

Parkland Primary School



Pupil Mental Health Policy

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Aims

All children and young people have the right to be educated in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody. All adults have the right to work in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody.

The SEND Code of Practice (2014) altered the previously published Special Educational Need (SEN) categories to incorporate mental health, thus highlighting its significance as a barrier to educational progress. The SEND code of practice breaks SEN into four broad areas. In practice, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across all of these areas and their needs may change over time.

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical

Mental health can affect any pupil directly or indirectly and the effects can be long or short term. The aim of this policy is to recognise and illustrate how these needs are supported at Parkland Primary School.

Objectives

To achieve our aims we strive to meet all of the below objectives:

1. To have an inclusive whole-school approach to good mental health, evident in every classroom.
2. To assess and identify individual mental health needs within school.
3. To engage with parents and families to work together where mental health needs effect individual pupils, or where mental health needs are prevalent within the immediate or wider family.
4. To work in partnership with outside agencies to gain the best possible outcomes for our pupils and families.

Whole School Approach

Parkland Primary School offers a learning environment that promotes and enhances positive mental health. A consistent approach means that the school environment and school ethos all promote the mental health of the whole school community. This has been created through clear staff roles, specialist training for core staff and raising whole staff awareness and understanding. Parkland Primary School strives to providing a place where all pupils feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and well-being.

A consistent approach means that the school environment and school ethos all promote the mental health of the whole school community. Healthy relationships underpin positive mental health and have a significant impact. Senior leaders within

school drive this agenda, build and sustain staff commitment to it. Senior leaders across Discovery Schools Academy Trust have invested in specialist staff to advise and support schools in the area of Social, Emotional and Mental Health and wellbeing, showing the commitment to good mental health across our Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).

Parkland has developed and invested in its pastoral team. We have designated family liaison officers who are trained in a range of emotional interventions including grievance counselling and whole-family intervention strategies. We have Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) who work with pupils one to one or in small group sessions to help recognise and understand their thoughts and feelings. Parkland also employs an independent school counsellor who works one to one with key pupils who have for the most part undergone childhood trauma.

All staff at Parkland Primary have been trained in areas of mental health such as attachment disorder and anxiety. Where outside agency advice has been gained for individual pupils or groups, all recommendations are fulfilled by school staff. All school staff act as role models in terms of wellbeing and emotional literacy – displaying characteristics such as empathy and self-control.

A mentally healthy environment has:

- A clear and agreed ethos and culture that accords value and respect to all
- A commitment to being responsive to children and young people's needs
- Clear guidelines for internal and external referrals
- Strong links with external agencies to provide access to support and information
- A clear staff structure with responsibility for mental health promotion within school
- The expectation that there is support and involvement and an ethos that 'mental health is everyone's business'.

A mentally healthy environment is a place where children and young people:

- Have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging
- Have opportunities to participate in decision making
- Have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- Have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- Have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Have opportunities to reflect
- Have access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- Have a right to be in an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for
- Are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times

A mentally healthy environment is a place where the whole school community:

- Is involved in promoting positive mental health
- Is valued for the role it plays in promoting positive mental health

- Contributes towards the ethos of the school

A healthy learning environment provides opportunities that promote positive mental health, through the academic curriculum and extended and individual curriculums.

Individual Pupil Approach

At Parkland Primary School we are very aware that SEMH needs can become very acute very quickly and can present large barriers to learning. We believe it is our responsibility to educate the 'whole child' to ensure that all needs are met and not just academic learning is catered for. This means that by adopting a preventative approach to our personal, social, emotional development (PSED) curriculum, these SEMH barriers to learning are less likely to occur. Equally, external support can be hard to secure and delayed in their intervention therapies, so we strive to bridge that gap between school curriculum and outside agency professional mental health support, as best we can through experience and sourcing professional advice.

