Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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Signed - Chair of Trustees	(Sue Trentini)
Signed - Chief Executive Officer	(Jamie Macintyre)

Vision

All children make at least good progress; no underperforming cohorts, groups or academies; all academies within the trust strive to be outstanding

Policy Statement

At The Forge Trust, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers).

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

We endeavour to ensure that children can manage times of change and stress and aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or to access help when they need it.
We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play

1, Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important

At The Forge Trust, we recognise how important mental health and emotional recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "*in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy*".

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and have schools where;

- all pupils are valued
- pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying is not tolerated

In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being.

2, Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out;

- how we promote positive mental health
- how we prevent mental health problems

- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- key information about some common mental health problems
- where parents/ carers, staff and pupils can get advice and support

3, Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

"A state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems"

We want all children/young people to;

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

4, Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

Links with the Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a message.

5, A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
6. effectively working with parents and carers
7. supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

6, Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

The school's Mental Health Team (Mental Health Lead Designated Safeguarding Team, SENCO):

- leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- liaises with the PSHE Leader on teaching about mental health
- is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- leads on and makes referrals to services

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families. Support includes:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- SENCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- Teaching assistants delivering a range of therapeutic interventions i.e. Art Therapy, Draw and talk
- School nurse
- Mental Health Support Team (MHST) offer support and guidance to both, staff, pupils and parents/carers.

7, Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

Whole School

- Using the Power of Reading to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience, etc. - the whole school will explore the same PHSE themed book
- Managing emotions resources in every class such as Worry monsters and Zone of Regulation
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class
- Anna Freud Schools in Mind resources
- Assembly themes
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school

Small Group Activities

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Lunch Clubs; Wellbeing mindful colouring workshops
- Sensory Room for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming

Transition Support

- Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT) support small group work such as Lego Therapy or Social Communication groups
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Yearly Transition available for all staff to be aware of vulnerable children's needs
- Key Adults might support secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

- The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. We promote and encourage social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.
- we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Our approach is to:

- provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- involve pupils in the care and support they have
- monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

8, Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- working with the School Office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- induction meetings for pupils / families joining
- analysing attendance data through 3 weekly attendance meetings
- 'My Feelings Questionnaires' /' Motional Assessments' to be completed by all children at the beginning of the school year and half way through the year to track and identify children may need additional support
- staff report concerns about individual pupils to the Designated Safeguarding Team and/or SENCO
- worry monsters in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked twice weekly
- weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- parental meetings and structured conversations with parents/carers of children who are on the SEN register
- enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'
- consultations with Mental Health Support Team, MASH Consultation line and Educational Psychologist

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors, types of mental health needs and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned

about a pupil will take this seriously and Designated Safeguarding Team following the safeguarding policy and procedures.

These signs might include:

- non-verbal behaviour
- isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- lowering academic achievement
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- drug or alcohol misuse
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as noncompliant, disruptive, or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed. A risk assessment and plan will be made.

Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

Confidentiality

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file on CPOMs, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time.

The level of need is based on discussions with key members of staff involved with the pupil and appropriate intervention decided. Parents/ carers will be informed throughout the process. (See appendix 1 for whole school approach to Mental health flow chat)

9, Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs.

We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision.

In line with the local authorities' 'Pathway to Provision' guidance, school referrals to a specialist service will be made by a member of the safeguarding team following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers.

Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

10, Involving Parents and Carers

Promoting Mental Health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children and supporting their children with mental health needs.

To support parents and carers:

- we sign post to Mental Health services such MHST, BU Notts, Healthy Families Team which can provide workshops such as Anxiety, Stress Management and Sleep.
- we provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- have an Open Door Policy.
- supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

- contact parents and carers and meet with them
- in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- be available for follow up calls
- make a record of the meeting
- agree an Action Plan
- discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

11, Involving Pupils

- we seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through Pupil Voice, surveys and class questions
- we have Well-being Ambassadors to provide additional support children in school and promote positive mental health across the school. The ambassadors and the schools Mental Health Lead have fortnightly meetings to discuss and implement new ideas.

12, Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help.

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and where possible access to supervision from mental health professionals.

Staff training to raise awareness of Mental Health and emotional well-being topics

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing.

13, Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy was made in collaboration with the whole school. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the Trust Directors and Board of Trustees.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if deemed.