

Mental Health & Well Being Policy



Introduction

Staff health and well-being at work is recognised as part of a broader approach to promoting health. It involves all stakeholders associated within the nursery community including parents, children, service providers and educational support services.

It is evident that organisations who adopt an organisational approach to improving the health and well-being of staff within the organisation can achieve substantially reduced costs associated with staff turnover, absenteeism and risk management. It is also evident that staff morale, job enrichment, quality of work and work-life balance alongside continuous improvement of educational achievement are all important, positive outcomes. Ultimately this can lead to improved productivity and the improvement of overall organisational performance.

It is also essential that the healthy organisation recognises people as its main strength and resource. It is essential, therefore, that they develop policies, systems and practice which optimise people's ability to work together and achieve their full potential within an inclusive, empathic and emotionally literate context.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Childhaven Nursery School to

a) promote health and well-being throughout all management policies and support services including information networks and health promotions: alcohol awareness,

diet, self-management exercise and by a liaison with appropriate external agencies; b) to prevent as far as possible any circumstances that could be described as detrimental to the mental health and wellbeing of staff and children. The purpose of the policy is as follows:

- To support staff effectiveness and teaching and other associated activities which contribute to achieving nursery's objectives;
- To ensure that staff's ability is enhanced in order to benefit from all provisions;
- To ensure that when responding to one individual's health difficulties that this approach does not significantly affect other people's health and well-being within the institution.

Definitions

The term mental health difficulties can encompass a wide range of experiences. These can range from stress and anxiety through to serious mental illness and conditions which are diagnosed and treated by specialist health providers. Although a difficult definition to give in absolute terms it is important that all within the community avoid the use of negative terms with stigma attached. This kind of behaviour may well deter staff and children from accessing the support required.

Inappropriate use of medical terms might also be misleading and cause unnecessary labelling. Consequently within this institution all staff and children will be encouraged to respond to individual needs as opposed to specific labels.

Links with Other Policies

This health and well-being policy interacts with and refines several already established policies. Our duty of care towards both staff and children is determined externally by legislation such as the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974; Human Rights Act 1988; Data Protection Act 1988; Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Act 2001.

Its links between this policy and other guidance are clear and include the following: Health & Safety Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy; Complaints and Grievance Procedures; Sickness Absence Policy, Capability Procedures; Stress Management Guidance, Confidentiality Policy; Disciplinary Procedures; Whistleblowing Policy; Inclusion Policy.

Confidentiality

It is important to note that confidentiality is of paramount importance with regard to those experiencing mental health difficulties and problems. However, it is essential that children and staff are aware that, in certain circumstances, where an individual is deemed to be at risk then this policy will need to be breached. At all times it is the

safety of the majority that needs to take precedence over confidentiality of the individual and the majority that need to take precedence over confidentiality.

Responsibility of this nursery school

It is the responsibility of this nursery school to:

- Promote the emphasis towards good health and well-being and consideration of the nursery within all relevant aspects of its day-to-day runnings;
- Ensure the provision of central support and advisory services as appropriate;
- To produce and disseminate explanatory notes to the policy in order to offer practical step-by-step procedures and guidance;
- To provide training to staff and children in the area of well-being and mental health problems;
- To promote and encourage a non-stigmatising community in order to enhance the effectiveness of its actions;
- To monitor the effectiveness of this policy through annual reporting to the governing body.

Responsibility of Staff

It is the responsibility of all school based staff to ensure the following:

- Maintain a non-stigmatising community;
- To treat each other and all children with dignity and respect as an individual and not as a problem or condition;
- Access and take advantage of appropriate training and sources of information;
- To uphold confidentiality while safety is not at risk;
- To recognise their own limits in terms of how they can support both themselves and others.

The Sources for Staff who Provide Support for Others

The nursery will ensure that all staff members, who are providing any form of support for staff or children with mental health difficulties, are appropriately trained, supported and supervised. There will be links with external specialist therapeutic agencies where necessary.

Services available to children and staff will be made public by regular awareness campaigns and via the staff induction procedure.

The school are committed to having members of staff who are mental health first aiders in school.

Key Indicators

1. Physical health

There is much research evidence to show that regular ie daily, light or moderate exercise is beneficial for the prevention of heart disease alongside a range of life threatening diseases. There is also a clear link between physical exercise and mental well-being. We are, therefore, committed to promoting physically active practices.

2. Personal well-being

There are many psycho-social factors which influence health and well-being and it is evident that mental health promotion in the workplace can prevent stress alongside promoting and understanding of mental illness. We are part of North Yorkshire Health Assured Scheme which includes information and advice for staff at any time.

As far as possible we will respond to requests for flexible working arrangements in order to cater for family and other external responsibilities or demands;

We will ensure that diversity is tolerated, both amongst staff and children, and that there is an awareness of the relevant legislation amongst both staff and children;

We will ensure the existence and quality of effective communication systems in order to reduce stress across all procedures and systems.

3. Organisational health

There is a great deal of research to show that harmonious working relationships which are created by effective leadership and staff involvement in decision making alongside effective administration systems are vital in terms of contributing to staff health and well-being.

