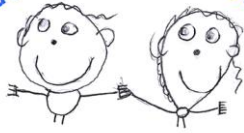


Atherstone Nursery School
and Warwickshire Early Years Hub



'Bright Start, Bright Future'
'Chances to explore, discover and grow'

Bedworth Heath Nursery School
and Warwickshire Early Years Hub



'You make the difference,
today, tomorrow, together'

Atherstone & Bedworth Heath Maintained Nursery Schools and Warwickshire Early Years Hub

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Date initial Policy Written	June 2023		
Approved by Governors	July 2023		
Revision Due:	Date completed:	Head teacher	Governing Body Representative
	June 2023	<i>N Burton</i>	<i>W Dodd</i>
Revision Due:	Date:	Head teacher	Governing Body Representative
	June 2024	<i>N Burton</i>	<i>C Gilsenan</i>

Note: Throughout the content of this policy you may find acronyms for commonly used terminology. Please see the following explanations for those acronyms used:

SEND- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
EHCP-Education, Health and Care Plan,
SENDSCO- Special Education Needs and Disabilities Coordinator
DfE- Department of Education
CAMHS- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service,
MHFA- Mental Health First Aider
SLT- Senior Leadership Team.
IDS- Integrated Disability Service
SIDP- School's Integrated Development Plan

1) Why Mental Health and Wellbeing is important

At our federation of Nursery Schools, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community; children, staff, parents, carers, visitors, governors and volunteers. We recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives, in just the same way as physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs in their nursery and school life and some face significant life events. Around 10% of children aged 5-16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department of Education (DfE) recognises that 'in order to help pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy'.

Schools can be a place for young children to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to support young children with the skills they need to manage times of change and stress, to learn how to build resilience, and to support each other to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, and who they can go to if they need help or support.

Staff, parents, carers, volunteers, governors and visitors will be supported to work and access conditions that are supportive of good mental health. Statistics show that currently in the UK one in six British workers are affected by mental health problems like anxiety, depression and stress every year. Additionally, around 15 per cent of people at work have symptoms of an existing mental health condition. Our aim is to normalise talking about mental health as we do physical health, and support in the same way.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are equally valued
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without fear
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued
- Bullying is not tolerated

Additionally, staff mental health and wellbeing is equally important. We want our schools to be a place where:

- All staff are equally valued
- Staff have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Staff are able to talk openly about mental health with their line managers without stigma and feel safe
- Staff can access support for any difficulties they may be experiencing with their mood, mental health or wellbeing
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued
- Bullying is not tolerated and will be acted upon swiftly according to staff Code of Conduct policy

2) The Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health
- How we prevent mental health problems
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs
- How we support staff, volunteers and teaching students with mental health needs
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- Where staff can find support
- Where parents and carers can find support

3) Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

...a state of wellbeing 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 his or her own community.

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want children to develop skills to:

- Feel confident in themselves
- To learn how to be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- To learn how to make positive relationships with others
- To cope with the stresses of everyday life
- To manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- To learn and achieve
- To have good adult role models
- To learn language and strategies to help feel safe

We want staff, student teaching staff and volunteers to have skills to:

- Feel confident in themselves
- To feel supported to cope with the stresses of everyday life
- To maintain positive relationships with others
- To achieve goals
- To learn language and strategies to help feel safe

4) Links to Other Policies

This policy links to our policies on Child Protection and Safeguarding, Inclusion, Anti-Bullying, Relationship Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, Special Educational Needs (SEND) Policy, Health and Safety Policy.

Links with the Relationship Policy are especially important when considering children's mental health and wellbeing, as disruptive behaviour, or aggression or being withdrawn could be indicators of a mental health difficulty. When we consider the needs of young children behaviour is a message, or another language, that children use to show us that something is not right for them.

5) A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children, parents and carers, staff, volunteers, governors and visitors become more resilient, to feel safe and to be successful. We aim to prevent problems before they escalate and support at the right time.

