

INSTOW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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1.0 Policy statement

At Instow Community Primary School and Pre-school, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Instow Community Primary School and Pre-school's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

4.0 Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Pastoral Staff – Learning Mentor
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies (SLT members)
- SENCO
- PSHE Coordinator
- SLT team
- Mental Health First Aider

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student, in the first instance they should speak to the Headteacher, SENCo or Learning Mentor. If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

5.0 Individual Relational Support Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school and specific staff

6.0 Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing> Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. **See Section 14 for Supporting Peers**

7.0 Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next

8.0 Sources of support at school and in the local community

School Based Support –

- Our Learning Mentor offers support for children and their families 4 days per week. If a child or family need to access this support, they can speak with the class teacher, SENCo or Head teacher to arrange this. Alternatively, Paula Harvest, our Learning Mentor, is often welcoming children at the gate in the mornings when parents may wish to talk to her directly.
- We have a whole school Thrive approach where children's well-being is at the forefront of everything we do. If class teachers are concerned about a child's mental health or wellbeing, they would discuss this with parents and the Head teacher and SENCo in the first instance, to decide on the best means of support.
- Family workshops for reception parents (when current guidance allows us to resume these).
- Regular circle time in each class/ time for reflection and to discuss solutions to a range of feelings and issues that crop up throughout the year
- Managing emotions using resources such as 'the incredible 5-point scale'
- We have 2 fully trained Thrive Practitioners, who are available to provide support for individual support for children and their families.
- In each class, there are teaching support staff and teaching teams work closely together to support the children in their care.
- All children are offered at least a week of Forest School Sessions, run by the Learning Mentor.
- Children with ongoing mental health and/or emotional wellbeing needs may be offered additional Forest School sessions as part of their ongoing support.
- The Learning Mentor also carries out weekly ELSA sessions, working on emotional literacy with a small group of children or 1:1 if needed.
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego Therapy, relaxation, worry monsters and mindfulness techniques.

Local Support

In Devon, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including **CAMHS**, specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. We also have the support of the Educational Psychology Service and can refer children to this service for social and emotional support and assessments.

9.0 Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should alert the Head teacher, Heidi Knight, Learning Mentor, Paula Harvest and SENCo, Lesley Turner. The observations should also be added to CPOMS as soon as possible.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

For pupils:

- Class Thrive assessments
- Individual Thrive assessments
- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile

For staff:

- Well-being survey twice yearly
- Performance Management and appraisals annually

10.0 Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had

previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with Devon's Children's Services, CAMHS, the Early Help team and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs;
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality.
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it.
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

11.0 Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be shared immediately with Head teacher, SENCo and Learning Mentor and added to CPOMS as soon as possible.

12.0 Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the child.

We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the child first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as children up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must always be informed, but students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

13.0 Whole school approach

13.1 Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

13.2 Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; and
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to

promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

13.3 Working with other agencies:

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- o The school nurse
- o Educational psychology services
- o Behaviour support team
- o CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- o Family support workers – through Early Help assessments
- o Play Therapists

14.0 Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend needs help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

15.0 Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

The Mind-ed online resource provides training for a range of mental health and wellbeing needs:

<https://www.minded.org.uk>

16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is September 2023.

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the SENCo, Lesley Turner.

17.0 Appendix

An outline of the Learning Mentor interventions available for the pupils at Instow Primary and Pre-School

Positive People (6 weeks)

This course is designed to raise children's self-esteem and help them to develop positive social skills and friendships.

Emotions games and activities (6 weeks)

Enhancing children's emotional intelligence will raise their levels of motivation, self-awareness, empathy, social skills and emotion regulation.

Social skills games and activities (6 weeks)

Social skills are an essential part of life, so developing these helps children to interact appropriately with others and assist them to build positive relationships with their peers.

Self-esteem focused sessions (6 weeks)

These sessions aim to enhance children's self-esteem, build their confidence and levels of motivation. The activities will help the children gain a more positive perspective on situations both in and out of the classroom.

Anger management courses (6 weeks)

These interventions are intended to help children who struggle to regulate their emotions. They promote awareness of feelings associated with anger, an understanding of what triggers angry emotions and teaches calming down strategies.

Lets chill (6 weeks)

This intervention is useful for children who struggle to regulate their emotions or suffer high levels of anxiety. It uses relaxation techniques, aimed to help children calm down in school and at home.

Loss and grief (bereavement and separation) (variable depending on the need of the child)

These sessions are aimed at helping children to cope with the death of a loved one but can also be adapted to help children whose parents are separating /divorcing. Each child may react differently to the loss of a loved one, so these sessions will be flexible in order to meet their individual needs.

Free2BeMe (8 weeks)

These sessions look at supporting children who have had adverse childhood experiences to build healthy relationships.

Positive People course (6 weeks)

This course is designed to raise children's self-esteem and help them to develop positive social skills.

Each week the session will consist of:

- treasure chest and gold coins activity - celebrating achievements and improvements
- mind map
- role play / discussion
- worksheet activity - write or draw
- circle time game
- closing compliments

Every session

- Each child will identify an achievement or improvement they have made,
- write it on a 'gold coin' and place in the treasure chest, in their 'Special book'.
- Each child will stick their completed work into their 'Special book'.
- At the end of the 6 sessions these books can be taken home to share with their families.

