



Canon Barnett
Primary School



Mental Health Policy

Approved: 26th April 2022
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Mental Health & Well-Being Policy

Mental health is 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. (World Health Organization)

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. We know we are 'first class' at supporting children with social emotional and mental health needs, but there is always more we can do. This policy helps aid consistency of approach and equality of provision for our pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By the age of fourteen, a half of all mental health problems are established in a person. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health, their peers and parents/carers
 - Provide staff with support for managing their own mental health and wellbeing

Key Members of Staff for mental health and inclusion

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Sarah Jane Bellerby – Designated Safeguarding Lead, LAC lead, mental health lead, mental health first aider
- Rebekah Greenslade – SENDCO, Inclusion lead (including behaviour) safeguarding lead, mental health first aider
- Inji Ali – Learning Mentor

- Haleema Hoque – Parent support worker
- Roxy Bugler – school counsellor
- Ella Deeks – Play therapist

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to a member of the lead team in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection officers. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Inclusion team and the HT.

Mental Health Champion

All staff should be mental health champions, but it is important for the staff to have a named person to maintain the importance of mental health issues and to champion their interest. A member of staff will be agreed each two years by self-nomination and an interview process by the Inclusion Team. This role will be to champion mental health for the school community, not to be directly responsible for it. The role will include promotion of well-being materials; being a 'listening ear'; acting as a signpost for other services or professionals; relaying ideas and information to senior staff that could further improve wellbeing in school; having oversight of school improvement plans to ensure that mental health promotion has a key place; help to reduce barriers to mental health in school by promoting positive language in relation to mental health.

Staff wellbeing and mental health

The school should foster a culture where staff wellbeing and mental health is recognised as important. A whole school action plan should ensure that procedures are followed to protect the staff members, and support them to manage their mental health. Training will be offered to all staff on a regular basis and wellbeing and mental health will feature in the weekly staff meeting. Professional development and training should address the stigma that can sometimes prevail when a member of staff is mentally unwell. Senior members of staff are mental health first aiders and are trained to approach staff about their mental health and where to signpost them for support.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Advice for staff on managing any associated behaviours
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will use guidance and resources from Heads Together; Mentally Healthy Schools website <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/> to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Resources such as Anna Freud Centre's campaign 'You're Never Too Young to Talk Mental Health' are useful for assemblies, Y5/6 debate and PSHE lessons.

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/youre-never-too-young-to-talkmental-health/>

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil, or a parent/carer is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with a member of our Inclusion Team, or our mental health and emotional wellbeing champion. •

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits • Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Managing disclosures

A pupil or parent may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil or parent chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively see appendix E.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing on a pupil communication form or by email to the HT and held on the pupil's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date

- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps This information should be shared with the Headteacher, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

The person who brings the disclosure to the HT or senior member of staff, also has the right to know the outcome for the pupil, or parent (where appropriate). This may just be an assurance that help was sought, or that the child is now receiving some support in school.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually a member of the Inclusion team, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support.

We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. Parents must always be informed if a child is self harming, talking of self harm, saying they are being bullied, bullying others, or expressing low mood.

We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection officers, Sarah Jane Bellerby (DSL), or Rebekah Greenslade must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.

- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse) Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling
- Training in Peer Support (e.g. Anna Freud Centre resources and training)

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Some good websites for staff who wish to learn more about mental health are:

<https://www.minded.org.uk/> <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/training/> <https://www.cwmt.org.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/children-incare/emotional-well-being-of-children-in-care/> <https://www.adoptionuk.org/campaigns>

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more pupils. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with our Inclusion team, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Concerns for immediate welfare of a parent and/or child If the school's DSL are unavailable then contact the Children's Services Professional Line on 02073645006.