

# SOUTH HAMS FEDERATION

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Approved 21.09.20

Review November 2023

### **Rationale**

#### **National view**

“Evidence tells us that good mental health is essential for children to learn and achieve” *Heads Together ‘Whole School Approach’*

As a nation we are increasingly aware of the numbers of children young people and adults who experience periods of mental ill health, and the fact that this can limit their opportunities to reach their potential and contribute to society.

National NHS and Government policies are now being formed to begin to address this situation through improvements to education.

The National Institute for Health Care Excellence is clear in its advice to schools, that developing a ‘Whole School Approach’ to promoting mental health has shown clear benefits in contributing to the wellbeing of students. This approach goes beyond teaching and learning and pervades all aspects of the life of the school (Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing).

#### **Local view**

When we asked our parents what they most wanted for their children at school we learned their overriding priority was for their children to be happy, safe and well educated through a love of learning with hope for their future.

When we asked our children they let us know that they would like to learn more about how to manage, difficult feelings, and how to know about their mental health in the same way as they are learning about their physical health.

When we asked our teachers, they let us know that they would value learning more about how they can directly influence and impact on a mentally healthier environment within which young people can work, learn and thrive.

When we asked our stakeholders, which include Governors, they fully support this evolving strategy and its policy. They let us know that they are behind a whole school approach and this is a high priority and fundamental to any learning environment.

#### **Definition of Mental Health and wellbeing**

We use the World Health Organisation’s definition of mental health and wellbeing

*“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”.*

### **The Aims and Intentions of our Mental Health Strategy**

#### **We aim to**

- Remain informed, inspired and influenced by national policy guidance within the DfE (Diocese if applicable) and Public Health England.

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- Ensure a whole school approach to development and delivery.
- Ensure a whole community contribution to development and delivery, including students and their families, stakeholders, partner agencies in statutory and charitable organisations and the local extended community.
- Connect with our partner schools in our Federations/MATS/local community to share good practice.
- To hold the Mental Health Strategy as a standard agenda item on Senior Leadership Team and Governor Meetings.

## **We will**

- Ensure that this Mental Health Strategy and its Policies complement all other current school strategies and policies.
- Review the Mental Health and wellbeing Strategy annually.
- Ensure there is clear learning in our curriculum regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health across all key stages.
- Produce a summary of implemented delivery, outcome and next step developments annually.
- Ensure our Mental Health Policy connected to this strategy is available on our website.

Here at the South Hams Federation we embrace our role, alongside our families, the community and with our wider partners, in contributing to the developing emotional wellbeing of our students and their learning about being healthy, from a physical and mental health perspective.

“Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school approach” suggest using an Eight Principles Approach.

We have chosen to use this Eight Principle approach to develop our school Mental Health Policy and evidence it in action.

However, in line with the EH4MH added value, our Eight Principles include our links with our community and national contributions to our children’s developing mental health and wellbeing.

We have chosen an additional section that aims to highlight our chosen forms of **communication** and information sharing.

**This policy is developed in response to our pledge in the Mental Health Strategy. It is guided by Public Health England’s key documents outlined at the end of this document.**

## **Principle 1: Leadership and Management**

At the core of these Eight Principles is Leadership and Management. Their commitment and drive are key in embedding this policy at the heart of our Federation.

