



Brown's School Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



<u>Full Name of Policy</u>	Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
<u>Date of Approval</u>	September 2023
<u>Date of Next Formal Review</u>	September 2024



All schools are under a statutory duty to promote the welfare of their pupils, which includes: preventing impairment of children's health or development and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021.

At Brown's School, we aim to promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for our whole school community (pupils, staff, parents and carers). We recognise that mental health is a crucial factor in a person's overall wellbeing and can affect a child's learning and achievement. This is particularly relevant in our specialist environment, where our pupils' neurodiversity can mean that mental health problems can underpin behaviour issues. The school understands that children with learning difficulties or Autism are significantly more likely to have conditions such as anxiety and that Children in Need, Looked after children and previously Looked after Children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers.

The school follows advice given in the non-statutory DfE's guidance 'Mental health and behaviour in schools', November 2018 which reports that 'Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children by developing whole school approaches tailored to their particular needs, as well as considering the needs of individual pupils.'

Identifiable mental health issues may include:

- ∞ Anxiety and depression
- ∞ Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- ∞ Eating disorders
- ∞ Self-Harm

Early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is vital and our school role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing can be summarised as:

- ∞ **Prevention:** by creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community and equipping pupils to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This includes teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum;
- ∞ **Identification:** recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible;
- ∞ **Early support:** helping pupils to access evidence based early support and interventions; and
- ∞ **Access to specialist support:** working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

The purpose of this policy is to set out:

- ∞ How we promote positive mental health.
- ∞ How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- ∞ How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems.
- ∞ Where parents, staff and pupils can get further advice and support.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour, Anti-bullying and PSHE policies.

A child's mental health is just as important as their physical health and deserves the same quality of support. No one would feel embarrassed about seeking help for a child if they broke their arm - and we really should be equally ready to support a child coping with emotional difficulties.

HRH Duchess of Cambridge



Creation of a Whole School Culture

- ∞ The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team ensure that Brown's School is a safe place to learn. It is vital that the environment is calm and structured and that pupils feel secure and valued. All staff are aware of this and contribute to the overall ethos of the school. Pupils have a sense of belonging, feel safe and feel able to trust and talk openly with adults about their problems.
- ∞ The Headteacher is responsible for determining the training needs of staff within his approach to school improvement and professional development and ensures that teachers manage behaviour effectively to provide a safe environment.
- ∞ High behaviour expectations of pupils are shared by all staff and the school uses a clear and consistent system of rewards and sanctions with all pupils to reinforce this. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and are supported to do this by their teachers, trusted adults and through both the therapy team and pastoral care team.
- ∞ Pupils are supported to understand their emotions and feelings by their teachers and the school's therapy team.
- ∞ Pupils are supported to develop social relationships, support each other, and seek help when they need it.
- ∞ Bullying (including cyberbullying) is taken seriously as staff are aware that this can be a key factor in adversely affecting a person's mental health and wellbeing and the school has robust Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies in place which the whole school community are aware of.
- ∞ The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) have put clear systems and processes in place for early identification of mental health and wellbeing issues and have communicated these clearly to staff. The DSLs work closely with the in-house therapy team and outside agencies to ensure that there is a range of support, both within and outside of school, which can be put in place depending on identified needs.
- ∞ The Headteacher and DSLs work effectively with parents and carers to ensure the best possible outcome for pupils with mental health and wellbeing difficulties.
- ∞ Positive mental health and wellbeing is promoted and valued through the PSHE curriculum, including health and relationships and sex education and also through Social Skills lessons. If required, pupils also receive small group or 1:1 intervention from the school's therapy team, which includes an in-house Clinical Psychologist.
- ∞ Pupils know that they can discuss their own or others' mental health issues with their trusted adults in school without feeling any stigma and understand that they will be supported. The DSLs ensure that staff have knowledge of vulnerable children in the school who may be at extra risk of mental health and wellbeing difficulties, including those who have a social worker or are Looked after Children (LAC).
- ∞ The school Senior Mental Health Lead is George Mitchell (Headteacher).



Supporting a Child's Mental Health and Wellbeing

- ∞ All staff at Brown's School are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff understand that the welfare and safety of children is paramount.
- ∞ Staff understand that mental health needs, such as anxiety, may 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
- ∞ School staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues but may notice behaviours that may be of concern.
- ∞ Where staff have a mental health concern about a child or young person, they should immediately raise the issue by informing the school's DSLs. This can be done initially through a conversation and followed up in writing on the designated safeguarding concern form.
- ∞ The DSLs will then decide what action is appropriate; whether that be a consultation with the school's Clinical Psychologist and Therapy team or a referral to an outside agency such as Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- ∞ Where required, the school expects parents/carers to seek and receive support elsewhere, including from their GP, NHS services or trained professionals working in specialist Children and Young People Mental Health Services (CYPMHS).
- ∞ The school has two members of staff who have attended training with Mental Health First Aid England.
- ∞ All pupils identify at least one trusted adult in the school who they can talk to without fear of stigma.
- ∞ Pupils have access to peer mentoring and can initially feel more comfortable talking to their peers about their worries. Pupils are encouraged not to deal with another pupil's concerns by themselves but to help them talk to a trusted adult in school.
- ∞ A mindfulness programme is practised throughout the school in which staff have been trained to deliver this.
- ∞ The school uses the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQs) to help identify and measure mental health and wellbeing difficulties. This process involves parents/carers, teachers, and pupil feedback.

