

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR PUPILS IN BEYONDAUTISM SCHOOLS' POLICY

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Summary of policy: This policy outlines how BeyondAutism Schools will work to promote the positive mental health and wellbeing of all pupils to enable them to flourish during their time in education with us.

Introduction and purpose

We promote a caring, supportive environment in which every individual is valued and respected. We have high expectations for all and aspire to achieve excellence. We want all of our pupils to lead fulfilling lives.

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.

Within our schools, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole community (pupils, 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 recognise that children and young people's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children and young people move up and down the mental health continuum during their educational journey. However, some face significant life events which can seriously impact their emotional wellbeing and can include mental illness.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "Schools have a role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children" ¹. (Mental Health and Behaviour in School, 2018). We want our schools to be a place for all pupils to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that have the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. The schools also offer positive role models and build successful peer relationships, which are critical in promoting the wellbeing of all young people.

The role of the BeyondAutism Schools is to ensure that pupils are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils 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.

The aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health difficulties and to ensure our schools are places where:

- All pupils are valued
- Pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Pupils are given the tools to talk openly about their problems
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued

¹ Mental Health and Behaviour in School, 2018

- Bullying is not tolerated.

Definition of mental health

Mental health and wellbeing is defined as “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.”²

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all our pupils 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.

Policy statement

We will ensure that:

- BeyondAutism Schools will be proactive in identifying and supporting a child or young person with mental health difficulties, ensuring the pupil is at the centre of all decisions and take into account their feelings, wishes and views.
- BeyondAutism Schools will work closely with the local authority, external agencies and charitable organisations to ensure appropriate care is accessed to support the pupil.
- BeyondAutism Schools have procedures and professionals in place to enable them to fulfil their duties and to drive a caring and positive wellbeing centred ethos and vision.

BeyondAutism’s Approach to Positive Mental Health

All staff within BeyondAutism Schools have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health (see appendix 1). Some pupils will require additional help and key staff are trained to look for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and appropriate

² World Health organisation: http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/

support. Key staff have been trained in 'Understanding Children and Young people's mental health' Cache Level 2.

BeyondAutism Schools recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some pupils 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 (see appendix 2).

BeyondAutism has a pupil mental health and wellbeing awareness group which leads on the promotion of positive mental health, raising awareness for pupils and within the community.

BeyondAutism Schools will make reasonable adjustments for children and young people experiencing emotional distress and mental health difficulties to support.

What BeyondAutism Schools will do

BeyondAutism Schools will designate a member of the senior leadership team to be responsible for overseeing, coordinating and championing mental health and wellbeing education and provision.

BeyondAutism Schools will prepare a mental health and wellbeing action plan and review this on a half termly basis.

BeyondAutism Schools will ensure that all members of staff have access to some mental health training, through INSET days or other, and take responsibility in promoting positive wellbeing and identifying and supporting pupils experiencing mental health difficulties.

BeyondAutism Schools will ensure pupils are taught about positive mental wellbeing and mental health illnesses through their group learning in PSHE and in their 1:1 sessions. This will cover knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient and understand how to maintain positive mental health as well as learning how to ask for help when they need it. We also have designated Mental Health days and weeks which take place on a termly basis throughout the school year to allow pupils to regularly engage with the subject and to promote a whole school approach towards positive mental health and wellbeing.

BeyondAutism Schools will:

- Provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of all pupils
- Identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve pupils in the care and support they have, ensuring the voice/views of the young person is always taken into account.

- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated.

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as noncompliant, 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 a pupil has received intensive and/or specialised external mental health professional support, the schools have a duty of care to support pupils and will seek advice from medical staff and mental health professionals on the best way to support children. We will carry out a risk assessment and produce an Individual Care Plan to support children to re-integrate successfully back to school.

BeyondAutism Schools recognise that when a pupil is experiencing mental health problems it can be challenging for their friends, who often want to help them but are not sure the best thing to do and can also be emotionally affected, therefore appropriate support will be provided.

BeyondAutism Schools also recognise the importance of support for parents/carers caring for a young person with a mental health difficulty. We operate an open-door policy and will ensure regular communication between home and school.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then BeyondAutism's safeguarding procedures are followed. If there is a medical emergency, then BeyondAutism's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

Responsibilities

The following responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:

- The Executive Head is responsible for ensuring a member of the senior leadership team is the designated mental health lead within their service.
- The Mental Health Lead is responsible for overseeing, coordinating and championing mental health and wellbeing education and provision.
- All staff are responsible for promoting positive wellbeing and identifying and supporting pupils experiencing mental health difficulties.
- The pupil mental health awareness team will support in the promotion of positive mental wellbeing.
- The Executive Leadership Team have overall responsibility for the implementation and approval of this policy

Appendix 1

Protective Factors and Risk Factors (Adapted from Mental health and behaviour in schools (November 2018)³)

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the child	<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"> • 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 • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the family	<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
In BeyondAutism Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negative peer influences• Peer pressure• Inconsistent implementation of the behaviour policy.• Poor relationships with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health• Positive relationships between pupils and staff
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Appendix 2

For support on specific mental health needs:

- Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- OCD UK: www.ocduk.org
- Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org
- Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and www.inourhands.com
- National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk www.selfharm.co.uk
- Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – POPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org
- www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people’s mental health and wellbeing
- www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health
- www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health
- www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems/ www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)

Last reviewed: May 2022

Date of next review: May 2024

Review group: Executive Head