We do this by:

- Monitoring staff wellbeing twice yearly during Appraisal and Performance Management Supervision (meetings with line managers and support given if needed. Staff can request further meetings throughout the year if required)
- Assessing staff well being with anonymous questionnaires annually
- Whole school training during inset days designated to wellbeing at least annually
- Having Mental Health First Aid lead trained staff in both schools to support children, staff, parents, carers, volunteers, governors and visitors
- Having staff wellbeing as an agenda item at Governor meetings
- Promoting mental health openness in our schools
- Signposting staff to support services when required
- Looking at ways to reduce staff workload and to consider work/ life balance as a priority for wellbeing
- Having a staff social WhatsApp group for friendship only, not work items
- Signposting parents/carers to support services when required
- Staff trained in recognising difficulties children may be experiencing and acting on those concerns quickly, including referring to supportive agencies if required
- Staff working with, supporting and guiding parents and carers to support their children with mental health issues once they arise
- Helping children to learn to recognise emotions and how to manage those emotions effectively without hurting others
- We have whole school staff trained in Protective Behaviours across the federation
- Having Protective Behaviours on our curriculum to help children to recognise 'early warning signs' and how to seek help and feel safe
- Having an 'Open Door Policy' for staff, children, parents and carers, volunteers, governors and visitors to be able to talk to others and get help when they need it
- The nursery websites have a specific page dedicated to Wellbeing for our nursery communities. These can be accessed here:
<https://www.bedworthheathnurseryschool.com/wellbeing>
<https://www.atherstonenurseryschool.com/wellbeing>
- The nursery continually strive to create an inclusive working environment that promotes wellbeing and positive mental health. This includes recent lighting and colour audit on the classrooms and communal spaces. This is an ongoing project and part of the federation SIDP

- In the case of a Critical Incident the school will follow procedures in place to ensure all staff, children, families and the wider nursery community are supported as necessary, according to the type of incident

6) Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. There will be times when children, parents, carers, teaching students, governors or volunteers, or staff will need additional help and all staff are aware of where they can access further help to support others. Staff are trained in a variety of areas to recognise factors that may impact on mental health in their colleagues, children and parents and carers such as long term illness, bereavement, loss, divorce, family breakdown, bullying, or other adverse experiences. They also understand the factors that protect us from such adversity such as building self-esteem, being a good listener, developing good communication skills and helping with problem solving, as well as a sense of belonging and developing emotional literacy.

Staff that have key responsibilities in areas of supporting others are:

- Mental Health First Aiders for the schools: Barbara Charles, Joanne Black and Grace Shergold
- Cheryl Acton as federation SENDCO across both schools to support children's needs and liaise with parents and carers. Also complete referrals for pupils for support including IDS, CAMHS or Health. Cheryl will be supported by SEND support staff in this role across both schools
- Designated Safeguarding Leads Nicci Burton and Barbara Charles across both schools, supported by our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads as follows: Atherstone Nursery School staff are Grace Shergold, Sue Carthy, Debbie Douglas and for Bedworth Heath Nursery Staff are Carole Jackson, Berinder Matharu, Joanne Black, Mary Moore and Rachael Greasley.
- Family Link Worker Barbara Charles to help support parents and carers who may be experiencing a mental health or wellbeing difficulty, and can refer or signpost to supporting agencies
- Senior Leadership Team across the federation- Nicci Burton, Barbara Charles, Karen Barratt, Carole Jackson, Cheryl Acton and Grace Shergold, who work on promoting positive mental health activities for staff and keeping training updated
- Governing Body- with named Wellbeing Governor Chelsea Gilsenan responsible for assessing wellbeing in the settings for both staff and children

7) Early Identification of a child's need

Identifying a child that may require extra support with wellbeing or mental health issues involves a range of processes:

- Home visits prior to starting to build relationships with the child and family and to discuss early life experiences, including any additional needs, social care past or current involvement, or genetic or family factors
- New Parent and Carer meetings for families to help them prepare their child for the setting and to discuss any worries with key staff
- Observations of the child in the early sessions to assess any support needed

- Group activities to share and discuss feelings and build relationships with key staff
- Gathering information from previous settings or schools
- Weekly staff meetings to discuss individual children or raise concerns
- Parent/ Carer meetings for settling in and then Spotlight progress review meetings between key person and parent or carer
- Specific SEND focus meetings such as Individual Education Plan Meetings, Family Conversations and Transition Meetings
- Open door policy for parents and carers to come and talk to key staff regarding their child, when they need it

