



**A love of learning and commitment to the success of every child at the heart of all we do.**

# **MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY**

**Policy date: September 2020**

**Reviewed: November 2023**

**Date to be reviewed: November 2024**

*Supported by Devon's Early Help 4  
Mental Health Programme and the  
Schools Development Support Agency  
2018*



## ***Rationale***

### **National view**

**‘Evidence tells us that good mental health is essential for children to learn and achieve’**

*Heads Together ‘Whole School Approach*

As a nation we are increasingly aware of the numbers of children, young people and adults who experience periods of mental ill health, and the fact that this can limit their opportunities to reach their potential and contribute to society.

National NHS and Government policies are now being formed to begin to address this situation through improvements to education.

The National Institute for Health Care Excellence is clear in its advice to schools, that developing a ‘Whole School Approach’ to promoting mental health has shown clear benefits in contributing to the wellbeing of children. This approach goes beyond teaching and learning and pervades all aspects of the life of the school in the promoting of children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing.

### **Local view**

#### **Parents**

When we asked our parents what they most wanted for their children at school we learned their overriding priority was for their children to be happy, safe and well educated through a love of learning and with hope for their future.

#### **Children**

When we asked our children, they let us know that they would like to learn more about how to manage stress, difficult feelings, and how to know about their mental health in the same way as they are learning about their physical health.

#### **Staff**

When we asked our staff, they let us know that they would value learning more about how they can directly influence and impact on a mentally healthier environment within which young people can work, learn and thrive.

#### **Stakeholders**

When we asked our stakeholders, including Governors, they fully supported this ever-evolving strategy and its policy. They let us know that they are behind a whole school approach and this is a high priority, fundamental to any learning environment.

## **Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing**

We have chosen to use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing

***'a state of well-being 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'.***

## **The Aim of our Mental Health Strategy**

### **We aim to:**

- remain informed, inspired and influenced by national policy guidance within the DfE and Public Health England.
- ensure there is a whole school approach to the development and delivery of Mental Health education.
- ensure the promotion of good mental health is an integral part of the schools vision and values.
- ensure the whole school community is actively involved in the ongoing development and delivery of our strategy including; children and their families, stakeholders, partner agencies in statutory and charitable organisations and the local extended community.
- connect with our partner schools within our River Exe Learning Partnership to share good practice.
- to ensure Mental Health is a standard agenda item on Senior Leadership Team and Governor Meetings.

### **We will:**

- ensure that this Mental Health Strategy and its policies are coherent with other current school strategies and policies.
- review the Mental Health Strategy annually.
- ensure there is clear learning within our curriculum regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health across all key stages.
- produce a summary of implemented delivery, outcome and next step developments annually; in the form of an action plan, which will include a cycle of monitoring and evaluation
- ensure our Mental Health Policy is available on our website.

Across the School we embrace our role in contributing to the development of the emotional wellbeing of our children and their learning about being healthy, from both a physical and mental health perspective.

### **An Eight Principled Approach**

**'Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school approach'** We have chosen to use this Eight Principle approach to shape our Mental Health Policy and evidence it in action.

In line with the EH4MH, our Eight Principles include our links with our community and national contributions to our children's developing mental health and wellbeing.

An additional section (9) aims to highlight our chosen forms of **communication** and **information sharing**.

**This policy is developed in response to our pledge in the Mental Health Strategy. It is guided by Public Health England’s key papers outlined at the end of this document.**

