Barford Primary School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy 2026-2027

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1.0 Policy statement

At Barford Primary School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to our whole school community. Our friendly and welcoming culture allows pupil's voices to be heard, and through our dedicated staff and governing body, along with the use of effective policies and procedures, we ensure a safe and supportive environment.

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff and governors outlining Barford's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.
It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies including Child Protection and Safeguarding, SEND, Anti-Bullying and Behaviour.

3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and pupils.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to pupils with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst pupil and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness and support amongst staff in relation to looking after their own wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and pupil welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms.

4.0 Key staff members

All staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of our pupils, however key members of staff include:

- Joanne Davies–Headteacher, Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL), Deputy DSL, Supervisor
- Elizabeth Harrison- Deputy Headteacher, Lead DSL, Inclusion Lead, Supervisor
- Phoebe Bishop – SENCO, EYFS Lead, Deputy DSL , Supervisor

- Gurparam Janagal– Pastoral Lead, Deputy DSL
- Madalina Popa- Well- Being Governor

Other sources of relevant support include the other school's Designated Safeguarding Leads, the Senior Leadership Team and our Phase Leaders.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of pupil, in the first instance they should speak to the Senior Mental Health Lead who works alongside the Pastoral Lead, Inclusion Lead and SENDCO.
If there is a concern that the pupil is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

5.0 Teaching about mental health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our pupils need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our RHE curriculum and our Well-Being Ambassador' programme.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively. Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote pupil's wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of pupil's own emotions as well as those of other people.

6.0 Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.
Within the school (noticeboards, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website, ClassDojo, Seesaw), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

- What help is available
- Why should they access it

- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- What is likely to happen next

We encourage and welcome parents and carers to contact their children's class teachers and key staff members when seeking additional support.

7.0 Support in school and the local community and beyond

We offer a variety of support within school including; 1:1 support, group sessions and targeted interventions such as Drawing and Talking. The SMHL/SENCo alongside the Pastoral Lead are responsible for coordinating this provision after gaining child, parent/carer and teacher views.

We work closely with Compass who are the Mental Health in Schools Birmingham Team.We are able to make referrals to this service, who, where appropriate, can offer low level Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. They also are able to offer advice and signpost to other services that may be able to offer support.

Local Support and Beyond

Compass Birmingham MHST - offers free, and confidential support to Children, Young People and Families with mild to moderate emotional health and wellbeing needs.

Child Bereavement - supporting children and families with grief.

Kooth - Online mental wellbeing community for young people aged 11-25

Hub of Hope – a useful website that signposts you to local support for a range of mental health and wellbeing needs

Crisis contacts

NHS
999 emergency or nearest A&E department
111 – professional health advice 24/7
Emergency GP appointment

Samaritans
116 123 – 24/7 freephone

Shout
Text 'SHOUT' to 85258

8.0 Identifying needs and recognising warning signs

As part of our universal provision, we will provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.

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Staff may also become of warning signs that could be indicating a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs are taken seriously and communicated with the designated and deputy safeguarding leads.

Possible warning signs could include:

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

Parents and carers may notice warning signs at home. We encourage parents and carers to contact their children's class teachers and key staff members if they recognise that their child is displaying warning signs.

9.0 Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. We ensure that we make appropriate referrals with the support of parent and carers to support services. We can offer:

- Specific help for those pupils most at risk or displaying social, emotional and behavioural problems
- Working closely with local agency services
- Identify and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool and providing this support for families
- Providing check ins with a trusted adult and the opportunity to develop relationships
- Providing therapeutic interventions, such as Drawing and Talking, THRIVE
- Discussing options for tackling problems and signposting to professional support with pupils and parents and carers

10.0 Managing Disclosures and Confidentiality

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff. The response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff will follow the Mental Health First Aid response.

Staff will sensitively make pupils aware that they will share disclosures with the DSL, SMHL and parents and carers when appropriate.

By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the pupil helping to safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Disclosures will be recorded confidentially on the pupils file.

Parents must always be informed, but pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

11.0 Working with and Supporting Parents and Carers

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children and therefore are keen to work alongside families to improve any difficulties their children may have.

We are mindful that hearing about issues can be upsetting and distressing. Where possible, we aim to discuss this with parents face to face, but if not possible, will utilise other methods of communication to ensure that the messages are shared without unnecessary delay.

We have trained Early Help practitioners who can offer support around the whole family and can signpost families to relevant sources of information and professional help.

12.0 Training

All staff receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe. School has a trained Senior Mental Health Lead. (Miss Davies)

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 students.

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 SMHL, SENDCO, Inclusion and Pastoral Leaders, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.