



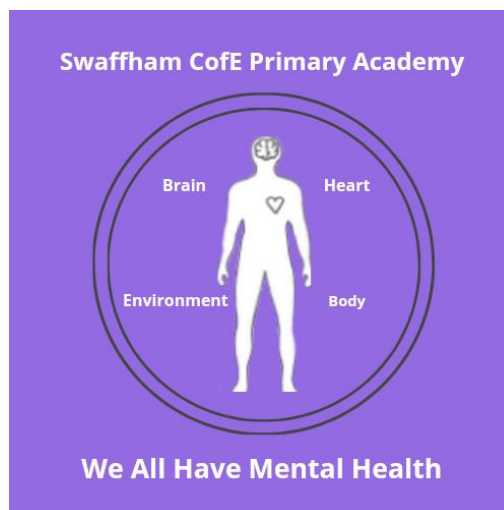
Mental Health for All

At

Swaffham CofE Primary Academy

At Swaffham CofE Primary Academy we:

- ★ Recognise that we all have mental health
- ★ Promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils, family, staff and community
- ★ Understand that our mental health is constantly changing as we navigate the world
- ★ Know that mental and physical health are intrinsically linked
- ★ Provide methods to enable each of us to promote our own wellbeing by making positive choices in our lives
- ★ Offer strategies, support and signposting for when we feel we need help with our mental health



Promoting and protecting our mental health now is more important than ever. We are building the foundations for positive mental health to enable it to be part of our culture and weaved within everything we do. It is explicitly and implicitly part of our curriculum, routines and decision-making.

Mind, Body, Heart, Environment

Mental Health is not only based on our mind, it is intertwined with our body and the environment around us. We work on strategies to help our community recognise this and empower all of us to promote and protect our own wellbeing. We teach specific evidence-based content so we learn what, how, when and why, and this learning becomes part of our everyday practice. We will provide an ever-growing toolkit to meet the needs of all members of our community.

Mind

Our brain is powerful and responsible for many aspects of our health. To promote positive mental wellbeing we focus on the following:

- Learning: Learning new things or improving our skills keeps our brain healthy and occupied giving us something to focus on and giving a sense of achievement. Problem-solving builds our ability to accept challenges and overcome obstacles.
- Goal-setting: Looking to the future, even the very near future, gives us a focus, something to aim for and a feeling of success.
- Gratitude: Recognising the things we have to be thankful for each day, especially when things are tough, encourages positivity and resilience.
- Mindfulness: Taking time to notice how we feel and our place in the world. It helps us to focus and calms our mind.
- Resilience: The more resilient we are, the more we thrive during change and can accept uncertainty. We learn from our mistakes and develop skills to face our fears.

Body

Our body and brain work together - when our brain is calm, our body reflects this and when our brain is stressed, our body reacts. When things are not right in our body, our brain recognises the signals to identify the issue.

- Physical activity: It is important to keep moving whether it is during team sports, PE lessons, dancing for fun or walking - the power of walking for a few minutes each day should never be underestimated for the physical and mental benefits. A mixture of activities has the best outcome to ensure the cardiovascular, nervous, skeletal, muscular and respiratory systems in our bodies are healthy and strong as well as calming the brain.
- Sleep: Adequate sleep is crucial for a healthy mind and body. It is when our bodies repair, our immune system is boosted and our brain organises and stores memories. Primary age pupils should be getting 9 - 12 hours each night and adults should aim for between 7 and 9 hours per night.
- Nutrition: What we eat has a direct impact on the health of our bodies and the energy we have each day. We should aim for variety in our diet and develop a healthy attitude towards what we eat.
- Hydration: Drinking enough each day is crucial for a huge number of reasons including keeping our organs and body systems functioning properly, lubricating our joints, preventing infections, promoting good sleep quality, improving concentration and regulating body temperature.

Heart

Our heart is a vital part of our physical self and benefits from being well looked after using the methods above. Throughout history the heart has always been seen metaphorically as the centre of our feelings and emotions so in our mental health work, we are going to use the heart to focus our work on this.

- Emotions and feelings: They are defined differently although they work in harmony. Emotions are an unconscious reaction to an internal or external stimulus, such as fear. We then become aware of this emotion and define it as a feeling, which is a thought and we make the link with the stimulus and how it makes us feel, which includes a physical response. We learn to recognise our emotions, the stimulus for them, our response and the actions we take.
- Connection: Humans are social creatures and we are meant to interact with others. Positive connection with family, friends and meeting new people stimulates our brain and makes us feel good.
- Kindness: The ethos of being kind and giving is something we embrace. Being kind to each other ensures we all feel welcome, cared for and that we belong. Simple acts of kindness and giving can make someone feel happy and lift them when things are tricky.

Environment

- Surroundings: Our surroundings often dictate how we feel so managing our space and keeping things attractive to us and organised feel calm. Changing our surroundings is excellent to keep our brain interested and can help with rest.
- Nature: The power of nature in promoting positive mental health is well recognised. Getting outside for even short lengths of time helps boost our mood, relax us and noticing nature is a great technique for mindfulness.
- Media and Social Media: We need to carefully curate the messages we are exposed to in our environment. This includes ensuring things are age appropriate, amount and types of advertising and the accounts we follow on social media. These often encourage comparison and feelings of inadequacy.

Mental Health for All is Part of Our Culture

There are some key ingredients to ensure we are promoting and protecting the mental health of ourselves and those around us. We are all **role models** for mentally healthy **behaviours** and we need to ensure we **communicate** thoughtfully. We **listen to hear** and interact inclusively, considering the needs of others. **Time** is key; time is not finite and the use of others' time must be treated with respect. Offering time to others is kind and powerful and can promote positive feelings. We will challenge our underlying beliefs, avoid stereotypes and learn to overcome our unconscious bias. We see **help-seeking** as vital whether it is asking for help with our wellbeing or anything else others could support us with.

Trauma Informed Practice

We recognise that the experiences in people's lives influences their mental wellbeing. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) indicate a higher chance of being at risk from poor mental health. We are increasingly skilled in identifying members of our community who are struggling and are able to signpost them to get appropriate support with their consent.