Promoting a Child's Positive Mental Health

- ∞ Campaigns and assemblies raise awareness of mental health.
- ∞ Peer mentoring allows children to work together to help solve problems.
- ∞ Mentoring from adults in the school ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to discuss worries and concerns.
- ∞ There is a worry box in school for those who prefer to write down their concerns.
- ∞ Children are encouraged to be kind to one another by earning kindness points on their daily behaviour sheets.
- ∞ The therapy team supervise activities to facilitate friendships including Lego therapy and lunchtime friendship clubs.
- ∞ The therapy team support pupils with self-esteem, resilience, and emotional regulation.
- ∞ Kindness and positive behaviour are rewarded through class and whole school reward systems, such as the Brown's Bonus Lunch and Celebration Assemblies.
- ∞ Weekly Social skills lessons teach pupils vital personal, social and emotional communication and problem-solving skills, including turn taking, conversation skills and dealing with emotional issues.
- ∞ The school displays information about positive mental health and where to go for help and support.
- ∞ The school's Clinical Psychologist is available to support pupils and parents/carers.
- ∞ The Pastoral Care Team helps pupils resolve conflict issues.
- ∞ The PSHE curriculum teaches pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.
- ∞ The school provides art therapy from a trained member of staff which gives pupils the opportunity to talk whilst painting or drawing.



Identifying, Referring and Supporting Children with Mental Health Needs

The school's approach:

- ∞ The school provides a safe environment where children feel that they are listened to and can express their feelings.
- ∞ The DSLs ensure that the appropriate support for pupils is based on their needs.
- ∞ The school involves parents and carers when their child needs support.
- ∞ Pupils themselves are involved in the care and support they have.
- ∞ The school monitors, reviews and evaluates the support with children and keeps parents and carers informed.

Early Identification

- ∞ The school uses the Social Difficulty Questionnaires (SDQ) to identify individuals who may need support.
- ∞ The school sends out a parental information and health questionnaire on entry to the school.
- ∞ Information is gathered from a pupil's previous school at transfer.
- ∞ The school informally analyses behaviour through attendance, sanctions, visits to the medical room and temporary inclusions or exclusions.
- ∞ Staff report concerns to the DSLs or Headteacher.
- ∞ Staff have daily meetings in which to raise concerns.
- ∞ Parents are encouraged to meet with the school's Clinical Psychologist or other therapy staff.
- ∞ Therapists lead by the Clinical Psychologist hold weekly pupil review meetings, attended by one of the DSLs to discuss and review pupils with a mental health difficulty, plan how the pupil will be supported and regularly review the effectiveness of the provision.
- ∞ The school enables pupils to raise concerns to adults and their peers.
- ∞ The school has an open-door policy where parents and carers are encouraged to raise concerns.
- ∞ The worry box is regularly monitored by Pastoral Care staff.

Early Support and Referral

Any concerns about a pupil's mental health will initially be discussed by the DSLs with the school's Clinical Psychologist. A decision will then be made as to whether the support should come from within school or through an outside agency, such as CAMHS. Parents/carers will be informed and consulted unless child protection issues have been identified. Parents are offered a meeting with the school's Clinical Psychologist for support.

The school can facilitate support from outside agencies within school and the DSLs continue to liaise with the agency involved and organise additional support within school if required.

Any friends who may be affected by a child's disclosure will also be supported by the Therapy Team and/or Pastoral Care Team.

A risk assessment and support plan will be put in place for the pupil concerned which will be regularly monitored and assessed.



Staff Training

- ∞ Staff are Team Teach trained.
- ∞ The Clinical Psychologist and other therapy staff train staff on mental health and wellbeing issues during regular staff meetings and insets.
- ∞ Two members of staff have trained to become Youth Mental First Aiders and have cascaded their knowledge to other staff.
- ∞ Staff have had safeguarding training and are aware that they should remain calm, supportive and non-judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. Staff should listen, rather than advise, and make it clear to pupils that the concern will need to be shared with the school's DSL. Staff understand that all concerns should be recorded and will be held on the pupil's confidential safeguarding file.
- ∞ The DSLs have had Safeguarding Lead training and are well placed to make referrals both in-house or to external agencies.

Staff are aware that the following signs might be indicators of a child who is experiencing mental health problems:

- ∞ Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- ∞ Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits.
- ∞ Falling academic achievement.
- ∞ Expressing feels of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- ∞ Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- ∞ Secretive behaviour.
- ∞ A decrease in attendance.
- ∞ Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE.
- ∞ Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- ∞ Drug or alcohol misuse.
- ∞ Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- ∞ Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.
- ∞ Weight loss.

Supporting Parents and Carers

In order to support parents and carers we will:

- ∞ Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website.
- ∞ Offer parents an appointment with the school's Clinical Psychologist.
- ∞ Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to and how to go about this if they have concerns about their child.
- ∞ Make our Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy easily accessible to parents.
- ∞ Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting Staff

It is recognised that promoting staff health and emotional wellbeing should be an integral part of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, training and signposting to materials about mental health and emotional wellbeing is made available to all staff. An open-door policy to the Senior Leadership Team is always available if staff need to speak to someone about any issues and staff can request a meeting with the school's Clinical Psychologist if they wish.

The school employs Peninsula, an employment law specialist, who offer staff the Employee Assistance Programme which is a 24-hour confidential helpline from Health Assured to support staff through any issues or problems they may have, including stress and anxiety, bereavement or family issues. Staff can ring the helpline on 0800 047 4097.



Useful links

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

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 and www.selfharm.co.uk

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

Person Responsible for Editing: George Mitchell in September 2022

_____ Signature

_____ Date

_____ Headteacher

_____ Date

This policy will be reviewed in September 2023