



# Ashwood Spencer Academy

## What Mental Health and Wellbeing means at Ashwood

At Ashwood, we define mental health and wellbeing as "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" (World Health Organisation). Mental Health and Wellbeing 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 and learn and achieve.

We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. We aim to equip them with skills that they can confidently use throughout their lives to deal with events that may impact upon their mental health and wellbeing.

In 2017, about 1 in 10 children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it is life-limiting. The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that "in order to help their children 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. For children, school acts as a safe place with positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

## Whole-School Approach

Mental Health and Wellbeing plays a vital role in education, and impact on our students' learning and lives. At Ashwood Spencer Academy, we are committed to advancing and safeguarding students' emotional well-being and good mental and physical health.

We adopt a whole-school approach towards Mental Health and Wellbeing, with every decision made in school being considerate of these factors.

We have used the 5 Ways to Wellbeing (NHS England) to theme our days of the week in school. Mindful Monday, Talking Tuesday, Wellbeing Wednesday, Thoughtful Thursday and Feel-Good Friday. The children are familiar with each day and what the purpose behind it is. Staff ensure that when planning, the theme for each day is considered to promote wellbeing and support children in understanding how best to support their own.



## Wider Agency Support

Our team receive updates from Derby City Council and attend briefings and network meetings to ensure that key messages are noted with regards to Mental Health.

We access support from wider agencies and refer children to a range of services which aim to support and develop positive Mental Health and Wellbeing, for example, Build Sound Minds through Action for Children, CAMHS, use of our Safe Speak Counsellor which the school have access to on Wednesday mornings, etc...

## Team Approach

At Ashwood, we use CPOMS as our way of recording all information relating to the welfare of our children. Pastoral members of staff are alerted to issues that relate to their remit, so that job roles and responsibilities are clear. This allows for more timely action. We also have a Mental Health and Wellbeing Team who meet half-termly and who are responsible for:

- Lead and work with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Lead on teaching about mental health.
- Provide advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Are the first point of contact with mental health services, and makes individual referrals to them.

Mental Health and Wellbeing is on the agenda for weekly RAG meetings that staff are in so that we can identify early on if children appear to be struggling with an element of their mental health or wellbeing.

Staff are aware of possible signs of children struggling and know procedures for identifying them.



## Staff Level

We recognise that, without happy and healthy adults in school, children will not receive the best provision to help them develop. We recognise that everyone is likely to experience periods of poor mental health throughout their lives due to numerous factors, both personal and professional, and so we aim to ensure that staff wellbeing is priority. Measures taken to support wellbeing include:

- ⇒ Wellbeing being a weekly item on the agenda for year group and SLT meetings.
- ⇒ Providing a breakfast each Wednesday for staff to enjoy before school starts.
- ⇒ Investing in calming spaces throughout for staff.
- ⇒ Access to a staff helpline through Perkbbox that staff can contact and speak to a trained individual.
- ⇒ Being mindful of staff's commitments outside of school and aiming to support these.
- ⇒ Support for staff around busy times of the year e.g. a day out of class at the end of each half-term to plan for the term ahead.
- ⇒ Offering staff a free school lunch each day.

## Family Level

We place a great deal of emphasis on the children understanding what mental health and wellbeing means, but we also extend this emphasis to parents and families understanding it too.

Mrs Mayer (FSL) runs a range of carefully planned groups with parents and children in school. These groups work on informing parents of academic developments, positive play, behavior strategies, etc., and sees bonds being developed between parents and children.

Additionally, we have a 'mental health and wellbeing' policy which outlines our exact approach with what we do in regard to this area.

We regularly seek parents/carers opinions about our approach in school, and have questionnaires available.



## What provision do we have?



## Child Level

### Pupil-led activities:

- ⇒ Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- ⇒ School Parliament reps with mental health and wellbeing on the agenda.

### Transition periods:

- ⇒ When transitions are known, children have staff members to support a smooth transition to another school e.g. transition to secondary schools is managed carefully and information is passed on in timely manners.

### Class activities:

- ⇒ Positive praise - we always focus on praising children first and foremost.
- ⇒ Worry boxes - a similar mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class.
- ⇒ Talk boxes - outside Pastoral Rooms, Children write their names and a reason to talk. These are picked up weekly by the DSL's.
- ⇒ Mental health teaching focuses e.g. Children's Mental Health Week.
- ⇒ Jigsaw PSHE curriculum that begins in Foundation Stage 1.

### Specialist Provision:

- ⇒ Nurture Group Provision that is run by staff who are training. Boxall Profiles are used to assess progress.
- ⇒ 1:1 sessions with our Learning and Behaviour Mentors for children who require additional support.
- ⇒ Wellbeing Sessions: Our Family Support Lead runs wellbeing sessions on a need to be basis. These groups are dependent on the needs of the children. Some groups happen in larger groups, whereas some are on a 1-1 basis. Children from the entirety of the school can access this.
- ⇒ Counsellor: Each Wednesday morning, we have a Counsellor from Relate come in to school. She works with 3 children each day for programmes that usually range from 6-8 sessions. As a school, we refer children and with parents' permission, sessions with the Counsellor start due to a range of reasons relating to Mental Health. Children from across school access this service.