



Mental Health Policy

Policy Statement

Gosford Park is proud of its family ethos and the importance of knowing every child and their family. They hold strongly to the principle that positive mental health is essential for children to access learning. Gosford Park's definition of Mental Health is as follows;

Mental Health is our emotional and physical response to the challenges that life brings our way. Positive Mental Health is having a toolkit of strategies that we can use to help us cope well with these challenges.

Having a member of the Senior Leadership Team as Mental Health Lead was key to ensuring that emotional health and wellbeing is always part of school development plans and embedded in the school's ethos. This has meant that talking about thoughts, feelings and behaviour and strategies to manage strong or uncomfortable feelings is normalised. We have developed our behaviour policy and renamed it the code of conduct, it now has a restorative focus and ensures there is no shaming element.

Our ethos is underpinned by following the PACE approach – Playful, Accepting, Curious and Empathetic. Every member of the Gosford Park family approaches one another in this manner, aiming to understand and support the behaviours and emotions of others.

At Gosford Park the SENDCo is the SMHL and is a champion for promoting emotional health and wellbeing and is an integral part of a multidisciplinary team, compiled of the Family Support Worker, Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Children, Parents and Governors, its aim is to support children, parents/carers and staff. This arrangement helps to ensure a good fit between the work of the multidisciplinary team and the leadership priorities for the school.

Promoting Positive Mental Health

At Gosford Park we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising. We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and well-being.
- Adhering to a positive, restorative approach to behaviour management.
- Helping children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Helping children to feel comfortable about sharing any concerns or worries.

- Teaching children emotional skills and an awareness of mental health so that they understand their emotions and feelings better.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world.
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.
- Helping all members of the Gosford Park family to recognise when they need more support and enabling them to seek this support.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Mental Health and PSHE lessons for all year groups.
- Promoting a variety of well-being strategies through use of resources such as the Action for Happiness calendars.
- Following the NHS backed My Happy Mind program across the school

We pursue our aims through:

- **Universal, support** for all pupils through whole school approaches including but not limited to PSHE lessons, use of sensory room and pathways, extended transition, PE lessons and use of the My Happy Mind program.
- **Tier 1 support**, targeted support for groups of children who are in need of more than the Universal offer including but not limited to Boomerang, Circle of Friends, Social Skills groups, Lego Therapy, Outdoor Therapy, The Bridge.
- **Tier 2 support**, specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term challenges, including but not limited to Transforming Lives for Good, Play Therapy, 1:1 sessions with Family Support Worker, support from outside agencies.

We acknowledge that as a school we are here to promote an understanding of Positive Mental Health however, we will always seek the intervention of medical professionals to support Mental Illness.

Staff roles and responsibilities

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote Positive Mental Health, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Named Mental Health Lead – Joanna Jacobs (SENDCO, DDSL, SMHL, DLAC, Behaviour Lead)

Deputy Mental Health Lead – Christina Beck (Family Support Worker, DDSL)

Named Mental Health Governor – Richard Smalley (CO-opted Governor)

PSHE Lead – Rebecca Francis (Subject Lead and Teacher)

The people named above lead the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team in promoting the importance of Positive Mental Health and ensuring it is considered in all Leadership decisions. They are role models for the school family and endeavour to lead by example in discussing, supporting and implementing Positive Mental health.

Our Mental Health Leads:

- Lead and work with all staff to co-ordinate whole school activities to promote Positive Mental Health and well-being.
- Provide advice and support to staff and organise training and updates.
- Liaise with mental health services and make individual referrals.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner. In Addition we follow the My Happy Mind NHS backed program to support the development of Positive Mental Health and strategies to aid this. This program also supports the positive mental health and wellbeing of staff.

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- The Boxall Profile

- Dimensions Tool
- Entry and Exit Questionnaires for targeted interventions.

Signposting;

We will ensure that every member of the Gosford Park Family is aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. We have a dedicated section on our website with links to support and advice.

Early Identification and Warning Signs;

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a child's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a child is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being challenges. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Safeguarding Team through recording on CPOMS or the Mental Health and Wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include but are not limited to:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking 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

Assessment, interventions and support

All concerns are reported to the designated adults within school through recording on CPOMS and needs are assessed through a triage approach with SLT, which includes the SENDCO and class teachers to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

Working with parents and carers;

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be cascaded to the Mental Health Lead for assessment.

To support parents and carers we will:

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can encourage and support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our emotional well-being and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home.
- Organise workshops and presentations on mental health, anxiety, resilience and steps to wellbeing.
- Encourage open lines of communication with SMHL for parents who have concerns about their child's Mental Health and behaviour.

When a concern has been raised, teachers or the Mental Health Lead will consider the following actions;

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (Although there may be cases, parents and carers cannot be involved due to safeguarding issues.)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Create a chronology of actions and events and record this on CPOMS.
- Agree mental health care and protection plan where appropriate including clear next steps.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signpost to parenting support groups.

Working with specialist services;

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Children may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- Emotional support through the SEMH&L team (Social Emotional Mental Health and Learning)
- Educational Psychology Services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- School Nursing Service
- Children's and Family Services
- Therapists
- Counselling Services

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 in order to enable them to keep children safe. There is 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 to developing situations with one or more children.

Links to other policies

This policy links to our;

Attendance Policy

Child Protection Policy

Code of Conduct - Behaviour Policy

SEND Offer

Monitoring and evaluation

The Mental Health and Well-being Policy will be published on the school website - hard copies are available on request. The policy will be ratified by Governors and reviewed every three years.