

Barningham CEVC Primary School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Contents

- 1.0 Policy Statement
- 2.0 Scope
- 3.0 Purpose
- 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities
- 5.0 Teaching about Mental Health
- 6.0 Signposting
- 7.0 Sources or support at school and in the local community
- 8.0 Warning signs
- 9.0 Targeted support
- 10.0 Managing disclosures and confidentiality
- 11.0 Whole School Approach
 - 11.1 Working with Parents/Carers
 - 11.2 Supporting Parents/Carers
- 12.0 Training
- 13.0 Policy Review

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1.0 Policy statement

At Barningham CEVC Primary School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to 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.

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

... 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.

Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff - including non-teaching and governors - outlining Barningham CEVC Primary Schools approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies. This policy links to our policies on Anti-Bullying and Behaviour, Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy. Links with the Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a message.

3.0 Purpose

- 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.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

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

- ELSA - Kate Shelton
- Parental support - Kate Shelton
- Designated Safeguarding Lead - Stephany Hunter
- SENCO - Lynn Orchard
- Mental Health Lead - Sally Garland
- PSHE Coordinator - Stephany Hunter

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of student, in the first instance they should speak to Kate Shelton.

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

5.0 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.

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.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe.

6.0 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 (newsletters, websites), 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

7.0 Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Based Support - We have a trained ELSA. ELSAs are emotional literacy support assistants. They are teaching assistants who have had special training from educational psychologists to support the emotional development of children and young people in school. ELSAs have regular professional supervision from educational psychologists to help them in their work. ELSAs help children and young people learn to understand their emotions and respect the feelings of those around them. They provide the time and space for pupils to think about their personal circumstances and how they manage them.

Most ELSA programmes will last for 6 to 12 weeks, helping the pupil to learn some specific new skills or coping strategies. Clear programme aims (SMART targets) need to be set early on and each session has an objective - something the ELSA wants to help the pupil understand or achieve.

Local Support

In Suffolk, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the **CAMHS partnership**, a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) have three core functions:

- to deliver evidence-based interventions for mild-to-moderate mental health issues;
- support the [senior mental health lead](#) in school to introduce or develop [whole school or college approach](#) and;
- give timely advice to school staff, and liaise with external specialist service to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education.

8.0 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 (insert name of mental health first aider).

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

9.0 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, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

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 CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers.
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs;
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

10.0 Managing disclosures and confidentiality

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 confidentially on CPOMS, including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▪ Date | ▪ Nature of the disclosure & main points |
| ▪ Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made | from the conversation |
| | ▪ Agreed next steps |

This information will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

11.0 Whole school approach

Involving Pupils

The mental health of our pupils is of paramount importance. A whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, with pupil voice at its heart, is therefore key. As public health England's 8 principles to whole school mental health and wellbeing, pupil voice is an important part of a whole school approach to mental health. By involving pupils in decisions about their own mental health and wellbeing, we can ensure that our pupils feel valued, listened to and supported.

- we seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through Pupil Voice, surveys, and suggestion boxes
- we have councils and clubs run by pupils, including The Faith Council, The Learning Council and The Gardening Club, to help to promote a sense of community and togetherness amongst pupils.

11.1 Working with parents/carers

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

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.

To support parents and carers:

- we provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- have an Open Door Policy.
- supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record.

11.2 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;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community

nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; and

- Ensuring 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.

15.0 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.

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. 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 students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host 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 Stephany Hunter or Sally Garland who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is June 2025

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes.

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.