Holmer Green First School and Pre-School
SEMH Policy

At Holmer Green First School and Pre-School, we are committed to promoting positive social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) for all pupils, families and staff. We recognise that SEMH needs may affect learning, wellbeing, relationships and participation in school life. This policy outlines how we identify, support and promote SEMH needs within our infant school community.

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies:

- SEND Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Policy

Definition of SEMH
SEMH is one of four broad areas of need identified in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0-25 years).

Children with SEMH needs may experience:
- Difficulty managing or understanding emotions.
- Anxiety, attachment difficulties, low self-esteem or withdrawal.
- Challenges with social interaction or forming relationships.
- Emotional dysregulation, frustration or behaviour that communicates distress.

SEMH needs may be temporary, long-term, or vary depending on circumstances. They do not always present through disruptive behaviour.

Aims of SEMH Provision
This policy aims to:
- Promote a whole-school culture that supports children's emotional wellbeing.
- Identify SEMH needs early and provide timely, appropriate support.
- Ensure children with SEMH needs are included, valued and supported to access the full curriculum.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and external professionals to ensure a coordinated approach.
- Develop staff understanding and confidence in recognising and responding to SEMH needs.

Objectives
We promote mental health and wellbeing through:
- A nurturing, supportive school ethos.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- A PSHE curriculum that develops emotional literacy, resilience and social skills.

- Daily routines that build safety and predictability.
- Staff modelling of emotional regulation and respectful communication.
- A safe environment that supports play, creativity and exploration.
- Staff training to become Youth Mental Health First Aiders.
- Staff member trained in Senior Mental Health.

All staff are responsible for promoting positive SEMH and acting when concerns arise.

Identifying SEMH

Early identification is essential. Staff may identify emerging needs through:

- Classroom observations and monitoring of behaviour, participation and wellbeing.
- Concerns raised by parents/carers.
- Pupil voice activities (age-appropriate).
- Attendance patterns.
- Assessment information and learning progress.

If concerns arise, staff will share them with the Head Teacher, Senior Mental Health Lead/Inclusion Leader.

SEMH Support

Initial Support in Class (Universal Level)

Teachers provide adjustments such as:

- Nurture-based strategies and predictable routines.
- Visual support, calm spaces or sensory strategies.
- Emotion check-ins and emotional literacy activities.
- Calming trollies.
- Nurturing, safe environment.

Targeted Support (SEN Support)

If further support is required, the Inclusion Leader may:

- Develop an individual support plan/add to class provision map.
- Deliver targeted interventions (e.g., nurture groups, 1:1 ELSA).
- Use graduated response (assess-plan-do-review).
- Liaise with parents/carers regularly.

Specialist Support

Where a child's needs are more significant or persistent, referrals may be made to external agencies, such as:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Early Help or Family Support Services
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Speech and Language Advice Clinics (where communication impacts SEMH)
- Mental Health Support Team.

The school will work collaboratively with professionals and families.

Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise parents and carers as essential partners in supporting children's social, emotional and mental health. Strong, collaborative relationships help ensure consistency between home and school and enable early, effective intervention. We will:

- Involve them early when concerns arise.
- Share strategies and support approaches collaboratively.
- Provide information on available external services.
- Listen to parents' insights about their child's experiences and needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Governors

- Have an awareness of SEMH provision in school through school visits, observations and regular meetings with the Inclusion Leader.
- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties regarding SEMH and SEND.

Role of Support Staff

- Implement interventions as listed on Provision Maps and Support Plans.
- Keep records of every time they work with children with SEMH on agreed record sheets/Insight.
- Contribute to termly reviews of Provision Maps and Support Plans.
- Attend training including recognising SEMH needs, emotional regulation strategies, and trauma informed practice and disseminate learning to other staff members.

Role of Teachers

- Monitor progress of children in their class through observations and assessments.
- Create, implement and revise individual support plans and their class provision map.
- Supervise support staff delivering interventions.
- Discuss support plans and concerns with parents.
- Attend training including recognising SEMH needs, emotional regulation strategies, and trauma informed practice.
- Discuss any concerns or changes in pupils with Inclusion Leader.
- Track provision on Insight.
- Provide a nurturing classroom environment.

Role of Inclusion Leader

- Discuss specific children with teachers and support staff.
- Attend training including recognising SEMH needs, emotional regulation strategies, and trauma informed practice.
- Monitor interventions being delivered and impact on individual's progress using Insight.
- Monitor pupils progress and data using Insight.
- Attend pupil progress meetings with the Headteacher.
- Liaise with external agencies.
- Complete referrals for individual children.
- Update policies.
- Meet with Inclusion Governor each term.
- Organise and attend meetings with external agencies.
- Liaise with families and external agencies.

Other related staff responsibilities

The Headteacher is the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Headteacher, Inclusion Leader and School Administrator are Additional Safeguarding Leads. Some SEMH concerns may raise safeguarding issues. Staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

We recognise that supporting children's SEMH is only possible when staff wellbeing is valued and prioritised. A mentally healthy school depends on staff that feel supported, respected and able to carry out its duties confidently. To promote staff wellbeing, the school will:

- Foster a culture of openness and support.
- Provide access to supervision and pastoral support.
- Ensure manageable workload expectations.
- Offer training that builds confidence and reduces stress - Ongoing CPD in SEMH, trauma-informed practice, emotional regulation and behaviour support to help staff feel equipped and less overwhelmed by challenging situations.
- Promote positive relationships and teamwork. Staff are encouraged to support one another, celebrate successes and work collaboratively to solve challenges.
- Provide signposting to wellbeing and mental health services. Information about local staff wellbeing services, employee assistance programmes or external support will be available to staff.

The Inclusion Leader reviews this policy annually and presents any updates to the Governing Body.