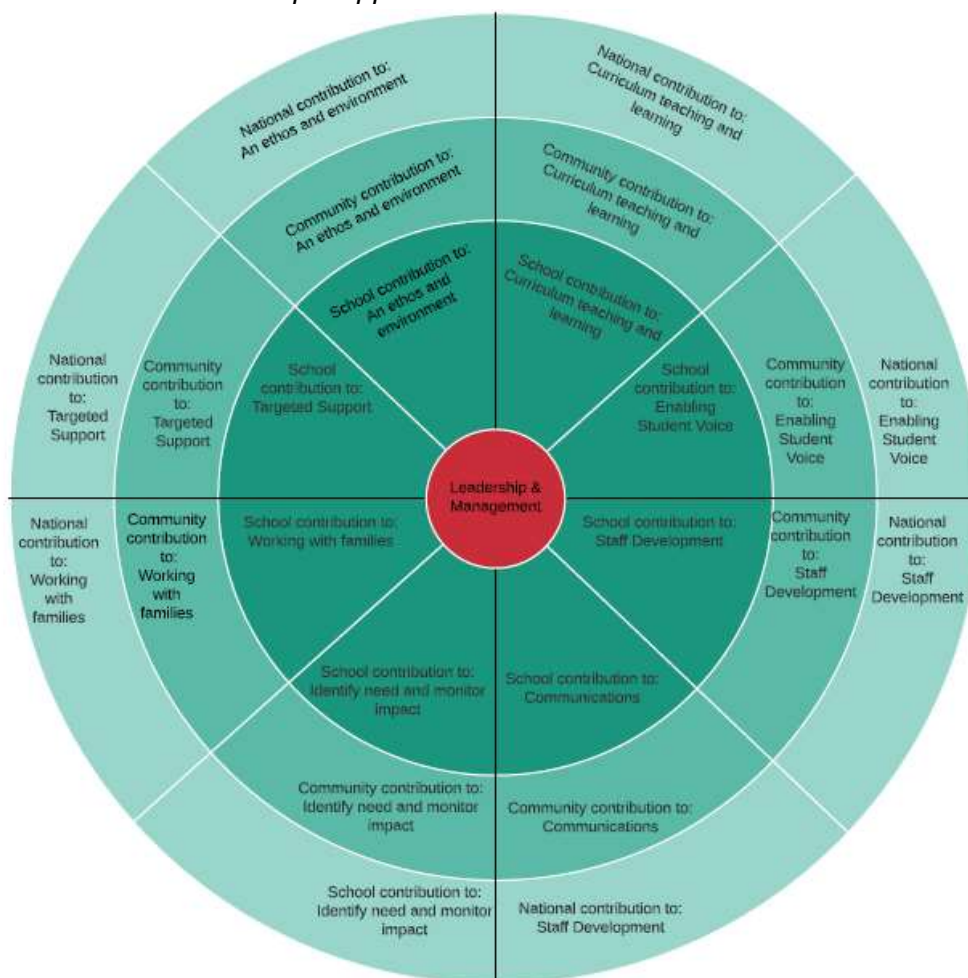
**Principle 1: Leadership and Management**

The School Leadership Team (SLT), including, our SENDCO and Designated Safeguarding Lead will support the development of our whole school Mental Health Strategy. Promotion of the wellbeing of our whole school community will be part of the School’s School Improvement Plan. A focus on Mental Health and Well-being education will be promoted and delivered, through the work of the SLT, Middle Leader groups, and through wider work across our Learning Partnership (RELP). Our Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader is Christine Phillips, who also supports the leadership of PSHE to ensure Mental Health and Wellbeing is embedded in this core area of our curriculum. The schools Governing body is fully committed to supporting the schools work in promoting good mental health for all.

**Community and National Support**

Senior Management have been working closely with our partners in the specialist NHS & DCC funded **Early Help 4 Mental Health** team and the Schools Development Support Agency programme: *“Building a whole school approach to mental health.”*

*Diagram 1: EH4MH’s 8 Principle approach with the additional **Communication** Principle.*



## Principle 2: School Ethos and Environment

At The Topsham School children and young people come first and this is at the core of our Vision, Values and Mission Statement. We celebrate diversity and promote respect for all.

Our Vision and Mission Statement guides our actions.

### Our Vision:

*A love of learning and commitment to the success of every child is at the heart of all we do.*

### Our Mission Statement:

*With a passion and commitment to learning, centred on warm, nurturing and respectful relationships we provide an environment and curriculum that motivates and challenges everyone in our school to succeed.*

We recognise that in order to embed this ethos, we need to promote an environment that focuses on the whole school's emotional wellbeing. We have considered this through both the physical environment of the school and the emotional culture that is promoted throughout the school.

The Values that we have developed in partnership with staff, governors, children and parents to support the whole school community to achieve our Vision and promote our Mission Statement.

### Our Values

Trust and Respect  
Opportunity for all  
Partnerships  
Success  
Health and happiness  
Aspiration and Attitudes to Learning  
Motivation

We have worked to ensure that we have shared the definition of these values both in terms of the adults who work in our school and how they are defined by the children. The promotion of Wellbeing and good Mental Health is visible in these values. None more so than Health and Happiness :

### Teaching Staff and Governors commitment in relation to this value:

**Health and happiness:** We want everyone in our learning community to be happy. To support this, we teach our children how to keep physically healthy through our PE provision, active playtimes and a wide variety of sports clubs. We strive to ensure everyone knows how to achieve good mental health and what strategies to use to support this. Our Mental Health Ambassadors work as valuable role models for this. Everyone needs to feel safe and cared for if they are to learn, succeed and be happy. We create a warm, safe and nurturing environment that meets and matches the needs of everyone in our school community. We understand that people encounter many ups and downs within their lives and at times may need more support than others; this includes supporting our children, parents and teachers

during times of transition. We teach our children empathy and understanding, and adults' model this at all times.

