



Benton Park School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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1.0 Policy statement

At Benton Park School we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and governors. We believe there is no health without mental health, and that positive mental health is vital for our staff and students to thrive and be happy and successful. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

Our whole school curriculum intent is a broad and aspirational Curriculum for all, creating a climate for great learning, success and opportunity. Our Curriculum builds on strong foundations to support and challenge every single member of our community. Our 'Benton Park School Values' permeate all that we do and our aim is for our staff and students to fully embody these important qualities of inspiration, resilience, endeavour, compassion and collaboration.

Our Pastoral Care and PSHE programmes are the cornerstones that develop students' personal and social wellbeing and are designed to support and promote positive wellbeing and mental health. Through the curriculum, form time, assemblies, pastoral support and Mental Health First Aid Team we signpost and deliver support for students with a wide range of mental health needs. PSHE is being further developed to ensure relationships are put at the centre of this important part of personal development. This will be delivered by Form Tutors to help us identify and cater to our students needs around issues of health and wellbeing.

We seek to support students in understanding and recognising when they may need mental health support, to engage them in discussion and programmes to support this and to supply them with the tools needed to keep them mentally healthy. Through our values we hope to instil resilience and compassion, which will assist them now and, in the future, to recognise and develop their own wellbeing. Our safeguarding and pastoral systems are designed to identify, support and maintain student mental health across all year groups and work across school departments to ensure that all students are given the appropriate help they may need.

Through our school ethos and curriculum we embed the themes of equality, acceptance, inclusivity and mutual respect, following equal opportunities guidance which intends to support the elimination of discrimination against any individual or group due to their gender, race, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. Our pastoral, inclusion and safeguarding teams work with students from all backgrounds, and we recognise that the work we do with different students and their families may require different approaches. We use Wellbeing, Action Support Plans (WASPs) to engage students in discussion around their mental health needs, and/or seek to support them in their specific needs, it is not a one size fits all programme but we seek to tailor the best support and interventions needed for the individual.

We have a team of trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) in school, the work of this team in being continuously reviewed and developed to ensure that all staff and students

know when and where they can find guidance around mental health and wellbeing at Benton Park.

We also offer a range of school counselling support, so students who are identified as needing additional mental health provision can access this within school or through alternative agencies. Referrals for additional support are triaged within school so we can refer through to the support service that best meets the context and needs of the student. As well as face to face Therapeutic Counselling we can offer access to Kooth, Silver Cloud, Mindmate and Mentoring support. Parents/Carers can also be referred to Silver Cloud to support their child's mental health or referred through the cluster for Adult counselling as appropriate. Our referral system and the development of external and cluster services are under continuous review to ensure we develop and maintain ways of working which respond effectively to the needs of our community.

Staff are proactive in their approach in identifying students who require support, using our knowledge of our students to identify and support students and their mental health prior to crisis points and referring these through to the MHFA team to ensure our support systems are effective for all. We are also continuing to develop our staff training and knowledge to support our staff and students in the best way possible. Our role as a school is to be responsive to ongoing changes in mental health trends, and to design and develop strong preventative measures and interventions to support positive mental wellbeing and when necessary, screen and signpost effectively.

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff, volunteers and governors, outlining Benton Park School's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health concerns.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health concerns in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health concerns.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health concerns, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.

- Ensure that collaboration with all stakeholders is a fundamental element of the mental health support provided; actions should be taken that are based on the thoughts and feelings of the individual regarding the support they access.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and SLT that staff may have mental health concerns, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

4.0 Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ▪ Pastoral and Safeguarding Teams | ▪ Mental Health First Aid Team |
| ▪ Inclusion Team | ▪ PSHE Coordinator & Mental Health |
| ▪ SENCo – Lara Tizard | Leader - Allana Howard |

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student, in the first instance they should speak to one of the teams or members of staff listed above.

If there is a concern that the student 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 parents/carers and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

5.0 Inclusion Passport

When a student has been identified as having an ongoing serious concern related to their mental health, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another medically recognised therapist/organisation, it is recommended that an inclusion passport and/or IPRA should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the student, parents/carers, and relevant professionals. If a student already has a passport, these details could be added to their existing support needs

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the student's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions – including highlighting if a Risk Assessment is in place.
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school and specific staff

6.0 Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves, and others, physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum and our peer mentoring programme. Our progression model allows for students to learn about mental health and wellbeing across all year groups from KS3 to 5 and encourages students to talk about their mental health and to understand strategies to seek support.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing>

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people. Students are guided through sensitive topics such as coping stress and anxiety, self-harm, grief, loneliness, mental health and illness and wellbeing.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

See Section 14 for Supporting Peers.

