I. The schools' role in supporting positive mental health

Schools' statutory responsibilities relating to social emotional mental health and wellbeing (wb)

Provision and processes relating to children and young people with Social Emotional and Mental health difficulties (SEMH) are defined in the SEND Code of Practice Jan 2015 (the Code)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

The definition of SEMH in the Code is:

(6.32) *Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties, which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder. (p98)*

The requirement specific to this defined condition is:

(6.33) *Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other pupils. (p98)*

However, the Code also includes comprehensive requirements for all children and young people with SEND including those with SEMH difficulties.

Some of the key points to note in the Code are as follows (the Code paragraph numbers are in brackets for reference):

(6.1) *All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfillment of potential. This should enable them to:*

- **Achieve their best**

- **Become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and**

- **Make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training**

(6.2) *Every school is required to identify and address the SEN of the pupils that they support. Mainstream schools, which in this chapter includes maintained schools and academies that are not special schools, maintained nursery schools, I6 toI9 academies, alternative provision academies and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), must:*

- **Use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people's SEN**

- **Ensure that children and young people with SEN engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEN**

- **Designate a teacher to be responsible for coordinating SEN provision – the SEN coordinator, or SENCO (this does not apply to I6 to I9 academies)**

- **Inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child**

- **Prepare an SEN information report**

The importance of early identification and the skills of the classroom teacher are emphasised:

(6.I4) *All schools should have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN. The benefits of early identification are widely recognised – identifying need at the earliest point and then making effective provision improves long-term outcomes for the child or young person.*
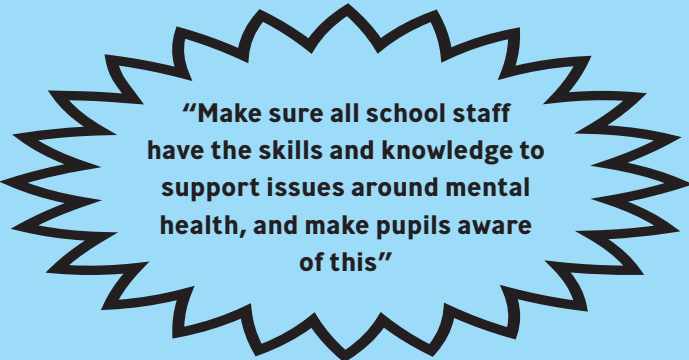
(6.I5) *A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age. Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such support. Such improvements in whole-class provision tend to be more cost effective and sustainable.*

(6.20) *For some children, SEN can be identified at an early age. However, for other children and young people difficulties become evident only as they develop. All those who work with children and young people should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. In particular, parents know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.*

(6.2I) *Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues. If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behaviour a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of approaches such as the Early Help Assessment, may be appropriate. In all cases, early identification and intervention can significantly reduce the use of more costly intervention at a later stage.*

(6.22) *Professionals should also be alert to other events that can lead to learning difficulties or wider mental health difficulties, such as bullying or bereavement. Such events will not always lead to children having SEN but it can have an impact on wellbeing and sometimes this can be severe. Schools should ensure they make appropriate provision for a child's short-term needs in order to prevent problems escalating. Where there are long-lasting difficulties schools should consider whether the child might have SEN.*

(6.37) *High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered.*

"Make sure all school staff have the skills and knowledge to support issues around mental health, and make pupils aware of this"

Involving the child and the family at all stages is also emphasised:

(6.48) *Where it is decided to provide a pupil with SEN support, the parents must be formally notified, although parents should have already been involved in forming the assessment of needs as outlined above. The teacher and the SENCO should agree in consultation with the parent and the pupil the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, along with a clear date for review.*

(6.65) *Where a pupil is receiving SEN support, schools should talk to parents regularly to set clear outcomes and review progress towards them, discuss the activities and support that will help achieve them, and identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school. Schools should meet parents at least three times each year.*

(6.66) *These discussions can build confidence in the actions being taken by the school, but they can also strengthen the impact of SEN support by increasing parental engagement in the approaches and teaching strategies that are being used. Finally, they can provide essential information on the impact of SEN support outside school and any changes in the pupil's needs.*

(6.67) *These discussions should be led by a teacher with good knowledge and understanding of the pupil who is aware of their needs and attainment. This will usually be the class teacher or form tutor, supported by the SENCO. It should provide an opportunity for the parent to share their concerns and, together with the teacher, agree their aspirations for the pupil.*