### **Our children's definition of this value:**

I keep myself and others around me safe. I follow our school values and try to be an example to others; using kind hands, feet and words. I work hard to be physically and mentally healthy so I can be happy and I know who I can talk to if I am feeling sad, or upset. I am empathetic and accept that we all need different support at different times.

**See appendix 1 for all Topsham Values**

## **School**

All our School Policies reference these Vision and Values. Relevant policies include: Teaching & Learning, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Inclusion, and Safeguarding. These policies can all be found on our web site

We create a sense of belonging by celebrating individual and team achievements, both inside and outside school events.

### **These are examples of how our School Ethos and Environment promotes Mental Health**

- ★ staff understanding and use of Normal Magic and 10 a Day with the children
- ★ parent workshops
- ★ newsletters and regularly updated links on the school website to provide support.
- ★ Work by the School Council, Compassion Leaders and Mental Health Ambassadors (Y6)
- ★ school displays
- ★ Class reward systems, achievement assemblies, house tokens.
- ★ Consistent positive language is modelled and encouraged throughout the school, "In our school we use...kind hands/words."
- ★ Promoting positive behaviour through using the language of choice
- ★ Buddy system where the Year 6 children each buddy a Reception child (Big Acorns) and through paired reading across the school to build relationships
- ★ Thrive activities and Lego Club for identified children/classes
- ★ JIGSAW PSHE Curriculum
- ★ Mindfulness activities such as yoga, relaxation, Chill and Chat.
- ★ Quiet play areas for those children that will benefit at playtimes and lunchtimes
- ★ Designated calm and quiet areas that allow children to take some time out of learning if they need to, sometimes through their choice and sometimes guided by a teacher.

## Promoting children's learning by fostering resilience and self belief by:

- Our Topsham Values: [see appendix 1](#)
- Giving children the vocabulary to express their feelings and articulate their barriers to learning through Building Learning Power. (guided by the work of Guy Claxton, James Nottingham and Carol Dwek) (See website for more information on this work)
- Asking our youngest children 'to use their words' to achieve the above
- Constantly viewing mistakes and difficulties as 'opportunities'
- Using restorative conversations when children make mistakes
- Direct teaching and modelling resilience/self belief through assemblies, visitors and in class; teachers modeling making mistakes and learning from them
- developing building learning power to support children understand the emotional process of learning and strategies (learning powers) that help them work through challenges including recognising emotions that tell us we are challenging ourselves; not always nice feelings, but the right feelings.
- teaching our children how to manage their relationships with each other and how to deal with disagreements; supported by the language of choice and development of empathy
- Talking about what bullying is and what to do if you are bullied. This happens in anti-bullying week and throughout the year. We have a clear traffic light 'STOP' (several times on purpose) poster to provide a strong visual and to define clearly what 'bullying' is.
- outdoor learning opportunities through an outdoor emphasis in our curriculum, for e.g. walking a daily mile, accessing the outdoor learning spaces including Nature School for Big Acorns. Children also take part in a range of educational visits and residential trips. We believe this supports confidence, self-esteem, community and team building, a sense of achievement, pride and fun, all of which impact positively on mental health.
- developing our wider curriculum to support deeper level thinking and through a choice of topics that ignite curiosity and are linked to our locality as much as possible to support children feel connected to where they live
- Following the JIGSAW PSHE Curriculum and our RSE Curriculum to support children gain a good understanding of positive relationships

## Community

- ★ We have strong links with the Estuary League of Friends and local elderly members of the community in a residential home
- ★ We support charity events such as Macmillian and invite local residents to join us in coffee mornings, afternoon teas etc
- ★ We have strong links with the local church and the vicar regularly leads assemblies in school to support children feel a sense of place in their community
- ★ We have worked with local artists on various projects to create artwork that reflects our school values and ethos
- ★ Strong partnerships with PTA leading to well attended regular events including grounds day and Christmas Fayre, supporting in bringing the community together
- ★ Facilitating Timid to Tiger, a parenting programme to support parents in enabling their children to become more resilient.

## Nationally

We are constantly striving to stay abreast of the most up to date research and are flexible in our approach to ensure we support our children and parents as best we can in this area.

Recent examples from CV Pandemic include:

- implementation of Feel Good Friday as part of remote learning during Pandemic
- Signposting and referring parents/children to well being support groups during this time and beyond
- design and implementation of schools rainbow reconnection curriculum to support the children, parents and staff in returning to school

### **Principle 3: Curriculum Teaching and Learning**

We know that school-based programmes of social and emotional learning have the potential to help young people acquire the skills they need to make good academic progress as well as benefit pupil health and wellbeing (*Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional health and Wellbeing*). We have sought to enhance knowledge and skills around mental health across the curriculum.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

#### **School**

- Our school values embedded in Our Choice Good Choice to promote positive behaviour
- Building Learning Power and the Power of Yet to support children understand the accept the emotional process of learning
- Exercise: There is a strong link between good physical health and good mental health. In our P.E. lessons we explore this with our children and the children have opportunities to work with a specialist P.E. teacher over the year. All KS2 the children walk or run a 'Daily Mile'. All children have active playtimes and we rarely keep them inside because of the weather.
- The school utilizes its grounds to provide children with opportunities to garden and explore their immediate environment
- We provide mental health education through our PSHE curriculum. This is supported through the use of Thrive and JIGSAW
- We offer our children the opportunity to access various after school activities and clubs such as: running, netball, football, choir, art, coding, drama, multi-sports, girl's P.E., storytelling/reading.

**Our carefully constructed curriculum supports children's developmental stages and is fully inclusive. This is seen through:**

- The balance of self-chosen learning and enquiry/whole class teaching changing as children get older
- Children learning fewer things at a greater depth than in the past. The whole class moves on together, with personalised support where children grasp ideas more quickly or slowly.



- our developing wider curriculum is focused on igniting children’s curiosity, developing deeper level thinking skills and supporting children understand and feel part of their locality. We want our children to develop a sense of being part of the environment and creating a better world, not just being an onlooker.

Examples of what we have done include:

- Children learning about the effects of plastic pollution and working with Devon Waste to think about how they can reduce their individual impact
- Working with Devon Wildlife Trust to learn about the world and to care for it
- Regular access to Nature School activities
- Our Green Team play an active role in making us more sustainable, e.g. emptying recycling bins, reminding staff about turning off lights, deciding what to spend the UV income on
- Topics such as ‘Under the Sea’ and ‘Real Heroes’ have enabled children to learn about humans impact on the environment and what how we can have a positive impact on this

## Community

Wherever possible we incorporate the resources of community services to enhance our curriculum’s delivery of mental health promotion.

We are proud of our partnership with EH4MH, a local health service, and their support in developing our school’s mental health awareness. Their introduction of 10 a Day and ‘Normal Magic’ has provided a firm foundation for the School’s developing work around mental health and wellbeing.

Children have been involved in various sporting competitions and events, such as football, netball, running the Exeter half marathon.

Children have participated in local singing events, including a project with Exeter Cathedral, celebrating the joy of singing together

## Nationally

Year 6 children have used the North Star resources to focus on their aspirations.

We regularly take a group of singers to Young Voices to celebrate singing at a national level

Our curriculum development is founded and influenced by a wide range of Educational Researchers including: Guy Claxton, James Nottingham, Carol Dwek, Jon Hattie and Dylan Williams

## Principle 4: Student voice

Involving children in decisions that impact on them can benefit their emotional health and wellbeing by helping them to feel part of the school and wider community and to have some control over their lives (*Promoting Children and Young People’s Emotional Health and*

*Wellbeing*). We are committed to providing structures that allow children to play an active role in developing a mentally healthy school.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

**School - level democracy. Children learn about how their voice can be heard in lots of different ways, including:**

- School Council, House Captains and Mental Health Ambassador elections
- Daily dialogue between children and adults
- Assembly and register monitors
- Play Leaders at lunchtimes.
- Children are present at parent's evenings
- Pupil Conferencing to gauge children's voice on different aspects of school including, safeguarding, playtimes and school values. This is done with small groups and also as a whole school in whole school assemblies
- Worry boxes in classes for children to share anxieties, checked daily by a member of staff.
- School Council consulted about what the PTA raises money for/spends money on
- School Councils are consulted about changes to routines that will have an impact on the children's school day
- School Council are involved in head teacher interviews

**Adults listen to and act on children's ideas, e.g.**

- Children-led fundraising events
- New school pets
- Minutes of meetings of the School Council and Compassionate Leaders
- School Values were developed together with the children and are reviewed and discussed in whole school assemblies and in class
- Mental Health Ambassadors –how to make our school environment more mentally friendly and promoting mindfulness

**Widening the curriculum using children's ideas and suggestions, e.g.**

- Increasing the range of clubs
- Using children ideas/interests in class and their expert knowledge
- Sharing and celebrating children's cultural heritage

## **Community**

We encourage our children to participate in other focused or general groups relevant to their needs, such as: Balloons or other local bereavement organisation groups, Young Carers, Rainbows/Brownies etc.

