



## **Littletown Primary Academy Mental Health Strategy 2019-2020**

*Supported by Devon's Early Help 4 Mental Health Programme and the  
Schools Development Support Agency 2018*



## **Rationale**

### **National view**

“Evidence tells us that good mental health is essential for children to learn and achieve” *Heads Together ‘Whole School Approach’*

As a nation we are increasingly aware of the numbers of children young people and adults who experience periods of mental ill health, and the fact that this can limit their opportunities to reach their potential and contribute to society.

National NHS and Government policies are now being formed to begin to address this situation through improvements to education.

The National Institute for Health Care Excellence is clear in its advice to schools, that developing a ‘Whole School Approach’ to promoting mental health has shown clear benefits in contributing to the wellbeing of students. This approach goes beyond teaching and learning and pervades all aspects of the life of the school (Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing).

### **Local view**

When we asked our parents what they most wanted for their children at school, we learned their overriding priority was for their children to be happy, safe and well educated through a love of learning with hope for their future.

When we asked our students, they let us know that they would like to learn more about how to manage difficult feelings, and how to know about their mental health in the same way as they are learning about their physical health.

When we asked our teachers, they let us know that they would value learning more about how they can directly influence and impact on a mentally healthier environment within which young people can work, learn and thrive.

When we asked our stakeholders, which include Governors, they fully support this evolving strategy and its policy. They let us know that they are behind a whole school approach and this is a high priority and fundamental to any learning environment.

### **Definition of 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”.*

## The Aims and Intentions of our Mental Health Strategy

### We aim to;

- Remain informed, inspired and influenced by national policy guidance within the DfE and Public Health England.
- Ensure a whole school approach to development and delivery.
- Ensure a whole community contribution to development and delivery, including students and their families, stakeholders, partner agencies in statutory and charitable organisations and the local extended community.
- Connect with our partner schools in our local community to share good practice.
- To hold the Mental Health Strategy as a standard agenda item on Senior Leadership Team and Governor Meetings.

### We will;

- Ensure that this Mental Health Strategy and its Policies complement all other current school strategies and policies.
- Review the Mental Health Strategy annually.
- Ensure there is clear learning on our curriculum regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health across all key stages.
- Produce a summary of implemented delivery, outcome and next step developments annually.

Here at Littletown Primary Academy we embrace our role, alongside our families, the community and with our wider partners, in contributing to the developing emotional wellbeing of our students and their learning about being healthy, from a physical and mental health perspective.

“Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school approach” suggest using an Eight Principles Approach.

We have chosen to use this Eight Principle approach to develop our school Mental Health Policy and evidence it in action.

However, in line with the EH4MH added value, our Eight Principles include our links with our community and national contributions to our children’s developing mental health and wellbeing.

We have chosen an additional section that aims to highlight our chosen forms of **communication** and information sharing.

**This policy is developed in response to our pledge in the Mental Health Strategy. It is guided by Public Health England’s key documents outlined at the end of this document.**

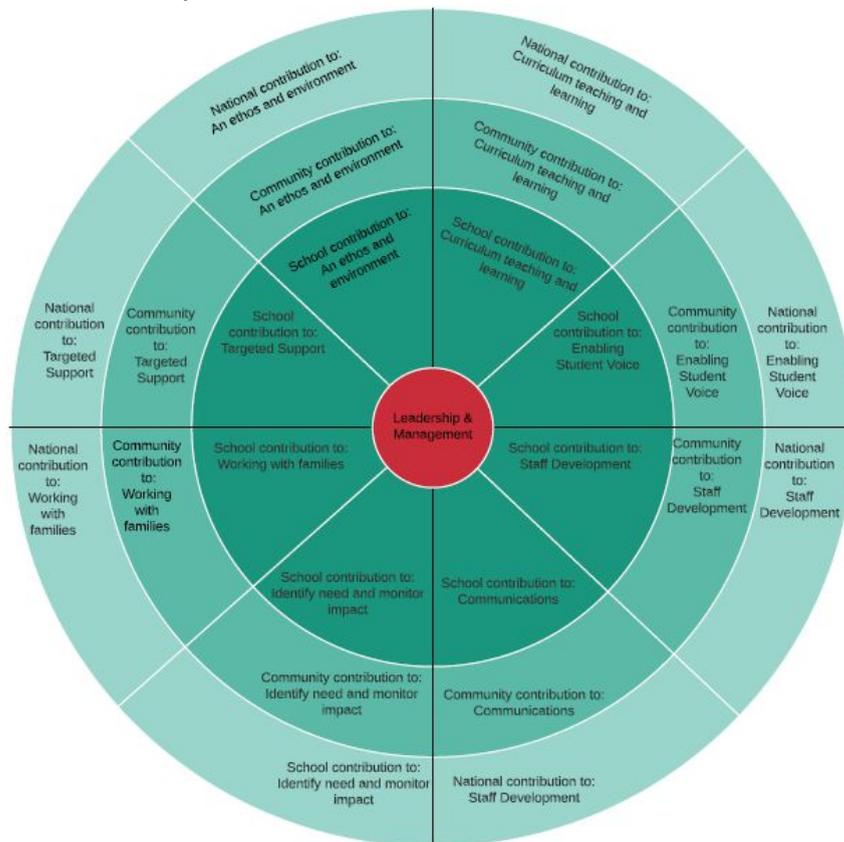
# Principle 1:

