Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Guidelines

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1. Background:

1 in 6 children and young people have a diagnosable mental health problem, and many continue to have those problems into adulthood. 50% of those with lifetime mental health problems first experience symptoms by the age of 14. 1 in 10 boys ages 5-19 with mental health condition are excluded in some for from school. (Place2Be Charity, 2023). Suicide rates continue to increase, and suicide is now the leading cause of death for young people ages 20-34 (Mental Health Foundation).

Tower House Preparatory School offers and happy, safe and caring environment. We have a unique family atmosphere where each pupil is valued and individual. We encourage a love of learning and promote a child's natural curiosity through varying challenges, experiences and opportunities. As a small independent school, we develop a knowledge and understanding of our community and foster a respect for other people and their beliefs.

We endeavour to ensure that our pupils develop the self-esteem, awareness and self-confidence to play an active part in school, be valued and valuable members of our community. By promoting skills that enable our pupils to develop emotional resilience and an awareness of the importance of good emotional health and wellbeing, we aim to help our pupils understand and manage the day-to-day pressures of modern life and know when they or others need help or support.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Support the wellbeing of all pupils and staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health.
- Provide a supportive work environment for all staff and pupils.
- Acknowledge the needs of staff and pupils, and how these change over time.
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities.
- Help staff and pupils with any specific wellbeing issues they experience.
- Ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims.

3. Promoting wellbeing at all times

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect.
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff.
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support.
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit.
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or admin rooms.
- Communicate with Head and/or Deputy Head when in need of support.

All pupils are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect.
- Work and play collaboratively with other pupils.
- Follow the THS school values and classroom rules.
- Communicate with teachers when they need support.
- Follow PSHE guidance.
- Use a range of strategies introduced to them: mindfulness, ‘calm me sessions,’ brain breaks.

4. Mental Health Support

Further mental health support will be provided:

- For pupils: time with mental health lead, SENDCo and/or DSL to discuss pastoral issues, through discussion with parents/carers, giving children time to discuss with a trusted adult, signposting from mental health team including mental health first aider (Anna Patel) in all areas around school.
- For staff: time with Headteacher, Dept. Head or line manager, signposting to external agencies where appropriate. Mental health lead will be checking in with staff if necessary.

5. What is 'good' emotional, mental health and wellbeing in our school?

At THS, we understand the importance of instilling in our pupils:

- The ability to recognise, acknowledge and manage their feelings.
- The ability to develop caring and concerns for others.
- The ability to develop meaningful, positive, and long-lasting relationships.
- The ability to take responsibility for themselves and make practical decisions.

We want our children to:

- Be effective and successful learners.
- Make and sustain friendships.
- Deal with and resolve conflict effectively and fairly.
- Solve problems with others for themselves.
- Manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger, and anxiety.
- Be able to promote calm, optimistic states that support the achievement of goals.
- Recover from setbacks and persist in the face of the difficulties.
- Work and play cooperatively.
- Compete fairly and win and lose with dignity and respect for other competitors.
- Recognise and stand up for their rights and the rights of others.
- Understand and value the differences and commonalities between people, respecting the rights of others to have beliefs and values different from their own.

