



**Oak Hill Academy West London**  
an Aspirations Academy

## Mental Health and Well-being Policy



Approved by Governors: February 2023  
To be reviewed in February 2024

## **Mission Statement**

At Oak Hill Academy, we promote a caring, supportive environment in which each individual is valued and respected. We have high expectations for all children and aspire to enable pupils to reach their full potential.

National statistics inform us that:

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 1 – 15 years have a clinically recognisable mental disorder in any one year
- 1 in 4 adults will experience mental health difficulties; at least half of these difficulties can be traced back to childhood

At Oak Hill Academy, we are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that our school can and does make a difference by providing a place where all children feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and well-being.

We believe that all children and adults have the right to be educated in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we also recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing. At Oak Hill we have trained adults who can support children or adults (staff) with mental health difficulties as they may arise.

## **Supporting Children's Mental Health at Oak Hill**

A mentally healthy environment is a place where children:

- Have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging
- Have opportunities to participate in decision making
- Have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- Have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- Have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Have opportunities to reflect
- Have access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- Have a right to be in an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for
- Are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times

Oak Hill Academy recognises that all children and young people need the foundation of positive mental health to benefit fully from all of the opportunities available to them. Trained staff are in a position to offer Mental Health support to our wrap around care (breakfast and after school) provision called Acorns to Oaks as well.

We understand that the mental health of children and young people, adults in schools, parents and carers and their wider families will impact on all areas of a child's development, learning, achievement and experiences. At times, we recognise that any child in our care may need additional support to maintain or develop good mental health.

Mrs Cooper is our child First Aid Mental Health support worker and a Designated Safeguarding Lead. Mrs Cooper is also the school Parent Liaison link and will inform and involve parents with their child's mental Health.

In some more extreme cases social care would be contacted if it were deemed appropriate to do so and agreed with the Principal.

### **Supporting Staff Mental Health at Oak Hill**

A mentally healthy environment is a place where staff:

- Have their individual needs recognised and responded to in a holistic way
- Have a range of strategies that support their mental health, eg a named person to speak to, signposting
- Have recognition of their work-life balance
- Have the mental health and well-being of the staff reviewed regularly
- Feel valued and have opportunities to contribute to decision making processes
- Celebrate and recognise success
- Are able to carry out roles and responsibilities effectively
- Are provided with opportunities for CPD both personally and professionally
- Have their unique talents and skills recognised and opportunities are provided for development
- Have time to reflect
- Can access proactive strategies and systems to support them at times of emotional needs in both the short term and the long term

We also recognise the importance of supporting all of our staff members with their own mental health. Mrs King is our fully trained Adult First Aid Mental Health Worker and works confidentially with staff who approach her or are referred via colleagues.

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

- All pupils are valued
- Pupils have a sense of belonging and feel part of the Oak Hill family ethos □ Pupils feel safe
- Pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults (staff) about their problems without feeling any stigma
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued
- Bullying is not tolerated

Our role in school is to support children so that they are able to manage times of change or stress and become more resilient whilst being supported by staff to get through the difficult times in order to reach their potential and have access to professional support and help when they need it.

Through our school's SMSC / PSHCE curriculum, pupils 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.

We understand that healthy relationships underpin positive mental health and have a significant impact.

## **Supporting Parents/Carers with Mental Health at Oak Hill**

Parents:

- Are welcomed, included and work in partnership with our school and relevant outside agencies
- Are provided with opportunities where they can ask for help when needed
- Are signposted to appropriate agencies for support
- Are clear about their roles and expectations of their responsibilities in working in partnership with schools
- Speak to staff who act as role models for parenting
- Opinions are sought and valued and responded to
- Strengths and difficulties are recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately

Oak Hill's healthy learning environment provides opportunities that promote positive mental health, through the standard curriculum and extended provision, eg PSHCE, Circle Time, social communication groups, differentiated learning activities, individual timetables, Parents Forum groups.

This policy promotes positive mental health. It is a working document and has been developed in consultation with the whole school community.

## **SMSC / PSHCE Curriculum**

At Oak Hill Academy, our PSHCE curriculum is broken down into three topics: ***Relationship, Health and Wellbeing*** and ***Living in the Wider World***.

Our Relationships Education scheme of work, encourages children to develop their social and emotional skills by planning and teaching lessons which will help to improve their confidence, resilience, as well as helping them to manage and understand their emotions. The Health aspect of the topic teaches children about leading a healthy lifestyle, staying safe, as well as strategies on how to deal with certain situations when/if difficulties arise.

The Wellbeing curriculum promotes the importance of children reflecting on their own mental wellbeing. Every term, the children take part in a Wellbeing Day which encourages pupils' to understand their own and others' emotions and the development of healthy coping strategies.

The "Living in the Wider World" section teaches children the importance of diversity in society and helps to prepare children for adulthood. Throughout the year, children will regularly have the opportunity to talk openly with their peers during Circle Time sessions, this is something that is supported by all staff members. Any issues that may arise, can be placed in the pupil voice box, which is allocated in every classroom, this helps encourage to the children to talk openly amongst their peers in a safe place whilst remaining anonymous.

The content of the lessons are determined by the needs of the cohort, but it enables pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness and resilience that are needed for their own wellbeing but also preparing them for the future. Guidelines from the PSHE association, ensure that we teach mental health and

emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner. All staff members take safeguarding very seriously and have a duty of care to our pupils.

Staff members should report any concerns to the Designated Safeguard Leads.

**Relevant further reading:**

- Children's Health: A Guide Fundamental Health Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) 2007
- Bright Futures: Promoting children and young people's mental health, Mental Health Foundation
- Article 28, 29, 30 and 31 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Work/Life Balance National Agreement 2003-2005

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended as required.