

Ligoniel Primary School and Glenbank Nursery School

LIGONIEL



Primary School



Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy

November 2021

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies including Child Protection and Safeguarding, Positive Behaviour, Anti-bullying and PDMU policies.

At Ligoniel Primary School and Glenbank Nursery School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, 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.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self esteem and ensure children know that they are special.
- encourage children to be confident and "have a go"
- help children to develop emotional resilience and manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making through our class and school council.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
 - Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others, buddy system, prefects, Take 5 Ambassadors, ECO Warriors
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches (Take 5 Breathing Programme)
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties including attachment disorder.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Mrs Stewart – Principal
- Mrs Gamble – Emotional Health and Wellbeing coordinator and Take 5 Champion
- Mrs Young - Designated child protection / safeguarding officer
- Mr Kirkwood – Deputy Designated child protection / safeguarding officer

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches or PDMU lessons.
- Targeted use of school counselling service, both individually and class based sessions.
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'
- Managing emotions resources –following Rathmore CALM training
- Primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing group
- Play Therapy sessions delivered by Paulina
- Stress busting sessions with Barnardos – Y6 & Y7
- Healthy Me Programme with Action Mental Health – Whole school
- PlayboardNI sessions addressing Mental Health – Y3/4
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques. (Classroom assistants are trained to deliver Theraplay sessions and Legoexpress.

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

- o PASS questionnaire
- o The Boxall Profile – when required

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

All staff will monitor their pupils by identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical/health indicators

- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 the Principal, Designated Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer or the Emotional Wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Working with Parents

In order to support parents, we will:

- Provide training on Healthy Me for adults – Action Mental Health
- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website. (via 'Parent – Parent Links')
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PDMU and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services

- RISE NI
- Behaviour support through Education Authority
- Reach – Education Authority
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Family support workers – Family Hub
- Jigsaw Counselling, Barnardos, Action Mental Health, Each Amazing Breath
- Therapists

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 in order to enable them to keep students safe.

In 2021 all staff have received training on Nurture with Capacita and classroom assistants have had training in Theraplay.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our PRSD process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.