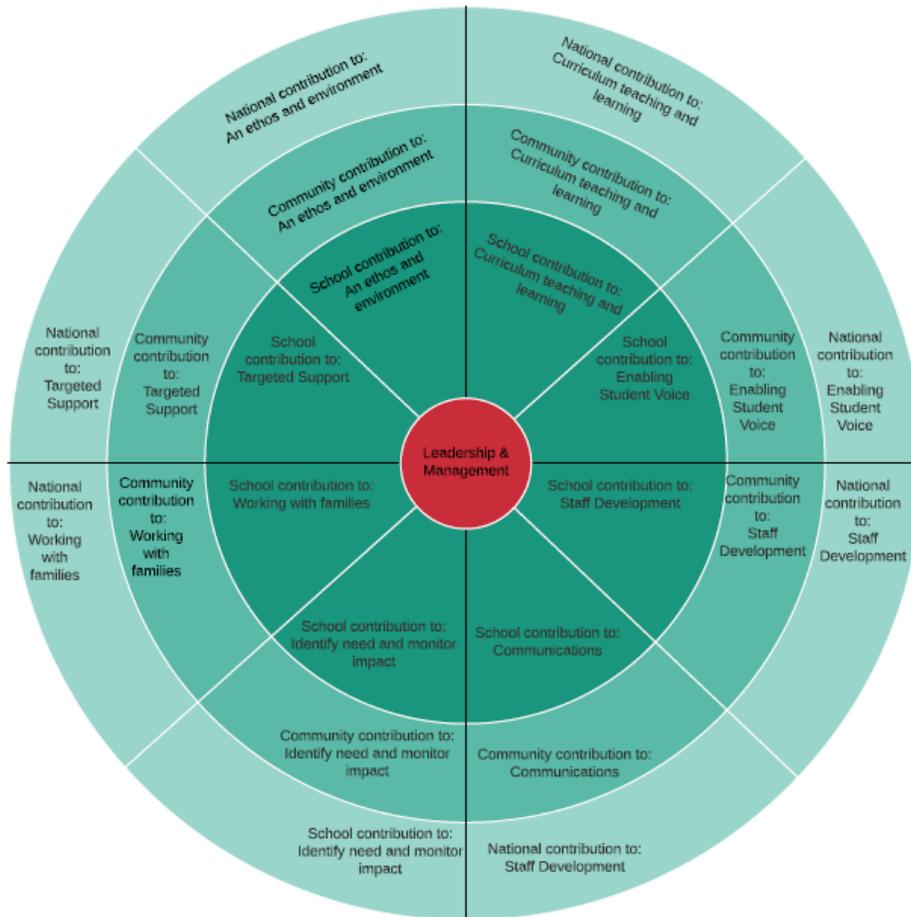
At the South Hams Federation Hazel Acton and Krystle Zillah- Dudley are our SENCO’s. Our Heads of School are our Safeguarding Lead and we have a Federation Mental Health Champion who is leading the development of our Whole School Mental Health Strategy. She has established a Mental Health working group represented by both staff and students, with support and oversight by the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors.

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Below is the EH4MH's 8 Principle approach including the added value of considering community and national contributions to each principle, and with the additional **Communication** Principle.



## Community and National Support

Senior Management have been working closely with our partners in the specialist NHS & DCC funded **Early Help 4 Mental Health** team and the Schools Development Support Agency programme: *“Building a whole school approach to mental health.”*

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### **Principle 2: School Ethos and Environment**

At the South Hams Federation, children and young people come first, and our priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning, within a culture of celebrating individual effort and progress. This is within an environment that celebrates diversity and promotes respect for all. We want every child to be successful, and to reach for success from the first day they join us, leaving the school with a love of learning that lasts throughout life.

We recognise that in order to embed this ethos, we need to promote an environment that focusses on the whole school's emotional wellbeing. We have considered this through both the physical environment of the school and the emotional culture that is promoted throughout the school.

### **Our Whole School Approach does this by**

#### **School**

The sharing of our Federations mission statement, which is; *to provide a safe haven where everyone is valued and respected. All staff members, in partnership with parents and families, are fully committed to students, empowering them to meet current and future challenges in both community responsibilities and personal growth.* We also promote our shared core values of; **compassion, enquiry, persistence, respect and joy.**

Our school policies including: Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Safeguarding.

We create a sense of belonging by celebrating individual and team achievements, both inside and outside school events.

### **These are examples of how it looks within our school**

Promotion of Mental Health

Mental Health Ambassadors.

Presentations to students and families, school displays and the modelling of the 10-a-day choices for mental health.

We promote Growth Mindset language and the '10 a day for good mental health' through **Normal Magic**, and enable children's learning to foster resilience and self-efficacy.

We encourage outdoor learning opportunities through forest school, outdoor education days, outdoor classrooms, the golden mile, residential trips. We believe this supports confidence, self-esteem, community and team building, a sense of achievement, pride and fun, all of which impact positively on mental health.

#### **Community**

These are some examples of how it looks within our school that we are proud of;

We have forged links with our local communities, who in turn contribute to assemblies.

The Federation is developing an ethos that promotes a positive image of people with diverse identities and abilities. This has helped to develop a zero tolerance to bullying where students feel confident to speak out for their rights.

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## **Nationally**

We are actively embracing the 'Time to Change' campaign to bring an end to the stigma and discrimination faced by people who experience mental health problems.

## **Principle 3: Curriculum Teaching and Learning**

We know that school-based programmes of social and emotional learning have the potential to help young people acquire the skills they need to make good academic progress as well as benefit pupil health and wellbeing (*Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional health and Wellbeing*). With this in mind we have sought to enhance knowledge and skills around mental health across the curriculum as well as through targeted subjects such as PSHE.

### **These are examples of how it looks within our school**

#### **School**

Exercise – There is a strong link between good physical and mental health. In our PE lessons we explore this with our students. We also promote the Golden Mile.

Impact Days provide students with whole day's experiences of mental health awareness.

We provide mental health education through our PSHE curriculum.

#### **Community**

Wherever possible we incorporate the resources of community services to enhance our curriculum's delivery of mental health promotion.