7.0 Signposting and Early Intervention

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, common rooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), 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
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next

8.0 Sources or support at school and in the local community

School Support

Within school we have various levels of support that can be accessed depending on need and are listed below:

WASP – Wellness Action Support Plan

Working with the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Team, students will be supported to consider what they are struggling with, what strategies they can use and members of staff they can turn to for support. This will be recorded on a WASP and given to individuals the student has highlighted. The WASP and support needs will be reviewed regularly and if further support is required, a Mental Health Support Referral will be completed.

Mental Health Support Referral

This referral can be completed by pastoral, MHFA, safeguarding and inclusion teams alongside other members of staff who are providing support for our students. If parents/carers or students feel they would benefit from this referral, it is advised that they contact the teams mentioned above in the first instance.

This referral will allow us to 'triage' students and ensure that they are receiving the appropriate support for their mental health concerns. When triaging, we may suggest school counselling, LFIS, SilverCloud, MindMate SPA, cluster support, GP appointment or other charities and agencies depending on concern.

Leeds Faith in School (LFIS)

This service provides 1:1 mentoring in school on a weekly basis with a member of the Leeds Faith in School team. Their service supports young people make informed

decisions about their future and the relationships they have with others with the aim of raising self-esteem.

School Counselling

Counselling and Psychotherapy are umbrella terms that cover a range of talking therapies where the counsellor will provide a safe and confidential space for a young person to explore thoughts and feelings which perhaps are overwhelming and upsetting. In school, it is delivered by British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) trained practitioners who will work with students over a period of time with the aim of bringing about effective change or enhancing their well-being by supporting them to:

- understand their relationships better and improve them
- increase their level of self-awareness and communicate their needs
- explore their feelings, and understand and manage them better
- recognise unhelpful thought patterns and adopt new ones
- recognise the past and current behaviours they do not want to take in to the future

The counselling offered follows guidance set out by the Department of Education in *Counselling in Schools: A Blueprint for the Future (2016)* alongside *Good Practice for Counselling in Schools (4th edition)* produced by the BACP.

- The counselling will last initially for between 6 to 12 sessions.
- Each counselling session will last 50 minutes.
- Sessions will be during term time only.
- Whatever the young person shares with the Counsellor is confidential unless they are at significant risk of harm to themselves or others. The Counsellor will aim to inform and gain consent from the young person before breaking confidentiality.
- When deciding whether to share information and who the information is shared with, the rights and views of the young person will be taken into consideration, alongside school safeguarding policies (<https://bentonpark.org.uk/our-school/safeguarding/>), BACP ethical guidance and the legal framework surrounding consent.

- If a young person is under the age of 16, *Gillick Competence (1985)* will be applied when considering informing without consent and the young person's right to consent to counselling.
- Young people aged 16 & 17 are entitled to the same level of confidentiality and the ability to consent as an adult based on the *Family Law Reform Act (1969)*.
- Although we aim to inform parents/carers if their child is accessing counselling, we will take into consideration the rights and feelings of the young person and who they wish to inform. For further guidance, please see:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>

Should individuals feel that they have any cause for concern regarding our counselling offer, in the first instance they should speak to the counsellor, and if it cannot be resolved, contact should be made with Claire Scaife (DSL) or Elle Bentley (Deputy DSL) to discuss concerns. Complaints or concerns can also be raised directly with the BACP.

SilverCloud

School can refer to SilverCloud, which is an online service that supports young people aged 11-19, where anxiety and low mood are affecting their day-to-day life. Young people, or their parents and carers, have access to SilverCloud programmes online, supported by experienced members of staff.

Local Support

MindMate & Single Point of Access (SPA)

MindMate supports young people and their parents and carers in Leeds seeking support for their mental health concerns. It provides information on local services and a self-referral process for access to this support <https://self-referral.mindmate.org.uk/> School can also refer into this system, in order to make the service more accessible for the young person, parent or carer.

Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service

A service for individuals aged 17+ who are registered with a Leeds GP. LMWS can offer support and resources to help support individuals to access a wide range of

psychological support options, including phone support, instant-access online resources (Omnitherapy), group classes, and one-to-one 'talking therapies'.

<https://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/home/>

Forwards Leeds

Free alcohol and drug support for people in Leeds: Helping adults, young people and their families

<https://www.forwardleeds.co.uk/>

My Living Well

For young people, parents and carers living in Bradford, My Living Well, provides a list of services and online platforms that can be accessed and referred into in the local area.

<https://mylivingwell.co.uk/mental-health/online-services--children-and-young-people>

CAMHS

CAMHS stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. This service is run by the NHS and provides support for a variety of complex mental health concerns.

CAMHS in Leeds can be accessed through MindMate SPA or via the GP and other healthcare providers. CAMHS in Bradford can be accessed via the GP and other health care providers

Emergency Care

If a young person is in crisis, please either organise an emergency appointment with your GP or hospital or contact 999 or the appropriate service below:

Leeds CAMHS Crisis Call Line

Tel: 0800 953 0505

Open: 8:00am - 8:00pm, every day.

Bradford First Response

Tel: 0800 952 1181

Open: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Wider support

Alumina: <https://www.selfharm.co.uk/>

Alumina is a free, online 7-week course for young people struggling with self-harm.

Child Bereavement UK: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

Helps children and young people, and parents and careers, rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies.

Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

A place where young people can go to seek support for a variety of concerns

Kooth: <https://www.kooth.com/>

A free online counselling and wellbeing platform for young people

Papyrus: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>

A charity that aims to prevent young suicide by providing support and resources

Quell: <https://www.qwell.io/>

A free online counselling and wellbeing platform for individuals aged 18+

Young Minds: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

Whether you want to understand more about how you're feeling and find ways to feel better, or you want to support someone who's struggling, they can help.

9.0 Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing concerns. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should alert a member of the safeguarding, pastoral, inclusion or MHFA teams.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- 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

10.0 Targeted Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing challenges that may impact their mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with internal and external agencies when supporting the emotional and mental health needs of our students who are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with local children's services, CAMHS and other agencies to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with early and internal help protocols, young people who are showing signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the young person and their parents/carers.
- Agreeing on a WASP and/or Inclusion Passport as a first line of support.
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the young person's needs;
- Ensuring young people have access to pastoral care and the MHFA team, as well as specialist services highlighted above, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;

- Providing young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available to them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Providing young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

11.0 Managing Disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. They will ensure that they follow the school's safeguarding policy and all disclosures should be recorded confidentially on CPOMS including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▪ Date | ▪ Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation |
| ▪ Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made | ▪ Agreed next steps |

12.0 Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the student. We will tell them:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Who we are going to tell | ▪ Why we need to tell them |
| ▪ What we are going to tell them | ▪ When we're going to tell them |

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared. When deciding whether to share information and who the information is shared with, the rights and views of the young person will be taken into consideration, alongside school safeguarding policies (<https://bentonpark.org.uk/our-school/safeguarding/>) and the legal framework surrounding consent.

If a young person is under the age of 16, *Gillick Competence (1985)* will be applied when considering informing without consent.

Young people aged 16 & 17 are entitled to the same level of confidentiality and the ability to consent as an adult based on the *Family Law Reform Act (1969)*.

Although we aim to inform parents/carers if their child is accessing support, we will take into consideration the rights and feelings of the young person and who they wish to inform.

If a student gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, they are over 16 or there are child protection issues, parents/carers may not be informed, but the child protection procedures will be followed.

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

13.0 Whole School Approach

13.1 Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider if a phone call or virtual meeting is more appropriate
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent/carer, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent/carer to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents/carers to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents/carers have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agreed are added to CPOMS and their WASP and/or Inclusion Passport if appropriate.

13.2 Supporting Parents/Carers

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes; and
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

14.0 Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student who is suffering and their parents/carers 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 needs 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

All PSHE lessons offer lesson signposting to support students in where and how they can access support and each other. Both in school services and local and national support services are signposted, and students are encouraged to support each other to access the different levels of help needed.

15.0 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 students safe. Our PSCH co-ordinator will train as Mental Health Leader and our MHFA team will be consistently reviewed and developed to meet need.

We will host relevant information on our website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal 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 to 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 HR who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

16.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **October 2024**

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes.