WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL
Wellbeing Policy

Modern life has many opportunities and positive influences. However, these also come with a number of pressures and at WMS ('the School'), we recognise the need to balance these two areas and to provide a safe and stable environment in which pupils can learn and thrive.

During their time at the school we hope that pupils are able to grow in confidence and develop resilience enabling them to face challenges with purpose and achieve to the best of their potential.

We want all children to:

- develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- use and enjoy solitude
- become aware of others and empathise with them
- play and learn
- develop a sense of right and wrong
- face and resolve problems and setbacks and learn from them

This policy is intended as guidance to all staff including non-teaching staff and principals.

The specific aims of this policy are:

- to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all pupils and teachers
- to increase understanding of common wellbeing and mental health issues
- to alert members of staff to early warning signs of wellbeing or mental health issues
- to provide support to pupils suffering wellbeing or mental health issues and also their peer, parents and carers

- to provide support to members of staff working with children with wellbeing or mental health issues
- to challenge stereotypes often associated with mental health
- to recognise mental health as having equal standing as physical health issues

In cooperation with our School Values we aim for pupils to become successful learners and confident individuals with self-respect and respect for others, secure values and beliefs and a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. They should also become responsible citizens and effective contributors who are able to make informed choices, relate to others and pursue a healthy and active lifestyle.

These aims will be addressed both through universal whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health and pupil wellbeing the aim is also to recognise and respond to signs of mental ill health, and provide a supportive environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental health or wellbeing issues.

Roles and Responsibilities
Whilst all adults within the school community have a responsibility to promote the wellbeing of all pupils the following members of staff have specific relevant remit with regard to mental health:

Principal: Lorna Mahoney
Designated Safeguarding Leads: Lorna Mahoney
Deputy DSLs: Shamona Mughal/Petra Bielikova/Stacey McCormack
First Aider: All Staff
SENCO: Julie Cooper

The principal is responsible for ensuring that all members of staff, including support staff, are aware of the policy and the procedures to follow should they have any concerns. Members of staff should be responsible for self-awareness when working with children and not label children, in such a way that may affect their wellbeing.

Procedures

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe form part of the WMS PSHCE Scheme of Work. All teachers ensure that mental health and wellbeing issues are taught in a safe and sensitive manner that helps rather than harms and challenges mental stereotypes. There will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the confidence to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Qualities such as confidence, resilience and motivation support academic attainment, and are valued by future employers and help children to make a valuable contribution to society. Activities to support children develop these qualities form part of our broader curriculum. These may range from those with a direct focus on mental wellbeing, such as mindfulness techniques, to others which build character and provide emotional fulfilment. Examples of these are music and cultural interests, our Outdoors Learning programme and other activities that encourage teamwork and healthy living, for example sport and physical pursuits.

Other attributes of wellbeing, both mental and physical are promoted in day to day life, such as discussing healthy eating habits and observing that children are eating a balanced diet.

Raising awareness of Mental Health and Wellbeing

Children's wellbeing has a very high priority within the school and great value is placed on identifying pupils who may be facing particular challenges.

Spotting warning Signs of Mental Health or Wellbeing Issues

Members of staff (teaching or non-teaching) may become aware of warning signs that indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues. In particular SEND pupils can be especially vulnerable. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and any member of staff observing any of these signs

should communicate their concerns with the Principal/Deputy Head of School. Early intervention is extremely valuable so all members of staff should remain vigilant. It should never be assumed that someone else is dealing with an issue; it is better for a concern to be reported twice than not at all.

Possible warning signs include:

- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- changes in eating/sleeping habits
- increased isolation form friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity and mood
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- abusing drugs or alcohol
- expressing feelings or failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- changes in clothing – eg: long sleeves in warm weather
- secretive behaviour
- trying to avoid PE or getting changed secretively
- an increase in lateness to or absenteeism from school
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Responding to a Mental Health or Wellbeing Concern

Any member of staff who has been informed or has concerns about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak the Principal/Deputy Head of School in the first instance. If there is a fear that a child is in danger of immediate harm then the normal Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures should be followed with immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If a child presents with a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

A child may wish to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of the school community so all members of staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. The response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and the first thought should be of the child's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring "why?" All

disclosures should be recorded in writing and given to the principal for further action and for storage on the pupil's confidential file. This written record should include:

- the date
- the name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- the main points of the conversation
- first points of advice and next steps suggested

Children should not be guaranteed confidentiality. It should be explained to them that it may be necessary to consult with a senior teacher in order to help them further and to ensure continuity of care in the absence of the teacher to whom the disclosure was made.

Parents/carers should usually be informed of any mental health or wellbeing disclosures. However if the disclosure gives the member of staff reason to believe there may be underlying child protection issues, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed immediately, before the parents are contacted.

Having made a disclosure, pupils may wish to tell their parents themselves of an issue, in which case they should be given 24 hours from the disclosure to do so, before the school makes contact. Pupils should always be given the option of the school informing the parents for them or with them.

Working with parents

Usually, the Pricipal will be the person to make contact with parents or carers following a concern or a disclosure, unless it is felt more appropriate for another member of staff to do so.

Consideration should be given as to: •

- telephone or face to face meeting (preferable)
- venue – consider school, their home or somewhere neutral
- who should be present – consider both parents, pupil, other members of staff
- the aims of the meeting

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during a first conversation. This

should be accepted (within reason) and time given for reflection. To enable parents to come to terms with and process the information that is being shared, they should be given further sources of information such as leaflets or links to supportive organisations that they can explore in their own time after the meeting. The support required for each child will be particular to their specific need. It may be school based support or external support from a specialist practitioner. The exact requirements will be different in each case and should be agreed in collaboration with the parents during the meeting. Any meeting should be finished with an agreed next step and clear means of contacting the school with further questions. Booking in a follow up meeting or telephone call right away is beneficial to show ongoing support.

Training and Resources

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. Twilight training sessions may also be held to promote learning or understanding about specific needs related to mental health. These may be inhouse sessions or from an external provider. Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge may be considered as part of the performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year should it become appropriate due to developing situations with one or more children.

Parents often welcome support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental wellbeing.
The school responds to this by:

- ensuring the Wellbeing Policy is available to all parents
- providing opportunities to meet with the Principal/Deputy Head of School to discuss any concerns they may have
- keeping parents informed about the wellbeing topics their child is covering as part of the WMS Scheme of Work.

REFERENCES

This policy has been informed by:
The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Guidance for Schools and Colleges (March 2016)

DfE Departmental Advice 'Counselling in schools; a blueprint for the future' (February 2016)
Department of Health NHS Report 'Future in Mind' (2015)
DfE Statutory Advice 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' (September 2014)
DfE Departmental Advice 'Mental health and behaviour in schools' (June 2014)
Behaviour Policy, Record Management Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy
H & S Manual 30: Staff Wellbeing Policy,

See also: Behaviour Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy, Safeguarding Policy
This Policy was adopted on/dated: 1 July 2017

Date Reviewed: 30th September 2026

To be reviewed: 30th September 2027

Further information and Sources of Support about common Mental Health Issues:
Charlie Waller Memorial Trust: www.CWMT.org.uk
Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
National self-harm network: www.nshn.co.uk
Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org
Anxiety UK: www.anxiety.org.uk
OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd
Eating Difficulties in younger children and when to worry:
www.inourhands.com/eatingdifficulties-inyounger-children