



Mental Wealth and Nurture Policy

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Why mental wealth, wellbeing and nurture is important

We aim to promote positive mental wealth and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. Some children have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it can have a life-long impact.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". Schools should be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their concerns without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental wealth.
- How we prevent mental health difficulties.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- How we offer a nurturing school and curriculum to all of our children.
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health difficulties
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

Definition of mental health and wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing - "a state of wellbeing 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".

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We are striving for our children to have Mental Wealth. We want all children/young people to:

- feel confident in themselves.
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.

- cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- learn and achieve.

How the policy was developed and who was consulted?

Across the Lightyear Federation, we have been using a framework set out by Nurture UK to look at our nurturing ethos and how we can develop this further. We have worked with the children, parents and staff at our school to look at what nurture means to us and how we embed the six principles below into our school systems for the benefit of our children. Repton Manor Primary School is recognised by Nurture UK as a Nurturing School and Greatstone Primary School is working towards being recognised as a Nurturing School.

The six principles of Nurture and what they mean to us;

Children's learning is understood developmentally

In our schools, learning is planned according to a child's individual starting points academically as well as socially and emotionally. There are clear plans, identifying next steps for the whole class, small groups and individual pupils. Our staff recognise the qualities and interests in our children and use these as motivators in both their learning and development of positive behaviour. In our schools, we will continue to make reasonable adjustments to meet the individual needs of children, ensuring where possible, they remain successful. We use our curriculum to be creative, meeting the learning objective in any lesson can be taught in a number of ways to ensure that different types of learners have the opportunity to flourish whilst building on a number of different skills.

The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing

In our school, teaching teams take the time to listen and learn to the children's personal interests and learn about their lives outside of school. We use assembly slots to talk to the class as a whole and build time into the curriculum for children to reflect upon themselves. We ensure that we understand the things important to any child and celebrate achievements inside and outside of school. Through our celebration assemblies achievements important to the child outside of school are shared and celebrated. We use emotion coaching to support children when they are struggling emotionally and are able to share our own thoughts and feelings where appropriate. Our behaviour policy and practice, recognises the importance of praise and acknowledgement being a routine part of the day.

All behaviour is communication

We use carefully considered assessments for children to support our understanding of their strengths and difficulties. Our schools use Boxall Profiles which are an invaluable resource for the assessment of children and young people's social, emotional and behavioural development.

We spend time as a team, including parents and outside agencies, to recognise individual potential triggers and anxieties and protect against them. This is considered in our decisions we make as a Senior Leadership Team. We have dedicated quiet areas in the classroom and around the school, the children can use our Inclusion Rooms and safe bases when needed or as routine part of their day with the support of adults. All staff are trained in de-escalation techniques, this includes supporting the children following any occasion they have found something emotionally difficult and helping with strategies to support them if they happen again.

The classroom offers a safe base

Our teaching teams take the time to get to know the children in their care, they strive for trusting relationship through continuous positive regard. The boundaries and routines in the classroom are consistent, with visual timetables used in every classroom and for certain children individually where needed. The children's wellbeing is considered in lesson planning, changes and the routine of the day. Every classroom has a book corner, with access to sensory resources and books should a child require 'reflective time' within the classroom.

Language is a vital means of communication

In our schools, all children are assessed on their understanding of language in Reception. Through carefully planned interventions with the Speech and Language assistant, a child's understanding is developed within the classroom and in small group sessions where appropriate. All children in our school will continue to reflect upon emotions, learning how to recognise and name them. All children are taught strategies to regulate early warning signs of negative emotions, but this is also delivered through an intervention with the Pastoral and Inclusion Team for children who are finding it particularly difficult. We recognise the importance of children being able to have a chance to share their experiences and feelings and the teaching team allow for this within their week and spend time with children during break and lunch time. Where appropriate, the Pastoral and Inclusion Team will also spend dedicated time with children.

The importance of transitions in children's lives

We recognise that during the day, there are a number of transitions for children and these are supported using visual timetables. For any additional changes, where possible, we will pre-warn and remind children about changes in routines. In addition to this, we offer home visits for every child starting school in reception to support with the transitions into school. For children starting in Reception, we meet with the child's nursery and plan additional support when needed.

During the transitions between year groups, staff are well equipped to support children settling in and we offer sessions with their new year group teacher in term 6 to prepare them for term 1. For some children, they may require additional support and resources such as photos and extra visits. We meet with all Secondary schools to support with the transition for children leaving our school, in some cases we also attend visits to the new school. For the children in year 6 we offer support on transitions through the curriculum, discussing how we may feel when things change in an open and honest way and explain the strategies that could be used to help. For children joining in reception, we offer nursery visits, visits to the classroom, staggered entry and, for some children, extra settling sessions. For all children new to the school, including reception we offer home visits.

