

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Our Mission Statement

Creating a child centred, safe learning environment which is underpinned by the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing of each child; focusing on children's interests whilst providing a challenging curriculum and enabling environments o support children to strive and be prepared for the next stage of their learning journey

LAST REVIEWED ON	SIGNATURE
FEBRUARY 2021	S. MADARI
February 2022	S. MADARI



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE EARLY YEARS

Mental Health Champion – Asma Patel

Mental Health and Wellbeing in children and young people has recently become a widely researched and investigated topic. This is because research suggests that children are more likely to experience mental health issues now, in comparison to 30 years ago, and currently 1 in 10 children and young people suffer from some form of mental health problem. Poor mental health in childhood, linked to adverse childhood experiences is associated with negative outcomes in later life, including poorer educational attainment, and employment prospects. Supporting children as early as possible with their mental health and wellbeing can help to prevent lasting consequences. The early years are crucial to scaffolding this support and nurturing strong social and emotional capabilities in children as an emotionally balanced and well-supported childhood will lead to positive outcomes for children and families in the long term.

PSED is one of the prime areas of learning and development in the EYFS. It is recognised as one of the building blocks for children's emotional wellbeing and is strongly associated with future success and good mental health in adulthood. The Children's Society recognises wellbeing in its simplest term as the quality of life; how we perceive ourselves to be coping with situations and how well our lives are going. UNICEF recognises that children learn the most throughout the first 5 years of their life and that experiences within the birth-5 years then tailor a child's future experiences and life choices. Kelly recognises that emotional wellbeing will play a fundamental role in the relationships that children make and the way that children communicate with others around them. Promoting wellbeing is important during the early years of a child's life as this can go on to have an impact on the mental health of a person as they age.

At Taqwa Nursery, staff embed positive Mental Health and Wellbeing strategies throughout the strands of PSED, and through all other areas of learning by offering experiences and support to:

- Help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others
- Develop children's social skills and build a positive attitude to learning
- Develop children's emotional wellbeing to know themselves and what they can do, and to understand that their actions and emotions can impact not only themselves but also those around them
- Identify children's likes and dislikes and supporting their choices
- Use everyday opportunities for children to learn about sharing and turn taking

- Ensure that every transition period throughout the day is an opportunity to embed the golden rules
- Identify children's individual skills and qualities and providing opportunities to celebrate each other's strengths
- Enable children to see adults as role models and partners in learning who value differences
- Develop independence and self-care
- Offer opportunities that acknowledge children's beliefs and cultural backgrounds and to allow children to foster pride for their cultures and religions
- Provide opportunities to make choices, discuss impact of choices and to talk about their feelings
- Promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles
- Offer opportunities to learn about Islamic methods to deal with feelings and emotions, such as Dhikr and the use of Prayer, Sajdah and Duas for the contentment of the heart/soul/mind

Positive relationships and secure attachments are key factors that can affect children's emotional wellbeing. Attachment is central to the key person approach used at Taqwa Nursery, as it allows children to form a strong bond with a designated member of the staff team who can provide continuity of care and can lessen the anxiety of separation from parents/guardians. We also aim to foster secure and trusting relationships between the key person and the parents/guardians. Key persons will actively listen to and model positive behaviours for the children in their care. They will encourage children to listen to one another, and notice how others are feeling, helping them to develop empathy and build relationships. They will support children to communicate positively and effectively and help them to deal with the frustrations experienced in early childhood. They will reinforce the golden rules often, embedding the positive language and strategies to de-escalate negative behaviours. They will show an understanding of emotions and behaviours, helping children to label, recognise and talk about their feelings. They will support children to find solutions and coach strategies to calm down or cope with fears and anxieties. Consistent behaviour management and wellbeing strategies will be implemented by all at Taqwa Nursery to enable feelings of safety and security to develop. Key persons will support children to develop executive function skills by modelling and role play, and through continuous narrative and communication regarding making positive choices. This in turn will support children to self-regulate emotions, impulses and behaviours as they grow and develop.

All adults are aware that it is normal and age-appropriate for children to display negative emotions or behaviours while they are learning to deal with their feelings appropriately. Consistent, setting wide strategies will ensure that children can learn to deal with these effectively and safely. However, staff also understand a range of other factors that can negatively affect children's mental health and emotional wellbeing resulting in a child or young mind becoming overloaded with heightened emotions including, but not limited to:

- Premature birth / low birth weight
- Long term physical illness or disability
- Poverty and deprivation
- Poor maternal bond
- Parental mental health problems
- Parental drug, alcohol or substance abuse
- Poor housing (quality or consistency)
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse

- Adverse childhood experiences
- Domestic abuse in the household
- Bereavement
- Parental separation or divorce
- Moving home or changing settings
- Birth of a sibling
- Effects of the Covid-19 pandemic

Taqwa Nursery has robust procedures in place to ensure that a child's home and family life is discussed in depth during their enrolment procedures. Parents/guardians will be supported to understand the importance of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing throughout their child's time at Nursery, through methods such as shared communications and information, to parent/guardian sessions and strategy sharing. The Nursery has strong links with Health Visitors, as well as an in-depth Internal Intervention and Early Help offer which will support staff in putting necessary early interventions in place to support every child. The Inclusion Funding offer is used to ensure that staff can attend a range of specialist training sessions that are personalised to the needs of the eligible child. This enables staff to further tailor support and interventions to meet the needs of each child. The Nursery's child-centred approach in all instances ensures that staff can focus on the needs of each child in a non-judgemental way, ensuring that trusting relationships with families remains in place. The intervention cycle captures the voice of the family, ensuring that staff are aware of any barriers or difficulties that parents/guardians are facing that could affect the child's development, and allowing us to offer support to parents/guardians as required.

References

Barnardos 2018. Research Review: Promoting Children's Emotional Health.

Kelly 2018. Supporting Children's Emotional Wellbeing.

The Children's Society 2018. What is Child Wellbeing?

UNICEF 2018. Early Childhood Development: The Key To A Full And Productive Life.

Department For Education 2017. Statutory Framework For The Early Years Foundation Stage.

Mental Health and Wellbeing – Action Plan (22/02/2022)

Action	Success Criteria	Evidence
Ensure that mental health and emotional wellbeing is a high priority item of development, embedding a culture of awareness filtering from SLT to all staff.		
Ensure all staff have a good understanding of the importance of PSED, further embedding the use of golden rules visuals, reflection zone and sharing strategies with families		
Ensure staff have a depth of knowledge on risk factors and identifying signs of poor mental health or emotional wellbeing		
Strengthen effective key person systems		
Understand behaviour management policy and procedures and ensure these are consistently followed by all adults		
Provide access to positive behaviour support and de-escalation training		
Understand that physical and mental health are closely related and underpin physical activity and healthy lifestyles within setting (create links to PANCo role)		
Ensure access to specialist training required to deliver targeted support		
Further develop transition processes to ensure that children’s mental health and emotional wellbeing is supported through significant changes in life		
Develop an effective procedure for measuring wellbeing in setting – researching the Leuven scales of wellbeing and involvement and persona dolls, use this to then inform target plans or interventions		
Audit environment for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing practices and procedures		