Administrative and professional support can assist school and nursery based staff to undertake their designated roles with organisational purpose and direction.

We therefore, seek to ensure the following:

- That leadership is considered to be supportive of all staff needs and that this is ensured via both formal and informal communication processes including regular well-being questionnaires, informal consultations with staff regarding their input and feelings.
- Create a culture where staff celebrate staff achievements both formally and informally;

- Create a culture where staff are empathic and supportive of one another
- We are creative in developing opportunities on a regular basis to ensure quality staff interaction
- Ensure that all staff have a clear understanding and acceptance of their roles and responsibilities within the nursery context and this will be conducted via the reviewing of the sections and actual performance as part of our self-monitoring processes and procedures;
- At all times the work demands on staff will be reviewed and monitored to ensure that they are both reasonable and realistic and do not engender stress or low morale.

4. Community relationships

It is essential that a strong and positive relationship exists between the school and nursery and the local community. This is important for staff's support and development as well as providing co-operation and access to resources. We will therefore aim to ensure the following:

- The existence and quality of parent involvement in the nursery. This will include the regular feedback from parents' about their views about the nursery, which will be shared with staff.
- The existence and quality of the relationship between the school and nursery and any local businesses or different settings
- We will ensure that local agencies and specialist provision are aware of the nursery's health and welfare policy and seek to further develop relationships and conduct regular communication with such agencies.

Implementation Strategy

1. The governors will agree the policy
 - Staff will be consulted
 - The following roles in school will be defined and support this policy

Flexible / family friendly working

We pride ourselves on supporting staff to swap shifts / roles and to attend events for members of their family where they would otherwise be at work. Staff are able to swap PPA times / swap shifts if this helps them to navigate busy family life alongside their commitment to their role.

Mental Health First Aiders – Amanda, Asti, Danielle, Jess, Liz

See role description attached

Our MHFA will wear green lanyards when they are on duty. A MHFA might not be wearing their green lanyard for periods where they are 'unavailable' emotionally to support others.

Rainbow lanyards

Rainbow lanyards are available for staff to wear if they are having a difficult day / time to make others aware without needing to explain things.

New staff

New staff will be allocated a buddy to support them as they settle in. There is a long and supportive induction led by line managers with regular meetings and support

Social events and birthdays

Social events co-ordinators – Donna, Jess, Liz

The purpose of this role is to promote relationships so that people in the team know each other well. There will be a range of events and staff will be to attend all, some or not at all which will be for each staff member to make a personal decision about.

Staff appreciation

There is a system of hearts that staff use to celebrate, thank and praise each other which mirrors the system used for children. Hearts can be posted in a box on the top landing. Once a half term these hearts are shared into staff member's pouches as a celebration.



The purpose of a mental health first aider

To provide confidential, emotional support for our colleagues experiencing feelings of distress or despair, and when appropriate to signpost and provide continued support if necessary.

The role of a mental health first aider

A mental health first aider's role in the workplace is to act as a **first point of contact** for people with mental health issues, providing **support and guidance** to their colleagues. As well as being someone to talk to whenever they are struggling, a mental health first aider also acts as an **advocate** for mental health in the workplace, helping to reduce stigmas and **enact positive change**.

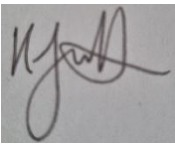
Mental health first aiders are **not** trained therapists or counsellors, and cannot give a clinical diagnosis as to what mental health issue a person is suffering from. They should not be seen as a replacement for proper treatment of mental health issues. Instead, they are a way to suggest ways that both things can be resolved.

The responsibilities of a mental health first aider at Childhaven

At Childhaven, our MHFA are positive people who can first and foremost respond to anyone in the school who needs their support with care and compassion, putting that person's needs first. In the course of doing this, the MHFA will need to be able to;

- Be positive in the face of adversity
- Be comfortable discussing mental health with an individual, providing them with some basic advice and pointing them towards resources which can help them with their problems.
- Work to remove stigmas around mental health, and encourage a more accepting and supportive workplace culture.
- Challenge people and practices that are not supportive
- Act as a point of contact for colleagues who are struggling, and provide guidance
- Look out for signs of mental health issues that are affecting colleagues, and forward any concerns on to a fellow MHFA and the Headteacher.
- Work as part of a confidential MHFA team to respond to staff concerns via confidential means (e.g. the post your troubles away box and the MHFA email thread, anonymous staff surveys)

- Provide support to fellow MHFA where needed as they try to support others
- Pass on and share concerns within a supportive and confidential group
- Ensure that mental health issues are taken seriously, and that the efforts of the mental health first aiders are not going to waste
- Have a genuine interest in developing the well-being of the whole team
- Develop together whole school strategies to support health and well-being at work
- Plan together specific staff meetings that are focused on mental health and well-being
- Meet together when needed for support / guidance and or planning
- Regularly update their training every 3 years

Signed:  **Headteacher**

 **Chair of Governors**

Date: September 25

Review Date: September 26