## **Nationally**

We access information from Young Minds ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)) for young people's views relating to their mental health, support and what they have found helpful. This is co-ordinated and kept up to date by our Mental Health Champion.

## **Principle 5: Identifying Need and Monitoring Impact**

Our Vision : A love of learning and commitment to the success of every child at the heart of all we do shows our ethos of striving to meet the needs of all our children and provide an appropriate supportive environment for children to thrive.

We aim to identify children and young people with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent them developing.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

### **School**

**We regularly seek feedback from our families and children. These include:**

- Regular use of the Ofsted Parent Questionnaire/promotion of 'ParentView' to understand how parents feel about the school
- Circulating specific questionnaires about issues; these may be from governors or from members of staff
- Gaining parent voice through the use of working parties
- evaluations after open mornings/afternoons and whole school events

**Senior leaders are readily available to parents who want to talk about any issues or concerns and can be reliably found on the gate at the start and the end of the school day. Alongside this the school we offer:**

- Weekly reminders in newsletters about who to talk to about issues or concerns and relevant links provided on the website to sign post and support parents
- SENDCO is informed and able to refer parents/children to relevant support groups as needed
- Trusting relationships built with more vulnerable families or those going through challenging times to support can be provided and work with relevant agencies set up and followed through
- Parenting programmes such as Timid to Tiger implemented

All staff are given regular training on how to identify signs that a student may be experiencing a mental health difficulty.

**We openly encourage children to let staff know when they have concerns. We provide a variety of ways for children to seek help, e.g.**

- Worry boxes in every classroom, checked daily by a member of staff.
- For identified children there is an open-door policy with SENDCO for weekly Chill and Chat sessions
- Our Mental Health Ambassadors lead regular assemblies and lunch time activities to raise their profile and ensure children have identified peers they can speak to

**Robust monitoring of provision for vulnerable children through:**

- Half termly Pupil Achievement and Wellbeing meetings take place between teachers and senior leaders, where wellbeing is discussed alongside academic achievement and is equally valued
- Analysis of safeguarding and behavioural logs (stored electronically on CPOMS) is shared with governors through termly headteachers report

- SLT meetings include discussing the impact of ongoing work with children and families and recommend future actions via SENCO, EWO, Inclusion etc and relevant information shared with class teacher and teaching staff as needed.
- Analysis of behaviour log alerting SLT to any changes in a child' behaviour that may be a sign of support needed
- Robust systems in place for attendance to swiftly identify school refuser or other difficult child may have coming to school

### **Community and National**

Information about local and national support services such as NSPCC, Childline, Early Help, Night Stop, Against Hate Crime etc. are on the school's website.

Mental Health Champion use 'Measuring and Monitoring Children and Young People's Mental Wellbeing: A toolkit for schools and colleges' (Public Health England and Evidence Based Practice Unit) for information on appropriate tools to measure impact of interventions.

## **Principle 6: Working with Families**

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. We recognise the important role the family plays in influencing the emotional health and wellbeing of children in the school.

We also recognise that working in partnership may sometimes mean providing support and resources to those families that are struggling with meeting life's challenges.

**These are some examples of how this looks in our school;**

### **School**

**One of our Topsham Values is:**

**Partnerships:** An effective, successful school is based on effective, successful partnerships. Our teaching staff work hard to develop strong, working relationships with parents, knowing what a valuable contribution they make to their child's progress and achievements. Opportunities are provided for children to build relationships within our community that encourage them to be proactive in their responsibilities towards the local community and the wider world. Our school governors are actively engaged in all aspects of school life, providing both support and challenge as the school continually strives to improve outcomes for children. The school is outward looking and works closely with other schools in our locality.

- We offer a programme to parents 'From Timid to Tiger', which supports parents in helping their child approach life more confidently, and learn to manage their worries and fears.
- Parent workshops focusing on wellbeing and providing a mentally healthy environment take place annually.

There are a range of opportunities for parents to engage with their child's learning e.g.

- Curriculum workshops
- Open mornings/ afternoons/celebration of learning each term
- Grounds Day
- Weekly early morning reading in KS1
- Tapestry in FSU
- parents meeting
- volunteering in school
- running or supporting after school clubs
- sharing expertise in class as part of the curriculum e.g cooking, sewing etc

### **Community and National**

We provide information to parents and help sign post them to appropriate support and advice through the information on our website which is regularly updated.

Details of several online resources and information from national charities and organisations regarding mental health and well-being is provided on the dedicated parent/carer page of our school website.

### **Principle 7: Staff Development & Well Being**

‘Well-being in schools starts with the staff; they are the front line of this work...’ (NCB Framework for promoting well-being and responding to mental health in schools).

Across our school we place the wellbeing and development of staff at a high priority, believing all school staff place a vital role in developing and supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of the children.

Principle 7 is split into two sections; the first is how staff are provided with the knowledge and understanding of children’s wellbeing and the second looks at how the school supports the development of staff wellbeing.

**These are examples of how it looks in our school;**

#### **Staff training**

By promoting consultation and supervision our staff are able to reflect on individual young people’s mental health and particular themes, as well as promoting culture change across the whole school.

All staff have received training in mental health delivered by; EH4MH. This is greatly helping the school develop a much deeper understanding of mental health which is breaking down stigma and bringing about whole school culture change.

Induction packs are provided for new members of staff.

Termly appraisal meetings with a member of SLT enable members of staff to share their practise and how they are working towards their appraisal targets.

All Teaching Assistants have had the North Star training.

The school is part of Attachment based training to provide extra insight into this key aspect

#### **Staff wellbeing**

**We use questionnaires to establish where senior leaders can make a difference to staff wellbeing. We follow these up by analysing the results, publishing our findings and acting on findings.**

**The outcomes of these so far have been:**

- Changes to marking policy to reduce workload
- More consultation about proposed changes
- Explaining decisions, the 'why'
- development of communication through weekly diary meetings, minutes of staff meetings, use of google drive
- striving to ensure that all staff or identified staff are part of the decision making process, when appropriate, so they feel a sense of ownership
- Considering impact on workload before making decisions about any new ways of working
- Flexible PPA including the opportunity to do PPA at home
- Culture of saying 'thank you' to help staff feel valued
- Secret Buddies, members of staff are looking out for one another
- Explicitly talking about the importance of wellbeing, and having check ins; this may just be a check in by SLT, asking staff if they are OK or inviting staff member to meet for a more formal check in
- Performance Management includes a section on staff Wellbeing to ensure a professional, supportive dialogue is had at this time
- Staff are made aware of follow on actions in relation to safeguarding concerns and staff know they can speak to any member of the Safeguarding Team should a child disclose anything and the staff member need some supervision
- Sharing resources and websites that promote wellbeing and give individuals good ideas

**Staff organise opportunities to interact socially, e.g.**

- Lunch off site during non-pupil days or a shared lunch to support time to talk
- Well being walks
- Macmillan coffee mornings
- Meals/events out at the end of term

**Health** - Staff have access to occupational health advice and support through 'IMAS', they can access counselling through Well Being at work and are encouraged to have a flu jab funded by the Federation.

**Keep in Touch (KIT) Days** are encouraged to stay in contact with long-term absent staff

When responding to **flexible working requests** senior leaders and Governors look for opportunities to respond positively.

The '10 a day' positive choices for mental health are used and modelled by staff constantly.

### **Principle 8: Targeted Support**

The Topsham School recognises that many behavioural and emotional problems can be supported within the school, with advice from external professionals, and that some children may need more intensive support at times. School staff are skilled at delivering a range of

interventions to support individual children's needs. The Topsham School proactively works in partnership with external agencies.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

### **School**

When children are identified as experiencing anxiety that is impacting on their learning, Strategies are offered to teaching staff and parents from the 'Timid to Tiger' parent programme.

To name all of our interventions would be a very long list, here are some examples that have been identified as really helpful by our student and parent voice;

- Nurture groups
- Nature School activities
- Caring for our guinea pigs (Guinea Pig leaders and friends)
- Reflection Room to led by SLT to provide a safe , quiet space for children at lunch times
- 'Chill and Chat' for children who prefer to spend part of the lunch hour having some quiet time or need to talk to a member of staff.

For both the reflection room and Chill and Chat children know that what they say is confidential unless there is a safeguarding concern or unless the child has requested that information be shared or expressed the need to be supported to communicate with someone effectively. SLT will contact parents/carers if it is deemed necessary to ensure the parents/carers have any information they need to support their child at home with an issue or concern

- Calming Areas which children can access as needed, and where sensory integration equipment is available to identified children
- 'Circle of Friends'
- Behaviour Care Plans and Nurture Notes
- Garden areas that provide a calming safe space for staff and children.
- Friendship Garden

### **Community**

At The Topsham School we regularly access EH4MH for support with an individual child's emotional health and wellbeing needs.

Our website is kept up to date with helpful website and initiatives to support families

Social, Emotional, Mental Health, Wellbeing and Behaviour Team (Previously the Behaviour Support Team) provide consultation and advice to all school staff around identified individual student's needs.

The school works closely with all relevant agencies including Inclusion to support our most vulnerable children and families

### **Principle 9: Communication**



At The Topsham School we know that clear and robust systems of communication both within the school and reaching out into the school community, are key components to providing a mentally healthy school.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

### **School**

In line with our school ethos, we are always thinking of diverse ways of promoting good communication, in enabling and encouraging children and staff to feel more comfortable to communicate feelings and seek help when they need it. We use a wide variety of approaches including; non-verbal systems such as suggestion boxes, paper information leaflets, emails, texts, our website and tapestry.

As part of a learning partnership of 8 schools, we recognise that communication between the member schools is very important to maintain consistency and the continual development of mentally healthy school environments. To ensure this, we have fortnightly partnership meetings where Mental Health at all levels is discussed.

We communicate with our children constantly during their learning and free times, whenever we are together.

Our PSHE, taught through JIGSAW and our RSE curriculum support staff have the knowledge and resources to teach these areas effectively.

Staff have received training in communication by EH4MH.

We inform all parents of the school's obligations and responsibilities to safeguard children during their information session when their children start at the school. Posters around the school building display our safeguarding practice and details of how to contact the designated safeguarding lead.

Staff are aware of school processes for flagging up which children are particularly vulnerable and ensuring the right support is given in school and sought outside of school where relevant, this process of responsibility is reinforced in staff meetings and in staff communications.

### **Community**

We communicate to our parents through our website, newsletters, emails, parent teacher evenings, information evenings and face to face daily contact

All staff have accessed EH4MH training, and are encouraged to access consultation & supervision, this encourages ways to talk about mental health and how young people are feeling, which can be used over the breadth of young people's experiences.

### **National**

We use resources from national organisations visually in the school, via display boards, website and newsletters.

We promote 'Take 10 Together at School' – tips for staff on how to start the conversation, by Mental Health First Aid ([www.mhfaengland.org/img/Take\\_10\\_Together\\_at\\_School](http://www.mhfaengland.org/img/Take_10_Together_at_School)).

We promote Childline – help line and online resources ([www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)).

We promote the NSPCC campaign Pantasauras/ Let's Talk Pants ([www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/)).

Heads Together - promoting the benefits for mental health of talking about difficult things ([www.headstogether.org.uk](http://www.headstogether.org.uk)).

Time to Change – movement to end mental health discrimination ([www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)).

**The Devon School's Mental Health policy was guided by Public Health England's key documents:**

***"Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper" (2017)***  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

***"Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school approach" (2015)***  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/414908/Final EHWB draft 20 03 15.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWB_draft_20_03_15.pdf)

***"Future in Mind" (2015)***  
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/martin-mcshane-14/>

**In Addition the Policy has been informed by;**

***National Children's Bureau "A Whole School Framework for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. School Leaders Resource"***  
<https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20School%20Well%20Being%20Framework%20Leaders%20Resources%20FINAL.pdf>

**Heads Together, Mentally Healthy Schools; A Whole-School Approach**  
<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/>

**IPPR The Progressive Policy Think Tank, Craig Thorley, 2016**  
<https://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/further-proof-of-the-crisis-in-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health>

## Appendix 1: Our Topsham Values:

Adults commitment:

Our **TOPSHAM** values have been created, in consultation with the whole learning community, to ensure we reach this goal.

### OUR VALUES:

**Trust and Respect:** A positive learning environment is based on respectful relationships. We expect everyone to treat each other with courtesy and with kindness in words and actions. We expect everyone to listen to one another and accept and value each other's differences. Conflict is part of life and we strive to ensure that our children learn ways to manage disagreement effectively through compromise and tolerance and this is modelled by all staff within the school.

Teaching and learning is a collaborative process. Teachers trust that children will be ready to learn and actively engage in every learning opportunity. Children trust that their teachers will be well prepared and able to meet their individual needs with understanding, whether these be educational or emotional. Parents trust teaching staff to be honest in regards of their child's needs, progress and attainment and know that their child will be appropriately supported. As a school we trust parents to actively participate in their child's education, supporting their child to succeed and achieve.

