



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

2020–21

Avenue Junior School Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing.

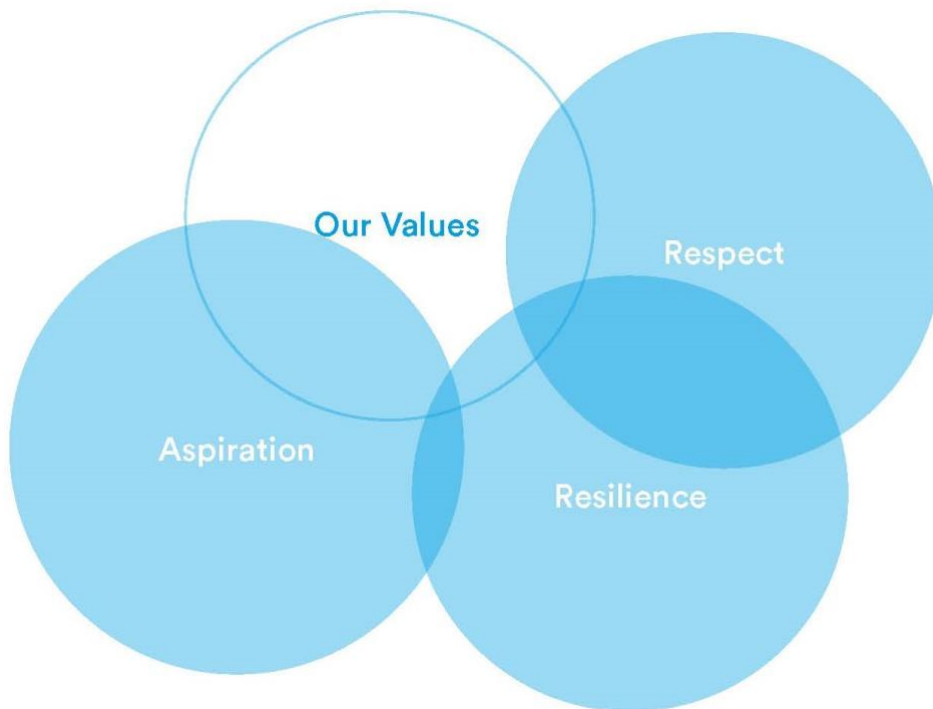
Policy Statement

At Avenue Junior School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils, families and our staff team.

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

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.

Our approach to good mental health and wellbeing is embedded in our school values and our curriculum.



Definition and Rationale

Mental health affects how we feel, think and act. It refers to our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. Our mental health can change and fluctuate on a daily basis and over time, and can be affected by a range of factors.

Just as it's important to look after our physical health, the same is true for our mental health. Our state of wellbeing affects how we cope with stress, relate to others, make choices, and play a part in our family, community, workplace and among our friends.

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a state of wellbeing in which every individual achieves their potential, copes with the normal stresses of life, works productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing.

- emotional wellbeing – this includes being confident, happy and not depressed;
- psychological wellbeing – this includes the ability to be autonomous, problem-solve, manage emotions, experience empathy and be resilient;
- social wellbeing – this includes the ability to have good relationships with others and to avoid engaging in disruptive, aggressive or bullying behaviour (NICE, 2014)

Good mental health for children

When children have good levels of wellbeing it helps them to:

learn and explore the world around them

feel, express and manage positive and negative emotions

form and maintain good relationships with others

be confident in themselves and their own uniqueness

cope with, and manage, change, setbacks and uncertainty

develop and thrive.

Through our provision we aim to ensure pupils are taught to look after their mental health and develop their coping skills. This will help them to boost their resilience, self-esteem and confidence. It can also help them learn to settle themselves, feel calm, and engage positively with their education - which can, in turn, improve their academic attainment.

Mental health doesn't mean being happy all the time. Neither does it mean avoiding stress altogether. Coping and adjusting to setbacks are critical life skills for children but it's important that they develop positive, rather than negative, coping skills.

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whats-mental-health/>

Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Curriculum

'Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.' Secretary of State 2019

All schools must provide mental health teaching as part of their statutory responsibilities from September 2020. We have adopted the Norfolk RSHE scheme of work to support in this responsibility. Ongoing training will support staff in delivering all aspects of this scheme, including teaching about mental health. This teaching will also run alongside our PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum, supporting children's wellbeing and encouraging children to express and understand their emotions and feelings. Our Paths Pupil of the Day is well embedded in school and gives children the opportunity to be proud of their achievements and uniqueness and enjoy the compliments from their peers, staff and parents.

The Environment

From 'Making the Grade' by Kadra Abdinasir '....educational environments, timetables, lessons and cultures all have an effect on the mental health of children and young people. From bullying to exam stress, schools can be stressful places, especially for young people facing the greatest adversity. But they can also be good for mental health – for example through teaching life skills and creative subjects.' 2019

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.

Promoting pupil, staff and parent voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making

Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements

Providing a broad and well balanced curriculum with plenty of opportunities for creativity and the arts

Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others

Providing opportunities to reflect.

Access to appropriate support that meets the needs of children, parents/carers and staff

Provision

At any one time, a child or young person may be anywhere on a spectrum between being healthy and unwell. Many children move along the spectrum at different times.

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every child, parent/carer and staff. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at identified vulnerable pupils and families.

Universal Provision

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum including the PATHS programme and the RSHE curriculum.

At Avenue Junior we also promote positive mental health through a number of additional strategies and approaches including:

Assemblies and workshops raising awareness of mental health.

