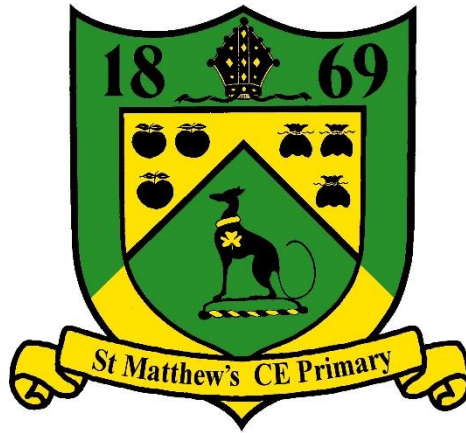


St Matthew's C.E. Primary School



Policy for

Mental Health and Wellbeing in Forest School

*'That the man of God may be competent, equipped
for every good work.'*

Timothy 3:17

Review date September 2023

Policy Statement

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 Organization)

In addition we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Scope

This document describes the Forest School's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Forest School Leader. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Forest School Leader. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting all staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern who utilise Forest School on a regular basis or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents.

This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the forest school can play

Warning Signs

Forest school staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Forest School Leader.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Secretive behavior
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held confidentially.

This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation

This information should be shared with the Forest School Leader who can take any concern further by reporting it to relevant bodies – the child's teacher, parent (see also safeguarding policy)

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we think it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Forest School Leader, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Forest School Leader must be informed immediately.