Individual approaches at Parkland Primary school can incorporate:

- Pupil or staff champions for vulnerable individuals/groups
- Meet and greet sessions with key staff members each morning
- Daily debriefs at the end of the school day with key staff members
- Use of 'safe-spaces' and 'time-out' cards for individuals in lesson times
- Individual or group worry boxes
- Emotional literacy or mindfulness sessions
- Relaxation and anxiety interventions
- Self-esteem and resilience programs
- Social Communication intervention activities
- Therapeutic timetabling
- Counselling.

Needs are assessed primarily through observation in relation to staff's knowledge of age-appropriate emotional development. Where an official measure is needed and progress is to be tracked, we use the Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the Boxall Profile. Data on attendance, behaviour and academic progress feed into our identification of need. Very importantly, families play a huge part in us identifying mental health needs through raising their concerns with us and sharing historic/relevant information.

Family Engagement and Whole Family Approach

There are well documented links between parental mental health problems and mental health problems in childhood, we are keen to promote positive mental health for the whole family.

A mentally healthy environment is a place where parents/carers:

- Are recognised for their significant contribution to children and young people's mental health

- Are welcomed, included and work in partnership with schools and agencies
- Are provided with opportunities where they can ask for help when needed
- Are signposted to appropriate agencies for support
- Are clear about their roles and expectations of their responsibilities in working in partnership with schools
- Opinions are sought and valued and responded to
- Strengths and difficulties are recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately

Within school, we tailor our communication approaches to meet the needs of different families. A member of our pastoral team is always available to speak with face to face within school hours, and families may have an appointed member of the pastoral team that they speak with in order to build a trusting relationship with them. Where needed we will make home visits. We can communicate over the phone via calls or texts, we can also converse regularly by email. We can set up home-school diaries where appropriate. The priority is that families feel comfortable and confident with the form of communication they choose and that all parties converse in non-judgmental dialogue.

Where school intervention is not enough for individual pupils or mental health difficulties are affecting other individuals in the family, we can sign post parents to additional sources of support outside of school. Support may be through local authority or NHS sources, charities, or privately sourced channels. We may be able to facilitate a referral or provide details to enable families to self-refer, depending on the service required. Our pastoral team or senior leadership team will always discuss the individuals' or families' needs with the parents prior to sign-posting or referring to other support.

Outside Agency Involvement

Parkland Primary School regularly seeks advice and consults with outside agencies. They may provide informal advice, be able to attend meetings in a consultative capacity prior to official caseload involvement or provide formal advice through thorough assessment of individuals or families' needs post referral. With parental permission, we can transfer information between these services and school directly and together find the best strategies to help pupils and families.

Services that we regularly consult with:

- CAMHs
- UAVA
- GPs
- Healthy together
- Menphys
- Educational Psychology; EPIC and LCC psychology services
- Laura Centre
- Early Help/Supporting Leicestershire Families

Families will be informed if we intend to make contact with these agencies.

We also sign post to a number of different charities or privately-run services, depending on the individual or diagnosed needs.

We also work closely with Social Services and will contact them on occasions where pupil needs are great, families need considerable support or contact is being made in line with our school safe-guarding policy. The needs and safety of our pupils is always paramount in these circumstances and as such, parents may not be made aware that contact has been made, in the first instance, with this particular service.

Dealing with Complaints

Any complaints concerning mental health or SEND should be made in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

For further information, please refer to the School's Complaint Policy which can be requested from the school office or is available here on our school website:

https://parklandprimary.co.uk/documents/our_school/parent_information/policies/Parkland%20Primary_Complaints%20Policy%20and%20Procedures%20V1.0.pdf

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be formally reviewed annually and published on the school's website. It is a working document that has been written in response to the needs of the whole school community and as such will continue to develop as the shape of practice within school and within outside agencies changes.

Read in conjunction with:

Parkland SEND Policy
Parkland SEND information report
Parkland Behaviour Policy
Parkland Learning Engagement Strategy
Parkland Medical Needs Policy
Parkland Safeguarding policy

References

- SEND Code of Practice (2014)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, Departmental advice for school staff, Department for Education (2016)
- Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges, Research and Analysis, Department for Education (2017)
- MindEd.org.uk