## Leadership and Management

At the core of these Eight Principles is Leadership and Management. Their commitment and drive are key in embedding this policy at the heart of our school.

At Littletown Primary Academy, Debbie Newman, our Mental Health Champion is leading the development of our Whole School Mental Health Strategy. She is establishing a Mental Health working group represented by both staff and students, with support and oversight by the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors. We have now appointed a specific role of Mental Health Champion within our Governing Team.

Below is the EH4MH's 8 Principle approach including the added value of considering community and national contributions to each principle, and with the additional **Communication** Principle.



## Community and National Support

Senior Management have been working closely with our partners in the specialist NHS & DCC funded **Early Help 4 Mental Health** team and the Schools Development Support Agency programme: *“Building a whole school approach to mental health.”*

## Principle 2:

### School Ethos and Environment

At Littletown Primary Academy we provide an exciting curriculum within a nurturing and caring ethos ensuring a high standard of education for all children in the Littletown family. We have high expectations of behaviour that are based on respect, intrinsic motivation and developing children's sense of worth, responsibility and self-esteem.

We pride ourselves on our caring and supportive environment where every child matters. We encourage special talents, skills and interests such as music, sport and art. We celebrate children's achievements both in and out of school. We aim for all our children to be both physically and mentally healthy, happy and safe in order to play an active part in the school and wider community.

We recognise that in order to embed this ethos, we need to promote an environment that focuses on the whole school's emotional wellbeing. We have considered this through both the physical environment of the school and the emotional culture that is promoted throughout the school.

**Our Whole School Approach does this by;**

#### School

The sharing of our school's mission statement, which is; *'to enable every child to be happy and successful, reach their full potential and be a responsible member of the community.'* We also promote our shared core values of; ***aspire, cooperate, learn, respect, celebrate and care.***

Our school policies including: Social, Emotional and Mental Health Policy (SEMH) this was previously known as 'Behaviour Policy', Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. All of which can be found on the school website and are updated annually.

We create a sense of belonging by celebrating individual and team achievements, both inside and outside school events.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school that we are proud of;**

Promotion of Mental Health, on World Mental Health Day.

Mental Health Ambassadors being introduced, involving year six children and in collaboration with EH4MH.

Presentations to students and families, school displays and the modelling of the 10-a-day choices for mental health in every classroom and staffroom.

A whole school Nurture approach and use of the Community Room and student support area, that allows students to take some time out of learning. This also offers a safe space that our parents can access.

We promote Growth Mindset language and the '10 a day choices towards balancing our mental health' through **Normal Magic**, and enable student's learning to foster resilience and self-efficacy.

We encourage outdoor learning opportunities through forest school, outdoor education days, outdoor classrooms, and residential trips. We believe this supports confidence, self-esteem, community and team building, a sense of achievement, pride and fun, all of which impact positively on mental health.

Lego Therapy with trained members of staff, Art Therapy and Animal Therapy with the introduction of our school guinea pigs.

Paired Reading/classes to foster a sense of responsibility and care for other children in the school.

School gardens maintained by each class/year group, sometimes by individual children and sometimes by whole classes at a time. We are also involving our children in the development of a 'sensory garden walk' within the Outdoor Classroom Area.