In developing this policy, we have taken account of:

- State of the nation 2022: children and young people's wellbeing
- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, Public Health England 2015 (Updated 2021)
- Supporting children with medical conditions, DfE 2014 (updated 2017)
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges DfE 2022

Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical Needs, Anti-Bullying, SEND and Equalities. Links with the School's Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

As a school, we invest in the mental health of our staff, through regular staff meetings, opportunities for supervision, an open door policy, access to professional counselling services and additional support where appropriate. We recognise that for children to flourish, they need to be supported by adults who are receiving the right level of support for their personal situations.

Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

Both Greatstone Primary School and Repton Manor Primary School have joint Pastoral and Inclusion Teams that regularly work with children across the school, in either group settings or 1:1 to support the development of good mental health. The team supports the emotional wellbeing of children on a daily basis. This includes daily meetings with some children to explore issues identified as having a potential to cause anxiety, supporting them in developing strategies, and to work with any strategies devised by external professionals/ agencies. The team meets those presenting as at a low level of crisis to prevent escalation, as well as with those children in a crisis. Young people will often come to see a member of the team of their own accord when they feel additional support is needed. They aid the development of individual timetables for appropriate pupils to support their engagement, as well as continuing to foster excellent relationships with families. In addition to the work with children, the team support to facilitate the transfer of nurturing principles between home and school, such as sharing what works, enhancing communication and supporting consistency and continuity of strategies. The team may visit homes and meet families in school to support emotional wellbeing, as well as addressing and sign-posting around key issues that impact on families, such as finance and housing.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the School environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to children with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support include:

- Our own Senior Leadership Team
- Our Pastoral and Inclusion Team
- Our Safeguarding and Pastoral Director
- Our Inclusion Director, who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision
- Our Phase Leaders
- Our teaching teams and other staff with knowledge of the children, including their interests.
- Educational and Clinical Psychologists
- Counselling Services
- School Health Team
- NELFT
- Early Help
- Specialist Children's Services
- Other voluntary services such as Rising Sun / CRUSE

Supporting children' positive mental health

We believe the School has a key role in promoting children positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

- Pupil-led activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Life Skills in the curriculum
- Transition programmes
- Circle times
- Nurture Assembly
- Breakfast and Lunch Club
- Targeted Interventions
- Nurture Groups
- Staff mental health counselling support
- Staff supervision
- Community projects
- Lunches with key staff
- SALT with our school Inclusion Team
- Safe spaces
- Access to sensory boxes
- Regular class based wellbeing activities.

Our curriculum also recognises the importance of life skills, this includes learning about different emotions and the feelings and emotions of others. At different ages, children will continue to build upon their knowledge so they have the skills necessary to be resilient, asking for help when needed.

Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

Early Identification - Our identification process involves a range of steps. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Referrals into the Pastoral and Inclusion Team from school staff.
- Conversations and meetings with parents
- Analysing behaviour, internal seclusions, illness and attendance
- The Boxall Profile assessment.
- Feelings boxes in some classes for children to raise concerns which are checked by the Class Teachers
- Pupil Progress Review meetings termly
- Weekly SLT, Phase, Safeguarding, Teacher and TA meetings for staff to raise concerns
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Home Visits
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

Staff across the Lightyear Federation, spend time to get to know the children and have an interest in ensuring that the children are listened too. All staff will refer any concerns to the relevant team in the school. These signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits.
- A decline in academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do PE. or get changed for P.E.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the School's safeguarding procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency then the School's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

Disclosures by children and confidentiality

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Safeguarding Lead and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Pastoral and Inclusion Team and recorded. We then implement our assessment system, which is based on levels of need to ensure that children get the support they need, either from within the School or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating. The level of need is based on discussions at the regular Inclusion meetings with key members of staff and involves parents and children. The kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and children, for example; school based intervention, monitoring, CAMHS-assessment, 1:1 or family support, therapy, school nurse, class teachers / TA support, drop ins with a trusted adult within the school, consultation with school staff and other agencies.

If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy.

Support for friends

We recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health problems it can be challenging for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected. In the case of eating disorders and self-harm, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping strategies from each other, and we will consider on a case by case basis what support might be appropriate including one to one and group support.

We will involve the pupil who is suffering and their parents and consider what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told, how they can best support, things they should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset and warning signs that their friend needs help.

