

Hartford Infant and Preschool & Hartford Junior School



Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Lead person: Mrs Vicky McGregor
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Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Statement

At Hartford Infant and Preschool and Hartford Junior School we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils, staff, and where appropriate parents.

We have a supportive and caring ethos. Our approach is both respectful and kind. Members of our school community are valued for their uniqueness.

We recognise how everyone experiences life challenges which can make them vulnerable at times. We understand that anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

This policy has been created in accordance with the CAM Academy Trust Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework 2021. It seeks to outline how at Hartford Infant and Preschool and Hartford Junior School we are a cohesive, nurturing, and forward-thinking community. At the heart of our work lie the six core principles of The Cam Academy Trust.

We strive to be at the forefront of the Government's recommendations for mental health provision in schools, as we believe this will create a stronger, healthier community and enable our children to develop our core school values and be equipped for life beyond school.

Further details of how our policy sits within the Trust wide values can be found in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework document.

Defining Mental Health and Well Being

It is important to have a shared understanding of what we mean by mental health both within our school and Trust.

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” WHO 2013

We understand Mental Health and Wellbeing as a spectrum rather than a fixed state of mind. We all experience positive and negative mental health and move within this spectrum when faced with challenges, chance, poor health etc.

Approach to Promote Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

Good Mental Health helps children to:

- Learn, make progress and safely explore the world;
- feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions;
- form and maintain good relationships with others;
- cope with and manage change and uncertainty;
- develop and thrive.

We understand the importance of knowing our children and families well and working collaboratively as a team. As such we recognise how we are in a good position to identify changes in pupil and staff mental health through the everyday relationships we have in our school community.

We work to a graduated model of support and responsibility when it comes to staff and pupil mental health and wellbeing (see appendix 1). This aligns with our statutory responsibilities outlined in the SEND Code of Practice and research by the DFE.

We believe that equipping children and young children with skills and knowledge regarding mental health and signposting them to sources of support before they are needed is good practise and empowers the

children in our care to take ownership and promote their mental health in the context of supportive relationships.

At Hartford Infant and Preschool and Hartford Junior School we will:

- help children to learn about and safely explore their world;
- help children to understand and respond to their emotions and feelings;
- help children to verbalise their emotions;
- help children make and maintain positive relationships;
- promote self-esteem and ensure school community members know they matter;
- help children to build emotional resilience and to manage setbacks;
- help children to feel comfortable sharing worries and to ask for help when needed;
- encourage children to feel confident in who they are and to “dare to be different”;
- help children to develop and thrive.

How have we created a mentally healthy environment?

- We have created a safe, nurturing environment where children can explore their feelings throughout their work and play;
- All Staff model emotional literacy and resilience through positive relationships and teamwork;
- We promote our values and encourage a sense of belonging. Our values are embedded through our Hartford Heroes [HIPS]/Hartford Habits [HJS] (characteristics of learning) which focus on aiming high through involvement, perseverance, problem-solving, reflection and teamwork;
- We promote pupil voice and provide opportunities for children to participate in decision making e.g. School Council;
- We celebrate achievement - both academic and non-academic; e.g. Hartford Hero, Wow Wall, and celebration Assemblies;
- We provide opportunities to reflect, learn from past experiences and plan our next steps;
- We provide opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others e.g. peer marking;
- We encourage the access of support to meet individual needs, e.g. providing intervention for pupils going through difficulties such as bereavement, separation, medical worries;
- We provide a range of pastoral and mental health interventions;
- We have a nurture group facility (The Nest);
- We have two ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants)
- We have excellent working relationships and engagement with outside agencies e.g. Inclusive Development and our linked therapeutic practitioner Beth Ouzman
- We have a designated ‘Healthy Week’ each year where we focus on healthy bodies and minds;
- We have a qualified Adult Mental Health First Aider;
- We conduct staff wellbeing questionnaires and analyse results and respond proactively to staff voice;
- We organise staff wellbeing activities. All staff can prebook a half day of wellbeing time. Staff wellbeing and workload is a regular agenda item at staff meetings and during leadership discussions.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally health and safety are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. We follow the Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme across the school.

