

‘Plannu hadau i dyfu am oes – planting the seeds for a lifetime of growth’  
Respect, Care, Community - Parch, Gofal, Gymuned



## Pontlliw Primary School Ysgol Gynradd Pontlliw



### Positive Mental Emotional Health and Well-Being Policy

Article 3: Everyone who works with children should always do what is best for each child.

Article 12: All children have the right to give their opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 28 : All children have the right to a good quality education.



Name	Position	Signature	Date
Alison Norman	Headteacher		September 2021
Ian Humphreys	Chair of Governors		September 2021

#### School Policies and Documents

Pontlliw Primary School has a range of policies and documents which cover the areas of Statutory requirements, Curriculum, Health and Safety etc. Some of the policies have been formulated by school staff while others are produced by the LA and/or Consortium and adopted by the Governing Body. These are stored on the office shared drive, HWB and the school website when appropriate. Paper copies of these policies are available from the school office and are stored in the school office.

## Positive Mental Emotional Health & Well-Being Policy Pontlliw Primary School

### Policy Statement

*Mental health is 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 Organization)*

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupils. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for children affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

### Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental emotional health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies in cases where a child's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue or an identified special educational need.

### The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and children
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with children with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

### Lead Members of Staff

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

- Alison Norman and Kirsty Cusack- designated child protection / safeguarding officers
- Michelle Commander/Denise Richardson and Lisa Davies - first aiders
- Mrs Louise Davis/Mrs Amy Bennett - Health Schools Co-Ordinators.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection

officer, the head teacher or the designated governor. If the child presents 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.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the headteacher & ALNCo. Seek guidance about referring to CAMHS from HT/ALNCO.

### Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

### Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental Health and Wellbeing AoLE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the new health and wellbeing AoLE WG guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

### Signposting

We will ensure that staff, children and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to children within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of child help-seeking by ensuring children understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

### Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 to HT, SLT and/or ALNCo.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

### **Managing disclosures**

A child may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a child chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the child's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the child's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the HT/ALNCo/SLT who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. See ALNCo for guidance about making a referral to CAMHS.

### **Confidentiality**

We should be honest about the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a child on, then we should discuss with the child:

- Who we are going to talk to?
- What we are going to tell them?
- Why we need to tell them?

We should never share information about a child without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and a parent for children up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is always important to share disclosures with a colleague, usually HT/ALNCo/SLT. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the child, it ensures continuity of care in our absence; and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the child and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed if disclosures relating to concerns about mental health and well-being are made and children may choose to tell their parents themselves. We should always give children the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection officer HT must be informed immediately.

### **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents, we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the child, other members of staff.
- What are 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 the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

### **Working with All Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in Health and Wellbeing AoLE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

### Supporting Peers

When a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the child who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

### Training

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 to enable them to keep children safe. Pontlliwstaff have received training in ACEs (Adverse Childhood experiences), DV, growth mindset, mindfulness, attachment and PREVENT. Staff are trauma informed and we are an emotion coaching school that uses restorative practices.

We will host relevant information for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The [MindEd learning portal](#)<sup>1</sup> provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more children. We have specialist THRIVE practitioners, resilience and play therapy practitioners on staff.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with HT/SLT/CPD leader, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

The [Charlie Waller Memorial Trust](#) provides funded training to schools on a variety of topics related to mental health including twilight, half day and full day INSET sessions.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. .

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be directed to HT/ALNCo/SLT.

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.