1. About myself

2. Good points and skills

3. Achievements and Good Feelings

4. Friendship

5. Peaceful problem solving and being assertive but fair

6. My Best Day

Emotions games and activities (6 weeks)

Enhancing children's emotional intelligence will raise their levels of motivation, self-awareness, empathy, social skills and emotion regulation.

These sessions will consist of a variety of games and activities such as:

- Emotion photos activity (recognise and sort)
- Emotions bingo game (relate emotions to own experiences)
- Play-dough feeling faces (understanding emotions change)
- Feelings pairs (actions and consequences)
- Fishing for feelings (describing emotions - linking to others - empathy)
- Blob tree (interpreting emotions - linking to self and others)
- Therapeutic books by Margot Sunderland (to develop emotional literacy)

Social skills games and activities (6 weeks)

Social skills are an essential part of life, so developing these early helps children to interact appropriately with others and assist them to build positive relationships with their peers.

These sessions will consist of a variety of games and activities such as:

- Snakes and ladders (general game involving turn-taking)
- Positional pictures (enhance speaking and listening skills)
- Kim's game (encourage concentration)
- Manners game (understanding actions and consequences - empathy)

- Group puzzle (develop cooperation and collaboration)
- What would you do? (game to develop morals and responsibility)
- Blob playground (interpreting positive and negative behaviours - linking to self and others)

Self-esteem focused sessions (6 weeks)

These sessions aim to enhance children's self-esteem and build their confidence.

These sessions will consist of activities such as:

- 'All about me' booklet (creating a positive image of themselves)
- Me collage (child identifies what is special to them)
- The thinking game (fun way to share ideas and opinions)
- 'Look what I can do!' mobile (celebrating what the child is good at)
- Nature self-portrait (creating a portrait using natural objects)
- Flower power activity (celebrating achievements)
- Photo collage (building a picture of their life)
- Issues/gifts mind map (addresses the issues and celebrates the gifts)
- Reframing (gaining a different perspective)
- Puppet power (sharing worries and finding solutions)
- The needs game (helps the child to work out their needs)
- Plaster activity (when one emotion hides others)
- My life snake (dealing with negative emotions / celebrating positives)
- Suffering skin (recognising difficult emotions)
- The resource board game (discovering ways to reach your goal)
- The magic finger (empowerment)
- My life picture (feeling important/addressing negatives)
- Warm fuzzy / Cold prickly (discovering how they communicate)
- What can we change? (empowerment)
- The best thing ever! (positive thinking)

Anger management (Nursery / Foundation / KS1/KS2) (4 weeks)

These interventions are intended to help children who struggle to regulate their emotions. They promote awareness of feelings associated with anger, an understanding of what triggers angry emotions and teaches calming down strategies.

Angry animal and calmly snail (Nursery / Foundation / KS1) (4 weeks)

These sessions consist of:

- Linking angry feelings to an animal / thinking about own actions when angry
- Identifying what triggers the angry emotions
- Calming down strategies
- Understanding why you get angry / alternative ways to express emotions
- Recognising the consequences of angry outbursts / gaining control of own anger
- Calmly snail booklet (emotion regulation strategies)

Volcano in my tummy (KS2) (4 weeks)

These sessions consist of:

- A volcano in my tummy - understanding the physical signs of feeling anger
- Bottling anger - understanding the dangers of bottling-up emotions
- Are you a volcano? - understanding the difference between feelings and behaviours
- The Anger Rules - establishing rules to keep safe and prevent damage
- Dirty anger/Clean anger - expressing anger safely
- Craig's angry day - understanding the consequences of angry outbursts
- Time out - establishing calming down strategies
- Tension scale - establishing the triggers to help manage anger

Let's chill (6 weeks)

This intervention is useful for children who struggle to regulate their emotions or suffer high levels of anxiety. It uses relaxation techniques, aimed to help children calm down in school and at home.

During each session the child will:

- Reflect on a positive and/or negative aspect of their previous week
- Listen to and practice the techniques of the 10 minute 'Sitting like a frog' or 'Relax kids' relaxation programme.

Discuss:

- how they feel physically when they are tense and relaxed
- their thoughts and feelings when anxious, stressed, angry etc
- what triggers stress, anxiety, anger etc

- the benefits of feeling relaxed and calm

Loss and grief (bereavement and separation) (variable depending on the need of the child)

These sessions are aimed at helping children to cope with the death of a loved one but can also be adapted to help children whose parents are separating /divorcing. Each child may react differently to the loss of a loved one, so these sessions will be flexible in order to meet their individual needs.

These sessions aim to:

- Enable the child to discuss their feelings
- Give the child the opportunity to share memories and information about their loved one
- Give the child the opportunity to create art work to reflect their memories
- Give the child the opportunity to make a memory box to store precious memories
- Enable the child to identify important people in their life and who can help them to cope
- Give the child the opportunity to share their bereavement story, should they wish
- Help the child to learn coping strategies and calming down techniques

Free2BeMe (8 weeks)

These sessions look at supporting children who have had adverse childhood experiences to build healthy relationships. We support children with

- Managing feelings and emotions
- Healthy relationships
- Gender Identity
- Communication
- Using metaphorical expression
- Dealing with stress
- Trust and safety
- Celebrating me!