The specific content of lessons is determined by the needs of the cohort and any needs within the local community. The content may also reflect events which may be happening nationally,

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff in school have a clear responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of their students.

In line with the CAM Academy Trust Mental Health Training Competency staff will

- have an awareness of what is meant by mental health and positive mental health;

- have an awareness and understanding of how to look after their own mental health (self-care);
- feel confident spotting the signs of poor mental health in pupils, parents/carers and their colleagues;
- identify risk factors and protective factors that impact mental health and barriers for certain vulnerable groups when it comes to accessing mental health support;
- understand their own role and responsibilities, and those of others when concerns arise over a pupil's mental health;
- understand the crossover between mental health and wellbeing needs and safeguarding and pass on concerns to the DSL in line with our safeguarding policy;
- reflect on how their own beliefs, attitudes and experiences influence their approach to mental health;
- be proactive in implementing recommendations from Mental Health Lead and taking opportunities for professional development in mental health and wellbeing;
- have a general awareness of key local services and resources that can support better mental health in children and young people;
- be able to signpost children or their parents to sources of support.

Supporting staff with these responsibilities

For staff to fulfil their responsibilities at this universal tier the following support and training will be provided. Staff will:

- have access to a copy of this Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and the supporting CAM Trust framework;
- receive regular training on areas of Mental Health and Wellbeing
- have regular opportunities to discuss pupil mental health in team meetings, pupil progress meetings and be confident of pathways for seeking support;
- receive informal supervision from members of the Senior Leadership Team or from the Mental Health Lead;
- have access to external supervision to discuss more complex issues which impact on their work;

Staff with Additional Pastoral Responsibilities

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils in line with the Mental Health Training Competency for School, some staff have enhanced responsibilities and have a deeper understanding of:

- the range of mental health problems which may include anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide etc;
- factors which make young people and adults more vulnerable to poor mental health;
- services and care pathways which can support children, their parents/carers and staff and know how to access these;
- strategies to build resilience and improve mental health;
- how to build emotional literacy through the curriculum and intervention sessions;
- the impact of attachment, adverse childhood experiences and trauma;
- the value of active listening and communication skills;
- solution focussed/restorative approaches to behaviour management;

Staff with Additional Responsibilities:

- **Mrs Rae Lee** – Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead
- **Mrs Vicky McGregor** – SENDCo, Mental Health Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Family Support Practitioner, Virtual School Lead
- **Miss Charlotte Deaves** – SENDCo, Mental Health Lead. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer, Virtual School Lead
- **Mrs Jo Smith** – Class Teacher and PSHE Lead
- **Mrs Moira Whitham** – Teaching Assistant, Nurture Practitioner and ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)
- **Mrs Jennifer Crabb- Family** Inclusion Worker, Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, ELSA

- **Mrs Abigail Shearing** – Mental Health Link Governor
- **Mrs Michaela Hall** – Attendance Officer
- **Mrs Natalie Beecher** and **Mrs Cheryl Esaw** – Computing Subject Leads
- **Ms Becca Drum** – CAM Family Support Worker
- **Mr Zach Beamish**- CAM Mental Health Lead
- **Rachael Panther**- CAM Education Welfare Officer
- **Mrs Sue Wright**- CAM Safeguarding Lead

Targeted Support

We offer support to individual pupils or groups of pupils this may include:

- managing feelings using a 'worry box' [tell me box]
- Circle of friends
- Nurture provision - see "The Nest" Information
- Brick therapy
- Drawing and Talking
- Artscapers
- Minecraft
- Transition groups led by the Mental Health Support Team

Tracking Progress

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing including:

- the Boxall Profile
- strength and difficulties questionnaire
- pupil, staff, parental questionnaires
- termly class tracking to identify need and potential vulnerabilities such as attendance, punctuality, bereavements, relationship breakdown, health, family circumstances, behaviours for learning, additional needs, young carers

Warning signs will be taken seriously by all staff members, these may include:

- changes to eating or sleeping;
- withdrawing socially;
- repeated talk of physical pain or nausea without any clear cause;
- expressing a feeling of failure;
- changes inactivity or mood;
- self harm.

