

## **Health and Well-being**

(Being healthy - mind, body and self-regulation)

At Jack and Jill's Preschool, we aim to promote positive mental health, physical health and wellbeing for our whole Preschool community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning, achievement and future. The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

At Jack and Jill's Preschool we aim to provide a place for the children to experience a nurturing and supportive environment- that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, preschool will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help create a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in Preschool is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We teach the children how to manage their own safety, develop trusting relationships and how to ask for help when needed. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, such as by teaching them meditation and breathing exercises to help calm down when emotions are high, and to develop mindfulness. The children also do yoga to develop the body and mind.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about anything they may be upset, angry or scared of
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.

## **Definition of mental health and well-being**

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff, volunteers and students mental health and wellbeing.

We 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".

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- feel confident in themselves.
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- learn and achieve.

## **Self- Regulation (Gaining control of our emotions)**

As part of ensuring the children's emotional well-being, we aim to give them skills to self-regulate - teaching them to understand and name their emotions. By recognising these emotions they can learn to recognise when they build up and then learn the skills needed to calm down (self-regulate their emotions) and ask for help to solve the problem or trigger that caused the over-powering emotion. This can be done in 5 steps:

- Step 1 - Ask for help when emotions get too big
- Step 2 - Close my eyes and take 3 deep breaths
- Step 3 - Take time to calm down
- Step 4 - Use my words to say how I feel and what I wish would happen
- Step 5 - Talk with an adult to help solve the problem

Further support given to minimise these triggers of emotions are - creating an enabling environment with visual prompts of rules and expectations, posters of yoga poses, the 5 steps and having positive and trusting relationships between staff, young people and the children.

### **Calming Sanctuary or Take a Break area**

There is a designated calming down area or take a break area where children can go - to channel their emotions into a more productive means. Here, the child is given space in a stimulating and sensory area, where they can access stress balls, magic calming bottles or jars, or where they can snuggle up to a cushion, hug a bear, colour or just have time alone to refocus their mind on something positive. Once a child calms down, this allows an adult the opportunity to talk about what has happened and if needed - discuss the implications of their actions and how it could be dealt with more positively next time.

### **Self-Regulation Games**

At Preschool children learn to follow directions, pay attention, remember rules and demonstrate self-control. They are listened to and given choices to ensure they feel empowered and given the opportunity to participate in self-regulation games, which enables them to learn to manage their energy levels, emotions, thoughts and behaviour. The games consist of working collaboratively with others, taking turns and following directions. Games could consist of playing musical statues, playing a sleeping song game- whereby they wake up to act as an animal, or taking turns in a circle time with musical instruments.

### **Wellness Wednesday**

As part of our aim to support emotional well-being - we also participate in Wellness Wednesday, where we concentrate on keeping healthy, give time to help others or participate in planned activities. These activities enable the children to display kindness, patience and compassion for themselves and others. It boosts self control, increases attention/focus and encourages them to make better decisions. Some activities included are:

- Mediations techniques
- Buddy Breathing
- Hand on tummy breathing techniques
- 5 finger mediation
- Trips to an old person's home or visit nature at a park
- Doing a collection for the food bank
- Raise money by a bake sale
- Visit a hospice - singing to elderly people or decorating a Christmas tree for them.

### **Outdoor activities**

Outdoor activities can consist of Learning about nature and exploring textures and sounds, a small walk to observe natural life and describe things. Trips outside the preschool as teach us about how we can keep safe.

### **Parent partnership and Healthy Eating.**

We give parents advice and information on how they can do their part to keep their children happy and healthy - through yoga, meditation and healthy eating. We encourage parents to provide children with healthy lunches and staff remain good role models in eating healthily, often having their fruit snacks with the children and sitting with the children and having their lunch together.

We also work with parents and offer them support where needed to maintain their own emotional and physical health. We can also make referrals to different agencies that can offer further support to parents in need, for example when experiencing domestic violence, or struggling with the day to day needs of family life, when under a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan. We understand to support your child and ensure their needs are met we must also work to support the whole family unit.

Signed by Manager

Signed by Deputy Manager

Signed by Health and Wellbeing Officer