



Buckden Primary Academy's Mental Health and Well-being Policy for All

Policy Statement

Mental health is 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.

(World Health Organization)

As a Christian school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupils. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils and staff. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant, positive and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils and staff affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

At Buckden CE Primary Academy, our vision is:

Every child is loved by God and educated for wisdom, aspiration and global citizenship to thrive in our community through a culture of dignity and respect. Their gifts, talents and wellness are cultivated with knowledge, skills and wisdom to live life purposefully in all its' fullness: sadness, struggles, joys and celebrations.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need. There is a separate Bereavement Policy which covers some overarching themes.

The Policy Aims to:

- ♣ Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- ♣ Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- ♣ Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- ♣ Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- ♣ Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers
- ♣ Provide support to staff suffering mental ill health



Covid 19

In light of the recent Covid 19 Pandemic and the effect that this will have on our whole school community the school will create a 'Mental Health and Well Being Working Party' to develop policy and practice. The school will encourage staff to share their concerns with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team whether these are their own worries or worries about other team members. Mental Health and well-being will be an item on the SLT agenda for staff.

Staff will be encouraged to share concerns about children either in teams or directly to the Mental Health Leads, if it is deemed urgent. Pastoral Care sheets should continue to be used and if 3 or more concerns are logged in a half-term this should be passed to the DSL. Staff meeting will have an item on the agenda to ask if any concerns have come to light over the last week, that have not already been addressed.

The school will look at training for more staff regarding Mental Health First Aid, Bereavement Counselling and resilience development for more staff members so that when we return to school we have the capacity and understanding to help.

The school have a procedure in place for children to access support depending on level of need and each case is explored individually with SLT. It is hoped that most children will respond to whole class (Wave 1) support such as Mind up, mindfulness and Buddy systems, or small group (Wave 2) intervention such as Nurture or lego groups, however the school also provide higher level support to individuals (Wave 3) such as Drawing and Talking or counselling, for those children with on-going moderate to severe needs.

Buddies will meet every 3 weeks, as a method of developing key trusting relationships for all the children within the school community.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- ♣ Alison Anderson- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- ♣ Rebecca Bliss & Michelle Heather - Mental health leads
- ♣ Kerry Collins/Yvonne Holl - Lead first aiders
- ♣ Stacey Romaine – Mental Health Support Champions
- ♣ Rebecca Bliss & Michelle Heather – CPD leads
- ♣ Kate Woodward – PSCHE Leads

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil or staff member should speak to the mental health leads in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection officer. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be



followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where needs are less urgent, a referral may be made to YOUUnited which may lead to a referral to CHUMS (Child Mental Health and Wellbeing Service) or to the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service (EHWBS). For greater needs, where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Rebecca Bliss, mental health lead. We have an accredited Counsellor in our staff body (Heidi Triance), and she is able to signpost support channels where there are adult mental health concerns of staff member can access '*Employee Assistance*' on 08000856148 for free individual counselling, through a scheme purchased by the school. The school can also refer staff to Occupational Health for further support with mental health needs.

Mental Health and Wellbeing will be an item on SLT weekly meeting agenda both of pupils and staff.

If concerns are around a staff member's mental health, a limited amount of support can be provided in house, but do this by finding solutions to ease anxiety. We have also have subscribed to '*Employee Assistance*' where they will be encouraged to seek professional guidance. If the staff member's mental health does not improve, refer them to further support. Discussions will need to be shared with the Safeguarding Leads where the member of staff is around children.

One Page Profiles

Ensure that any child that's mental health is causing concern is signposted through the one-page profiles with situations to avoid that raised anxiety and strategies that are known to reduce anxieties. If a medical diagnosis has been made signpost and ensure this 'One Page Profile' is shared with parents. Ensure that the one page profiles are shared with any relevant staff.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing more serious concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals where possible. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSCHÉ curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching, but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop



the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSCHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner, which helps rather than harms.

All children at Buckden CE Primary Academy are taught explicitly about their own mental health and Well-being through the Mind-Up programme, which is delivered alongside the PSCHE curriculum.

