

Brackenwood Infant School



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

	Name	Signature	Name	Signature
Date Adopted				
Review Date				

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Policy Statement

At Brackenwood Infant School it is our vision that all children are entitled to flourish, academically, socially, emotionally and mentally, enabling them to grow in confidence and be able to participate with confidence in everything that goes on in the wider community. It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing. The Department for Education recognises that in order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy.

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 her or his community (World Health Organization)

Brackenwood Infant School, promotes positive mental health to all stake holders. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable children and people.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. A recent report from NHS Digital showed that one in six children are experiencing mental health difficulties. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for the whole school community affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Appendix
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- SEND Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote and support positive mental health in the whole school community
- 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

Lead members of staff

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

Mr Chris Mervyn – Headteach / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Mrs Johanna Rumble – Deputy Headteacher / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Sally Thomas –SENDco / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead / Mental Health First Aider

Mrs Vicky Lamprou – ELSA / Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead / Mental Health First Aider

Mrs Annette Dickens – PSHE Co-ordinator

Mr David Warrington - Linked Governor for Wellbeing

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to a child's class teacher in the first instance or the DSL. If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL. If the child 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 DSL.

PCP's

When appropriate, Person Centred Plan's (PCP) for children causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health are drawn up by the class teacher and other professionals. They also involve the child, the parents and relevant health professionals.

For further details on this, please see Brackenwood Infant School SEND Policy.

Emotional Literacy Support Assistant - ELSA

Children could be offered 1:1 or group sessions depending on the reason why the support has been offered. The sessions will be led by a trained ELSA. Our ELSA (Mrs Lamprou) is trained through the Educational Psychology service and has to attend supervision regularly throughout her practice. Our ELSA, supports the social emotional and mental health needs of our children such as recognising and managing their emotions, raising their self-esteem, resilience or improving peer relationships. They may also need help in recovering from significant loss or bereavement and developing ways to resolve conflict effectively.

Being offered ELSA support is a positive experience and it means that the child will be offered 1:1 support from a trained professional. Any extra intervention to help children gain confidence and feel happier in themselves will in turn increase their learning potential. Each child will have their own learning preferences which will help them access resources and become independent and confident learners.

Teaching about Mental Health - Jigsaw

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our whole school developmental PSHE curriculum, Jigsaw.

The content of lessons will be determined by the needs of the cohorts we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language, and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner. We ensure that all children and staff are treated with dignity and respect.

Metacognition

Here at Brackenwood Infant School, we want our children to understand that it is okay to be stuck and to make mistakes, and that some of their best learning is done when they find things the hardest. Rather than simply praising success, we praise effort and persistence. We know that FAIL stands for First Attempt In Learning and so failure shouldn't be a scary – it's just part of the learning journey.

We believe the best thing to do is to teach children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. We try to make sure that all children encounter challenges and find some work tough! Our children recognise that effort, persistence and good teaching are what help them improve.

Signposting

We ensure that staff, children, and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. The support available within our school and local community and how to access it is outlined in our SEND Policy.

We, along with the School Nursing Team, sensitively signpost parents to sources of support during meetings and during parent events. We regularly highlight sources of support to children within our Jigsaw, PSHE curriculum.

We actively signpost parents or families to the following sources of support

- Family Toolbox <https://familytoolbox.co.uk>
- Wirral Sand Box <https://wirralsandbox.com>
- My Mind <https://www.mymind.org.uk>

- Wirral Safeguarding
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-early-help/>
- CAMHS <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk>
- Autism <https://www.autismtogether.co.uk>
- Ferries Family <https://ferriesfamilygroups.org.uk>
- Zillo Wirral <https://www.zillowirral.co.uk>

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 initially communicate their concerns to the class teacher then with our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead, Mental Health First Aiders or SENDco.

However, if a safeguarding concern is also identified, then this must be discussed without delay, with the DSL.

Possible warning signs include:

- 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, mood, or behaviour
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about wanting to hurt themselves, others, or to die
- 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
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Child on child abuse

Managing Disclosures

A child 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 child 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.

All disclosures should be reported in writing and recorded on "My Concern" which is an online reporting procedure/platform and recording database. The DSL should also be notified. For more information you can see Brackenwood Infant School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Confidentiality

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

- 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 child 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, particularly if a child is in danger or harm. In such situations, the school's safeguarding policies and practice must be applied.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, including with the Mental Health lead. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the child, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the child and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing at the earliest opportunity to enable parents and school to work together in supporting the child.

Working With Parents of Children Experiencing Mental Health Difficulties

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach.

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues. We should be accepting of this and sensitive towards parent's feelings at all times.

Further sources of information and support should be highlighted during the meeting and revisited at further meetings. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can be very helpful for parents, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should provide clear means of contacting us with further questions. Subsequent follow-up meetings or phone calls are made by staff to ensure parents feel supported in the process. Each meeting is ended with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting is kept and shared with the parent before the meeting concludes.

Working With all Parents

At Brackenwood Infant School, we believe that it is essential to develop strong partnerships with parents/families in order to support their children's emotional and mental health and we aim to:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Welcome parents/families in the morning, communicating with them in a non-judgemental and positive way
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Gather feedback from parents with online surveys about mental health and wellbeing
- Organise wellbeing trainings for parents/families
- 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 child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. In order to keep all 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 with the child who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What is helpful for friends to know
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help

Additionally, we highlight with children healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection training which includes recognising and responding to mental health issues to enable them to keep children safe.

Additionally, one member of staff has received a Senior Mental Health qualification and two others have received a Mental Health First Aider qualification. The [MindEd learning portal](#) provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 to developing situations with one or more children.

Mrs Lamprou has attended the following trainings:

- Counselling Children and Young People (Bachelor Degree in progress)
- Senior Mental Health Lead
- Mental Health First Aider
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)
- Children and Youth person's Mental Health (L2 certification)
- Emotional Literacy and Emotional Coaching
- Supporting the Emotional Needs of Children and Youth during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Bereavement Awareness

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Headteacher who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Mrs Lamprou, our Mental Health Lead.

This policy will be regularly updated to reflect personnel changes.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to one of the following persons:

Mr Chris Mervyn
Mrs Johanna Rumble
Mrs Sally Thomas
Mrs Annette Dickens
Mrs Vicky Lamprou