**Thomas Russell Infants’ School**

**Mental Health and**

**Emotional Wellbeing Policy**

**Date prepared by Wellbeing Change team**: June 2019

**Date approved by Governing Body**: June 2019

**Review dates**: June 2020

 June 2021

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing.

**Policy statement**

At Thomas Russell Infants’ School, we are committed to supporting the emotional mental 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:

* help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
* help children feel comfortable sharing any worries or concerns
* help children socially to form and maintain relationships
* promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
* encourage children to be confident and celebrate differences
* help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks
* support staff to maintain a work/life balance
* support staff through difficult times
* understand we all have mental health and that we are at different stages of the continuum
* support all members of the school community and signpost external support where appropriate.

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, e.g. in the Golden Book
* 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.

We pursue our aims through:

* universal whole-school approaches
* support for pupils and staff going through recent difficulties including bereavement
* specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder
* offering a range of enrichment activity e.g. running, dance, healthy eating, reading and sewing clubs.

**Scope**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical Policy and our SEND Policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-Bullying, and PSHE and SMSC policies. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

**Lead members of staff**

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

* Lisa Farmer & Suzy Burton – Designated Safeguarding Lead
* Tracy Moore – Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead
* Lisa Farmer – Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing lead
* Marie Warner & Sam Hollender – Mental health and wellbeing champions

**Teaching about mental health and happiness to our children**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we’re teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

**Targeted support**

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

* circle time approaches or ‘circle of friends’ activities
* targeted use of nurture groups and self-esteem groups
* managing feelings resources eg ‘worry boxes’
* managing emotions resources
* therapeutic activities including art, Lego therapy, relaxation and mindfulness techniques
* the school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate, including Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire and The Boxall Profile.

**Signposting**

We ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. This is done through the school website and regular newsletter updates.

**Identifying needs and indicators**

All staff understand the significance of the following areas both for children and staff:

* attendance
* punctuality
* relationships
* approach to learning
* physical indicators
* negative behaviour patterns
* family circumstances
* recent bereavement
* health indicators

Possible concerning indicators could include:

* changes in eating/sleeping habits
* becoming socially withdrawn
* changes in activity and mood
* talking or joking 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

(This list is not exhaustive.)

**Working with parents**

In order to support parents, we will:

* highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing via our school website, email and Twitter,
* ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to and how to go about this, if they have any concerns about their child
* make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
* share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
* keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

**Working with other agencies and partners**

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children’s emotional health and wellbeing, including:

* educational psychology services
* behaviour support
* paediatricians
* CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
* Counselling services
* family support workers
* therapists

**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 for them to keep students safe. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. We are committed to enabling staff to complete further training such ad Child/Adult Mental Health first aid, emotional coaching, nurture training and many more.

**Conclusion**

Thomas Russell Infants’ is committed to enabling all children and adults in its community to thrive; this means being mindful and aware of all issues which may affect mental health and wellbeing. We talk openly about this area, share research and best practice regularly and engage with organisations further afield to ensure we are up-to-date and can offer the very best help and advice available.