



Well-being Policy

Purpose of the policy

We believe that well-being is the foundation for healthy development and learning. We prioritise children's well-being as the most important element of our provision. This policy defines Wildwood Nature School's approach to well-being and the specific ways in which we ensure the well-being of the children who attend the school, the members of staff who work there and the families of the children attending the school.

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1. What do we mean by well-being?

Well-being is the state of being comfortable, content, healthy and thriving. The [World Health Organisation](#) defines well-being as "A positive state experienced by individuals...Well-being encompasses quality of life and the ability of people...to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose."

At Wildwood Nature School, we focus on various aspects of well-being:

- Emotional well-being - the ability to feel, recognise and express emotions as they arise;
- Mental well-being - when someone is generally in a good relationship with the world around them. They have a clear understanding of themselves, other people, and their

life. They can be flexible and adjust when situations change and can tolerate healthy amounts of stress without becoming overwhelmed. There are many factors affecting mental health, including one's biography, biology and experience of trauma;

- Physical well-being - being fit, healthy and able to do the things they want to do such as running, climbing, dancing etc. It also means being comfortable in one's own body and enjoying their body;
- Social well-being - the ability to navigate and build relationships and interact with others in a healthy and meaningful way. Feeling a sense of belonging to one's community;
- Spiritual well-being - having a connection to something greater and understanding one's own relationship to spirituality;
- Well-being of the self - having a strong sense of self (i.e. knowing who they are as a person), good self-esteem (liking who they are and feeling competent to do the things they want to do), having power and agency over their own life, and a sense of meaning and purpose;
- Creative well-being - feeling freedom to create in all areas of life, finding inspiration and being intellectually stimulated;
- Environmental well-being - feeling connected to nature and the living environment in which one lives;
- Civic well-being - contributing to society, being of service and helping to make the world a better place.

2. Children's well-being

This section describes the different ways in which we support children's well-being and how well-being is woven into the fabric of our school. We've created our own well-being curriculum (see below) that teaches children about all of the aspects of well-being described above and how they can take active control over their own well-being. As well as our well-being curriculum, there are various ways in which we support children's well-being at Wildwood Nature School:

Key person system

We think the Early Years key person system, where each child has a particular adult who is focussed on supporting their needs, learning and communicating with their families, is excellent. That is why we have decided to have a key person system all the way through our primary school.

Each child will have a key person. This adult will be the person who supports them while they settle, who builds a relationship with them and their parents, and who keeps an overview of their learning and development. The adult will also have regular 1:1 check-ins

with each child to find out about their well-being, relationships with peers, and anything that might be bothering them at home or at school. In this way, the key person will be able to quickly identify any issues or concerns that need dealing with and that might not be apparent when observing and interacting them with others. This also greatly supports how we safeguard children from harm (see our [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)).

It ensures that each child will form a close, trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school, which we believe is a necessity in order for young children to feel safe and secure while at school. They will also be taught by other adults and have lots of interactions with all of the teaching staff at Wildwood Nature School, so they will have the opportunity to develop trusting relationships with other adults too.

Our approach to behaviour

At Wildwood Nature School, we have taken quite a different approach to behaviour than most conventional schools. We have reframed behaviour to understand all expressions of behaviour as a communication of unmet needs. Our [Behaviour Policy](#) describes the ways in which we always respond to children with compassion and an attempt to meet their needs, while still ensuring the safety and well-being of all children in our care.

We use the methods of conflict resolution restorative justice to repair any harm and find constructive ways to move forward. The key focus of how we respond to incidents of stressed behaviour is that children always know that their behaviour never impacts upon the quality of their relationships with their trusted adults; response and resolution is always within the context of relationship, whether with adults or their peers. We believe this approach treats children with the respect and dignity that they deserve and contributes to their overall well-being.

How we learn

We have also taken quite a different approach to teaching and learning at Wildwood Nature School. We believe children learn best when they have control over what and how they are learning. Our topic-based cross-curricular projects afford children this freedom and control to follow their own avenues of interest and decide how they want to learn and present their learning. They are supported and guided throughout the process by their teachers. This nurtures children's natural curiosity and creativity and ensures they are intellectually stimulated and challenged.

Much of the learning time at Wildwood Nature School takes place outside in nature. This supports not only their connection to nature, but also the flexibility with which their minds respond to their environment (read more about the theory of 'Loose Parts' and compound flexibility [here](#)). Our commitment to following the Forest School principles and ensuring

there is a significant portion of the day dedicated to free play, lays important foundations for both learning and well-being.

