

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

The Importance of Mental Health and Wellbeing

Braunton Academy's Mental Health Policy demonstrates our commitment to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our whole community; students, staff, parents and carers. Our culture is supportive, caring and respectful.

We encourage all members of our community to be open and we want everyone to be able to have their voice heard. We know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. Research suggests that approximately 10% of children aged between 5 and 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: *"in order to help their students succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy"*. Furthermore, the NHS report that one in four adults experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any given year. People in all walks of life can be affected and at any point in their lives. Mental health problems represent the largest single cause of disability in the UK.

We recognise that mental health is a crucial factor in everyone overall wellbeing and can affect performance, engagement and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to students having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need. In adults this can lead to ill health and social isolation.

At Braunton Academy, we recognise our role to ensure that everyone in our community learns about 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. We are aware of the impact of online platforms and the activity of young people which can have significant negative outcomes on the mental health of young people. Please see our [Online Safety](#) Policy for further information.

We believe that positive mental health is everybody's responsibility; we all have a role to play.

Mental Health – a definition

Mental health is defined by the World Health Organisation as *'a state of well-being in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community'*.

Policy objectives

The aim of our policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health of our staff and students.

At Braunton Academy, we will always:

- Help everyone to understand their emotions and experiences better
- Ensure everyone feels comfortable sharing any concerns and worries
- Help everyone to form and maintain positive relationships
- Encourage everyone to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem
- Help everyone to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks

We will always promote a positive environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students and staff
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect
- Promoting our students' and staff voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making
- Celebrating each member of our community for who they are and making everyone feel valued and respected
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any student or member of staff that needs it
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental health difficulties
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health
- Ensuring the physical environment of the school is harmonious, safe and comfortable for all
- Ensuring the physical environment is accessible for all through an [Accessibility Plan](#)

Key staff members

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and each other. However, the following staff members have a specific role in the process:

- **Designated Safeguarding Leads:** Elise Woodhead, Fay Bowler and Jenna Swain
- **Designated Senior Mental Health Lead:** Jenna Swain
- **HR Manager:** Alice Hellmund

- **Heads of Year:** Angie Sayer, Caroline Armstrong, Lewis Ovey, Carey McLoughlin and David Liversedge
- **Line Managers**
- **Pastoral Support Workers:** Vicky Frayne, Shannah Hart and Stacey Rush
- **Reflection Room Co-ordinator:** Jason De Groot
- **SENCOs:** Kirsty De Groot, Pam Bodimeade and Josie Dorbin
- **PHSE Co-ordinators:** Andy Parsons and Pippa Moy

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health and or/wellbeing of a student should initially speak to the student. If the student is willing to share information, it is important that they are notified that this information may need to be passed on to another member of staff and their parent or legal guardian. If the student is not willing to share information, it is important that any concerns are passed on to a Designated Safeguarding Lead who will then consider how to appropriately deal with the received information. This may include making a referral for further support from within the school environment and/or outside services.

If there is a fear that a student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed. If the student 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.

If the concern was about a colleague, please follow the same advice but raise the concern with their Line Manager, HR or the Principal.

Managing disclosures

If a student discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental manner. All disclosures will be recorded confidentially in line with our safeguarding policy. The disclosure record will contain:

- The date of the disclosure
- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

Confidentiality

If a member of staff believes it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student or colleague, either to another member of staff or someone outside of the school environment, then this will first be discussed with the individual. They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell
- What the staff member is going to disclose
- Why it is necessary for someone else to be told
- When the contact will be

However, it may not always be possible to gain the person's consent first, such as in the case of someone who is at immediate risk. Protecting everyone's safety is our main priority so we will share disclosures if we judge them to be at risk.

Under no circumstances will any member of staff promise a student that they will keep any information to themselves.

Teaching about mental health

Our PHSE curriculum is developed to give students the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy. Students are initially introduced to the topic of mental health and are taught it in more detail as they move through their school years. Such taught topics include:

- What is meant by emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Emotional changes from puberty
- Signs of poor mental health
- The effects of mental health on returning to school (in response to the stresses and anxieties related to returning to school post lockdown)
- Strategies to maintain and improve mental health

We will regularly review our PHSE curriculum and lesson content to ensure that they are meeting the aims outlined in this policy as well as keeping up to date with the information provided by the PSHE Association.

Staff training

All staff will receive regular training in student mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training which is a requirement to keep students safe. Training records will be held in staff files. We will post all relevant information, and additional information, on our school website so staff can learn more about student mental health. We will consider additional training opportunities for staff and we will support additional CPD throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with students.

Specialise training to key staff has included:

- Senior Mental Health Lead training which was a two-day course through Anna Freud
- Follow up support from Anna Freud

Support at school, in the local community and recognised support services

We have a range of support available in school for students, including:

- Tutor support
- Pastoral Support Workers
- Mental Health Support Team
- School Nurse
- LGBTQ group

There are a range of support networks available for students in the local community. We also work alongside these services as part of our whole school approach to supporting our students' emotional health and wellbeing. Such services include:

- CAMHS
- Young Devon

- Y-SMART
- Intercom Trust
- CareWise
- Families in Grief
- Careers South West
- Cruse Bereavement Care
- Wave Project

We regularly sign-post students to the following services/resources/apps (some of which are signposted on the students' landing page for easy access):

- Kooth
- Childline
- Papyrus
- Young Minds
- Headspace

Support for staff

We recognise that good staff wellbeing is essential for cultivating a mentally healthy school and for promoting student wellbeing. We provide a number of avenues to promote good mental health as well as support mechanisms for colleagues if they need additional support, these include:

- HR manager with overall responsibility for staff wellbeing
- Line managers – regularly check ins and annual job chats which include wellbeing conversations
- Staff wellbeing co-ordinator
- Wellbeing sporting and craft activities
- Attendance policy including back to work and support meetings
- Employer Assistant Programme
- Referrals for external support/counselling
- Staff consultations and annual staff survey including wellbeing questions
- Links to mental health services on the internal staff landing page

Identifying needs and warning signs

Staff will be able to identify the following warning signs which may indicate that a student or colleague is experiencing mental health or wellbeing difficulties:

- Physical signs of harm
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in mood
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Feelings of failure, uselessness and loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption
- Attendance and absenteeism
- Punctuality and lateness
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education
- Family and friendship/relationship problems

Finally, staff will be well placed to identify any additional needs arising from difficulties that may impact a person's mental health and wellbeing, such as bereavement and health difficulties (*please see Appendix A for further details*).

Working with parents and carers

We aim to support parents as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times. To support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school
- Share and allow parents to access further support
- Ensure that parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child
- Give parents guidance about how they can support their child's mental health
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents
- Keep parents informed about how mental health is covered in our school curriculum

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every two years. This is so that it remains up to date, useful, and relevant. We will also regularly review it in accordance with local and national policy changes. We will use strategies such as questionnaires, pupil/staff/parent voice, working with external agencies (Kailo/MHST feedback) to support the review of the effectiveness of the policy.

Appendix A:

Department for Education (2016) *Mental health and behaviour in schools: Departmental advice for school staff*

Risk and protective factors for CYP's mental health