(6.68) *Conducting these discussions effectively involves a considerable amount of skill. As with other aspects of good teaching for pupils with SEN, schools should ensure that teaching staff are supported to manage these conversations as part of professional development.*

(6.69) *These discussions will need to allow sufficient time to explore the parents' views and to plan effectively. Meetings should, wherever possible, be aligned with the normal cycle of discussions with parents of all pupils. They will, however, be longer than most parent-teacher meetings.*

(6.70) *The views of the pupil should be included in these discussions. This could be through involving the pupil in all or part of the discussion itself, or gathering their views as part of the preparation.*

East Sussex guidance for schools on using the code of practice can be found on c-zone

Links to ESCC guidance

https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/1388/escc-sen-matrix-guidance-final.pdf
https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/1379/semh-sept-v1.pdf

In addition to the Code of Practice the Department for Education have also produced departmental advice relating to Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (March 2016)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508847/Mental_Health_and_Behaviour_-_advice_for_Schools_160316.pdf

This provides examples of specific strategies used by schools to promote positive mental health but does not include any whole school approaches apart from an example of using the PSHE Curriculum.

Guidance about whole school approaches from Public Health England can be found in Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing: A whole school and college approach https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWB_draft_20_03_15.pdf

This is the whole school approach that is promoted through the East Sussex School Health Improvement Grants Programme (led by ESCC Public Health and delivered by the School Health Service) and through workshops for schools. https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/health-safety-wellbeing/health-improvement-grants/grants/

What will Ofsted look for?

The Ofsted Inspection Handbook (August 2016) gives the grade descriptor for Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare in an outstanding school as:

- Pupils are confident, self-assured learners. Their excellent attitudes to learning have a strong, positive impact on their progress. They are proud of their achievements and of their school.

- Pupils' impeccable conduct reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. Pupils are self-disciplined. Incidences of low-level disruption are extremely rare.

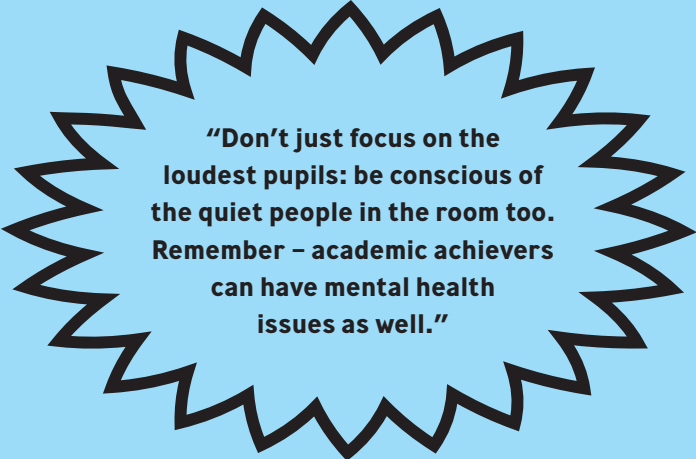- Pupils discuss and debate issues in a considered way, showing respect for others' ideas and points of view.

- For individuals or groups with particular needs, there is sustained improvement in pupils' behaviour. Where standards of behaviour were already excellent, they have been maintained.

- In secondary schools, high quality, impartial careers guidance helps pupils to make informed choices about which courses suit their academic needs and aspirations. They are prepared for the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training.

- Pupils work hard with the school to prevent all forms of bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying.

- Pupils understand how their education equips them with the behaviours and attitudes necessary for success in their next stage of education, training or employment and for their adult life.

- Staff and pupils deal effectively with the very rare instances of bullying behaviour and/or use of derogatory or aggressive language.

- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance. The attendance of pupils who have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence is rising quickly towards the national average.

- The school's open culture actively promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare Pupils are safe and feel safe at all times They understand how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations and settings. They trust leaders to take rapid and appropriate action to resolve any concerns they have.

- Pupils can explain accurately and confidently how to keep themselves healthy. They make informed choices about healthy eating, fitness and their emotional and mental well-being. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and are confident in staying safe from abuse and exploitation.

"Don't just focus on the loudest pupils: be conscious of the quiet people in the room too. Remember – academic achievers can have mental health issues as well."

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online and of the dangers of inappropriate use of mobile technology and social networking sites.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equips them to be thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and in wider society. (p51)

The next section:
1. Introduces the concept of a resilience-based approach to support children and young people's development
2. Shows how a resilience-based approach will help meet Ofsted requirements described above
3. Demonstrates the importance of a whole school approach to resilience and mental health.