We are proud of our partnership with EH4MH, a local health service, and their support in developing our school's mental health awareness. Their introduction of the 10 a – day program has been a successful part of enhancing childrens understanding of how to look after their own mental health.

## **Nationally**

Recently we responded to children asking for helpful resources for managing stress and introduced Calm and Breath apps and Go Noodle. Although not directly embedded in curriculum content, each class is given time to take a break and recharge their emotional batteries. This has had a very beneficial impact on childrens engagement in lessons.

## **Principle 4: Childrens voice**

Involving children in decisions that impact on them can benefit their emotional health and wellbeing by helping them to feel part of the school and wider community and to have some control over their lives (*Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing*). We are committed to providing structures that allow children to play an active role in developing a mentally healthy school.

### **These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

#### **School**

Developing a Mental Health Ambassador Team.

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All staff make a strong contribution to senior leaderships' understanding of children's need by being an advocate for children.

Our Peer Mentors facilitate children finding and establishing a voice.

Our school promotes children in all clubs and activities to have a voice in how the clubs run, how the clubs inter-face with the school, and children can promote the clubs within the school.

We give children opportunities for hearing and encouraging their voices in drama, singing, debating, dance and visual art projects.

Within Circle time, staff create an environment that encourages all children to share their views and experiences.

### **Community**

We encourage our children to participate in other focussed or general groups relevant to their needs, such as: Balloons or other local Bereavement organisation group, BEAT groups (Beating Eating Disorders charity) and LGBTQ Groups such as Intercom Trust, etc.

### **Nationally**

We access information from Young Minds ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)) for young people's views relating to their mental health, support and what they have found helpful. This is co-ordinated and kept up to date by our Mental Health Ambassador Team.

## **Principle 5: Identifying Need and Monitoring Impact**

In line with our ethos of celebrating diversity and the successes of the individual, we are keen to identify need in order to provide the appropriate supportive environment for students to thrive. We aim to identify children and young people with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent them from developing.

### **These are examples of how it looks within our school**

#### **School**

We use a number of whole school profile surveys, including SIAMS and the SHUE (The School Health and Education Unit). These help highlight any particular trends within the school population that may need attention. The Federation consulted with the EH4MH team who were able to support staff to provide some targeted information and resources to the student year group that helped them find positive ways of managing their emotions.

We seek feedback from our families and children through questionnaires.

All staff are given regular training on how to identify signs that a student may be experiencing a mental health difficulty.

We openly encourage children to let staff know when they have concerns, we provide a variety of ways for students to seek help.

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### **Community**

As a Federation we work closely in partnership with our community colleagues to ensure we are actively identifying student mental health needs and monitoring the effectiveness of our actions and support.

### **National**

The staff team and Mental Health Champion use 'Measuring and Monitoring Children and Young People's Mental Wellbeing: A toolkit for schools and colleges' (Public Health England and Evidence Based Practice Unit) for information on appropriate tools to measure impact of interventions.

### **Principle 6: Working with Families**

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. We recognise the important role the family plays in influencing the emotional health and wellbeing of students in the school.

We also recognise that working in partnership may sometimes mean providing support and resources to those families that are struggling with meeting life's challenges.

### **These are some examples of how this looks in our school**

#### **School**

From Timid to Tiger; this is a program designed to support parents to help their child approach life more confidently, and learn to tolerate their worries and fears.

A Parent/Carer area on our website with useful online and local resources.

The 10-a-day choices for mental health parent workshops, provided in school by EH4MH.

Evidence shows that being part of a community and feeling a sense of belonging is good for our mental health.

#### **Community and National**

We provide information to parents and help sign post them to appropriate support and advice through the information on our website which is regularly updated.

There are several online resources and information from national charities and organisations regarding mental health and well-being. Details are provided on the dedicated parent page of our school website.

### **Principle 7: Staff Development, Health & Wellbeing**

'Wellbeing in schools starts with the staff; they are the front line of this work...' (ncb Framework for promoting well-being and responding to mental health in schools).

At the South Hams Federation we place the wellbeing and development of staff as a high priority, believing all school staff play a vital role in developing and supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of the children.

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Principle 7 is split into two sections; the first is how staff are provided with the knowledge and understanding of students' wellbeing and the second looks at how the school supports the development of staff wellbeing.

### **These are examples of how it looks in our school**

#### **Staff training**

In the last year all staff have received training in mental health delivered by; Babcock Educational Psychology Team. This is greatly helping the Federation to develop a much deeper understanding of mental health which is helping us break down stigma and bring about whole school culture change.

#### **Staff wellbeing**

We implement 'Time to Talk' for staff, which encourages the importance of being able to talk about what is going well and any struggles.

Using and modelling the 10 a day positive choices for mental health as a whole school approach (for staff and students).