Community

A sense of belonging to one's community is another key component of well-being and one that we take very seriously. Our ethos at Wildwood Nature School is built around community. The fact that we are a very small school means that children know all the other children and adults in the school very well. We also place a great emphasis on building the family community (see below), so that children know each other's families as well.

We hold regular meetings with the children and teachers. The aim of these is to build community, teach children the skills of navigating decision-making and consensus-building, to give children a sense of agency over how the school is run, and to let them know that each of their voices has a place in our school community. It contributes to a sense of belonging and a deeper understanding of democracy and civic duty which all support well-being.

Wildwood Nature School also actively engages with the local community in various ways. We want our children to know that contributing to the local community and actively helping to make it a better place is a fundamental aspect of being part of a community. Being of service and giving back not only helps others, but is also important for one's own self-esteem and well-being.

3. Our well-being curriculum

We have expanded upon the Statutory Guidance for PSHE to include the most current research into emotions, neuroscience, trauma, well-being and spirituality. Our well-being curriculum is a core component of our provision and as well as being taught during discrete circle times at the beginning and end of each day, will be woven into every aspect of the school day, including how our teachers interact with the students and the cross-curricular topic projects. We believe that children's emotional needs and well-being come first and are the foundation for learning.

Our well-being curriculum is closely linked to our [Behaviour Policy](#), which details how we are putting our student's emotional needs at the forefront of how we operate. Our well-being curriculum is also closely linked to our [Relationships Policy](#), which describes our approach to Protected Characteristics. Our curriculum actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. As with the other elements of our well-being curriculum, these values help to form the foundation of how we operate as a school and are woven into all of our interactions and teaching.

In addition to all the aspects included in the PSHE Statutory Guidance (physical health, mental health, relationships and living in the wider world), our curriculum will also teach children:

- how to recognise and feel sensations and emotions in their bodies;
- how to name and describe different emotions and experiences;
- how to communicate their needs and emotions effectively;
- how to understand emotions in others and practise compassion;
- how to resolve conflicts using Giraffe language (Nonviolent Communication);
- an understanding of the different parts of the brain and how emotions, mindfulness, well-being and learning are linked with brain activity;
- various movement, mindfulness and breathing techniques to support them to become aware of their emotions, bodies and reactions;
- self-awareness, motivation and how we learn;
- secular ethics, problem-solving and democracy;
- to understand how spirituality has been expressed in world religions and other ways, and to help them understand their own relationship to spirituality.

These components will be taught using a variety of techniques including storytelling, drama activities, movement, role-play, yoga, dance, mindfulness, play, sharing through partner and group work, rhythm, music, singing and journaling, mostly while outdoors in nature.

We use the [Kapow Primary](#) scheme of work for PSHE & RSE to support our planning for well-being and to ensure coverage of the Statutory Guidance.

We also use the [MindUp](#) curriculum as a resource to support the teaching of mindfulness, emotions and the brain. *Based firmly in neuroscience, MindUP teaches the skills and knowledge children need to regulate their stress and emotion, form positive relationships, and act with kindness and compassion.*

4. Staff well-being

We also prioritise the well-being of our staff. We know how hard teachers work to ensure the best outcomes for the children they teach, but this can be draining for the teachers themselves. Teachers cannot do their best to support children to learn if they feel stressed, overworked and uninspired. So we offer our staff an annual wellness benefit to use for therapy or counselling, as well as offering regular yoga classes and other wellness activities to support them to feel well. We also believe that working outdoors, with a supportive team, and in a creative way that is nourishing for children, is also nourishing for the adult soul too.

To ensure that our teaching staff feel supported, they will have 1:1 supervision meetings with the head of school each half term. This will be an opportunity for teachers to share any work-related issues or concerns and talk through how they are feeling in terms of their stress levels and mental health. If additional support measures are needed to be put in place

to ensure that teachers feel their best to teach our children, we will be able to act on these quickly rather than waiting for problems to arise.

5. Well-being for our family community

At Wildwood Nature School, families are intimately involved with their children's learning and know their children's teachers well. We believe this supports both the children's and families' well-being. Family members are often invited to join their children and see how they are learning, as well as to share their own particular skills and interests with the school community. It is also hugely beneficial for teachers to have regular communication with children's parents, since they are the experts when it comes to their children, and the more our teachers know about each child, the better able they are to support them and ensure their well-being.

We also want to support our families and act like an extended family, so that when hard times occur, as they so often do, our school is a source of help, relief, sustenance or whatever else is needed, not just for the child but for all members of the family. We do this by organising regular events for families, ensuring regular communication, and having a family room where parents can stay after dropoff to chat with each other and build relationships with the other families in our community.

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