



Mental Health & Emotional Wellllbeing Policy

Ratifying Committee	Health and Safety Committee
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Review	Annually

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1.0 Policy statement

The Bridge School is committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing of all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

2 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining The Bridge School approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

3 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

4 Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of Staff and pupils, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Team Leaders
- Head's of Phase
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Health and Well-Being Co-ordinator
- Mental Health trained Lead and Deputy
- Future in Mind Co-ordinator
- PSHE Coordinator

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of staff member, in the first instance speak to Health and Well-Being Co-ordinator or Head of Phase. It is understood that staff may speak to their direct team leader who can liaise with the above staff.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil, in the first instance they should speak to the class teacher who can liaise with Head of Phase.

If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

5 Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through BEE U or another organisation, it will be included in their Medical Needs Plan and associated documents

6 Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum personalised to the understanding of the pupils.

Staff form a strong supportive and preventative factor for pupils' mental health.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing> Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Staff are also supported in education of adult mental health and can access support and information from Health Assured.

7 Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school and through our communication channels), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

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

8 Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Based Support

- The provision set out in each pupil EHCP
- Trained staff
- Staff who are focussed on pupils and their well-being and communication
- Support and strategies outlined in Behaviour Support Plans, Autism Support Plans and outcomes.
- Referrals made to other services for support for child/family
- Parent course including course to support behaviour, communication and learning.
- Sign-posting of parent/carers to family support services such as Bridge PFA or PODS or to LA Local Offer

Local Support

Bee U have a range of services that can be accessed by families to support their needs. For specific needs Bee U referral can be made if criteria is met for service

9 Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 alert class teacher who will liaise with Head of Phase. Staff should follow the school processes on alerting for any concerns or sensitive information.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

10 Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, those who have had previous access to Bee U, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and

11 Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded in line with the School Safe-guarding Policy

12 Confidentiality

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

13 Whole school approach

13.1 Working with parents/carers

The school will work closely with parents/carers regarding pupils mental health and as part of the work on all aspects of the pupils linked to their EHCP.

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

13.2 Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills through school courses or referrals to other services.
- Facilitating parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting session. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

We have a Pupil and Family Liaison Worker who is able to provide parents with bespoke support and to access services in the community.

14 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 to enable them to keep students safe. A nominated member of staff will receive professional Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

Staff have access to Health Assured Services. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. School has provided access to other training.

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 students.

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

15 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Emily Tracey.