ACE award given at the end of every term to recognise and celebrate Attitude, Commitment and Effort for children. This helps to emphasise the importance of these characteristics of learning as separate to attainment.

Transitions between year groups and with secondary schools is managed sensitively and effectively to meet the needs of all children, with flexibility to allow for more vulnerable children.

## **Community**

We have regular visits from our community police officers who talk to the children about health and safety, including online safety and the impact that can have on our mental health.

Working with Early Help for Mental Health, staff who are regularly supporting vulnerable children and families receive supervision support to ensure the best outcomes for all.

In the latest Ofsted report it was reported that;

*'Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Messages with regard to safety were well promoted through a school safety week. They know what steps they would take if they feel unhappy or concerned about anything. Pupils understand the different kinds of bullying, including name-calling and cyberbullying and are clear about what steps they should take if it happens to them.'*

We are also proud of what parents have said about the school;

*'Everything is great at Littletown! The kids are happy here and my questions, if I have any, are always answered. Staff listen and help if necessary.'*

*"A fabulous team of staff! The children are happy and thrive here."*

*"My children are always happy to come to school and come home happy every day."*

*"So much thought is put in to each child's individual needs and progress."*

*"The school feels friendly, supportive and like a family. From our first visit, we felt confident that this was the right school for us and the teachers have proved us right."*

## **Nationally**

We are actively embracing the 'Time to Change' campaign to bring an end to the stigma and discrimination faced by people who experience mental health problems.

## Principle 3:

### Curriculum Teaching and Learning

We know that school-based programmes of social and emotional learning have the potential to help young people acquire the skills they need to make good academic progress as well as benefit pupil health and wellbeing (*Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional health and Wellbeing*). With this in mind we have sought to enhance knowledge and skills around mental health across the curriculum as well as through targeted subjects such as PSHE.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

#### School

We provide mental health education through our PSHE curriculum.

Exercise – There is a strong link between good physical and mental health. In our PE lessons we explore this with our students. We also have other PE professionals to help with specific lessons including a yoga instructor who offers two sessions a week open to all classes. Every morning we encourage teachers to start with an active 10 minutes, which includes outside and inside movement.

Healthy school meals are cooked on site every day with fresh ingredients to help promote healthy bodies and children link this to the 10 a day to see how that relates to our mental health.

Impact Days, such as World Mental Health Day provide students with whole day's experiences of mental health awareness.

We feed and encourage a growth mindset in our classrooms and school. This has a positive impact on self-esteem, resilience, ability to accept challenge and perseverance. Students learn they can ask for help and make a change.

We have fortnightly assemblies for Mental Health and Growth Mindset to reinforce the work going on in classrooms.

Break times are in place and we make explicit links between the 10 a day choice of taking a break and its beneficial impact to mental health.

#### Community

Wherever possible we incorporate the resources of community services to enhance our curriculum's delivery of mental health promotion.

We are proud of our partnership with EH4MH, a local health service, and their support in developing our school's mental health awareness. Their introduction of the Normal Magic and 10 a day, along with Timid to Tiger programmes have been a successful part of enhancing students' understanding of how to look after their own mental health.

Year 6 children also have a Life Skills day, including input from RNLI, Police, Fire Service, and including internet safety.

## **Nationally**

There are many nationally recognised resources available to help support child mental health and parents are regularly updated with resource lists. In school, we make use of helpful websites/resources such as GoNoodle, Headspace, and Just Breathe to help children to take an emotional break in the day when needed. This has had a very beneficial impact on student engagement in lessons.

## Principle 4:

### Student voice

Involving students in decisions that impact on them can benefit their emotional health and wellbeing by helping them to feel part of the school and wider community and to have some control over their lives (*Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing*). We are committed to providing structures that allow students to play an active role in developing a mentally healthy school.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

#### School

Pastoral staff make a strong contribution to senior leaderships' understanding of student need by being an advocate for students.

It is our intention to embed Mental Health Ambassadors into the school to help be a voice to other children on the topic of mental health.

We have a variety of other roles in school that are a chance for children to have a voice and take a lead, including play leaders, sports leaders, and Pupil Voice. Pupil Voice representatives are chosen from each class and bring the discussion points from each class' class assembly to a central meeting for discussion. This gives children a sense of ownership and belonging which brings improved mental health.

Within Circle time staff create an environment that encourages all students to share their views and experiences knowing that they will be respected and valued by their peers.