8) Supporting Parents and Carers

Supporting parents and carers with their child's needs is crucial for the best outcomes for the child. Key staff including SENDCO staff and Family Link staff are trained in recognising early difficulties such as anxiety, attachment difficulties, Latent Vulnerability due to early trauma or adverse childhood experiences. Parents and carers will be supported to recognise the best way to support their child and be provided with possible solutions or organisations and referrals that can help their child. If necessary regular meetings to continue that support will be established such as Individual Education Plan Meetings (IEP) or Early Help meetings, which will be held every 6 weeks.

Parents and carers will be signposted to training and resources such as Family Support duty Line, Parent Workshops, Rise (CAMHS) Parent Consultations or Rise (CAMHS) Workshops to support their child in areas including anxiety, self-harm, emotional regulation, low mood, sensory needs or self-esteem. Also, parents and carers can be directed to book a 1-1 parent consultation with a mental health professional through Coventry and Warwickshire Rise (CAMHS).

We will offer in house parent workshops through our Family Link Barbara Charles, for face to face group workshops on how to support a variety of topics to help parents and carers feel confident and skilled in their role. We will work closely with the Health Visitor Service to offer workshops to support parents and carers needs. We will gather parent and carer's views on what they would like help with and offer solutions according to those needs. We will also offer workshops on Teams for those that cannot attend face to face. Workshops run throughout the year. Additionally, Barb is trained in Solihull Approach and Malachi Inspiring Futures programmes in order to deliver one to one support to families with a nurture based feel.

Supporting links for parents and carers include, but are not limited to, the following sites. For further information or specific support please speak to Barbara Charles, Family Link:

- For parents and carers who wish to assess their **child's** mental health, wellbeing and overall health needs and obtain ideas for support for a range of areas including eating, sleeping, friendships, social skills and development needs then the Dimensions assessment tool is a useful way to access further ideas and support; <https://dimensions.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/>
- The Health Visitor 0-5 service is a useful site to access a range of ideas and help for a **child**; <https://www.swft.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-young-peoples-services>
- For mental health support for **children and young people** contact Young Minds here; <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

- To request a 45 minute 1-1 Parent Consultation with a mental health clinician for your **child** email; risecommunityoffer@covwarkpt.nhs.uk
- To book onto a parent workshop to support your **child's** mental health then access the workshops here; <https://cwrise.com/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n6752.pdf&ver=9156>
- For ways in which to lift your own/ **adult** mood and wellbeing please visit- <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>
- If you are experiencing a mental health crisis as an **adult** then please call Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Crisis Line on 08081 966798. In an emergency, or a threat to life, dial 999
- If you are feeling overwhelmed as an **adult** during the evening, when many services are closed, and you wish to speak to a mental health professional contact Warwickshire Safe Haven on 02477 714554. Text 07970 042270. Email safehaven@cwmind.org.uk or visit 3 Newtown Chambers, Corporation Street, Nuneaton CV11 5XR. <https://cwmind.org.uk/warwickshire-safe-haven-nuneaton/>
- For mental health support for an **adult** you can text SHOUT on 85258 24/7
- Other useful mental health organisations: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/> <https://www.samaritans.org/> <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>
- For those who need support in the LGBT+ community, or with a related issue, please either speak to the LGBT+ staff representative- Sharon Wood or Louise Wainwright, or speak to a Senior Leadership Team member.

9) Supporting Staff and Colleagues

Staff wellbeing is a core value for our Executive Headteacher Nicci Burton, as well as for our Senior Leadership Team. In order for our children to develop into strong, confident, capable adults, they need to be guided, taught and supported by adults who have the same support. Our federation has a strong ethos of taking care of our work 'family' and we actively promote Mental Health and Wellbeing in our schools, and strive to remove any stigma when discussing mental health or wellbeing in meetings, training or on a one to one personal basis. Support to staff is through a variety of routes including training sessions and Inset days, Employee wellbeing scheme, Appraisal and Performance Management Supervision and local and national policy.

