



	<p>At First Steps Childcare, we aim to provide positive mental health and well-being for all at our setting (children, staff, parents, and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children’s mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement.</p>
	<p>First Steps Childcare is a place for children to experience a nurturing and supporting environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some it will be a 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 is to also ensure that children can manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health and who they can talk to for help and support.</p>
	<p>Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a nursery where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children are valued</li> <li>• Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe</li> <li>• Children feel able to talk with trusted adults about their feelings</li> <li>• Positive mental health is promoted and valued</li> </ul> <p>In addition to children’s wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.</p>
	<p>Definition of mental health and wellbeing The World Health Organisation describes mental health as "a state of wellbeing", in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". Mental health and wellbeing are not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/adults to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feel confident in themselves</li> <li>• be able to express a range of emotions appropriately</li> <li>• be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others</li> <li>• cope with the stresses of everyday life</li> <li>• manage times of stress and be able to deal with change</li> <li>• learn and achieve</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Promoting positive mental health</b> We take a setting approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy, and successful and to prevent problems before they arise. This encompasses seven aspects: 1. Creating an ethos, policies, and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.</p>

	<p>2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.</p> <p>3. Helping children to be resilient learners.</p> <p>4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental Health.</p> <p>5. Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.</p> <p>6. Effectively working with parents and carers.</p> <p>7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.</p> <p>We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.</p>
	<p><b>Supporting children’s positive mental health</b></p> <p>We believe that the nursery has a key role in promoting children’s mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. We have developed a range of strategies and approaches including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaigns to raise awareness of mental health</li> <li>• 1:1 time with keyworker</li> <li>• Emotional wellbeing charts where children can register how they are feeling</li> <li>• Resources to help children to talk/share their worries or concerns</li> <li>• Staff training</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Teaching about mental health and emotional well-being</b></p> <p>We teach children about health, safety, and wellbeing through our practices, policies, and procedures. We endeavour to minimise hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment. We help the children learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To recognise, name, and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings.</li> <li>• Simple strategies for managing feelings.</li> <li>• How their behaviour affects other people.</li> <li>• About empathy and understanding other people’s feelings.</li> <li>• To cooperate and problem solve.</li> <li>• To motivate themselves and persevere.</li> <li>• About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing family, pets or toys).</li> <li>• Who to go to if they are worried.</li> <li>• About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable.</li> <li>• How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, whom to go to and how to get help.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs</b></p> <p>Our approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.</li> <li>• Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.</li> <li>• Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.</li> <li>• Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.</li> <li>• Monitor, review, and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated.</li> </ul>

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

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