Circle time discussions

Sharing boxes for concerns or achievements in each classroom

Zones of regulation

Teachers and support staff are trained in emotion coaching

Posters in all classes and around school

Regular signposting via Dojo and websites

Targeted support

Avenue Junior School recognises that some children may need additional support around their mental health and wellbeing at times in their lives.

This support may include:

Social skills groups (Connections) - a small group intervention to improve children's communication skills around turn taking, dealing with issues, resolving conflict etc.

1:1 check-ins or mentoring for children from the pastoral team from our ELSA staff

Access to other services including Educational Psychology, Benjamin Foundation, CAMHS, YMCA wellbeing service

Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

Individual support for trauma such as bereavement counselling including Nelson's Journey

Supporting Mental Health in children with SEND

Avenue Junior School is an inclusive school. We understand mental health difficulties as both a primary need and as secondary need to other types of Special Educational Needs (SEND). Children on the SEND register at school support or with an EHCP have access to both universal and targeted support as listed above. However, we acknowledge that sometime children need a more bespoke approach to supporting them with their mental health. This may include: -

Bespoke training to staff to in supporting children with SEND that is renewed regularly. Relevant information related to a child's SEND is shared with all stakeholders as appropriate to provide them with the best support in school.

Support from external agencies in supporting the needs of these children as necessary.

A differentiated curriculum for helping children with SEND to learn about healthy minds that is accessible to each individual.

Use a range of methods to obtain 'Pupil Voice' from children with SEND, seeking support from external agencies when necessary.

Multi-agency individual support plans for children with SEND, with contributions from school, parents, external professionals and the child which can include information to support mental health e.g. what's important to me, what's important for me.

Staff Responsibilities and Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, the Wellbeing Team of staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Name	Role	Main responsibility for Wellbeing and Mental Health
Deborah Dismore	Executive Head	Strategic lead for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Mike Hooper	Head of School	Operational overview for mental health and wellbeing Designated Safeguarding Lead(DSL)
Jake Rose-Brown	Y6 Teacher Inclusion Lead and SLT	Mental Health Lead for School & PSHE lead Inclusion Champion DSL Pupil Premium Lead
Rosie Amies	SENDCO Inclusion Team SLT	Mental Health Lead for children with SEND Inclusion Champion for SEND
Jocelyn Read	Y4 Leader and Teacher	Children's mental health lead
Lauren Pereira	Y6 Teacher	PSHE & RSHE Supporting Lead
Lauren Gislam	Parent Support Advisor	Mental Health lead for staff and parents DSL
Cat Cator	Pastoral Support	ESLA delivery DSL Parental support
Steve Leek Louise Gibbs	Pastoral Team	ELSA delivery Pastoral support Mentoring
Ally Ireson	Governor	Responsibility for Wellbeing

All staff at Avenue Junior School have the responsibility to identify when a child may have moved along the mental health spectrum and be showing signs of mental health difficulties. Similarly, to the Safeguarding procedures, school staff should pass on any concerns about a child's mental wellbeing to the Inclusion Team using the CPOMS system. In order to successfully identify any mental health concerns staff receive training to understand the risk factors that contribute to mental health difficulties and how to report concerns appropriately.

Identifying Needs and Warning Sign

It is key that staff develop good relationships with children and their parents/carers enabling them to quickly identify when children/families are in need of support. This may include identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

Attendance

Punctuality

Relationships

Approach to learning

Physical indicators

Negative behaviour patterns

Family circumstances

Recent bereavement

Health indicators

School staff may also 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 communicate their concerns with one of the designated safeguarding leads or the Inclusion team as appropriate.

Possible warning signs may include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Staff Wellbeing

Avenue Junior School recognises that in order to support children's mental health and wellbeing effectively it is important to promote staff wellbeing. All staff have full access to the Norfolk Support Line: a service which offers advice, counselling and support to staff members for professional and personal problems. The school has also engaged a programme of staff wellbeing delivered by the YMCA to support good mental health and resilience. We also recognise the link between mental and physical wellbeing and have provided opportunities for staff to participate in activities such as yoga and Pilates. Staff have access to the PSA in school for support and advice as well as an open door policy to the SLT.

There is a separate Staff Wellbeing Policy which is reviewed every two years.

Working with Parents

Avenue Junior School recognises the important role that parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children and in supporting children who have an identified mental health need.

We have a dedicated Parent Support Advisor, Lauren Gislam with support from the pastoral team member Cat Cator, to support parents and carers with understanding and supporting good mental health.

In order to support parents/carers we will:

Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website and Class Dojo pages

Share sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.

Offer parent workshops at a universal level eg supporting good sleep

Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns about their child.

Make our emotional Mental Health Policy accessible to parents on our website

Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.

Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE/RSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Working with other agencies and partners

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

Educational psychology services

CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service) and Point 1

Counselling services such as Nelson's Journey, Benjamin Foundation, YMCA Wellbeing

Family support workers

Therapists

Children Social Care

Matthew Project

Speech and Language Therapists

The Inclusion Team at NCC

The Senior Leadership and Inclusion Team at Avenue Junior School make informed commissioning choices about specialist services to support mental health which are outlined in the SEND Information report published on the school website.

This policy should be read and implemented alongside the following policies:

RSHE Policy

PSHE Policy

Positive Behaviour and Discipline

Anti-Bullying Policy

SEND Policy and Information Report and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Review and monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every two years. Regular wellbeing surveys will be carried out with staff and children in order to inform the Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

Helpful Links

[Teaching about mental wellbeing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing)

[Homepage | Centre for Mental Health](#)

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

[Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Mental health charities and organisations - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people>

[Supporting Mental Health - YMCA England & Wales](#)

[schools-wellbeing-week-pack.pdf \(mentalhealth.org.uk\)](#)