



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

This policy should be reviewed biennially and as required by legislation.		
Action	Reviewer	Date
Review	EG	Jan 2023
Approved by Chair of COM	DB	Jan 2023
Date for next internal review		Sep 2024



The Children's House

We are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all pupils, their families and members of staff. Our open culture and curriculum allows pupil's voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies, procedures, including whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils, we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all.

Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff the school's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy (includes pupil welfare)
- Health and Safety Policy
- PSHE and RSE policy
- SEN policy

Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues in pupils.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young children
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Instill a culture of staff and pupil welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms of poor mental health
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Lead staff members

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

- Ellie Grunewald – Headteacher and DSL
- Taiba Hussain – Deputy Head, DDSL
- Mihaela Zama – Assistant Head of Nursery and DSL with Coordinating Responsibilities
- Laura Powney- SENCo, Mental Health Lead & More Able Coordinator



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If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of pupil, in the first instance they should speak to the Mental Health Lead, who will consult with SLT.

If there is a concern that the pupil 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.

Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum, which follows the Jigsaw schemes of work. The content of lessons are determined by the specific ages and needs of the year group being taught but there is an emphasis on enabling all pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. We always ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

We follow the guidance issued by the DfE and use the highly recommended resources by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively. ([Programme of Study \(pshe-association.org.uk\)](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk)) Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages, together with the Jigsaw programme, supports pupils' wellbeing through an understanding of pupils' own emotions as well as those of other people and the development of healthy coping strategies.

Support at School

Support is available for children identified as being vulnerable to mental health issues. Children who are going through difficulties such as family illness, separation, bereavement, or other stressful situations are supported. The school is sensitive to the needs of the family and child and draws on guidance for relevant activities from organisations such as Winston's Wish (guidance for grieving children).

Targeted Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, 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 ensure timely and effective identification of children who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Identifying and assessing children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems
- Assessing children's wellbeing every term using the Leuven well-being and involvement scales
- Assessing wellbeing using termly self reporting pupil questionnaires
- Dedicating time at weekly staff meetings to discuss pastoral needs
- Having circle time discussions with children
- Building relationships with parents and operating an open door policy with parents

- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agreeing on an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective
- Ensuring pupils have access to pastoral care and support at school, as well as specialist services, including play therapists, speech therapists, Islington CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural issues can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Providing pupils with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns.
- Providing pupils with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it

All wellbeing concerns, however small, are logged onto our Wellbeing Manager on ISAMs. These are shared with appropriate staff and reviewed by the Headteacher.

Signposting

We ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support within the school and in the local community, and how they can access these. The school encourages open communication between adults and children so children feel comfortable sharing. As a small school every member of staff knows every pupil on site, which provides containment for children experiencing difficult emotions and the safety of a small community to seek and receive support.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 the Heads or Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

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| ▪ Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental | ▪ Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope |
| ▪ Changes in eating / sleeping habits | ▪ Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather |
| ▪ Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn | ▪ Secretive behaviour |
| ▪ Changes in activity and mood | ▪ Skipping PE or getting changed secretly |
| ▪ Lowering of involvement and academic achievement | ▪ Lateness to, or absence from school |
| ▪ Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide | ▪ Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause |
| | ▪ An increase in lateness or absenteeism |

Local Support

In Islington, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the Islington **CAMHS**, who support the emotional health and wellbeing of children, young people and families in Islington.



Managing disclosures

If a pupil 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 the ISAMs Wellbeing Manager, including:

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

This information will only be shared with the DSLs and relevant staff.

Confidentiality

The pupil will be told:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, the child protection procedures should be followed.

Working with parents/carers

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 will be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. A record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record on the ISAMs Wellbeing Manager and an Individual Care Plan is created if appropriate and linked to their profile.

Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children'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;



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- 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 are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing.

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by the pupil who is suffering and their parents.

We will discuss:

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

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

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

Staff Mental Health and Well-being

The school provides opportunities for staff to talk through any personal issues through supervision meetings and operates an open door policy to ensure staff members feel comfortable approaching members of the Senior Leadership Team with any issues. The school also subscribes to the Employee Assistance Programme run by Peninsula, which provides workplace wellbeing support through: a 24 hour employee assistance helpline; face to face counselling; a medical line and other online support. Staff are reminded of this termly, with a poster on the staffroom noticeboard.

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.

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 pupils.



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Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight 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 Laura Powney (Mental Health Co-ordinator) who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

This Policy was reviewed, amended and agreed by the Council of Management in January 2023. It will be reviewed again in one year's time.

Dawn Brindle

Agreed by _____ Chair of the Council of Management

Useful Numbers

Winston's Wish

Islington child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)

Peninsula Employee Assistance Programme

08088 020 021

020 7272 3070 (main
switchboard 24 hours)

0800 0513638