



BREWSTER AVENUE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

This policy was ratified by the Full Governing Body on 21st September 2023

Date for review (this policy will be reviewed every three years): Autumn 2026

Policy Statement

At Brewster Avenue, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents, and carers).

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

We endeavour to ensure that children are able manage times of change and stress and aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential and to access help when they need it.

We also have a role to ensure that children learn 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.

At our school, we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everyone's business and that we all have a role to play.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. The policy is intended as guidance for all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors.

Aims

- To promote positive mental health for all
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to any warning signs of mental ill health

This policy should be read in conjunction with the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

Teaching about mental health

At Brewster Avenue we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children to become more resilient, happy, and successful and work in a proactive way to avoid problems arising. We do this by:

- Creating a positive, supportive, and friendly ethos
- Adhering to a positive, therapeutic behaviour management
- Helping children socially to form and maintain friendships
- Helping children feel comfortable about sharing any concerns or worries
- Teaching children emotional skills and awareness of mental health (at an age appropriate level) so that they understand their feelings and emotions better
- Weekly PSHE lessons in Key Stage 1
- Promoting self esteem and ensuring that children understand their importance in the world
- Helping children to be resilient learners and manage setbacks
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Weekly SMILE assembly
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing a sense of self worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Understanding the positive effect of outdoor space on mental health-weekly woodland learning sessions for all year groups
- Specialised targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties

Targeted Support

- Individual therapy sessions with YMCA therapist
- Therapeutic activities e.g. lego therapy, drawing and talking
- Direct work with student social worker (during placement)
- From September 23, dedicated ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) wellbeing sessions and nurture groups

Key Staff

- Named Mental Health Lead-Amanda Bull (SENDCO)
- ELSA-Marie Cockayne
- YMCA Therapist-Julie

Early Identification and Warning Signs

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to pupils poor mental health including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also 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 should communicate their concerns with the designated child protection and safeguarding officer and the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible signs include:

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

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 children safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require a more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year when it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with a pupil/pupils.

Working with Parents

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 go about this, if they have concerns about a child's mental health or emotional wellbeing
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents on the school website
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE lessons
- Involve parents in the creation of a mental health support plan as appropriate.

Related policies:

- Anti bullying
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Online safety
- PSHE

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

This policy will be updated immediately to reflect personnel changes.