**Marwood School Mental Health Strategy**

*Supported by Devon’s Early Help 4 Mental Health Programme and the
Schools Development Support Agency 2018*

 

***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 students they let us know that they would like to learn more about how to manage stress, 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.
* 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 it’s Policies complement all other current school strategies and policies.
* Review the Mental Health Strategy annually.
* Ensure there is clear learning on 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 Devon School 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 school.

At the Marwood School Corinne Lethaby our SENCO and Mental Health Champion alongside Alun Dobson our Head Teacher and Safeguarding Lead are leading the development of our Whole School Mental Health Strategy. They have consulted with both staff, students (school council) and Governors. From this we have now appointed a specific role of Mental Health Champion within our Governing Team.

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.”*

**Principle 2:**

**School Ethos and Environment**

At the Devon School, 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 school’s vision and ethos:

**Our Vision for Marwood**

Our vision is to provide outstanding teaching and learning delivered by skilled and enthusiastic staff in superb premises and surrounding facilities. This will enable all pupils to reach their maximum potential and become lifelong learners who will live healthy lives, which are socially and intellectually fulfilling.

**Our Ethos at Marwood**

The school’s guiding belief is that it will provide a foundation for life through learning and personal development in a nurturing, caring and stimulating environment where individuals feel valued; where endeavour is encouraged and fostered; where promotion of high morale and good behaviour is considered important and where children become increasingly aware of, and responsible for, their own learning. Working in partnership with parents our aim is for children to be confident, thinking people, capable of independence and caring.

Our school policies including: Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Inclusion, 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, in Mental Health Week.

Mental Health Ambassadors – request training from EH4MH team before March 2019

Display on Mental health and ‘10-a-day’ in our entrance hall for parents and children to see daily to visually remind them to balance their mental health plus the modeling of the 10-a-day choices for mental health through ***Normal Magic,*** and enable student’s learning to foster resilience and self-efficacy.

Mental Health training posters displayed in staff room

A whole school Thrive approach and use of the Thrive Room and student support area, that allows students to take some time out of learning.

‘Worry Box’ in KS2 classrooms so children know they can share concerns and be listened to

We promote Growth Mindset language.

We encourage outdoor learning opportunities through 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 faith community, who in turn contribute to assemblies, as well as linking with both groups and individual students.

We have also made links with local elderly members of the community in a residential home.

Through working with an outside training company the whole school has developed 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. Parents in a recent survey said;

“*This is a really safe school, you know that if any issues with bullying are raised that they will be dealt with in a compassionate and respectful way, that leaves everyone feeling comfortable” Parent survey from recent Ofsted inspection.*

**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**

We use the Thrive approach across the whole school (www.thriveapproach.com).

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 Daily Mile in KS2.

We provide mental health education through our PSHE curriculum.

KS1 and Environment Club has it’s own garden and plant tubs that they can nurture.

Learning to keep ourselves safe in PSHE and Sex Education.

Meditation/ Mindfulness is used in upper KS2 class.

We encourage a growth mindset in our classrooms and school. This has a positive impact on self-esteem and resilience.

Assemblies to promote good mental health.

Staff deliver ‘normal magic’ for the classroom – water available always whilst in class, 10-a-day posters around classroom

Display on Mental health and ‘10-a-day’ in entrance hall for parents and children to see daily to visually remind them to balance their mental health.

‘Have you filled your bucket today’ books and principles shared with children in class and in assembly.

Class based reward system and praise assembly.

**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 Living Life to the Full and We Eat Elephants programmes have been a successful part of enhancing students’ understanding of how to look after their own mental health.

**Nationally**

After a recent student survey we responded to the positive feedback from students asking for helpful resources for managing stress and introduced students to initiatives such as Headspace, 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 student engagement in lessons.

**Principle 4:**

**Student voice**

Involving students 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 students to play an active role in developing a mentally healthy school.

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

**School**

Schools Health & Education Unit (SHEU) or other well-being surveys give us a broad over view of children’s mental health.

Mental Health Ambassadors – year 5/6 pupils in class 4[-‘0..

Pastoral staff make a strong contribution to senior leaderships’ understanding of student need by being an advocate for students.

Our young people Mental Health & / or Anti Bullying Ambassadors promote mental health amongst the student population.

Our Peer Mentors facilitate students finding and establishing a voice.

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

We have an active and vibrant arts and humanities department, giving students opportunities for hearing and encouraging student’s voices in drama, singing, debating, dance and visual art projects.

Student led assemblies.

Within Circle time / Tutor time staff create an environment that encourages all students to share their views and experiences.

**Community**

Students are encouraged to attend their local Young Devon Hub Participation Groups (secondary age only), which offer a forum for students to have a voice about mental health and issues affecting them.

Young Devon Workshops within school.

We encourage young people (secondary age only) who may benefit from additional external support to access the Young Devon Mentoring Scheme.

We encourage our students 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. A recent survey highlighted a sudden rise in reports of self-harming behaviour in year 9 students. This prompted The Devon school to consult 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 regularly seek feedback from our families and students 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 students to let staff know when they have concerns, we provide a variety of ways for students to seek help; worry boxes in every classroom, checked daily by the teacher. For those young people in our Secondary school, there is an open door policy with the Pastoral Team rooms, as well as a ‘let us know’ box where students can write a message. Through our Mental Health Ambassador Team, we are currently developing ways to promote students reaching out for help.

