

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN SCHOOL POLICY

Introduction

Good mental health is a state of wellbeing 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 his or her community. (World Health Organisation).

At our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students. Our school is committed to embedding and promoting a whole school approach to emotional health, wellbeing and resilience. Staff are trained and children are supported and listened to.

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 developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health. Since the pandemic mental health issues have increased according to a government report rates of probable mental disorder in children and young people have increased between 2017 and 2021 (rates identified in 2020 were similar to 2021). In 6 to 16 year olds, rates had increased from 11.6% to 17.4%, among 17 to 19 year olds, rates had increased from 10.1% to 17.4%.

Aims and Objectives

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health and that mental health can be an indicator of abuse (see safeguarding policy)
- Staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share and escalate their concerns appropriately.
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers.
- All children and young people feel listened to, valued and respected.
- All staff recognise and know how to deal with self harm. School protocol attached
- Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child or young person's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Responsibilities

Governors

There is a designated Wellbeing governor who is also the designated Safeguarding lead governor.

Lead members of staff

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

Abigail Speight: Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead (Reporting to Deputy Headteacher - Inclusion).

Responsible for implementing the policy and for developing detailed procedures in the line management of the appointed person.

Clare Warburton: Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Lead
Caroline Gray: Sanctuary Coordinator and Lead First Aider
Karuna Nagrani: School Counsellor
Heads of Year

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child or young person should speak to the designated mental health and wellbeing lead or the child's HoY in the first instance this can be face to face or via email. If there is a fear that the child or young person is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated safeguarding lead. If the student 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 Abigail Speight the Designated Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead or Caroline Gray Sanctuary Coordinator.

Parent/Carer

Parents/carers will be contacted if there is a safety concern for the child/young person.

Student records/Individual care plans

Records will be kept on individuals causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the student, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a student's condition.
- Special requirements and precautions.
- Medication and any side effects.
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency.
- The role the school can play.

Teaching about mental, emotional and physical health and well being

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE programme.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow DfE Guidance to ensure mental, emotional and physical health and well being is taught in a safe and sensitive manner, which helps rather than harms.

Aspects now included and taught in Health and Wellbeing, which are no longer part of RSE:

- Reflect upon the physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty.
- Understand the biological aspects of reproduction.
- Be aware of the need for preventative health care and know what this involves.

Some students are targeted to attend specific tutor time sessions in the sanctuary around mental health, exam stress/anxiety and motivation.

Assemblies will cover throughout the academic year a range of mental health and wellbeing topics. Wellbeing days/weeks will be implemented into the school calendar to raise awareness and promote mental health and wellbeing.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

Below is an overview of the services that we use and promote.

An annual student wellbeing survey will be conducted to identify any common themes that can trigger poor mental health and wellbeing as well as identifying students who may need targeted support. The survey will also identify what the school is doing well to support students and areas it needs to improve.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH): provide assessments, support and treatment for children experiencing moderate to severe mental health problems. The service works to provide students with a greater knowledge of their condition and improve coping techniques. We have a Community Mental Health Nurse and CAMHs outreach worker who comes into the school and carries out assessments on students who have had referrals made about them either through staff or parents/carers. She can then advise on a plan of action for the students to be referred to their services for an assessment and then advises us on which outreach service the student is best suited to and for us to make this contact with those services.

Mental Health Schools Team: Biddenham is part of the MHST. Trainee therapists supported by CAMHS schools team work within our setting once a week to offer individuals support such as 'worry management' and 'Low intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy'. They also run small group workshops around topics such as self esteem and exam anxiety.

Bedford Open Door: committed to offering an accessible, confidential and professional counselling service to young people. Their aim is to enable young people to manage their own lives with confidence and safety. They provide the resources for students to deal with distress, achieve healthy emotional and physical development and sustain education, training and employment.

Aquarius: Aquarius Bedfordshire is a young people's drug and alcohol service covering Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. Aquarius work with young people aged 5-18 years. They are part of CAN, a drug, alcohol and homelessness charity which has services across Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire.

School Nursing Service: we have a NHS nurse, Laura Russell, who is available to the students via referral through Caroline Grey to talk about any concerns the students may have such as confidence, relationships, bullying, sexual health, self-harming or exam stress or anxiety issues.

Brook/Terrence Higgins Trust: Brook has been putting young people's health and wellbeing first for 50 years. They give information on contraception, emergency contraception, pregnancy testing, screening for infections, termination referrals.

CHUMS: CHUMS Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Service for Children and Young People provides therapeutic support in a variety of ways. CHUMS use a number of outcome measures to evidence positive change which are Children and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (CYP IAPT) compliant.

Sanctuary: The students, in addition, have an on-site service to 'drop in' during break times and lunchtime. Students may also be asked to attend specifically during tutor time. The sanctuary runs a variety of programmes to support the wellbeing of our students or acts as a place they may need 'time out'.

These areas of support will be displayed in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum and

during assemblies/tutor time/PSHE. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of students seeking help by ensuring they 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

There are often warning signs which indicate a child or young person is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs are taken seriously and staff observing any of them should communicate their concerns with Abigail Speight the mental health and emotional well being lead or any of the safeguarding team. While not exhaustive, the list below details possible warning signs as follows:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Aggression
- 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
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

If you wish to receive further information on specific mental health issues please see Abigail Speight.

