



STUDENT WELL-BEING

We believe that all pupils are individuals, are of equal worth, have the potential to learn and have a unique contribution to make to the life of the school, their family and the community. To that end we aim to offer a nurturing and stimulating environment in which each person is respected and valued so that they are able to benefit from the diverse opportunities they are presented with.

All children, young people and adults have a right to be educated in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody. At Frank Wise School we believe that a key part of what we do is to encourage the development of student self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of life. Being mentally well is as vital as physical health in ensuring each child and young adult can thrive.

This policy has been written with reference to:

Mental health and Behaviour in Schools - March 2016

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508847/Mental_Health_and_Behaviour_-_advice_for_Schools_160316.pdf

NHS: Five steps to mental well-being

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx>

Future in Mind, March 2015 - updated November 2017

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414024/Childrens_Mental_Health.pdf

We are aware that there are a range of risk factors that can make it more or less likely that a child or young adult will experience mental health problems and statistically children, young people and adults with disabilities are more likely to suffer from mental illness compared to the general population, most especially those with PMLD. We also acknowledge that one of the key mitigating factors can be the school environment; offering a secure and stable place in which to develop. As a school we aim to raise self-esteem and self-confidence in all children and young adults so that they have belief in their own ability to succeed, are more able to deal with change and have begun to form problem-solving skills.

There are three main ways in which we aim to promote the mental health and well-being of all students; effective pastoral support, explicit teaching of well-being through the PSHE curriculum and training staff to identify if a child may be experiencing mental health problems.

1. Pastoral Support

Pastoral support within Frank Wise School aims to promote positive mental health by giving students a consistent and trusting space in which to learn as well as to provide them with strategies to grow more confident and able to cope with the anxieties they may experience.

Ethos and Culture

We have a very strong and long-standing set of values driving the ethos of the school, which are revisited with all staff at the start of every year. Our Values and Aims are also a fundamental part of our induction process and form the basis of an introduction to the school Open Mornings. In an extremely brief summary the core values can be summarised as:

- All pupils are of equal worth
- Their education should be stimulating
- Staff should hold high expectations of all pupils and be highly motivated
- The school should be structured yet innovative
- We should foster understanding and positive attitudes towards our pupils in the wider community

Classroom Organisation

The school is organised by age group and all children and young adults are placed into Family Groups of peers of the same age range. The concept of a Family Group is to foster strong and trusting relationships amongst students and adults and that this is a community beyond their own family in which they can feel secure and valued. Students are provided with a consistent team for an academic year. The following year, we aim to retain one familiar adult to the child, either the class teacher or a CSO and the rest of the team change. This will remain constant for a further year. In this way we are introducing change in a manageable way, providing opportunities for students to experience and learn to cope with new situations but in a controlled way.

Effective Relationships

By providing students with a consistent team of adults to work with them across the whole year we create the environment for carefully teaching our pupils to develop relationships with others, and our pupil-staff ratios enable us to have great success with this. Adults within the classroom carefully model positive interactions with each other and with the students and this helps to promote these behaviours across the school.

Personalised Approaches to Learning

All students are regarded as individuals and, whilst being part of their peer group when learning is important, it is also essential that the learning they are experiencing is tailored entirely to their needs. Teachers focus a great deal of time on creating differentiated learning objectives and observing and attending to every nuance of progress a student might be making. We believe that every child has a positive contribution to make and this is planned for and encouraged both in formal lesson contexts and in more informal, less structured times too.

Fostering Independence

Opportunities to promote independence and to encourage students to take on responsibilities are sought from a very early age. Whether it be to independently take the register to the office in the morning, put on shoes without adult help or to make and communicate a clear choice, we believe these to be the stepping stones to living a life as independently as possible beyond Frank Wise School and having a voice which is heard. The student council is a clear example of where students across the school are encouraged to take on the responsibility of discussing important issues their peers have raised seeking change or a resolution. Students are elected to this council by their peers and are rightly proud of the status it brings. Fostering independence and promoting self-advocacy, supports mental health as our pupils develop their own sense of self-identify through it.

Celebrating Achievement

At Frank Wise School we have very high expectations of all of our students and these are communicated to them, their parents and carers and to the wider community. Praise and positive reinforcement are key ways in which students learn what is expected of them and experience the pride and sense of fulfilment their achievements bring. Students' successes are celebrated through Records of Achievement, assembly time, certificates, class DVDs, the home-school diary and on a daily basis in the praise and positive language all staff use. In this way we create an environment of rewards rather than sanctions and this is borne out in our behaviour management approaches too.

Whole School Activities

The unit of the Family Group is very important and this is true within the classroom as well as when students go on trips and visits. The trust and security created in these teams enables students to often spend their first night away from home during a residential trip. However, we also think it is important for students to see themselves as part of the bigger community of Frank Wise School and for this reason we provide lots of opportunities for the school to come together as a whole. On a weekly basis this happens at lunch times and during assembly and in addition to this we have special events in which parents sometimes share such as World Book Day, our Curriculum Days and Sports Day. Our Christmas Performances provide an excellent example of whole school working and celebration inextricably linked.

Working with Parents and Carers

Whole school events are one of the ways in which we aim to include parents and carers directly with the work that we do, so that they can feel involved and students also witness teachers and parents working together. As a school we strive to ensure good levels of communication through our home-school diaries, school text system and phone calls. We understand that different parents and carers find different forms of communication more helpful and we aim to personalise this too. At Frank Wise School we also have a liaison officer who works closely with families to promote out of school opportunities and to provide advice and guidance on a range of matters such as further education or employment opportunities. This close liaison with parents is vital to ensure that we all have a full picture of what life is like for each child and young adult and to work together to bring about change if it is necessary.

2. Teaching of well-being and good mental health

Through the PSHE curriculum, students participate in lessons that are specifically targeted at promoting mental health. It is hoped that making this the focus and giving students the tools to cope with a range of events within the classroom will enable them to generalise this resilience in other contexts. Across the curriculum, students experience a range of learning scenarios in which they are required to adapt to change, work as a team, cope with making an error or have another go. Some students may learn by rote a range of problems in specific contexts and how to solve them whilst others may move to generalising the skills they have used at those specific times.

3. Staff Training

It is also important that staff feel equipped to identify when a child may be experiencing mental health problems and for this reason we offer training through induction and ongoing INSET days. Staff do not diagnose but can collate vital information to build up a picture of what a child or young adult is experiencing. Data such as attendance or changes in behaviour can be helpful and there are some tools that can be used such as the 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire' which is a series of statements relating to behaviours such as "thinking before acting" or "being able to stay focussed on a task" which are scored as not true, somewhat true and certainly true. These tools can be used to structure the ongoing observations that will happen, where appropriate. Staff must also know when and how to seek external help, such as via a referral to CAMHS.

**The promotion of positive mental health for children, young people
and adults is everyone's business.**

Reviewed by: Lara Hughes

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Approved by Governors:



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