Staff can access the Devon County Council Wellbeing and Counselling service.

### **Principle 8: Targeted Support**

The Federation recognises that many behavioural and emotional problems can be supported within the schools, with advice from external professionals, and that some students may need more intensive support at times. The South Hams Federation has a range of potential interventions to support individual's needs, as well as links with external agencies.

#### **These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

#### **School**

Our SENDCO team have been supporting each other to identifying early signs of difficulties in children and are able to quickly identify specific interventions to support students in school.

**An example of this is;** students being identified as experiencing anxiety that is impacting on their learning, strategies being offered to the teaching staff and parents being offered the 'From Timid to Tiger' parent programme.

To name all of our interventions would be a very long list, here are some examples that have been identified as really helpful by our student and parent voice;

Forest school.

Animal therapy- Ivybridge Donkey Sanctuary

Lunch time mentoring / club for children having a difficult time.

Peer mentors for vulnerable children overseen by staff.

Take 5 – whole school resilience building programme using mindfulness, including universal & targeted needs ([www.eachamazingbreath.org](http://www.eachamazingbreath.org)).

'Just Breathe' video for children to explain about relaxation, especially useful for primary age (from [www.mindfulschools.org](http://www.mindfulschools.org)).

#### **Community**

At the South Hams Federation we work closely with our Community Colleagues in Health and Social Care.

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Social, Emotional, Mental Health, Wellbeing and Behaviour Team (Previously the Behaviour Support Team) provide consultation and advice to all school staff around identified individual student's needs.

Linking with EMTAS - Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service.

Emotional Logic –free session from Babcock for primary and secondary schools, focusing on helping students manage feelings and move forward in their lives with strength and resilience (for more information on emotional logic as an approach visit [www.emotoinallogiccentre.org.uk](http://www.emotoinallogiccentre.org.uk)).

### **There are many national resources and services outlined on our website**

#### **Principle 9: Communication**

In the South Hams Federation we identify that clear and robust systems of communication both within the school and into the school community, are key components to providing a mentally healthy school.

#### **These are examples of how it looks within our school**

##### **School**

In line with our Federation ethos, we are always thinking of diverse ways of promoting good communication, in enabling and encouraging students and staff to feel more comfortable to communicate feelings and seek help when they need it. We use a wide variety of approaches including; non-verbal systems such as suggestion boxes, cue cards, internet communication via emails our website.

We communicate within the staff group through staff meetings and emails, including having mental health as a standing agenda item at staff meetings so that staff are aware of what support is available within school. This includes refreshers of key themes / training topics.

At Key Stage 1 we use 'Worry Monsters' to help students feel more comfortable about communicating their thoughts and fears.

Staff have received training in communication by both Mental Health England, and EH4MH.

We inform all parents of the school's obligations and responsibilities to safeguard children during their information session when their children start at the school.

Staff are aware of school processes for flagging up which children are particularly vulnerable and ensuring the right support is given in school and sought outside of school where relevant, this process of responsibility is reinforced in staff meetings and in staff diaries/ handbooks.

##### **Community**

We communicate to our parents through our website, newsletters, emails, parent teacher evenings and information evenings.

All staff have accessed EH4MH training, which encourages ways to talk about mental health and how young people are feeling, which can be used over the breadth of young people's experiences.

##### **National**

We use resources from national organisations visually in the school, via display boards, website and newsletters.

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We promote 'Take 10 Together at School' – tips for staff on how to start the conversation, by Mental Health First Aid ([www.mhfaengland.org/img/Take\\_10\\_Together\\_at\\_School](http://www.mhfaengland.org/img/Take_10_Together_at_School)).

We promote Childline – help line and online resources ([www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)).

We promote the NSPCC campaign Pantasauras/ Let's Talk Pants (www. [www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/)).

Heads Together - promoting the benefits for mental health of talking about difficult things ([www.headstogether.org.uk](http://www.headstogether.org.uk)).

Time to Change – movement to end mental health discrimination ([www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)).

**The Devon School's Mental Health policy was guided by Public Health England's key documents:**

***“Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision: a green paper” (2017)***

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

***“Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school approach” (2015)***

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/414908/Final\\_EHWP\\_draft\\_20\\_03\\_15.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWP_draft_20_03_15.pdf)

***“Future in Mind” (2015)***

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/martin-mcshane-14/>

**In Addition the Policy has been informed by**

***National Children’s Bureau “A Whole School Framework for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. School Leaders Resource”***

<https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20School%20Well%20Being%20Framework%20Leaders%20Resources%20FINAL.pdf>

**Heads Together, Mentally Healthy Schools; A Whole-School Approach**

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/>

**IPPR The Progressive Policy Think Tank, Craig Thorley, 2016**

<https://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/further-proof-of-the-crisis-in-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health>