



Brentfield Primary School

Children of Today, Champions for Tomorrow

Mental Health Policy

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Governor Responsible	Ms. M. Ninvalle
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Next Review Date	October 2025

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1. Policy Statement

Young Minds charity reports that **one in six** children aged 5 to 16 were identified as having a probable mental health difficulty in July 2020. That could mean **up to five children in every classroom**.

Mental health issues can affect a pupil's emotional wellbeing as well as their educational attainment.

At Brentfield Primary School, we are committed to promoting a positive mental health for every member of our staff, pupil body, their families and governors. With effective policies and procedures, we endeavor to create safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly by mental health issues.

We know that everyone experiences life challenges that make us vulnerable, and at times anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view a mentally healthy school is one that has a whole-school approach to the topic of mental health and sees the mental health of its pupils, staff, and parent/carers as everybody's responsibility.

2. Aims

This policy focuses on the mental health and wellbeing of our school community. It aims to:

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in our school community.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health and wellbeing issues and support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs.
- Inform pupils, parents/carers and staff about the support they can expect from our school in respect of pupils' mental health and wellbeing and provide them with access to resources.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

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

- Nicola Harmer – Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Julie Harvey – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Sunita Rawat – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/ SENDCo/ Mental Health Lead
- Tess Adrisoejoko – Place2Be Manager (Mon-Wed)
- Sam Matthews – Family Support Manager
- Wendy Poghosyan – Welfare Officer
- Ebony Chisolm - Truesdell– PHSE/RSE Lead

All staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- discussing mental health with pupils in order to break down stigma.
- encouraging pupils to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating.

4. Warning Signs

School staff might become aware of changes in behaviour which may indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

These changes may 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 and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- 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

5. Teaching About Mental Health

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

Pupils should know:

- that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.
- that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.
- how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings.
- how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate.
- a range of healthy coping strategies
- isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support.
- that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing.
- where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online).
- it is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the issues can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of each cohort 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.

6. Managing Disclosures

At times, a pupil may choose to tell a staff member concerns that they have about their own emotions or well-being or that of a peer. All staff will respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgmental way.

Staff will listen rather than advise and their first thoughts will be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures will be recorded on CPOMS and shared with a DSL who will offer support and advice about next steps.

If there is a concern that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the school's child protection procedures will be followed. If the pupil presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies will be followed, including alerting the first aid staff, a member of SLT and contacting emergency services if necessary (see Appendix 1)

If a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Inclusion Lead, Ms Rawat.

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, a Risk Assessment and Safety Plan or Individual Healthcare Plan may be created. The development of the plan will involve the pupil, parent/carer, and relevant professionals.

7. Confidentiality

Staff will be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. They will never promise the pupil that they will keep this to themselves and will inform the pupil who they are going to talk to, what they are going to tell them and why it is important that they pass these concerns on.

8. Informing Parent/Carers

Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis. Where relevant, families will be signposted for further support. This may include an opportunity to speak with our Place2Be manager.

9. Working with Parents/Carers and the School Community

We will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote mental health and wellbeing by:

- asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support.
- informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child.
- highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.)
- informing parent/carers about the topics that children are learning about in school.
- carrying out parent workshops/information sessions via our school coffee mornings to raise awareness of mental health and well-being.

10. Training

All staff will be offered training so they:

- have a good understanding of what pupils' mental health needs are
- know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health.
- know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil in need of help.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our appraisal process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate.

11. Support for Staff

We recognise that supporting a pupil experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with this we will:

- treat mental health concerns seriously
- offer staff 'Place 2 Think' sessions with our Place2Be manager or a member of the SLT
- support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- offer an employee assistance programme via Health Assured

12. Links to Policy and Guidance

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies. It has regard for Statutory guidance including 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023 (KCSIE) and 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' 2019

This policy was written in relation to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

This policy links to following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and approved by the governing board.

Appendix 1 Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis

Is the pupil seriously injured, experiencing an acute mental health crisis (psychosis, mania, self-harm) or feeling suicidal?