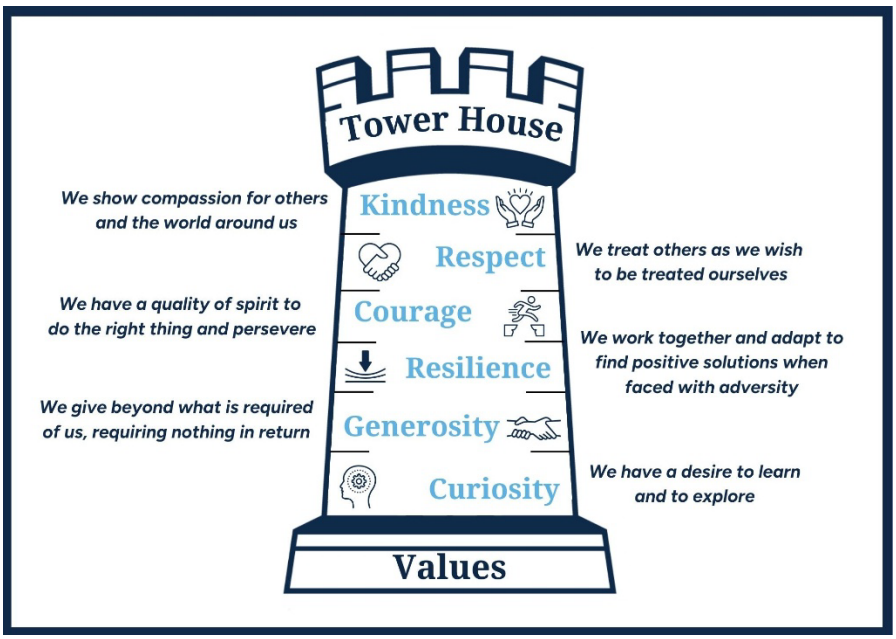
The mental health and wellbeing of all members of our school community is fundamental to our philosophy and aims. Our policies and practices are founded in the development and sustenance of a happy, healthy school, where all learning can flourish. When a school promotes positive mental health and wellbeing, pupils can better understand and express their feelings. This builds their confidence and emotional resilience and therefore their capacity to learn.

6. Curriculum organisation:

THS endeavours to be proactive in its approach and welcomes opportunities to promote good mental health and wellbeing through the formal and informal curriculum. Emotional wellbeing is integrated into our personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum following the Jigsaw scheme of work from Reception to Year 8.

The delivery of PSHE is fundamental to our promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing. Through the planned SoW and informal curriculum, opportunities exist to explore issues appropriate to children's ages and stages of development. Staff deal sensitively with these issues and differentiate according to the varying needs to the children in their care.

We also promote positive mental health and wellbeing through our core school values which are embedded into our learning: Kindness, Respect, Generosity, Resilience, Curiosity and Courage:



Alongside weekly PSHE lessons, we take part in national events such as Anti-Bullying Week, Children's Mental Health week and Mental Health Awareness week. These are also opportunities for external visitors / speakers to come into school.

7. Methods used by staff to promote good mental health and wellbeing for pupils:

- Class codes of conduct
- Clearly identified rewards and sanctions, understood by all
- Rewarding positive behaviour and achievement through our house point system
- Setting appropriately challenging tasks.
- Providing a forum for listening and talking, e/g/ school council, form periods.
- Encouraging co-operation and collaboration.
- Developing social competence
- Encouraging and developing coping strategies and resilience

Promote and facilitate our 5 ways to wellbeing, which are:

- **Connect** - helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to.
- **Be active** - providing pupils with the opportunity to be physically active and to engage in a range of co-curricular activities.
- **Take notice** – helping pupils to pay attention to the present moment.
- **Give to others** – providing opportunities for pupils to connect and engage with their community.
- **Keep learning** – provide pupils with opportunities to learn skills and knowledge, including social and emotional skills, an awareness of mental health, how to maintain positive wellbeing and coping techniques. This allows and helps pupils to build self-confidence and to be resilient learners.

(Taken from Health in Mind website)

The school places emphasis on problem-solving, positive self-assessment, time for reflection, quality feedback and encouragement to participate in school and community events.

8. Pastoral organisation for pupils:

We pride ourselves on the whole school, team approach that is integral to our way of working at THS.

- Recognising and responding positively to a child's emotional, mental health and/or behavioural needs.
- Communicating with parents positively and realistically to create a partnership approach to children's emotional, mental health and wellbeing.
- Liaising with appropriate agencies to enlist advice and/or support.

Clear policies for Behaviour, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Attendance are promoted at THS. Together, they provide the foundations for emotional, mental health and wellbeing. Alongside our policies are a range of practices to promote positive mental health;

- A school Council
- Achievement Assemblies
- A whole school system of rewards for individuals
- Use of Zones of Regulations

Where appropriate, our mental health lead, SENCo or DSL may become involved to support a child experiencing emotional, mental health and/or behavioural difficulties. We recognise the effectiveness of our early intervention approach and our commitment to pastoral care for all.

