

Brinscall St John's C.E./
Methodist Primary School



Mental Health and Well-Being Policy Document

Date of policy: Autumn 2024 (under
review)

Date approved by Governing Body:

Review date: Autumn 2026

Subject leader - Mr Stephen Westwood

Mental Health and Well-Being Statement of Intent

At Brinscall St John's we understand the importance of mental health and well-being in all individuals who walk through our and we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers. We appreciate the wide scope of mental health and well-being and the many aspects of our day-to-day lives this encompasses, which enables us to develop a nurturing and supportive environment in our school where children and adults feel safe and valued.

All children and young people have the right to be educated in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health and well-being for everybody. All adults have the right to work in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health and well-being for everybody.

Brinscall St. John's recognises these needs and rights. We are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that we can and do make a difference by providing a place where all children, young people and staff feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and well-being, 'shining with the light of Jesus'.

We hope children develop a firm and mature understanding of the world they live in and continue to explore their own questions and curiosities whilst learning and that this applies to all areas of the curriculum. We believe all children require and are entitled to the basic understanding of the world they live in and should be equipped with skills to approach challenges and obstacles they will inevitably face throughout their journey through life.

Why Mental Health and Well-Being is important

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall well-being and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. It is also believed that 1 in 4 adults will experience mental health difficulties; at least half of these difficulties can be traced back to childhood. The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting the well-being of pupils and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that our pupils and staff manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils and staff learn about and understand what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

Aims

At Brinscall St John's, we recognise that all children and young people need the foundation of positive mental health to benefit fully from all the opportunities available to them.

All children, young people and adults need to:

- Know that all pupils and staff are valued
- Have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Pupils can talk to trusted adults openly about their problems without feeling any stigma
- Know that positive mental health and well-being is promoted and valued
- Know that bullying is not tolerated
- Be able to connect with others by participating in groups and teams
- Know they are capable and able to achieve
- Know they count in their world and can contribute to their community
- Know they have courage and can manage risks appropriately.

Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health
- How we prevent mental health problems
- How we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- Key information about some common mental health problems
- Where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

Definitions:

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 contribute to her or his community.'

Good quality mental health and well-being are 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

A mentally healthy environment has:

- A clear and agreed ethos and culture that accords value and respect to all
- A commitment to being responsive to children and young people's needs
- Clearly defined mental health links in school policies

- Clear guidelines for internal and external referrals
- Strong links with external agencies to provide access to support and information
- Named lead(s) for mental health promotion with the expectation that there is support and involvement and an ethos that 'mental health is everyone's business'.

At Brinscall St. John's, this responsibility will belong to and be shared between Joanna Owen (Headteacher), Stephen Westwood (Senior Teacher and Mental Health & Well-Being subject leader), Andrew Lewis (Deputy Headteacher) and Elin Rounding (Senior Teacher and SENCO).

A mentally healthy environment is a place where children and young people:

- Have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging
- Have opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- Have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- Have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Have opportunities to reflect
- Have access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- Have a right to be in an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for
- Are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times.

A mentally healthy environment is a place where staff:

- Have their individual needs recognised and responded to in a holistic way
- Have a range of strategies that support their mental health, e.g. a named person to speak to, signposting
- Have recognition of their work-life balance
- Have the mental health and well-being of the whole staff reviewed regularly
- Feel valued and have opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes
- Celebrate and recognise success
- Are able to carry out roles and responsibilities effectively
- Are provided with opportunities for CPD both personally and professionally
- Have their unique talents and skills recognised and opportunities are provided for development
- Have time to reflect
- Can access proactive strategies and systems to support them at times of emotional needs in both the short term and the long term.

A mentally healthy environment is a place where parents/carers:

- Are recognised for their significant contribution to children and young people's mental health
- Are welcomed, included and work in partnership with schools and agencies
- Are provided with opportunities where they can ask for help when needed
- Are signposted to appropriate agencies for support
- Are clear about their roles and expectations of their responsibilities in working in partnership with schools
- Opinions are sought and valued and responded to
- Strengths and difficulties are recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately.