This is a structured curriculum which teaches children about how their brain works in relation to their emotions and reactions to stress. It gives them strategies and ideas for coping with their feelings, expressing their feelings and recognising the emotions of others.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

The 'Mental Health Working Party' are developing a bank of signposting resources for all parts of the community, including parents, pupils and staff.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as; staffroom, toilets and the Peace Pod and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- ♣ What help is available
- ♣ Who it is aimed at
- ♣ How to access it
- ♣ Why to access it
- ♣ What is likely to happen next

Warning Signs

School 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 communicate their concerns with Rebecca Bliss or Michelle Heather, our Mental health and Emotional Wellbeing Leads. Possible warning signs include are listed in Appendix 1

Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the



member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file.

Proformas for disclosures are held in school safeguarding file (we will moving to an online system and have a laptop to allow immediate access in the staffroom for all members of staff).

This written record should include:

- ♣ Date
- ♣ The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- ♣ Main points from the conversation
- ♣ Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the mental health leads, Rebecca Bliss or another Designated Safeguarding lead, who will provide store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Our procedures for highlighting a concern

- We have an open door policy to give the staff the opportunity to share concerns of either staff or pupils
- We have appropriate recording procedures so that we can look back for possible triggers and to ensure that all members of the mental health and well-being team have the information they need

What are your procedures for taking action?

- Risk assess whether there is an immediate outside assistance
- Through discussion within the team we will look at the best way to help immediately by reducing and removing anxiety triggers if appropriate
- Together with the pupil & parent/staff member we will put together an action plan for moving forward

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:

- ♣ Who we are going to talk to
- ♣ What we are going to tell them
- ♣ Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be



shared with another member of staff and/or a parent. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health Leads, Rebecca Bliss and Michelle Heather. This helps to safeguard our own emotional well-being, as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed if a concern is raised and it is felt to be substantiated by a member of the mental health team and they need further help and guidance. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection officer Alison Anderson must be informed immediately, who will follow Safeguarding Guidelines from this point.

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- ♣ Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- ♣ Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- ♣ Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- ♣ What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible, as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing.

Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g., parent helplines and forums. We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- ♣ Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues 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 own child or a friend of their child



- ♣ Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- ♣ Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- ♣ 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 Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom 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 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
- ♣ Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Supporting Staff Members

When a staff member is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends and peers. Friends and peers often want to support but do not know how. In order to protect the well-being of other staff members we will consider on a case by case basis, which friends may need additional support. Support will be given in one to on or group settings and will be guided conversations with the affected staff member who is suffering. With whom we will discuss:

- ♣ What 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 might inadvertently cause upset
- ♣ Warning signs that their friends needs help (e.g. signs of a relapse)

Additionally, we will highlight to peers:

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

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 in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. Mental Health issues feature in our cycle of continuing professional development for all staff. We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal² 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 developing situations with one or more pupils.

One member of the Mental Health Working Party have had training in Mental Health First Aid for children (Rebecca Bliss). Another staff member (Heidi Triance) is an accredited counsellor for adults and children and can provide signposting advice and support to staff who need it, she is also supporting children that have been signposted through our tiered system.

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 the SLT.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in July 2024.

<http://www.inourhands.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Mental-Health-Policy-and-guidance-for-schools-CWMT-FINAL-1.pdf>

COVID-19

The school is very aware that the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, including the lockdowns and loss of education have had far reaching consequences on the mental health and wellbeing of all of the schools' community; pupils, staff, parents/carers and the wider Buckden community.

Policies including the Buckden Academy Recovery Plan, Post Covid-19 Action Plan and SEND policy should be read in conjunction with this policy in order to gain a full understanding of how the school have sought to support the wellbeing of its community throughout the Pandemic. This includes the adjustments that are required on a long term scale in order to monitor these needs and the possible impact it will have on people's mental health and wellbeing.



Further notes or ideas



Appendix 1- Possible Warning signs of Poor Mental Health

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

Buckden C.E. Primary Academy