9. Monitoring and evaluation:

Provision across the school is monitored by the Head, SLT, DSL, DDSL and Mental health Lead. The Head, together with the SMT will provide support and advice to members of our school community about the provision and implementation of pastoral care in school. Regular staff meetings and termly full governor meetings provide regular opportunities for the quality of care to be evaluated and developed.

The school uses different ways to monitor and evaluate well being in school.

- Pupils can access an online wellbeing form to discuss how they are feeling. These are monitored, recorded and acted upon if necessary.
- Pupils take part in an internal wellbeing survey annually.
- Pupils will take part in a wellbeing test, termly, via the use of Quest.
- The head promotes an open-door policy with both staff and pupils.

10. Wellbeing App (ISAMs)/Individual Wellbeing/Behaviour Plans

As well as the above monitoring and evaluation, the school uses the wellbeing application on ISAMS to record any wellbeing concerns. These are reviewed by Heads of Year, DSL, Senco, Mental Well Being Lead, Deputy and Head and actioned if required.

Some pupils are put onto an Individual Wellbeing or Behaviour Plan, depending on what is required. There could be many reasons for this, and this is discussed with staff before, and then reviewed by DSL, DDSL and Head ½ termly. These plans are shared with staff where appropriate.

Staff know that mental health can be a sign of a safeguarding concern and know how to escalate it if they are concerned.

Appendix A – Signs of mental ill health in a child or young person: (NSPCC)

- Acknowledge the issue and don't ignore or dismiss it: other colleagues might not have noticed; early intervention increased the changes of full recovery.
- Use the right language - when talking with a child, use language that they understand. This will differ according to their age and stage of development.
- Keep a written record of the signs, your concerns, and the time/date/context using school iSAMS system.
- Create an open environment - It's important to create an open and safe environment where children are comfortable speaking about their mental health. Ensure boys know who they can talk to
- Mental Health Lead to keep records in file on ISAMS wellbeing manager.
- With the support of the mental health lead, SENCo and the DSL assess the risk of harm to the pupils or to others.
- Consider other possible causes other than a mental health problem.
- Talk to line managers, colleagues, the young person, and their family about your concerns and keep them appropriately informed.
- Support the young person to keep mentally well and provide self-help strategies.

Possible signs of a mental health problem include:

- Sudden poor academic behaviour or performance
- Changes in social habits, such as withdrawal or avoidance of friends and family
- Not taking care of their appearance and/or hygiene
- Unexplained physical changes, such as weight loss or gain
- Increases in obsessive activities (e.g. requesting reassurance, fiddling etc)
- Hyper-arousal (e.g. tremors, fast pulse, sweating…)
- Outbursts of aggression, destructiveness, or even self-harm

- Disruptiveness, non-compliance, antisocial behaviour
- Needing to go to the toilet more often
- Persistent aches and pains without physical cause
- Not being able to concentrate and seeming distracted
- Unusually fearful behaviour without cause; seeming jumpy or nervous for no obvious reason
- Returning to developmentally young behaviours (e.g. bedwetting)
- Absence from school or sickness – often in adolescence, young people will experience physical symptoms of anxiety of stress before they can necessarily articulate the issue.
- Becoming socially isolated and/or withdrawing
- Avoiding friends and activities they used to find fun
- Being tired in school
- Experiencing panic attacks
- Lack of aspiration or not being able to predict positive things happening in the future
- Changes in appetite

Appendix B: Data Sources

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing profiling tool collates and analyses a wide range of publicly available data on risk, prevalence and detail (including cost data) on those services that support children with, or vulnerable to, mental illness. It enables benchmarking of data between areas

Mental health and behaviour in schools provides non-statutory, departmental advice from the Department for Education (DfE) for all school staff working to support children.

Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2023 report presents findings from the fourth (wave 4) in a series of follow up reports to the 2017 Mental Health of Children and Young People (MHCYP) survey, conducted in 2023.

Tower House School is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment