

# Policy

## Mental Health & Wellbeing

October

# 2022

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Owned by: Alice Humphries

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# Policy

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**Title:** Mental Health and Wellbeing

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**From:** Early Years Centre

**Date:** 17/10/2022

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Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right and it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development (World Health Organisation). At The Early Years Centre, we understand the importance of promoting the mental wellbeing of our staff, children, and families.

At The Early Years Centre, we actively promote social and emotional wellbeing, alongside physical health and use emotion coaching to help our children understand their feelings. All management and staff within the Centre endeavour to look after each other's mental wellbeing.

Our mental health and wellbeing lead, **Alice Humphries**, is responsible for overseeing the promotion of mental wellbeing within the Centre and ensuring that all staff and families are aware of the policy. We also have a wellbeing champion, **Amy Linford**, who assists the wellbeing lead in supporting our staff with their mental health and wellbeing.

Procedures to minimise workplace stress:

- We have an open-door policy for all staff within the Centre to have wellbeing chats with the management team.
- Management has the opportunity to take part in the Southampton Early Years Advisory Teachers "Wellbeing Workshops"
- Each term, we have a "wellbeing week" where all staff have the opportunity to discuss their wellbeing with the lead or champion, either work related or personal.
- Our staff have 1:1 supervision which take place every 6 to 8 weeks. These provide the opportunity to discuss mental health and wellbeing.
- New staff will receive a full induction, so they feel competent and capable to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- In order to minimise stress in the workplace, staff receive ongoing training and professional development to ensure they feel confident in their work. It is also our aim to ensure all staff complete training related to mental health and wellbeing, and emotion coaching to enable them to feel capable in providing support to children.
- Staff are encouraged to have a healthy work-life balance. Full time staff are offered the choice to work their weekly hours over 4 long days or 5 shorter days, so that they can effectively manage their free time outside of work.

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- Staff workload is monitored so that they do not need to complete paperwork outside of working hours. We carefully review our expectations around the amount of paperwork that staff must complete, including observations and assessment of children. We work as a team to ensure all record keeping is meaningful and kept to an appropriate level so as not to add undue pressure to staff members.
- We aim to create a reflective culture within the Centre that encourages feedback from staff about the support they are given from the management team and their working relationships. This is to facilitate an environment based around strong teamwork.
- We ensure that confidential conversations are carried out in private, away from other staff members and children. Discussions remain confidential or on a need-to-know basis to provide freedom for open and honest conversations. However, if the manager or mental health & wellbeing lead feels there is a question regarding the safety of a staff member, they will refer to the HR relations manager for support and guidance. These measures will be discussed in a sensitive and understanding manner with the staff member, as appropriate.
- We actively promote a culture of mutual respect, tolerance and cooperation, in line with the British Values.
- Staff meetings take place every 4 to 6 weeks to educate and facilitate individual and team development. At these meetings we raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing by engaging staff in conversations about how we, as a centre, can maintain a supportive & collaborative environment for everyone.
- Staff wellbeing and self-care information is available within designated staff areas.
- Leaders and managers support practitioners in a safe culture where bullying, harassment and discrimination is not tolerated; Any inappropriate behaviour will be challenged and handled in a timely manner.

How we promote wellbeing for our children within the Centre:

- Children are provided with quiet and calm areas for rest, sleep and relaxation. This enables them to recharge their batteries and supports both their physical and mental wellbeing.
- We encourage children to make strong attachments with their key person and forge relationships with their peers and other practitioners within the room.
- We offer opportunities and resources for children to play independently, in pairs, small groups and large groups.
- We provide a safe environment that allows for practitioner to child co-regulation, this consistent practice supports the process of children building the capacity for self-regulation. This is also done through providing activities in which children are able to recognise and express their emotions, developing their emotional literacy.
- We model calming strategies to children and support self-regulation through carefully planned activities and naming and talking about feelings. Practitioners are able to recognise when a child may need help with their emotions and provide this support through one to one or small groups, whichever is appropriate for the child.
- Each room within the Centre will have at least one daily activity specifically aimed at mental health and wellbeing.

In line with our safeguarding policy, our early years practitioners are trained to identify factors that may pose a risk to a child's social and emotional wellbeing.