**Community**

As a school 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. As part of our commitment to supporting students we employ a school counsellor to be present two days a week.

As part of the LLTTF programme delivered to Secondary aged students, they complete the Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale, which is provided and collated by Exeter University. This monitors the impact of the programme on students’ use of positive coping tools to balance their mental health.

Our THRIVE practitioner works closely with THRIVE organisation to ensure assessment and monitoring are being used effectively.

**National**

Being part of the SHEU survey network helps the school have a better understanding of pupil’s behaviour and perceptions of the school environment.

The Pastoral 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**

Dad’s dinners.

Parent Support Advisors.

From Timid to Tiger; this is a programme 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. We have recently started an initiative in school where parents are operating a noticeboard in the school, this is coupled with our community room being opened once a week for parents to meet and chat with our Parent Support Advisor. Parents view;

*‘I love my Tuesday morning time in the Community room, they have been a real life saver. It is a chance to meet with other mums and dads! And relax a bit. As well as being able to get some advice from Sue (Parent Support Advisor) if I feel like I need it. The added bonus is my son seems to have settled down too!’ Parent feedback*

**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 as well as offering advice sessions with our Parent Support Advisor.

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 Devon School 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 students.

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; EH4MH, Babcock Educational Psychology Team and Bis-net. This is greatly helping the school 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 have a staff support group that promotes and organises team building through various activities, and having fun, across all staff.

We have LAY (Look After Yourself) time to promote staff looking after their physical and mental health.

Staff have access to sports facilities and equipment to help them maintain their physical health.

We implement ‘Time to Talk’ for staff and students, 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 school recognises that many behavioural and emotional problems can be supported within the school, with advice from external professionals, and that some students may need more intensive support at times. The Devon School 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 recently introduced a system that has freed up some of their time to be available in class, to support students and staff better meet the needs of individual’s emotional wellbeing. The initial feedback from staff is that this approach has been really helpful in identifying early signs of difficulties in students and being 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;

Nurture groups & Fast Track Nurture groups.

Forest school.

Animal therapy/ time with school guinea pig/ hamster.

School Parental Support Advisors.

Thrive approach across the school and targeted support for individuals, including a THRIVE room for children who need a space for calming down.

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

Peer mentors for vulnerable children / students, overseen by staff.

Sensory room which all young people can access as needed / Using sensory strategies from Occupational therapy (when an individual child has had a sensory assessment), such as balance boards.

Sensory integration box in each classroom / sensory integration equipment available / sensory area in every classroom so that children can take themselves there during the lesson if needed, with a timer / different types of sensory area, e.g., ‘caves,’ across the school.

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

‘Just Breathe’ video for children to explain about relaxation, especially useful for primary age (from www.mindfulschools.org).

We have developed a therapeutic garden that was established in consultation with our school counsellor to provide a calming safe space for staff and students.

Our PTFA have arranged a number of fund raising events to help recently enrolled refugee students and their families. They recently raised £2000!

**Community**

At the Devon School we work closely with our Community Colleagues in Health and Social Care.

Please look on our website for an extensive list of resources and initiatives we link with to offer targeted support, listed under ‘Who to talk to, if you’re worried’, below are some of those students and parents have really found helpful.

EH4MH have provided the Living Life To The Full programme for all students to access. For those students identified as needing further support we are developing an enhanced focus on the programme. This is being supported by our School Nurse service.

We have commissioned a local charity to provide a school-based counsellor.

We have recently developed a partnership with our School Nurse and Parent Support advisor who are co-delivering the From Timid to Tiger parent programme. This has been offered to parents of children presenting with heightened levels of anxiety in school.

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.

Proud2Be - supporting LGBTQIA+ people and their families, in South Devon and beyond, campaigning, delivering training and facilitating a youth project, a volunteer programme and groups and events throughout the year ([www.proud2be.co.uk](http://www.proud2be.co.uk)). A number of students have been actively involved with the charity.

We have been working with the Boys to Men Project (aiming to reduce the numbers of young men who become perpetrators of domestic abuse, with research and free resources on [www.boystomenpoject.com](http://www.boystomenpoject.com)).

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 Devon School 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 school 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 and social media.

As part of a Multi Academy Trust, it is recognised that communication between the partnership schools is very important to maintain consistency and the continual development of mentally healthy school environments. To ensure this, we have regular Federation/MAT meetings co-ordinated by Mary Rogers where Mental Health Champions and student representatives meet to drive forward our collective initiatives in breaking down stigma and promoting ‘mentally healthy environments.’

We communicate within the staff group through staff and departmental 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.

We communicate to our students through tutor time, whole year/ house or whole school assemblies (reinforced by tutor information) & school planners.

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

In our 6th Form students have introduced a ‘Mental Health Café’, promoting talking about mental health.

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 students 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**

The school website has links of ‘Who to talk to’ for a range of different issues, with information relevant to students and parents.

The school has a student led newspaper (online and paper), and staff encourage students to become involved in this.

We communicate to our parents through our website, newsletters, emails, parent teacher evenings, information evenings & the school facebook page.

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.

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).

We promote Childline – help line and online resources (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).

Time to Change – movement to end mental health discrimination (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_EHWB_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>