**Opportunity for all:** We value every person in our learning community and strive for equity for all. As a community we celebrate diversity, ensure equal opportunities are created and welcome everyone regardless of their background, race, culture or religion. We are dedicated to meeting the needs of all our children and families and are determined to give every child a wide range of experiences and challenges to support them to develop their interests, discover their strengths and celebrate personal achievements. Our curriculum is clearly linked to children's interests to ignite their curiosity and engagement and to support children feel part of our community. School trips, residential, sporting events, visits and workshops led by outside artists and professionals provide inspiration and support in raising children's aspirations. We want our children to dream big and know that with the right attitude, and grasping opportunities they can achieve their goals.

**Partnerships:** An effective, successful school is based on effective, successful partnerships. Our teaching staff work hard to develop strong, working relationships with parents, knowing what a valuable contribution they make to their child's progress and achievements. Opportunities are provided for children to build relationships within our community that encourage them to be proactive in their responsibilities towards the local community and the wider world. Our school governors are actively engaged in all aspects of school life, providing both support and challenge as the school continually strives to improve outcomes for children.

The school is outward looking and works closely with other schools in our locality, as part of the River Exe Learning Partnership (RELP); collaborating, researching and sharing best practice. We actively engage with initiatives and research at a national and international level.

**Success:** We are committed to the success of every child. We know that each child's learning journey will be unique to them and celebrate with them when a goal has been met. As well as providing high quality provision we also ensure that children understand their role in achieving success. This includes showing them what success looks like, the steps they need to learn to succeed and providing them with the appropriate level of challenge to support them in meeting their next step targets.

**Health and happiness:** We want everyone in our learning community to be happy. To support this, we teach our children how to keep physically healthy through our PE provision, active playtimes and a wide variety of sports clubs. We strive to ensure everyone knows how to achieve good mental health and what strategies to use to support this. Our Mental Health Ambassadors work as valuable role models for this. Everyone needs to feel safe and cared for if they are to learn, succeed and be happy. We create a warm, safe and nurturing environment that meets and matches the needs of everyone in our school community. We understand that people encounter many ups and downs within their lives and at times may need more support than others; this includes supporting our children, parents and teachers during times of transition. We teach our children empathy and understanding, and adults' model this at all times.

**Aspiration and Attitudes to Learning:** We ensure all our children become confident, independent learners with an enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge. Challenge is at the heart of successful learning and everyone aspires to 'achieve or be more'. Children are taught to understand how they learn and the skills and learning behaviours they need to work through and conquer each new challenge. They are taught the process of learning and understand that making mistakes is part of this process and is to be seen as a positive. We continue to ensure that strong leadership is embedded at all levels and provide a challenging and motivating environment for staff so that they are supported to be the best they can be. Teachers actively seek out and participate in developing collaborative networks that have the capacity to sustain continuous improvement.

**Motivation:** Teachers are passionate about teaching and learning and the subjects they teach. They are relentless in finding ways that engage, enthuse and inspire the learners in their care. Children are encouraged to be curious and have a 'thirst' for knowledge. They know what their next steps are and want to achieve.

**How the children have defined these values for themselves:**

**Trust and Respect:** I take responsibility for my own behaviour, strive to make good choices and can accept the consequences of any poor choice I make. I trust my peers to look after me and our school property. I trust and respect others by listening to them, valuing their opinion, and acting with care and kindness in all I do. I expect to be treated in the same way.

**Opportunities for all:** I dream BIG and put 100% effort into all I do! I actively involve myself in my learning and the many opportunities school provides, supporting others to do the same. I know that we are not all the same and I accept and celebrate others' differences.

**Partnerships:** I am able to talk to others and can resolve disagreements with respect and kindness. I am able to work well with others, sharing ideas and collaborating, helping others to achieve their goals.

**Success:** I am learning what success looks like for me and how I can get there. I know that it is OK to ask for help and I do this when I need to. I want to challenge myself and I do my best to achieve my goal.

**Health and Happiness:** I keep myself and others around me safe. I follow our school values and try and be an example to others; using kind hands, feet and words. I work hard to be physically and mentally healthy so I can be happy and I know who I can talk to if I am feeling sad, or upset. I am empathetic and accept that we all need different support at different times.

**Aspiration and Attitudes to Learning:** I want to be the best I can be. I am in school to learn and make the most progress I can. I know I am as equally responsible for my learning as my teacher. I know that learning is hard but am strong enough not to give up and I learn from my mistakes.

**Motivation:** I know that learning never stops and I work hard in every aspect of school life because I want to. I want to be proud of myself.

***We have worked hard to ensure that the British Values of Law, Tolerance, Democracy, Liberty, Respect and Responsibility are embedded in the values***