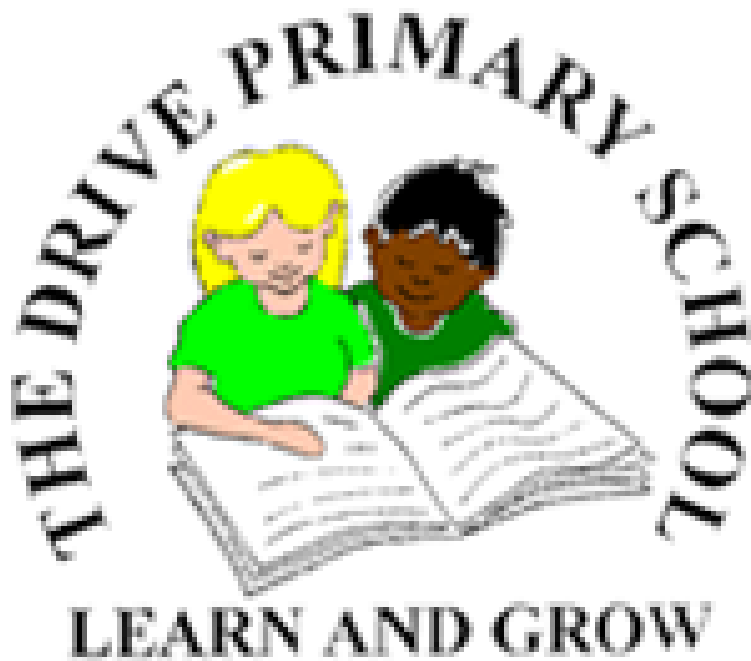


**The Drive Community
Primary School
Mental Health and Emotional
Wellbeing Policy**



Date of last review: March 2024

Approved by Governors: March 2024

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Policy Statement

At The Drive Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- actively teach children to recognise and articulate their emotions,
- strive to provide our children with 'tools' or 'strategies' to support them with self-regulation,
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries,
- support children socially to form and maintain relationships,
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count,
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different',
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- dedicated weekly wellbeing sessions for EVERYONE,
- promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging,
- encouraging 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,
- access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

Well-being Wednesday Classroom Sessions

Children's well-being and emotional regulation is an integral part of our curriculum. Wednesday morning sessions are dedicated to health and wellbeing. Topics include:

- worry,
- self-regulation - understanding the connection between our feelings and our behaviours, identifying strategies to cope with these emotions such as anger or disappointment.
- mindfulness

- friendship/ conflict resolution
- guided meditation
- transition/change and anxieties that can stem from change.

As well as the above, a Stormbreak activity is carried out in most wellbeing sessions. At the beginning of each session, children share their feelings and vote how they want to feel (with guidance from their teacher on the current needs of the class). These options include: brave, excited, valued and energised. The main concepts these sessions are based on are: resilience, self-care, relationships, self-worth, hope and optimism. (See school website for more information).

Music and wellbeing programme

We have a bespoke programme we have written to suit our children's interests and needs at The Drive because we know our children love music and that music is a tool to promote emotional wellbeing. Using this cross curricular manner encourages our children to open up more through discussions and build on their emotive language and understanding. (See programme for more details).

Outside of the classroom

Weekly sessions of **Commando Joe's** are extremely popular with our children. This programme enables them to develop life skills and behaviours that have a positive impact on their education, engagement, empathy for others and well-being.

The aim of **The Daily Mile** is to improve the physical, social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of our children. Children's relationships blossom as they run and talk together and it's a great 'brain break' giving the children the opportunity to revitalise ready for learning.

Worry boxes are in each classroom and feedback has told us that children prefer to write down their worries rather than talking about them. Children know their worries will be read and they will be invited to discuss their worry with an adult. Children are happier 'off-loading' their worries in this way and are often relieved when a solution is found.

Outside agencies such as Kalmer counselling and Trailblazers provide more vulnerable children with weekly 1:1 therapeutic intervention in the school setting. Trailblazers and RISE northeast have played an integral part in helping us to develop our well-being curriculum and to support our children with their social and emotional development.

We have partnerships with various third-party providers who carry out workshops throughout the year linked to children's mental health/ too address current issues that are particularly relevant to children. For example, The Children's Foundation has provided workshops for 9-11 year olds around anxiety and depression to address the rise in self harm in under 12's, the themes and characters aim to improve emotional literacy and psychological resilience.

Well-being hubs for KS1 and KS2 take place weekly and provide both a calming environment and a safe place to talk for our more vulnerable children. In these sessions, children listen to stories and carry out activities that give them the opportunity to discuss their feelings, worries and to build upon strategies to help them to become more resilient and confident.

Therapy writing/drawing

Therapeutic Story Writing promotes our wellbeing. The supportive group work allows vulnerable or more sensitive children to enjoy meditation and is a space for sharing. They have the opportunity to express their own internal world through the magical protective world of story, where they are free to create characters, plots and scenes.

Reflection time

In line with our Behaviour Policy, children spend time in 'Reflection' when they have had three warnings or an immediate red warning is given (See Behaviour Policy). During lunchtime children miss their playtime as a consequence of their negative behaviour but we also use this opportunity for children to reflect on their behaviour with the support from a member of staff where they will discuss their actions and reasons for acting in such a way (Listening and then reflecting back what we have heard including naming feelings 'I wonder if you were angry or may have felt a bit jealous and that's why.....')The member of staff will also support them to empathise with the children who were on the receiving end of their actions and what they could do next time to avoid behaving negatively. This is an extended opportunity for children, with a context relevant to them, to put into practise the mindfulness strategies they have been learning in class to understand the connection between their feelings and their behaviours.

'Too often we forget that discipline really means to teach, not to punish. A disciple is a student not a recipient of behavioural consequences.'

(D. Siegal)

Physical Activity

We are dedicated to ensuring that EVERYONE has the opportunity to take part in physical activity over and above their twice weekly timetabled P.E sessions. At playtimes and lunchtimes, children have a vast area outside including a yard, MUGA, field and adventure playground to encourage them to take part in physical activity with their friends. Our partnership with Active Future has supported us to instil a love of movement and increase the likelihood of lifelong participation for our children at The Drive. Our Year 5 children are competent trained Games Leaders, thanks to Active Future staff. Our Games Leaders plan, timetable, set up and pack away lunchtime resources, running activities in the playground and enforcing our school values during lunchtime. Our Games Leaders are disciplined, patient, positive and key members of the school community. The aim of The Daily Mile is to improve the physical, social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of our children. Children's relationships blossom as they run and talk together and it's a great 'brain break' giving the children the opportunity to revitalise ready for learning back in the classroom.

Health and well-being lead: Mrs E Graham