HACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Reviewed: July 2026

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Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

"Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her 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."

World Health Organisation

Policy Statement

At Hacton Primary School, we recognise the importance of good mental health and wellbeing and aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community; children, staff, parents and carers. We recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our everyday lives in the same way that good physical health is vital.

As a school community, we recognise that children's positive mental health and wellbeing is crucial to their overall welfare and can dramatically affect their happiness, learning and achievement. At Hacton, we aim to create a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop children's resilience and self-esteem.

Likewise, our staff are a precious resource and we highly value the contribution they make to our school community. As a result, their welfare is of paramount importance to us. Positive mental health in staff will lead to good relationships, a positive work environment and the effective delivery of our curriculum. As a Trust, we recognise the importance of establishing a positive and supportive working environment and understand the role we play in supporting both our own and the wellbeing of our colleagues. Wellbeing is at the centre of everything we do and as a result, we implement the DfE's Education Staff Welfare Charter.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental health needs. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for those affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health. We are aware that everybody can experience challenges in life that make them feel vulnerable or in need of additional emotional support. This document describes our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and is intended as guidance for all members of the school community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour
- Equality
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Our PSHE and RSE content will also support this policy.

Policy Objectives

This policy sets out how we:

- promote positive mental health
- promote awareness of common mental health conditions and how to identify them
- develop understanding of possible mental health needs that may arise in the school environment
- identify and support members of the school community with mental health needs
- train and support staff in understanding and recognising mental health needs
- support our school community in getting support and advice

Our Whole School Approach

At Hacton, our role is to ensure that our school community is able to manage times of change or stress, be resilient and feel supported within our school community or if accessing additional help. We understand the importance of establishing an emotionally secure environment based on mutual respect.

We want our pupils and staff to feel:

- valued and confident in themselves
- able to talk openly about their mental health without feeling any stigma
- able to learn and work in a positive environment that develops self-esteem and self-worth
- supported in a way that is sensitive to the needs of the individual

At Hacton, we aim to create an open and positive culture where everyone feels safe to discuss and understand mental health issues. We operate an 'open door policy' and encourage staff, pupils and parents/carers to talk about their mental health.

Pupils

We aim to support our pupils by:

- developing their understanding of their emotions and feelings and the emotions and feelings of others
- forming and maintaining healthy relationships
- becoming confident and emotionally resilient
- demonstrating individual responsibility
- developing their knowledge beyond that which the curriculum prescribes in order that they become rounded individuals ready for life beyond the school gates

Staff

We aim to support our staff by:

- recognising their individual needs
- offering an 'open door policy' to talk about concerns, both private and professional
- recognising the need for a work life balance
- valuing their contributions to the school
- valuing and recognising good practice and personal and professional achievements
- offering professional development through training opportunities
- offering an Employee Assistance Programme (HSF Assist)
- offering HR contact via telephone
- offering the support of our ELAT Wellbeing group

Parents / Carers

We aim to support other adults in our school community by:

- creating a welcoming environment for parents/ carers, volunteers and visitors
- building strong links with parents/carers and wider members of the community
- encouraging participation in our school life and recognising and appreciating their contribution
- seeking and valuing their views and opinions
- maintaining healthy dialogue between staff and parents/carers
- offering support and signposting to relevant external agencies where necessary

Roles and Responsibilities

We understand that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health but staff with a specific remit include:

- Headteacher - Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Deputy Headteacher – Senior Mental Health Lead and Safeguarding Team
- Office Manager – Safeguarding Team
- SENDCo – Senior Mental Health Lead and SEND
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants
- Mediating Learning Support Assistants
- PSHE / RSE Lead
- Named Governor for Mental Health and Wellbeing

As a staff, we understand about protective and risk factors for mental health (Appendix 1) that might make some children more likely to experience problems. For example, physical illness, low self-esteem, family breakdown, death and loss (including loss of a friendship), having a parent with mental health needs and bullying. Many behaviours and emotional support can be delivered within the school environment but we recognise that some children will need more intensive support from mental health professionals and organisations. These include:

- School Nurse
- CAMHS
- School Counsellor
- Early Help Referral
- EWO

Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for an individual's needs. Our pupils are our primary concern and in the rare event that parents/carers are not accessing the support or services put in place, the Local Authority will be contacted.

