

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing

At Hoyle Court Primary School, we believe in promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to ensure that the school is a community where everyone feels able to thrive. Our school ethos and values underpin everything that we do.

Who has mental health?

We all have mental health – some people call this emotional health or wellbeing. Good mental health is as important as good physical health. Like physical health, mental health can range across a spectrum from healthy to unwell; it can fluctuate daily and change over time.

What is mental health?

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a state of wellbeing in which every individual achieves their potential, copes with the normal stresses of life, works productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to their community. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel and act.

Many children grow up mentally healthy, but surveys suggest that more children and young people have problems with their mental health today than 30 years ago. It is thought that this is probably because of changes in the way that we live now and how that affects the experience of growing up. Since the Covid lockdowns there has also been an increase in children and adults suffering a decline in their mental health.

What helps?

Things that can help keep children and young people mentally well include:

- being in good physical health, eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise
- having time and the freedom to play, indoors and outdoors
- being part of a family that gets along well most of the time
- going to a school that looks after the wellbeing of all its pupils
- taking part in local activities for young people.

Other factors are also important, including:

- feeling loved, trusted, understood, valued and safe
- being interested in life and having opportunities to enjoy themselves
- being hopeful and optimistic
- being able to learn and having opportunities to succeed
- accepting who they are and recognising what they are good at
- having a sense of belonging in their family, school and community
- feeling they have some control over their own life
- having the strength to cope when something is wrong (resilience) and the ability to solve problems.

What happens in school?

In school, we teach children about what it means to have good mental health and wellbeing through our curriculum and daily practice.

Our PSHE curriculum focuses specifically on developing children's social and emotional skills which can prevent poor mental health from developing and help all children cope effectively with setbacks and remain healthy. It is about helping children to understand and manage their thoughts, feelings and behaviour and build skills that help them to thrive, such as working in a team, persistence, and self-awareness.

What can I do if my child is experiencing difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing?

Mental health doesn't mean being happy all the time and neither does it mean avoiding stresses altogether. One of the most important ways to help your child is to listen to them and take their feelings seriously.

In many instances, children and young people's negative feelings and worries can be helped with the support of their parents and families. It is helpful for the school to know what they are going through at these times, so that staff can be aware of the need and support this.

Coping and adjusting to setbacks are critical life skills for children, just as they are for adults, but it is important that they develop positive, rather than negative, coping skills.

If you are ever worried about your child's mental health and wellbeing then please come and talk to us. Sometimes children may need additional support for a short period.

If your child is distressed for a long time, if their negative feelings are stopping them from getting on with their lives, if their distress is disrupting family life or if they are repeatedly behaving in ways, you would not expect at their age, then please speak to your child's teacher or one of the Senior Leadership team.

Looking after yourself

If things are getting you down, it's important to recognise this. Talk to someone you trust and see what they think. It is easy to go on struggling with very difficult situations because you feel that you should be able to cope and don't deserve any help.

Come and talk to us, in confidence and let us know when things are tough. As much as you try to hide how you are feeling from your child, they will notice even the smallest changes.

Go to your GP if things are really getting on top of you. Asking for some support from your doctor or a referral to a counselling service is a sign of strength. You can't help your child if you are not being supported yourself.

We can help!

Whether it is you or your child who needs support please come and talk to us, we can support in school but also signpost you to other agencies who will be able to help.

People in school to talk to:

Mrs Thirkill- Headteacher

Mrs Nutting- Deputy Headteacher and qualified Senior Mental Health Lead

Mrs Sheard- Pupil Parent Support manager and Mental Health First Aider