Working in partnership with Parents/ Carers

We regularly discuss the importance of positive mental health and encourage an open sharing culture to help us facilitate the best provision for children. This message is shared initially through our Preschool and Reception home visits. In addition, at the start of each academic year, teachers meet with parents/carers and conduct a wellbeing meeting. These conversations continue as the year progresses.

At times families need support with their children or with events that happen in life. We have a dedicated staff who are available to facilitate support for children and families. Please contact Mrs McGregor at who is based at Harford Preschool and Infant School and Miss Deaves or Mrs Jenifer Crabb who are based at the Junior School.

Some common issues include:

- challenging behaviour
- anxiety

- emotional well-being
- sibling rivalry
- sleep difficulties
- self esteem
- sharing difficult news
- bereavement support

We recognise that parenting isn't easy and doesn't come with a manual, so a partnership approach can be helpful.

In addition to school support, we have close links with the District Team who can offer training and drop ins with the **Early Intervention Family Worker [EIFA]**. Our current worker is **Mrs Katie Smith** and her contact details and more about her support can be found on posters in school and on our website and is information is routinely shared with parents and carers.

She can be also contacted via the following QR Code



To support parents/carers we will:

- highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website;
- share key information through our school newsletter;
- ensure that parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to get help about this, if they have concerns about their child. As we are a school who are linked to the Mental Health Support Team we can refer to them for a consultation;
- share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through information sessions;
- keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE through the Learning Leaflets and newsletter and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home;
- provide workshops for discussion around themes suggested by parents/carers;
- involve parents/carers in whole school events e.g. Healthy Week, Healthy Selfie;
- encourage parents with urgent concerns to contact their local GP or 111;

If a child discloses information of concern in school, we will:

- contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately *if* a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents/carers will always be informed unless sharing information may lead to harm;
- be sensitive when explaining a child's need to the parent/carer, recognising that parents/carers may be overwhelmed by the information need time to reflect;
- provide a clear means of contacting school with further questions;
- finish each meeting with agreed next steps these may include referrals to other agencies or the initiation of an Early Help Assessment
- keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record;
- ensure families are aware of how to access support within school and beyond.

Confidentiality

If we feel it is necessary for us to pass any concerns about a pupil on, then we would normally, if age-appropriate, discuss this with the child and explain

- who we are going to talk to;
- what we are going to tell them;
- why we need to tell them.

It is always advisable to share mental health concerns with a colleague, usually the Mental Health Lead, as this helps to safeguard our staff teams emotional wellbeing as they are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and provides an extra source of ideas and support. We will discuss this with the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share information with.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision, we work with a range of outside agencies to support and enhance our pupil's emotional wellbeing and mental health including:

- School Nurse
- Early Intervention Family Support Worker (Katie Smith)
- Family Support and pupil mentoring - Beth Ouzman from Inclusive Development
- Family Worker sourced through an Early Help Assessment
- Cambridgeshire Mental Health Support Team
- Educational Psychologist
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Play Therapists
- Young Carers
- Disabled Children's Social Care Team
- Drama Therapist
- Community Police Officers
- Paediatrician
- Specialist Teaching Team
- Younited

SEND and Mental Health

Children experiencing ongoing mental health issues may have greater difficulty with learning. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational needs and disability (SEND) and will subsequently be added to the SEND register. Any identified support and provision would be discussed with parents/carers.

Sources of Support

- <https://healthyschoolscp.org.uk/resources/emotional-health-and-wellbeing-service-ehws>
- <https://www.annafreud.org>
- www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing
- www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems
- www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)
- www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health
- www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health
- www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders - eating disorders
- Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.inourhands.com/eatingdifficultiesin-younger-children
- Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/if-youre-being-bullied/find-help-and-support>

Policy Development

This policy has been written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents, and professionals involved in mental health.

Links to other school policies and DfE publications:

- SEND
- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour
- PSHE
- Medical
- Accessibility
- Equalities
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings

Monitoring

As part of the Schools' annual monitoring:

- **This policy will be reviewed in January 2026**