We will also make information available about where and how to access information and support for themselves and healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

In some cases a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by a member of the Pastoral and Inclusion Team following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the pupil and parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having a special educational need and/ or disability (SEND).

Involving parents and carers

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs.

On first entry to the School, we ask parents to inform us of any needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the School so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

When a concern has been raised, the School will contact parents and carers and meet with them, we will offer information to take away and places to seek further information and be available for follow up calls. We will discuss how the parents and carers can support their child and keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Supporting and training staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing.

The Nurture Group

Our Nurture Groups runs five afternoons a week, we have a maximum of ten children, from both key stages in our group at any one time. The sessions take place in our Inclusion Rooms, an environment which is continually developing to offer the best possible space for our children. We also offer breakfast clubs and lunch clubs during recreational times. Our nurture group follows the six principles of nurture and alongside academic assessments, all children will be assessed using the Boxall Profile and will have SMART targets. The sessions provide a safe and nurturing learning environment where each child is valued, understood and has their emotional needs met appropriately. Through these sessions, trust and confidence are built and learning begins to take place more effectively.

The sessions follow strategies based upon the children's needs using the 'Beyond The Boxall' handbook. A drink and snack is always available, and we take it in turns to serve each other. This is an ideal opportunity to improve on our social skills in a relaxed environment.

The format of the sessions is flexible and the children are invited to volunteer ideas, suggestions and activities for the group.

It is important that the children feel safe, relaxed and happy within the session and this is achieved by a happy, inclusive, nurturing environment.

Marjorie Boxall

Nurture Groups were developed in 1969 in inner London by educational psychologist, Marjorie Boxall. Marjorie noticed that a large number of children entering school were presenting social, emotional and behavioural needs. They were unable to form trusting relationships with adults or respond appropriately to other children. So she invented the Boxall Profile, a two-part check list to be completed by staff who know the child in class. It provides a framework for the precise assessment of children who need help in school and helps teachers to plan focused intervention. Depending on how the children score on the Boxall Profile will distinguish whether they need to join a Nurture Group.

What is a Nurture Group?

Nurture Groups are a small provision within a school supporting children who have difficulties in the mainstream classroom or expressing their emotions. The Nurture Groups promote good mental health.

Who are Nurture Groups for?

Nurture groups are set up for children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties which may be:

- lack of self-esteem
- withdrawn
- unable to share and take turns
- doesn't trust adults/peers
- may lack in mannerism skills
- disrupts other children in the classroom
- shows outward behaviours
- cannot sit still and listen
- language skills
- struggle with the mainstream classroom environment
- internalises emotions which impact upon their daily life

These children need a significant level of support. Entry into the group is carefully considered through a staged referral procedure and the use of a range of assessments over time.

What is a Nurture Group Room?

The Nurturing Group room is designed to have a nurturing home atmosphere with a seating area, scatter cushions, activity table, eating and kitchen area; where snack is prepared and shared. Food, the most fundamental expression of care, is shared with much opportunity for social learning. An emphasis is placed on communication and language development through intensive interaction with an adult and children.

What do the children do in the Nurture Group?

The children will talk about feelings, emotions, strategies, emotion and social situations through;

- group discussions
- social interaction
- group games
- role-play
- topic learning
- circle time
- snack time
- activity of the day (arts & crafts, baking etc)
- story time

What will the Nurture Group offer my Child?

Within the nurturing environment, the child is enabled to develop a trusting relationship with an adult and can be supported to relate well with others. The consequent development of a positive self-esteem and sense of security provide a self-confident child who can begin to take responsibility and exercise independence. This in turn develops self-respect and a sense of wellbeing. The child can then take pride in himself and his achievements. Over time, with appropriate interventions based on identified needs, the child becomes happier, more confident and more motivated to learn.

What does the Nurture Group offer Parents?

We offer you a friendly environment with lots of support, the assurance that you will be respected and valued and that your child will be helped. It provides a safe environment, where parents can feel listened to, as well as to work collaboratively, to devise effective strategies to implement in both the home and school, to further support an individual.

What do the staff provide?

We provide support for the child's positive emotional and social growth and cognitive development, at whatever level of need the child manifests. This is done by responding to the child in a developmentally appropriate way. They provide a safe base and trusting relationships. The adults work together modelling adult co-operation, sharing discussing and problem solving. We work closely with the Pastoral and Inclusion Team and classroom teaching teams, as well as parents. We carry out assessments using a range of tools including Boxall profiles.

What will the Nurture Group offer the School?

The establishment of the Nurture Group has the potential to enhance the school ethos by continuing to promote a nurturing environment that benefits all the children whether they attend nurture group or not.