A mentally healthy environment is a place where the whole school community:

- *Is involved in promoting positive mental health*
- *Is valued for the role it plays in promoting positive mental health*
- *Contributes towards the ethos of the school.*

Links to other policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Discipline, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

*Links with the 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**.*

Roles and responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems; such a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The school's Mental Health Team (Headteacher, Subject leader(s) and SENCO):

- *Leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health*
- *Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates*
- *Keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available*
- *Liaises with the PSHE Leader on teaching about mental health*
- *Is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services*
- *Leads on and makes referrals to services*

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families. Support can include, but is not limited to:

- *Inclusion Manager*
- *Safeguarding/Child Protection Team*
- *Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils*
- *SENCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.*
- *School nurse*
- *CAMHS core meetings to support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils.*

- Early Help Assessments completed with the support of the family to help signpost to where help can be found

As a school, we continuously review own practice and seek out additional help, resources and agencies that may be of use to our school community and family.

Supporting pupils' positive mental health and well-being

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Pupil-led Activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health

Transition Support

- Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT) support small group work such as Lego Therapy or Social Communication groups
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Yearly Transition Passports for vulnerable children
- Transition Passports available for all staff to be aware of vulnerable children's needs
- Key Adults might support secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils

Class Activities

- Worry boxes
- Class displays to promote positivity and to celebrate achievements
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class
- Classroom scripts and signposting
- Growth mindset displays
- Mental health ground rules to be discussed with classes at the start of each academic year and will be recapped frequently during PSHE lessons.

Whole School

- Assembly themes
- Using the power of reading to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience, etc. - also done through PSHE lessons
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school
- Inside Out-themed displays and resources to support children understand discuss their emotions (linked to Disney film) - done in EYFS
- My Happy Mind is used from Year One to Year Six to promote mental health and strategies (see section below)
- Anna Freud Schools in Mind resources are available and shared by the subject co-ordinator

Small Group Activities

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Nurture and intervention groups with adults
- ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) groups will be run by Sally Bhowmick (teaching assistant) to support children highlighted as needing support

- Lunch Club support
- Safe spaces for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming - e.g. use of an intervention room
- Happiness Heroes - a school council-type group who work to promote positive mental health and wellbeing throughout school. The group will be run by Stephen Westwood (subject lead).

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

- As a school, we subscribe to My Happy Mind. This is a resource that is backed by the NHS to support children in understanding their mental health and to develop strategies to cope and promote their own wellbeing. This is a scheme with a vast bank of resources and teachers will have access to lesson plans and interactive resources to aid in the teaching of mental health.
- Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems. We will use a wide range of resources to support this area of the curriculum (e.g. SCARF /Coram Life and PSHE Association).

Curriculum and organisation

At Brinscall St John's, children are encouraged to see the positive aspect of all their work and are encouraged to see the value in what they produce. Each child is encouraged to see their work and themselves as inherently valuable, as a member of the class, school and Christian family of the church. Children are encouraged to adopt a positive approach to work by:

- Following the schemes of work and resources incorporated into our curriculum for promoting mental health and well-being (e.g., SCARF /Coram Life, PSHE Association and My Happy Mind).
- Being given positives in their written and verbal feedback, as well as corrections;
- Being given achievable goals and targets;
- Having mental health and wellbeing explicitly covered as part of the curriculum;
- Having links to mental health made where appropriate through varied curricular topics;
- By being taught their intrinsic value as human beings, 'shining with the light of Jesus';
- By recognising achievement, for example through Friday worship;

Role of the subject leader

Stephen Westwood (Senior Teacher and Mental Health & Well-being subject leader) is responsible for ensuring staff are given relevant training and resources and updates are disseminated amongst staff. Individual staff are responsible for children in their care and reporting any concerns to the subject leader and other appropriate staff (through CPOMs), whilst always following the strict procedures created to safeguard children (see Safeguarding Policy). Staff are responsible for the teaching of mental health in their own classrooms and curriculum - any issues with resourcing and curriculum mapping are to be reported to the subject leader. The subject leader is responsible for the monitoring of CPOMs and ensuring appropriate action is taken. The subject leader will work closely with the headteacher (Joanna Owen) and the SENCO (Elin Rounding) to ensure information is shared appropriately and the best course of action is taken as a team.