Managing disclosures

A child or young person may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend/sibling to any member of staff so all staff have been briefed/trained on how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend/sibling 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 the focus should be of the child or young person's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the child or young person's confidential file. This written record should include:

Date of disclosure

- 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 designated Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead Abigail Speight, Caroline Gray or the Safeguarding team who will store the record appropriately and offer

support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

Staff will be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary to pass on concerns about a child or young person, then they should discuss with the child or young person:

- Who they are going to talk to?
- What they are going to tell them?
- Why they need to tell them?

Information about a child or young person should not be shared without first telling them. Ideally their consent should be received, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent if students are up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead Abigail Speight, Caroline Gray or one of the Safeguarding team. This helps to safeguard the emotional well-being of the member of staff as they are no longer solely responsible for the student. It also ensures continuity of care in the absence of that member of staff and provides an extra source of ideas and support. This should be explained and discussed with the student along with who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents/carers must always be informed if there is a safety concern, the young people may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. If this is the case, the young person should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents/carers. We should always give a child or young person the option of us informing a parent 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead - Clare Warburton must be informed immediately.

Working with parents and carers

Where it is considered appropriate to inform parents/carers of a disclosure, staff will always seek to be sensitive in approach and will consider on a case by case basis the following points:

- Should 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? (parents/carers, child or young person, other members of staff)
- What are the aims of the meeting?

The school accepts that, on learning of their child's issues, parents/carers may be upset or surprised and may respond negatively during the first conversation. The school understands that (within reason) and will always seek to give the parent/carer time to reflect.

As it can be difficult to 'take in' information while coming to terms with unexpected news, the school will provide parents/carers with leaflets/information to take away in addition to highlighting sources of further support aimed specifically at parents/carers - e.g. parent/carer helplines and forums.

The school will provide a contact point for parents/carers if they have further questions and will consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call as parents/carers often have many questions.

Each meeting will finish with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting will be kept on the child's confidential record.

Communicating with parents/carers

Parents/carers often welcome support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents/carers the school will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website.
- Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to and how to arrange 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/carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings such as parental engagement day, parents' evenings, transition evenings and open evenings.
- Keep parents/carers 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/siblings

When a child or young person is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends/siblings.

Friends/siblings often want to support but do not know how best to do it. The school will seek to support friends/siblings and will consider what is most appropriate on a case by case basis. Support will be provided on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting and will be informed by the views of the student who is suffering and their parents/carers with whom the school will discuss:

- What is helpful for friends/siblings to know and what they should not be told.
- How friends/siblings can best support.
- Things friends/siblings should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset.
- Warning signs that their friend/sibling may need help (e.g. signs of relapse).

Additionally the school will highlight with peers/siblings:

- Where and how to access support for themselves.
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's/sibling's condition.
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues to enable them to keep the child or young person safe.

Staff can also access the MindEd learning portal www.minded.org.uk provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

Training opportunities for key staff requiring more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of the school's performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, the school will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Staff Wellbeing

A programme for staff wellbeing is part of the staff development programme. Biddenham International School recognises that the staff are an important resource and are to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a learning and caring community. There is a relationship between healthier, more positive staff, pupil achievement and

school improvement. There are employer duties to staff that require sensitive staff policies and practice. Upon employment each staff member will be given access to the Staff Handbook, Code of Conduct Policy and other staff policies which are held in the staffroom and on the website. The purpose of this policy is to provide a document that embraces the many school practices that support staff health and wellbeing, to minimise the harm from stress and ensure that there is cohesion and progress in working towards the health and wellbeing of all staff.

Implementation of the Staff Wellbeing Policy

- Leaders will act as positive role models.
- A named Well-being Lead will ensure that the school environment continues to promote staff well-being, and alert the Head of School or Assistant Headteacher if this becomes compromised.
- Decision making processes are clearly understood and supported by staff.
- Opportunities are provided for all staff to socialise and relax with each other, in both formal and informal contexts.
- New staff are supported with an appropriate level of induction.
- Leaders will promote an open listening culture that responds quickly to problems.
- Provision of a welcoming and tidy staff room that is sensitive to issues of race, gender, homophobia, culture and disability.
- Maintenance of quality staff facilities and accommodation e.g. access to refreshment, adequate seating and toilet facilities.
- The regular and systematic monitoring of staff absences, staff/children/family relationships and the recruitment and retention of staff.
- Absence monitoring can include, when triggers are met, support meetings to explore actions and solutions between the line manager or Head of School and staff member.
- Wellbeing targets will be part of the performance management process, and opportunities will be given to meet these targets in directed time.
- Staff meetings/training will incorporate wellbeing through specific areas such as managing workload.
- Annual staff survey to recognise mental health and wellbeing concerns amongst staff that require particular advice and/or intervention.

Promoting staff wellbeing

- Lunch provided on the first staff development day of each year, subsequent days will be decided depending on the type of training being carried out.
- Positive comments made about the school and staff are shared.
- Successes are celebrated.
- Social activities are organised for staff by staff.
- Concerns are shared with line managers through regular meetings and discussions, and the operation of an open-door policy.

Stress

- Please refer to the 'Stress management policy'

When problems arise

Staff will be listened to; the school will provide support where possible and if necessary staff will be directed to external agencies e.g. Bedford Wellbeing Service

<https://bedfordshirewellbeing.nhs.uk/> Education support

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/> and Keeping Well BLMK <https://www.keepingwellblmk.nhs.uk/>

Date of Next Review: **November 2024**