We will continually assess, monitor and access training to ensure we are always putting staff mental health and wellbeing at the forefront of our priorities. Work/ Life balance is key for good mental health and we will strive to reduce workload and implement flexibility, wherever possible, to support individual staff members. Legislation, including the **Equality Act 2010**, stipulates that reasonable adjustments must be made to support staff who are experiencing poor mental health. Additionally, we actively endorse The **Education Staff Wellbeing Charter**, written in 2021, which promotes schools and educational establishments to drive down unnecessary workload, measure and respond to changes in staff wellbeing, embed wellbeing into training and professional development, improve access to mental health and wellbeing resources and support, break down stigma around mental health and continually review our policy on how we are meeting this criteria. To read the charter please click here;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1034032/DfE_Education_Workforce_Welbeing_Charter_Nov21.pdf

We have our Wellbeing Governor, Chelsea Gilsean, who is responsible for semi-annual visits to the settings to ensure Staff Wellbeing is a core value. We monitor staff wellbeing with ongoing assessments, anonymous surveys which shape our future training offer, and regular training sessions concentrating on Wellbeing.

Staff can access personalised help in the following ways:

- Employee Wellbeing Service. This can be accessed 24/7 by contacting 0800 1116 387. The helpline (only) is also available to dependants. An eligible dependent is:
 - your spouse or domestic partner
 - unmarried dependants, under 21 years of age, who are dependent upon you for maintenance and support - this includes legally adopted children, stepchildren and children who are dependent upon you by reason of legal guardianship
 - unmarried dependent child under 25 who is in full-time education (they may live away from home)
 - unmarried dependent child who is incapable of self-sustaining employment because of physical or mental disability, who became disabled prior to age 21
- By starting a conversation with a Mental Health First Aider in nursery
- By accessing a range of resources linked to training days we have completed on the 5 Ways to Wellbeing. <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>
- By assessing their own Mental Health and Wellbeing needs by using the Dimensions assessment, which can lead to signposting and further support. The assessment can be accessed here: <https://dimensions.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/Begin.aspx>
- By using a range of support services, including, but not limited to the following services as an example;

-To text with a mental health professional you can Text Shout on 85258

-For evening help when most services are closed you can contact Warwickshire Safe Haven. You can have a phone call, video call or face to face meeting with a Mental Health Volunteer. They are open from 6-11pm each night. Access here: <https://cwmind.org.uk/warwickshire-safe-haven-nuneaton/> or call them on 02477 714554

- By visiting useful websites who have access to webchat, text chat or 24/7 helplines. Including;
 - <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>
 - <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>
 - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/where-to-start/>
 - <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- By accessing courses for a range of mental health concerns through the Recovery Academy. The full list of available courses can be found here and are free of charge; <https://www.recoveryandwellbeing.co.uk/Courses>

- By downloading helpful apps to your smart phone. The NHS recommended apps are;
 - Stay Alive- the No1 suicide prevention app. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/wellbeing-apps/stayalive/>
 - Bright Sky app for those in an abusive relationship <https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/wellbeing-apps/bright-sky/>
 - Head Space, a science backed app in Mindfulness and Meditation: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/wellbeing-apps/headspace/>
- By self-referring yourself to the NHS offer for mental health support- IAPT. (Improving Access to Psychological Therapy) Here is the link to the self-referral form; www.healthymindservice.com/self-referral
- By contacting your GP
- If you are in **abusive relationship** that is affecting your mental health and wellbeing, you can also contact Refuge here: <https://refuge.org.uk/i-need-help-now/refuge-domestic-violence-service-warwickshire/>
- For those who need support in the **LGBT+** community, or with a related issue, please either speak to the LGBT+ staff representative-.- Sharon Wood or Louise Wainwright, or speak to a Senior Leadership Team member
- For **Bereavement Support** there are many charities that can help. Some are more tailored to specific loss, for example child loss, loss through cancer and others. Please access some examples here, who can offer bespoke bereavement counselling, befriending, forums to talk with others who are experiencing the same loss and webchat amongst other services.
 - <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>
 - <https://www.sueryder.org/how-we-can-help/online-bereavement-support>
 - <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/> for the loss of a child
 - <https://www.winstonswish.org/> for supporting children with the loss of a parent
 - <https://freddieswish.org/> for the loss of a child of any age
- Our websites have specific support for wellbeing. These can be accessed here;
 - <https://www.bedworthheathnurseryschool.com/wellbeing>
 - <https://www.atherstonenurseryschool.com/wellbeing>
- For additional help please do speak to Senior Leadership Team Members or Mental Health First Aider who can offer bespoke support to you