Planning and Resources

Mental Health and Well-being will be intertwined to our whole curriculum so the pupils are aware that this is recognised, valued and important throughout every aspect of our lives. It will be

planned and taught, and on some occasions in isolation, in our PSHE sessions, using the planning format used for this subject. Within our PSHE curriculum we use resources taken from the PSHE Association and SCARF /Coram Life and use these to compliment and support our own planning. These are stored electronically and all staff have access to these and are aware of their location. Other resources are available as appropriate to each class and planning always considers the personal needs of each cohort and recognises that this will change year-on-year. Any missing resources or need for resource will be reported to the subject leader.

Early identification:

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- Working with the School Office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- Induction meetings for pupils / families joining after the Reception year
- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room, attendance and weekly Behaviour Forms / Anti-Bullying Forms
- Pupil voice taken into account through various councils and groups run in school
- Staff report concerns about individual pupils to the Inclusion Manager/SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Team
- Worry boxes in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher
- Weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- Parental meetings
- Enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'
- Drop-ins with School Nurse or Educational Psychologist

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SENCO/Inclusion Manager or Designated Safeguarding Team.

These signs might include:

- Non-verbal behaviour
- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- Lowering academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development. If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed. A risk assessment and plan will be made.

Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount, and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Inclusion Manager/Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil. Information and events such as this will be recorded using CPOMs and will only be shared with the relevant people.

Non-Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or message.

Confidentiality

Reporting of concerns will be done via CPOMs and, where appropriate, safeguarding procedures will be followed. Staff, through knowing their class, are aware of children's normal mental state and know how to report when children not acting in character. Staff will have strong professional relationships with children and will be able to approach children to discuss issues in the first instance. Staff are aware of the link between mental health and home circumstance and are trained in wellbeing and attachment theory.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating. We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes, there are no absolutes.

Need The level of need is based on discussions at the regular Inclusion meetings/panel with key members of staff	Evidence-based Intervention and Support - the kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and pupils For example	Monitoring
Highest need	CAMHS-assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with school staff and other agencies. School Mentor/counsellor -1:1 support Educational Psychologist involvement External agency support that provides 1:1 support and group work	All pupils needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Care Plan drawn up setting out - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs of the pupils • How the pupil will be supported • Actions to provide that support • Any special requirements

	If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy and SEN School Information Report.	Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact e.g. through a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.
Some need	Access to in school 'quiet area' for support and reflection 1:1 intervention, small group intervention, skills for life/wellbeing programmes, circle of friends	Multi-agency meetings and regular reviews and feedback with parents/carers. Early Help Referral and Children's Services if appropriate. Discussion, advice and support in Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) core hours for key staff . An electronic log is kept and there are monthly safe-guarding team meetings Weekly staff briefing
Low need	General support e.g. Lunch Club, class teacher/TA, Learning Mentor 'Check-in'	

Working with specialist services

In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs. We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision. School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Inclusion Manager/SENCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Specialist Service	Referral Process
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Accessed through school, GP or self-referral
School Mentor	Accessed through headteacher/SENCO
Music Therapy	Accessed through headteacher/SENCO
School Counsellor	Accessed through headteacher/SENCO
Educational Psychologist	Accessed through headteacher/SENCO
Early Help Referral	Accessed through headteacher/SENCO, DSL

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy was made in collaboration with the whole school. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the SLT and subject leader and reported to the school governors. This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if deemed necessary.

Appendix I

Protective and Risk factors (adapted from Mental Health and Behaviour DfE March 2016)

	<i>Risk factors</i>	<i>Protective factors</i>
<i>In the child</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic influences • Specific development delay • Communication difficulties • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem • SEND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being female (in younger children) • Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • Problem solving skills and a positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Capacity to reflect
<i>In the family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss - including loss of friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long-term relationship or the absence of severe discord
<i>In the school</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Negative peer influences • Peer pressure • Poor pupil to teacher relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences
<i>In the community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Other significant life events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High moral school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities
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Appendix 2

Where to get information and support

For support on specific mental health needs

Anxiety UK - www.anxietyuk.org.uk

OCD UK - www.ocduk.org

Depression Alliance - www.depressionalliance.org

Eating Disorders - www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com

National Self-Harm Network - www.nshn.co.uk

Self-Harm - www.selfharm.co.uk

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK - PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

For general information and support

www.youngminds.org.uk - champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

www.mind.org.uk - advice and support on mental health problems

www.minded.org.uk - (e-learning)

www.time-to-change.org.uk - tackles the stigma of mental health

www.rethink.org - challenges attitudes towards mental health