



## **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy**

### **INTENT**

At Brookland Infant and Nursery School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health.

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: “in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy”.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that we all have a role to play in supporting the positive mental health of everyone. Therefore we need to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health and where they can go if they need help and support.

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”.*

### **AIMS**

At Brookland Infant and Nursery School we:

- Ensure all our children feel valued.
- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings.
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- Encourage children to be confident
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.
- Ensure children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values, Golden Rules and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting child voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.



- Providing sensible, honest, unbiased and straightforward answers to questions raised by children.
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs.

We meet our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches.
- Support for children going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at children with more complex or long term difficulties and needs.

## IMPLEMENTATION

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise. We aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and enhances understanding.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. We follow a comprehensive PSHE scheme which is based on Barnet's framework on the PSHE Association's PSHE Education Programme of Study (published in 2020). We teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner and in a way that is appropriate to the age and maturity of the children.

EYFS & Key Stage 1 children learn:

- To recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings.
- Simple strategies for managing feelings.
- How their behaviour affects other people.
- About empathy and understanding other people's feelings.
- To cooperate and problem solve.
- To motivate themselves and persevere.
- How to calm down.
- About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing toys, pets or friends).
- Who to go to if they are worried.
- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable.
- How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, whom to go to and how to get help.

We offer support through a variety of approaches for whole class groups, groups of children or individual children which may include:

- Circle time.
- Zones of Regulation for children and staff to refer to when supporting the children understand how they are feeling and implement a 'tool' to help them to regulate their emotions.
- 'Safe Spaces' for children to use to self-regulate.
- Mental health and wellbeing groups e.g. BYCAS.



- Therapeutic activities including sensory circuits, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

## **IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND WARNING SIGNS**

As part of our termly Pupil Progress meetings, teachers provide information about their children's wellbeing which is aimed at identifying a range of possible difficulties that could impact on a child's wellbeing including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- A change to family circumstances including any recent bereavements
- Health indicators such as a physical long-term illness
- Having a parent who has a mental health problem

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 communicate their concerns with one of the designated child protection and safeguarding officers or the SENCo.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm, suicide or desire to cause serious harm to others
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

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, additional learning needs, friendship issues or development delays.

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, the staff know how important it is to remain calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Our role is to listen and follow the child protection procedures.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

As staff receive annual Level 1 Safeguarding training and regular safeguarding updates throughout the year which includes information about recognising and responding to mental health issues in order to enable them to keep our children safe.



We use The National College online CPD package, The MindEd learning portal and any courses provided by Gov.co.uk. to provide suitable online training and support for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. We also invite external trainers into school to deliver training relating to specific issues. Additional CPD will be provided throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more children.

## **WORKING WITH PARENTS**

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- 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.

## **WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND PARTNERS**

As part of our provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse – Oak Lane Clinic and Child's Hill Clinic
- Educational Psychology services
- Behaviour support through Barnet – IAT Team
- Paediatrician
- Barnet Autism Team
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Facilitate counselling services
- Early Intervention Team - Family support workers
- Music Therapist

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection, SEND, Behaviour, Anti-bullying, and PSHE policies. It also sits alongside our child protection procedures.

## **USEFUL WEBSITES**

- Minded – [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)
- Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families – [www.annafreud.org](http://www.annafreud.org)
- Young Minds – [www.youngminds.org](http://www.youngminds.org)