How we will support a staff member to encourage positive mental health:

Workload and work-life balance:

Senior Leadership Team actively assess and reduce work load wherever possible according to the Education Staff Fair Workload Charter. We constantly evaluate assessment tools for children and access platforms that are effective in reducing the workload for staff when assessing pupil progress. Staff meeting times are reduced to ensure that staff still leave school at a set time to prevent late finishes. Working from home is actively discouraged.

Promote protected breaks:

Staff are encouraged to have full lunch breaks to give them time to reflect and rest during the busy school day. The staff room is a quiet place, with no access to children, and is equipped with relaxing reading materials, low level lighting and ample comfortable seating.

How we will respond to a disclosure:

When a staff member shares with Senior Leadership Team or Mental Health First Aider that they may be experiencing mental health difficulties or low wellbeing, this will be responded to with support, compassion and practical ways to help. This may include offering the Employee Assistance Programme, encouraging staff to use a Wellness Action Plan to actively promote ideas that will help them as an individual, discuss flexibility within the role, and how to access further support and signposting for medical services, such as NHS services or another healthcare provider. We will be positive – focus on what employees can do, rather than what they can't. We will work together and involve people in finding solutions as much as possible.

How we will encourage normalising mental health discussions:

We will have mental health and wellbeing as an agenda item at staff meetings, as a training day focus annually, by having ongoing assessments of mental health of staff through a variety of means including anonymous surveys, one to one discussion during Appraisals or Absence support meetings, as well as having an 'open door' policy for staff who need help in the moment.

How we support an employee who is off sick:

We will support people during their absence and reassure them their job will be there when they return. We will maintain regular open and meaningful communication with individuals – agree together the frequency of contact early on and confirm this in writing. We will take the staff member's lead on how they would prefer to communicate – whether by phone, email, text or face-to-face – and keep checking that the current arrangement is still working for them. We have an open-door policy so that the staff member can approach us with any concerns. We will ask how individuals are doing and focus conversations on their well-being. We will make it clear they should not rush back to work or push themselves too much. We will consider visiting the employee at home, but only with their consent. We will encourage employees to stay in touch with their friends at work as this is vital for their wellbeing. We will keep them updated about important developments at work so they still feel connected. We will regularly communicate with HR/ Occupational Health, act on their recommendations and keep them informed. We will agree what information the employee would like shared with colleagues – close colleagues will want to know how they are getting on. We will communicate clearly with the team and ensure they understand the situation. If other staff members have to pick up extra work this will be carefully managed to reduce impact.

How we will support return to work following a mental health absence:

At your return to work meeting we will explain the return-to-work process/ procedures and reassure staff members that they are not expected to walk straight back into full time hours or to manage a full-time workload. We will ask you how you are feeling. We will use open questions that require more than just a 'yes' or 'no' answer and give individuals lots of space and time to talk. We will listen and try to empathise with the employee. We will ask if there are any problems at work that might be causing them stress, or if there are difficulties outside work that might be contributing to their absence. We will discuss their mental health problem and the possible impact on their work, and consider possible solutions and ensure we can provide possible sources of available support. We will discuss any worries they have about returning to work, reassure them that this is normal and agree a strategy to address these concerns together. We will try to prepare them for how they may feel on their return and also to think about how they want to manage their return e.g. what they want to say to colleagues. We also understand that despite looking fine, someone may still be unwell. We will discuss practical steps and workplace adjustments, and ensure on-the-job support from line manager and HR. Steps will be discussed and a plan

completed in advance, so that employees are fully aware of how their needs will be met on their return. We will plan for regular check-ins and reviews over those first days and weeks and further adaptations if necessary, can be introduced.

10) Closing Summary

The Federation's open door policy is taken seriously. We want all of our nursery community members to feel safe and able to approach us, to talk about anything, even if it feels awful or small, in confidence that we will support and offer help.

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