

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy



May 2024

To be reviewed 2026 or as required

Aims

Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden are inclusive schools with a focus on the wellbeing of our school community. We aim to ensure emotional health and wellbeing promotes school success and improvement by:

- Contributing positively to continued priorities including teaching and learning, raising standards, promoting social inclusion, behaviour and attendance.
- Ensuring active pupil voice throughout the school.
- Enhancing confidence, motivation and engagement through a sense of belonging.

The Federation adopt the World Health Organisation's description of a state of wellbeing which aims to ensure every individual:

- Realises their own potential
- Can cope with the normal stresses of life
- Can work productively and fruitfully
- Is able to make a contribution to their community

At Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden we provide opportunities for children to:

- Understand and articulate their emotions and feelings
- Form and maintain relationships
- Develop self-esteem, emotional resilience and manage setbacks
- Learn and practice emotional regulation skills

This allows children to develop a strong sense of morality that allows them to take on board the thoughts and feelings of others. It also teaches children how to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a way that will be beneficial in adolescence and adulthood.

We ensure a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging collaboration
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to reflect on outcomes
- Providing access to appropriate support that meets identified areas of need

This ensures that all members of the school community feel safe and encourages relationships to facilitate effective learning.

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches including identified values, assemblies, celebrating success, pupil voice forums, problem and praise boxes and a robust PSHE curriculum
- Support for pupils going through a period of instability, including bereavement
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties including attachment disorder

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum. This ensures that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner in line with the statutory framework.

Children learn through adult modelling of emotional regulation skills and consistent communicating behaviours and strategies.

Identification of need

School approaches ensure that systems support early identification. This includes monitoring attendance patterns, punctuality patterns, behaviour patterns and health indicators.

Awareness of warning signs which may indicate a pupil is experiencing ill mental health or emotional wellbeing issues should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of the warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the learning mentor as appropriate.

Possible warning signs 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

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual or groups of pupils which may include:

- Social skills
- Learning mentor interventions
- Therapeutic group or individual sessions (including play and art therapy)
- Personalised Support Plans
- Use of the emotion coaching model (see appendix a)

Working with Parents

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website.
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent drop ins
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- Ensure an active parent voice

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:

- School nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Specialist teacher services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

The Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) Programme

The WAMHS programme was introduced in City and Hackney following the 2017 publication of the Government green paper called "*Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper*". The green paper set out an ambition for earlier intervention and prevention, a boost in support for the role played by schools and colleges, and better, faster access to NHS services. The WAMHS project seeks to meet some of these aims by supporting our staff and parents to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all children in the Viridis Federation.

CAMHS Worker in School (CWIS)

We have a regular CAMHS worker to provide training, consultation and support, signposting and liaison and to help to develop and sustain closer working links between Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and our school.

Training

At a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protect training in order to enable them to keep children safe.

Staff Wellbeing

It is recognised that promoting staff health and wellbeing should be an integral part of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, training and signposting materials about mental health and emotional wellbeing will be in place including but not limited to:

Organisation

- Additional release time for phase and subject leaders which is planned in advance
- Additional release time provided for report writing
- PPA undertaken onsite with partner teachers
- Phase meetings during the working day
- Short reports termly with an additional 0.5 release time per term
- Teaching Assistant in every year group
- Full time reprographics assistants to undertake staff admin and copying tasks
- No staff meetings on weeks where there are parents evenings or enrichment events
- Teachers relieved of break duties to allow time for planning & preparation
- Annual events planned and outlined a year in advance to avoid clashes
- Teachers not expected to run clubs after school and where they do (e.g. booster) this is recompensed.

Teaching and Learning

- Baseline planning provided for non-core subjects RE / ICT / PSHE / Art / D&T / Humanities / Science / PE
- Assessment only undertaken twice a year with data collection kept to a minimum
- Revised marking and feedback policy created through consultation with staff
- Additional release time (music/MFL slots and some assemblies) to support with classroom environment upkeep e.g. displays.

Training and Development

- Personalised approach to CPD including mentoring / coaching
- Senior Leader mentoring support for those with identified emotional health needs
- Wellbeing focus incorporated into staff meetings
- Managing workload focus incorporated into professional meetings
- Confidential access to the employee assistance helpline service

Guide to Emotion Coaching

Emotion Coaching is a way of teaching children to use their heightened emotions (e.g. angry, frustrated) to support them to use responses that are more effective. Emotion Coaching is based on research by American Psychologist John Gottman, who found that through demonstrating empathy, the child is able to self-regulate, as they feel safe. This helps the child to make positive choices when they feel these heightened emotions again and supports the child to calm down.

Emotion coaching uses a 4-step model as outlined below:

STEP 1

Recognising, empathising, soothing to calm

- Recognise all emotions are ***natural and normal***
- Recognise behaviour as a way the child is communicating their feelings
- Look for physical and verbal signs of the emotion being felt
- Take on the child's perspective while showing empathy

STEP 2

Validating the feelings and labelling

- Validate and label the emotion, acknowledging this is how the emotion feels

Labelling:

- *'You seem angry to me' / 'I wonder if you feel angry...'*
- *'Your face seems tense – am I right in thinking you feel angry?'*

Empathising:

- *'I can see you get angry when this happens'*
- *'I would feel angry too – it's ok'*

STEP 3 (If needed)

Setting limits on behavior

- Explain the limits of acceptable behaviour and make it clear certain behaviour is unacceptable, while treating the child with respect.

Example

- *'It's not ok to behave like that'*
- *'In this room we have kind hands and kind feet'*
- *'If you choose to... (behaviour), then you're choosing...(consequence)'*
- *'We can't allow you to hurt yourself /others'*

STEP 4

Problem-solving with the child / young person when the child is **calm** and in a relaxed, rational state:

- **Explore** the feelings that led to the behavior/problem/incident. *'How did you feel when...?' 'Can you remember feeling this way before and what you did?'*
- **Empower** the child to believe they can overcome difficulties and manage feelings/behaviour. *'Let's decide what you will do next time you feel like this'*