



*'Improving the quality of family life'*

## **Snowflake School Wellbeing Policy**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a document that embraces the many school practices that support health and wellbeing, to minimise the harm from stress and ensure that there is cohesion and progress in working towards the health and wellbeing of the whole Snowflake School community.

Snowflake School is a school for pupils aged 5-16 with a diagnosis of autism. Pupils are supported 1:1 by staff and we acknowledge that aspects of the work can be emotionally challenging and/or stressful.

### **Guidelines for Implementation**

The Snowflake Leadership Group and the trustees will ensure that the school; -

- Provides an ethos where everyone is valued and where respect, empathy and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships.
- Treats every member of the community as a unique individual
- Ensures that emotional well-being is acknowledged and discussed without stigma or guilt.

### **1. Pupils**

#### **a. Key principles and challenges Communication**

A key strand in emotional well-being is the ability to communicate thoughts, fears, dreams and to know you are heard. We recognise that this can be particular challenge for pupils who have autism and we constantly seek to support them to manage this. Adolescence, in addition to the factors already described, dealing with hormonal changes and the challenges regarding: exploration of a sense of self; becoming aware of difference; exploring identity; developing a sexual identity; and the effect of these on self-esteem, are also pertinent to our pupils.

#### **b. Strategies and Provision**

Snowflake School adopts a whole school stance to emotional and mental health and well-being; these principles are embedded in the curriculum and the total approach.

Each pupil has an education health and care plan and their emotional health and well-being is acknowledged in the social emotional and mental health section of the Plan. All pupils have relevant targets in this area which are reviewed termly to inform the Annual Review. The school monitors the effectiveness of this provision internally and through external means. Core knowledge and attitudes are delivered and explored in discreet PSHE lessons including the school's sex-education programme. We have very close and detailed knowledge of our pupils and work alongside families and outside agencies to identify those who may require additional support will signpost relevant services accordingly. In addition, each site has two designated mental health leads: one for pupils and one for staff. In addition to this, the Assistant Head of Secondary is undertaking the Senior Mental Health Lead training.

**c. Evidence-Based Approach**

Using evidence-based approach and a very individualised learning target for each of the pupils based on their strengths and needs.

Research indicates that children diagnosed with autism make optimum educational gains where intervention is consistent between different environments. As such we aim to work closely with parents to enable them to continue teaching their child, to manage any behaviours that challenge learning and participation and to generalise their mastered skills to the home and community environments.

This approach is based on our values and enables learners to access learning opportunities across their personalised learning plan and to achieve their full potential. The focus of all behaviourally based intervention is on the individual and their learning needs. We work closely with the child or young person and their families to identify the things that are important to them, and use these aspirations, in combination with a robust assessment of their abilities, interests, prior learning and experience, to plan an appropriate learning programme. It is this personalised and collaborative approach which enables us to provide the highest quality teaching, learning and support.

**d. Behaviour Interventions**

All behavioural interventions are, as ethically required, function based, very individualised based on each child's motivation and a functional replacement behaviour will be taught. Where the school feels that the pupil requires additional support beyond the remit of the school, a referral will be made to the relevant service. This could include the Educational Psychology Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), social care, or other agency. This process will fully involve the families. The school may also recommend that families take the pupil to their GP to access medical services or a community advocacy service. This service provides support for young people using non-instructed advocacy approaches to gain wishes and feelings for those who are Looked After by the local authority, subject to Children Protection and Child in Need plans.

**e. Provision for all**

We recognise that traditional 'talking therapies' can be difficult for pupils to access and so seek to explore alternative means for pupils to explore difficult emotions and topics and improve their quality of life by:-

- Timetabled lessons in PSHE which includes relationships and sex education to enable pupils to recognise and express emotions and deal with growing up.
- Outstanding teaching and learning underpinned through an evidence based behavioural approach, of children affected by autism and those of their families
- Developing the necessary pivotal skills as building blocks for future skill acquisition and independent learning in other settings.
- Strong, ongoing communication with families, through; parent/carers' events and coffee mornings where they can discuss concerns, Earwig, the new online communication method where photos/ videos can be safely shared and regular face to face and written contact.
- Preparation and support for dealing with transitions and change.
- Increasing tolerance of busier environments and the wider community.
- Providing learning about leisure
- Promotion of Pupil Voice and advocacy, linked to EHCP plans and IEP targets re independence through making choices and expressing preferences,
- Promotion of a healthy lifestyle including diet and exercise.
- Yoga therapist.
- Music therapist.
- Individual programme regarding appropriate sexual behaviour (e.g. private time) .
- Sensory integration,
- OT sensory diets .
- Outdoor activities exercise.
- Positive reinforcement.

## 2. Adults

Snowflake School recognise that the staff is the most important resource, to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a learning and caring community. There is a relationship between healthier more positive staff, pupil achievement and school improvement.

There are employer duties to staff that require sensitive staff policies and practice. Which include:

### a. Management of change

- Provide a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes.
- Operate sensitive Performance Management and Appraisals linked to clear job specifications.
- Provide extra support from the Senior Leadership Teams at certain times of particular stress and/or difficulty e.g. OFSTED Inspections, Child Protection cases.

- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system.

**b. Staff Workload**

- Provide staff with a sense of safety and the confidence to deal positively with stressful incidents.
- Review the demands on staff regarding the time spent on paperwork and seek practical alternative solutions wherever possible, through the School Improvement Plan process.
- Respond sensitively and flexibly to external pressures that impact on staff lives whilst at the same time ensuring the efficient running of the school.
- Maintain contact with staff when they are absent.
- Maintain positive staff-pupil relationships to ensure an effective teaching and learning environment.

**c. Well Being.**

- Decision making processes must have clarity and transparency.
- Opportunities are provided for all staff to socialise and relax with each other.
- New staff are supported with an appropriate level of induction.
- An open management system exists that responds quickly to problems
- A welcoming and tidy staff area exists, sensitive to issues of race, gender, homophobia, culture and disability.
- Regular and systematic monitoring of staff absences, return to work meetings and threshold checks
- Supervisors available to organise informal meetings with all staff, if required.
- 6 month PDR review sessions to be held with supervisors
- Staff attend one training session after school per week
- Regular breakfasts, snacks & treats provided
- WFH Time for staff with additional responsibilities to complete major tasks.
- Time is set aside for such tasks as work sampling and planning sampling.

When Problems Arise: -

The school will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to the circumstances. In some cases, this may include:

- external support such as support from the Local Authority e.g. counselling.
- Occupational Health, HR services.

**d. Absence due to Ill Health –**

September 2022  
Review Date: September 2024  
Kerry Sternstein

The school follows the Local Authority's procedure for managing absence due to ill health (see attendance policy). The school will implement the use of risk assessments regarding health needs, when required.

**Appendix 1:** Attendance Policy – This lays out all the support the school offers in terms of staff wellbeing during and following absence. Examples include; welfare meetings, return to work support, phased returns, Occupational health referrals, risk assessments.