News reporters go around the school each week to hear from all year groups on what they have been learning that week. Children are encouraged by seeing their comments in the parent's weekly newsletter.

Each class has a worry box where children can put their worry or simply their name. This will get followed up by someone from the SAFS team or the class TA.

#### Community

Children from Key Stage 2 participate in Youth Speak competitions, which develops confidence in planning and delivering talks on a topic they have had to research. The children take great pride in their presentations.

Our Mental Health Ambassadors will take part in community events when established.

## **Nationally**

We access information from Young Minds ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)) for young people's views relating to their mental health, support and what they have found helpful. This is co-ordinated and kept up to date by our Mental Health Ambassador Team.

## Principle 5:

### Identifying Need and Monitoring Impact

In line with our ethos of celebrating diversity and the successes of the individual we are keen to identify need in order to provide the appropriate supportive environment for students to thrive. We aim to identify children and young people with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent them developing.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

#### School

##### Identifying need:

All staff are committed to making and maintaining positive relationships with the children in their care. This ensures that they are able to notice changes in behaviour patterns or attitude which may need support. All staff make use of Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) to record any such information so that it can be accessed centrally and inform support where necessary.

Staff and student surveys to assess awareness and confidence in mental health issues. The need for further assessments can be identified and coordinated by the SENDCO who may employ Individual Education Plans (Known in school as MY PLANS) or Individual Social and Emotional Wellbeing Plan.

Leadership team are committed to listening to parents and carers and will ensure they are available to hear and respond to concerns as they arise. In addition, SAFS team use a range of parent questionnaires to assess need with individual children to inform targeted interventions.

The SEND register can help in identifying which students would benefit from additional intervention and resource, alongside their My Plans.

Attendance records and records of internal and external exclusions provide a source of information to identify students that may benefit from additional support.

We openly encourage students to let staff know when they have concerns, we provide a variety of ways for students to seek help including worry boxes in every classroom, checked daily by the teacher. The introduction of Mental Health Ambassadors will also help signpost children with concerns to the SAFS team.

## **Monitoring Impact**

Due to the positive relationships staff have with the children, they are able to notice the small improvements in mental health of children in the class after an intervention time. Children who have received support are more engaged in the classroom and are consequently more able to learn.

We are starting to use the Boxhall Profile to measure the effectiveness of a range of our specific interventions within the school, such as Lego and Animal therapies and Nurture groups. Each intervention has a start point and next steps for the duration of the intervention. Staff members keep weekly records which are shared within the SAFS team to ensure best care for the child.

Timid to Tiger course has beginning and end questionnaires which then generate a report that staff can analyse in order to make next steps for child.

Staff refer to attendance records to monitor whether intervention groups have had a positive impact on attendance levels.

## **Community**

As a school we work closely in partnership with our community colleagues to ensure we are actively identifying student mental health needs and monitoring the effectiveness of our actions and support.

EH4MH provide training, consultation and supervision to school staff regarding mental health and the promotion of ways for the whole school to keep mentally healthy. This is accessed by all staff.

## **National**

Being part of the SHEU survey network helps the school have a better understanding of pupil's behaviour and perceptions of the school environment.

The Student and Family Support team and Mental Health Champion use 'Measuring and Monitoring Children and Young People's Mental Wellbeing: A toolkit for schools and colleges' (Public Health England and Evidence Based Practice Unit) for information on appropriate tools to measure impact of interventions.

## Principle 6:

### Working With Families

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. We recognise the important role the family plays in influencing the emotional health and wellbeing of students in the school.

We also recognise that working in partnership may sometimes mean providing support and resources to those families that are struggling with meeting life's challenges.

**These are some examples of how this looks in our school;**

#### School

Parent Support Advisor who is available on a drop in basis to discuss any worries with parents as they arise. We are in the process of setting up a weekly drop in coffee session where members of the SAFS team are present.

All classes have an open door policy for parents along with regular parents evenings set to discuss all aspects of children's learning and wellbeing. We also have a Community Room which aims to provide for, partner with, and progress relationships with families.

From Timid to Tiger; this is a programme offered to all families designed to support parents to help their child approach life more confidently, and learn to tolerate their worries and fears.

Parent/Carer information on our website with useful online and local resources and a twitter account to keep parents informed.

The Normal Magic and 10-a-day choices for mental health parent workshops, provided in school by EH4MH.

