RUSHMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

At Rushmore primary school, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students, staff and parents/carers.
Our culture is supportive, caring, respectful and kind. We encourage students to be open and we want each student to have their voice heard.

At our school, we know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. At our school, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

The aim of our policy is to:

- Demonstrate our commitment to the mental health of our staff and students.
- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our students feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries.
- Help children to form and maintain relationships.
- Encourage children to be confident and help them to promote their self-esteem.
- Help children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.
- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students and staff.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth.

At our school, we will always promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting our students' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making.
- Celebrating each student for who they are and making every student feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any student that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in students.
- Supporting staff members who are struggling with their mental health.
- Wellbeing week and access to information around the school

POLICY SCOPE

This policy is a guide to all staff, including teachers, governors, and non-teaching staff. It outlines our approach to promoting student mental health and wellbeing. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant school policies.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Officers: Eileen McEwan, Margaret Foster and Jim O'Shea
- Learning mentors: Sinead Francis-Hendrickson and Alix Maraval
- SENCO: Eileen McEwan

- Mental health first aider: Sinead Francis- Hendrickson
- Named Pupil Well-being Governor – Sarah Perry
- Designated Health and Well-being lead – Cherrelle Gray
- Senior Mental Health lead – Eileen McEwan/Sinead Francis-Hendrickson
- Educational Mental Health Practitioner – Berin Sari
- CAMHS in school worker –Zakera Pirnhai

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a student, then in the first instance they should speak to: Eileen McEwan.

OUR MENTAL HEALTH LEADS:

- Lead and work with all staff to co-ordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Work with the PSHE leader re: teaching about mental health.
- Provide advice and support to staff and organise training and updates.
- Liaise with mental health services and make individual referrals to them.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as: A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or hers 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."

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health.
We want all children/young people to:

- Feel confident in themselves.
- Be able to appropriately express a range of emotions.
- Be able to develop and maintain positive relationships with others.
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- Be able to deal with change and manage times of stress.
- Achieve and learn.

WHAT IS WELL-BEING

The concept of wellbeing comprises two main elements: feeling good and functioning well. Feelings of happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement are characteristic of someone, who has a positive experience of their life. Equally important for wellbeing, is our functioning in the world. Experiencing positive relationships, having some control over your life and having a sense of purpose, are all important attributes of well-being.

Often, life events that are outside our control can damage our mental health, and this is made worse if we feel powerless to do anything about them. One of the ways we can re-gain a sense of control

WHY IS MENTAL HEALTH IMPORTANT?

At Rushmore we recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing and aim to promote, positive mental health and wellbeing just the same as we do physical health.
We recognise that children's mental health, is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school

career and some face significant life events. A child's state of mental health can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases, it is life-limiting.

The Department for Education (DFE) recognises that: "*in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy*"

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience, a nurturing and supportive environment, that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences, for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors, which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly, with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.
-

TEACHING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Through PSHE, (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) including our Jigsaw scheme of work, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

SIGNPOSTING

We will ensure that all staff, students, and parents are aware of the support that's available in our school for mental health. This includes how to access further support, both inside and outside of school hours. Information on relevant agencies can be found at the end of this policy or the schools website.

IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND WARNING SIGNS

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

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

School staff have received the relevant training to be able to spot warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 with the designated and safeguarding leads or the learning mentors.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Changes in eating / 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.
- 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 secretively.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

ASSESSMENT, INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT

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

TARGETED SUPPORT

At Rushmore we offer support through targeted approaches for both groups of pupils and individual pupils. This may include:

- Managing feelings resources e.g. worry boxes
- Therapeutic activities such as art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques
- Managing emotion resources e.g Zones of regulation
- Friendship groups
- Behaviour management
- Attention buckets
- Self-esteem workshop
- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Resilience workshop

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

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- Emotional literacy scales
- Self-esteem inventory
- Wellbeing Measurement Framework for Primary Schools

INDIVIDUAL CARE PLAN

Should we have a pupil who had received a diagnosis or a pupil who may be causing concern, an individual care plan will be drawn up. 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.

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND PARTNERS

As part of our whole school approach, Rushmore will work with other agencies to support our students' emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with.

- The school nurse.
- Paediatricians.
- CAMHS.
- Counselling services.
- Therapists.
- Family support workers.
- Behavioural support workers.
- Art therapist.
- Educational Psychologist.
- Education Mental Health Practitioner.

Should a referral need to made to any of the above agencies parents/carers will be informed and their consent will need to be given.

SUPPORTING PEERS

We understand that, when a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. They may want to help, but be unsure of how they can do this. In response to this, we will consider, (on a case-by-case basis) any friends that may need additional support. They will discuss:

- How they can help their friend.
- How they can access support themselves.
- Healthy ways of coping with any emotions they might be feeling.

We will provide support in a one-on-one or group setting. These sessions will be guided by conversations involving the student who is suffering and their parent/carer 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 / saying which may inadvertently cause upset.
- Warning signs that their friend could display (e.g. signs of relapse).

SUPPORTING PARENTS AND CARERS WITH CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available. When a concern has been raised, the School will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.)
- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls

- Make a record of the meeting.
- Agree a mental health Individual Care Plan including clear next steps.
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger and children may choose to tell their parents and carers themselves. We give children the option of informing their parents and carers about their mental health needs for themselves or accompany and support them to do so.
We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

MANAGING DISCLOSURES

If a student discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgemental manner.
All disclosures will be recorded confidentially and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it is necessary.
The disclosure record will contain:

- The date of the disclosure.
- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made.
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation.
- Agreed next steps.

CONFIDENTIALITY

If a member of staff thinks it's necessary to pass on concerns about a student, either to somebody inside the school or somebody outside, then this will first be discussed with the student. They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell.
- What the staff member is going to disclose.
- Why it's necessary for somebody else to be told.
- When the contact will be.

However, it may not be possible to gain the student's consent first. This may occur if a student is deemed to be at immediate risk.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES
This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, ***Medical Needs,*** Anti-Bullying, SEND and Equalities. Links with the School's Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

WHERE TO GET INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

For support on specific mental health needs

Anxiety UK www.anxietyuk.org.uk

OCD UK www.ocduk.org

Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org

Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com

National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk www.selfharm.co.uk

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

For general information and support

www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health & wellbeing

www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems

www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)

www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health

www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health

This policy was written by Sinead Francis-Hendrickson and was approved by the Governing Body on 7th March 2023 and will be reviewed in Spring 2027.