# Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

## Introduction:

Little Stars Pre-school is committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all children, their families and members of staff.

We recognise that supporting mental wellbeing is important for both individuals and the Pre-school. Mental wellbeing is a key factor in an individual's health and safety, social wellbeing and productivity. By promoting good mental health, the positive benefits are realised by individuals, their families and the broader society. The many different aspects of mental ill-health and stress are associated with a broader range of illnesses and disabilities within our society today.

A positive, supportive culture for mental wellbeing is important for all employees and therefore should be applied across the Pre-school. Everyone can contribute to mental wellbeing in our setting and by doing so deliver a wide range of benefits to staff, children and others.

## Purpose and Aims

This policy sets out the framework for the Pre-school to provide an environment that promotes and supports a positive state of mental health and wellbeing for our staff, the children and their families.

The policy also aims to ensure any staff or children who are experiencing mental health issues are supported through a number of measures with respect, confidentiality and without discrimination.

### Policy Aims:

The Pre-school plans to implement this policy to achieve the following aims:

- To increase the understanding and awareness of our staff regarding issues associated with mental health and wellbeing and to develop the skills and knowledge of managers and staff to deal with these issues.
- Instill a culture of staff and child welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms of poor mental health
- To promote good mental health and wellbeing of all staff and children through effective communication of our policies and best practice.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues in children.

- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young children
- Provide the right support to children with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst children and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- To provide support to staff experiencing a mental health problem while in employment and upon return from any absence, whilst preventing discrimination.

## Scope:

This policy applies to the entire Pre-school including staff, volunteers, contractors, children and their families.

## Responsibilities

### Management Committee:

- Ensure that this policy receives the necessary support and prioritisation to achieve its aim.
- Participate in the annual review of this policy and its effectiveness (See Monitoring and Review)
- Ensure that managers and supervisors are aware of, and are implementing, their responsibilities.

### The Pre-school Manager and Deputy Manager:

- Ensure that all staff are made aware of this policy at induction and how to access it afterwards.
- Actively promote a culture of good mental health and wellbeing through the implementation of this policy.
- Manage and review the effectiveness of this policy for staff and children, and feedback to the Management Committee as appropriate.

### All staff:

- Read and understand this policy, including changes, seeking clarification where required.
- Support our aim of providing a culture of good mental health and wellbeing through their activities and when considering others.
- Take care of their own health and wellbeing, including mental health.
- Ensure that their actions do not affect the health and safety and general wellbeing of other people in the workplace.
- Be aware of and identify any signs of poor mental health in Children or staff.

- Raise issues or concerns and seek help from their line manager.

## Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing

### General Support

Supporting children's wellbeing and the 'whole child' is a priority for the Pre-school through training and development of staff and the experience we offer for our children and their families.

Our ethos and curriculum support positive mental health strategies and nurture is an integral part of everything we do at the Pre-school, and we aim to provide everyone in the Pre-school with a supportive environment and experience for their mental health and wellbeing.

We operate a successful and embedded key person system, along with a thorough settling in period, and through this period our practitioners will know the children and families well and will be able to identify factors that may pose a risk to a child's social and emotional well-being. This will be mean being aware of any child becoming withdrawn or unresponsive, a change in a child's behaviour, a regression in their development (i.e., bed wetting, sleep disturbances), a delay in their speech or poor communication and language skills.

In supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children, we feel the benefits will include;

- the children being more engaged with their learning,
- children develop resilience
- that parents will be engaged with the pre-school and work together to support their child's leaning and development,
- good relationships are developed between staff and parents

We will do this by the following:

- The children will have regular opportunities with their key person who will check in with how they are feeling (either through words or pictures).
- There will be 'calm' areas in the setting so children can access quieter spaces for reflection if needed.

### Identification of additional support needs

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the Pre-school Manager or Deputy Manager in the first instance. If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSO. If the child presents a medical emergency, then

the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including contacting the emergency services if necessary.

We aim to establish firm, effective and supportive relationships with children and their families. This begins as soon as a child enters the Pre-school and allows us to offer support and guidance for individual children and their families. Young children often display their needs through their behaviour and so this policy carefully aligns with our behaviour policy, allowing staff to recognise where support is necessary.

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 to the Pre-school Manager or Deputy Manager.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Changes in behaviour and relationships with others
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Physical signs of harm
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

## Provision of Additional Support

Additional support will be tailored to the child's specific needs.

Children who have been identified as requiring additional support may be registered on the SEND register under the category of 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health'. If this is the case, they will receive additional support through the SEND pathway and procedures.

Support may involve working with the whole family. This is support offered by the Pre-school with strategies such as individual behaviour plans, individual programs of support for children in school and signposting for families.

If necessary, a multi-agency approach may be taken,

## Managing disclosures

A child 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 child 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 child's emotional and physical safety. All disclosures should be recorded in-line with our safeguarding arrangements.

### Working with Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. We recognise the family plays an important role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues
- Making our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Promoting positive mental health through our regular parent newsletter

### Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep children safe. Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more children.

## Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing:

The Pre-school will promote a culture of good mental health and wellbeing to all staff as follows:

- Through effective communication designed to raise awareness and understanding about mental health and wellbeing.
- By implementing measures at all levels of the Pre-school that provide a workplace and culture promotes good mental health.
- By listening to our staff and adapting workplace policies (as required) and implementing the policies and evaluating their effectiveness.

The Pre-school will provide knowledge and skills training to help management and staff support their own mental health and wellbeing and that of others. This training will be designed to address the following:

- The promotion of understanding of the importance of mental wellbeing to all employees, including best practice.
- How to deal with issues around mental health and stress effectively.

- Ensuring that any employee suffering from mental illness is treated fairly, with respect and confidentiality and without discrimination.

### Providing support to our staff:

The Pre-school undertakes to provide the following measures and ways of working to promote mental health and wellbeing:

- Being flexible about working arrangements where practicable.
- Working with employees to create a culture where bullying, harassment, discrimination and racism is not accepted.
- Providing training for all employees to raise awareness of everyday contributory factors, such as stress and excessive workload, that undermine mental health.
- Ensuring that the Manager and Deputy Manager are aware of their obligations to promote a good working environment for their staff and colleagues as defined within this policy.
- Implementing training and awareness programmes to create a culture where staff are able to talk openly about mental health problems and disclose difficulties without fear of discrimination or reprisal.
- Providing proactive support for individual staff who are experiencing mental health problems, inside and outside the workplace, in a positive manner.

Where an employee is experiencing mental health issues, The Pre-school will provide support in the following ways:

- Proactively making employees aware of third-party organisations that might be able to provide information, advice and support in these situations, offering continued employment where practicable subject to appropriate adaptions to the role.
- In situations where the staff member experiences a period of absence from work due to mental ill-health, working with the employee to develop a “Return to Work Plan” that provides the best opportunity for the employee to return to work as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensuring that the employee is treated fairly and without discrimination
- Encouraging staff to seek the appropriate help through the NHS or a mental health support organisation
- Identifying and remediating any factors within the workplace that are contributing to the negative mental health issues.
- Dealing with the mental health related issues in a sensitive manner, respecting the employee as an individual and acknowledging their right to confidentiality.
- Being mindful of the Pre-school’s responsibilities under The Equality Act 2010.

This policy recognises that reducing stress in the workplace is a key component of supporting mental health and wellbeing. Our Pre-school shall promote the principles and activities below through workforce training and ongoing staff communication.

- Workload demands and expectations placed on employees should be effectively communicated, be achievable and accepted by all parties.
- We will promote an environment where staff are encouraged to feedback to their line management about factors in their job roles that may induce stress, such as excessive workload or overly stretching performance targets.
- Provide adequate support and training to enable the employee to meet the requirements of their role.
- Provide sufficient communication to keep employees adequately informed about any information that may impact the Pre-school and their roles.
- Ensure that Manager and Deputy Manager are aware of their responsibilities towards their staff, including setting and managing performance in a manner that is consistent with this policy.

### Communication:

The Pre-school will ensure that all employees receive a copy of this policy during their induction process and have continued access to the policy throughout the length of their employment. Employees should remain informed as the policy changes and be empowered to actively contribute and provide feedback to this policy.

### Monitoring and review:

This policy will be reviewed at 3-yearly intervals or more frequently as required for example to address issues highlighted through employee feedback or to react to legislative changes. The policy should objectively assess whether the stated policy aims have been met and review the effectiveness of the measures within this document.

Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:

- Feedback from the workforce, including complaints, appraisals/performance reviews, return to work surveys and exit interviews as appropriate.
- Staff turnover, retirement and sickness statistics
- Outcomes of any mental health issues supported through this policy

### External support opportunities:

Education Support

Helpline: 08000 562561
Website: www.educationsupport.org.uk
Telephone support and counselling for people working in education.
“We are the only UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental

health and wellbeing of education staff in schools, colleges and universities."

Website: www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/

NHS website some great tips and information on staying well, signposting and support including self-help videos and talking therapies. talking therapies

Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/free-therapy-or-counselling/

NHS website where you can gain access to free therapies and counselling.

Website: www.nhs.uk/mental-health/

Mental health and wellbeing NHS website with information on self-help and further signposting to support Infoline (signposting and information service): 0300 123 3393

Email: info@mind.org.uk Text: 86463

Website: www.mind.org.uk/

Mental health information and support.

Website: www.samaritans.org/

Support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

ANXIETY UK Helpline: 03444 775 774

Website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk/

Expert advice and support to help with anxiety

Website: www.bacp.co.uk/

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapists. Details of counsellors and psychotherapists

Website: www.sane.org.uk/

Email: support@sane.org.uk

Telephone helpline: 0300 304 7000

SANE offers emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental health problems through our helpline, Textcare and our online Support Forum where people share their feelings and experiences.

| Review / Version Control | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Review period - 3 years | | | | |
| Version | Created | Reviewed | Initials | Changes |
| Attendance Policy v1.0 | 10/2026 | | DH SH AP | New policy |
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