Evidence shows that being part of a community and feeling a sense of belonging is good for our mental health. We have an active and successful PTFA who meet regularly to help raise money for the school and are a way of communicating between staff and parents. The PTFA have funded a selection of books to support the awareness and teaching of mental health in the school.

Family SEAL workshops for all parents in year 2, which talks about all the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning in a relaxed environment.

Parenting groups and support using the Solihull system.

Work alongside families using the Team Around the Family approach, so there is a united approach from school and home, which is bespoke to support the individual family.

Parents are encouraged to be on the governing body of the school, and play an active part in interviews for teaching staff, along with having a voice on other matters that arise.

## **Community and National**

We provide information to parents and help sign post them to appropriate support and advice through the information on our website which is regularly updated as well as offering advice sessions with our Parent Support Advisor. With the development of our Community Room, we aim to run monthly information sessions/workshops for our parents and weekly 'drop-in' coffee mornings.

There are several online resources and information from national charities and organisations regarding mental health and well-being. Details are provided on the school website.

# Principle 7:

## Staff Development & Well Being

'Well-being in schools starts with the staff; they are the front line of this work...' (ncb Framework for promoting well-being and responding to mental health in schools).

At Littletown Primary Academy we place the wellbeing and development of staff as a high priority, believing all school staff play a vital role in developing and supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of the students.

Principle 7 is split into two sections; the first is how staff are provided with the knowledge and understanding of students' wellbeing and the second looks at how the school supports the development of staff wellbeing.

**These are examples of how it looks in our school;**

### Staff Training/Development

By promoting Early Help for Mental Health Consultation and Supervision our staff are able to reflect on individual young people's mental health and particular themes, as well as promoting culture change across the whole school.

All staff have received training in mental health delivered by EH4MH. This is greatly helping the school develop a much deeper understanding of mental health which is helping us break down stigma and bring about whole school culture change. All staff are now familiar with Normal Magic, and the 10-a-day choices towards balancing our mental health.

Staff have had training on the Mental Health Strategy to ensure all staff know their roles and responsibilities in this whole school approach.

Staff are able to call on the expertise of School Nurses, Educational Psychologists and behaviour support team to help them support individual needs of children where necessary. Some members of staff have also received PiPs training, again, to support needs of individual children.

All staff have yearly appraisals, to talk about and identify areas for development, including mid-year reviews to monitor targets.

When necessary, staff are able to access support from occupational health, and have return to work conversations, to ensure smooth transitions after a period of absence.

## Staff wellbeing

We have introduced a staff well-being committee that promotes and organises staff outings and activities, including socials and charity events. They also help to make the school environment a warm and inclusive place to work by providing a 'wellbeing box' in staff toilets, and celebrating each other's birthdays and special occasions.

The SAFS team are available for staff to come and talk to anytime, and support is given where necessary to enable all staff to be equipped for work.

All staff are encouraged to use and model the 10-a-day positive choices for mental health as a whole school approach.

Staff are given time to do their work and encouraged to maintain a healthy work life balance. In addition, staff are reminded and encouraged to take breaks at work, and the Community Room is offered at lunchtimes for staff who want to take a break in a quieter, more relaxed venue.

There is a culture within school of recognising and valuing each other, and this is maintained through line managers including Key Stage Leaders. In addition, the first 10 minutes of every weekly staff meeting is set aside for pastoral conversation '*what has gone well this week? Are we ok?*'

## Principle 8:

### Targeted Support

The school recognises that many behavioural and emotional problems can be supported within the school, with advice from external professionals, and that some students may need more intensive support at times. Littleton Primary Academy has a range of potential interventions to support individual's needs, as well as links with external agencies.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

#### School

Our SENDCO has recently increased their hours to support students and staff in the identification of need for support. The initial feedback from staff is that this has been really helpful in identifying early signs of difficulties in students and being able to quickly identify specific interventions to support students in school.

**An example of this is;** students being identified as experiencing anxiety that is impacting on their learning, strategies being offered to the teaching staff and parents being offered the 'From Timid to Tiger' parent programme.

To name all of our interventions would be a very long list, here are some examples that have been identified as really helpful by our student and parent voice;

Nurture groups & Fast Track Nurture groups.

Young Carers support group for children who have been recognised as having a caring role at home.

Forest school.