Within the school environment, the following strategies and approaches will be used:

- Assemblies to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing
- Participation in themed days and weeks
- Mindfulness activities in lessons
- Wellbeing Ambassadors to hold campaigns and offer support and awareness across the school
- PSHE lessons to explore mental health and wellbeing themes
- Small group interventions such as Lego Therapy, Forest School and social skill groups
- Posters highlighting sources of support for staff and pupils displayed in key parts of the school
- Access to ELSA, MeLSA and counselling sessions

Early Identification and Intervention

Our early identification system involves:

- identifying individuals who may need support
- working closely alongside the school office staff who are usually the first point of contact
- Induction meetings in the EYFS
- monitoring attendance and patterns of behaviour which may raise concern
- pupil voice surveys used termly
- analysing logs on MyConcern which may show a pattern of behaviour or emotional needs

- weekly Safeguarding meetings to discuss concerns
- 'Open door policy' used for the school community
- School Nurse drop in
- Educational Psychologist visits organised via the SENDCo
- Access to Primary Mental Health Therapist Clinician
- Access to Star Worker (school consultations and parent and pupil drop-in sessions)

In order to strengthen and embed positive mental health in all children, we aim to provide the following levels of support:

- Universal support – to meet the needs of all our pupils through our curriculum offer, ethos and values
- Additional support – to meet the needs of our pupils who have short term needs and may have been made vulnerable by life experiences such as bereavement
- Targeted support – to meet the needs of our pupils who need personalised support, resources and targeted interventions such as wellbeing groups or personal mentors

Where a pupils' mental health causes concern or requires a greater level of support, an individual care plan will be written. This process will involve the pupil, parents/carers and relevant health professionals.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil or staff member should speak to the Mental Health Lead, SENDCo or Headteacher. If there is a fear that someone is in immediate danger, a member of the Safeguarding team should be contacted so that the child protection procedures can be followed. The Mental Health Lead and other members of the Safeguarding team will work closely to provide the necessary channels of support.

If a referral to CAMHS is needed, the SENDCo will lead and manage this.

ELSA

ELSAs are Emotional Literacy Support Assistants who have special training from educational psychologists to support the emotional development of children. It recognises that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are met. At Hacton, we have two qualified Emotional Literacy Support Assistants who plan and deliver programmes to pupils who are experiencing temporary or longer emotional needs such as social skills, bereavement, anger management and self-esteem.

MeLSA

MeLSAs are Mediating Learning Support Assistants who have special training from educational psychologists to support pupils' learning. Their role is to help children to become more competent and independent learners. At Hacton, we have one qualified Mediating Learning Support Assistant who delivers programmes to pupils to help with their mindset, memory and recall in a practical and interactive way.

Warning Signs

All staff have received training on the signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. These signs might include:

- non-verbal behaviour
- isolation from friends or family or appearing socially withdrawn
- changes in mood and what they enjoy doing
- changes to eating and sleeping habits
- changes to academic achievement and progress
- expressing feelings of failure or hopelessness
- changes in attendance at school
- repeated physical pain or nausea without an evident cause
- physical signs of harm

Managing Disclosures and Confidentiality

We recognise the importance of staff remaining calm, supportive and non-judgemental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our pupils is paramount and staff understand the importance of listening to disclosures as opposed to offering advice.

All disclosures will be recorded in line with our Safeguarding Policy using MyConcern. Our school mapping system will then be used to determine the appropriate interventions needed in order to prevent the problems escalating (Appendix 3).

Involving Parents and Carers

We will support parents/carers by:

- always operating an 'open door policy'
- providing information and support services
- offering regular meetings to support parents/carers with children with mental health needs

Staff Development

We want our staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing. All staff are expected to participate in Safeguarding training and Mental Health refresher training. If required, additional CPD opportunities will be provided for more specific needs. Members of staff with a specific responsibility will receive more specialised training.

Appendix 1:

Protective and Risk Factors (DfE Mental Health and Behaviour)

Table 1: Risk and protective factors that are believed to be associated with mental health outcomes

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the child	• Genetic influences • Low IQ and learning disabilities • Specific development delay or neuro-diversity • Communication difficulties • Difficult temperament • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem	• Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • A positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the family	• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship	• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the school	• Bullying including online (cyber) • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Deviant peer influences • Peer pressure • Peer on peer abuse • Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships	• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct) • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Good pupil to teacher/school staff relationships • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences • Positive friendships • Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies. • An effective early help process • Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working • Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to can raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively
In the community	• Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation • Other significant life events	• Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

Appendix 2:

School poster advertising support systems

Appendix 3:

Mental Health and Wellbeing Pathway of Support