Animal therapy/ time with school guinea pigs

Lego therapy

Art Therapy- TA's recently trained in delivery of Art Therapy

School Parental Support Advisor.

Lunch time Nurture club for children having a difficult time.

Introduction of Mental Health Ambassadors.

Play leaders/mediators trained to deal with conflict resolution in the playground overseen by staff.

Fun fit.

Adjusted timings and timetables for particular children who need a smoother start or end to the day.

Pre-teaching lessons for targeted children to help increase confidence when they access the learning in their classroom.

Book Club, to read to children who would benefit from hearing and enjoying stories in a small group environment.

My Plans and Social, Emotional and well-Being Plan

Sensory room which all young people can access as needed/Using sensory strategies from Occupational therapy (when an individual child has had a sensory assessment), such as sensory bags in every year group area which can be used by individual children with a timer when needed.

Normal Magic

## **Community**

At Littletown Primary Academy we work closely with our Community Colleagues in Health and Social Care. We regularly access consultation with EH4MH to think about individual children's emotional health and wellbeing needs.

Please look on our website for a list of resources and initiatives we link with to offer targeted support, listed under 'Who to talk to, if you're worried', below are some of those students and parents have really found helpful.

We have recently developed a partnership with our School Nurse and Parent Support advisor who are co-delivering the From Timid to Tiger parent programme. This has been offered to parents of children presenting with heightened levels of anxiety in school.

Social, Emotional, Mental Health, Wellbeing and Behaviour Team (Previously the Behaviour Support Team) provide consultation and advice to all school staff around identified individual student's needs.

**There are many national resources and services outlined on our website**

## Principle 9:

### Communication

In Littletown Primary Academy we identify that clear and robust systems of communication both within the school and reaching out into the school community, are key components to providing a mentally healthy school.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

#### School

We communicate within the staff group through staff and departmental meetings and emails, including having mental health as a standing agenda item at staff meetings so that staff are aware of what support is available within school. This includes refreshers of key themes / training topics. Displays around the school and in the staff room ensure that messages and key information are communicated well.

In line with our school ethos, we are always thinking of diverse ways of promoting good communication, in enabling and encouraging students and staff to feel more comfortable to communicate feelings and seek help when they need it. We use a wide variety of approaches including; non-verbal systems such as suggestion boxes, cue cards, internet communication via emails, our website and social media.

We communicate to our students through class time, and assembly time along with individual conversations. We have daily assembly times covering a range of themes.

At Key Stage 1 we use 'Worry Monsters' to help students feel more comfortable about communicating their thoughts and fears and have worry boxes in each classroom across the school.

Staff have received training in communication by both Mental Health England, and EH4MH.

We inform all parents of the school's obligations and responsibilities to safeguard children during their information session when their children start at the school.

Staff are aware of school processes for flagging up which students are particularly vulnerable and ensuring the right support is given in school and sought outside of school where relevant, this process of responsibility is reinforced in staff meetings and in staff diaries/ handbooks.

## **Community**

The school website has links of 'Who to talk to' for a range of different issues, with information relevant to students and parents.

We communicate to our parents through our website, newsletters, emails, parent teacher evenings, information evenings & the school twitter account.

## **National**

We use resources from national organisations visually in the school, via display boards, website and newsletters.

We promote Childline – helpline and online resources ([www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)).

We promote the NSPCC campaign Pantasauras/ Let's Talk Pants ([www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/)).

Heads Together - promoting the benefits for mental health of talking about difficult things ([www.headstogether.org.uk](http://www.headstogether.org.uk)).

Time to Change – movement to end mental health discrimination ([www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)).

**Littletown Primary Academy's Mental Health policy was guided by Public Health England's key documents:**

***"Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper" (2017)***

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

***"Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school approach" (2015)***

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/414908/Final\\_EHWP\\_draft\\_20\\_03\\_15.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWP_draft_20_03_15.pdf)

***"Future in Mind" (2015)***

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/martin-mcshane-14/>

**In Addition the Policy has been informed by;**

***National Children's Bureau "A Whole School Framework for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. School Leaders Resource"***

<https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20School%20Well%20Being%20Framework%20Leaders%20Resources%20FINAL.pdf>

**Heads Together, Mentally Healthy Schools; A Whole-School Approach**

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/>

**IPPR The Progressive Policy Think Tank, Craig Thorley, 2016**

<https://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/further-proof-of-the-crisis-in-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health>