Pupil mental health and wellbeing policy

Fringford C of E Primary School

Contents

1. Aims 3
2. Legislation and guidance 3
3. Roles and responsibilities 4
4. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis 5
5. Warning signs 6
6. Managing disclosures 6
7. Confidentiality 7
8. Supporting pupils 7
9. Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers 9
10. Supporting peers 9
11. Signposting 9
12. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness 10
13. Training 11
14. Support for staff 12
15. Monitoring arrangements 12

1. Aims

At Fringford C of E Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

This policy focuses on pupils' mental health and wellbeing. It aims to:

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils across our school
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which pupils feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Inform pupils and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources

It should be read alongside:

- SEND policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy was written with regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

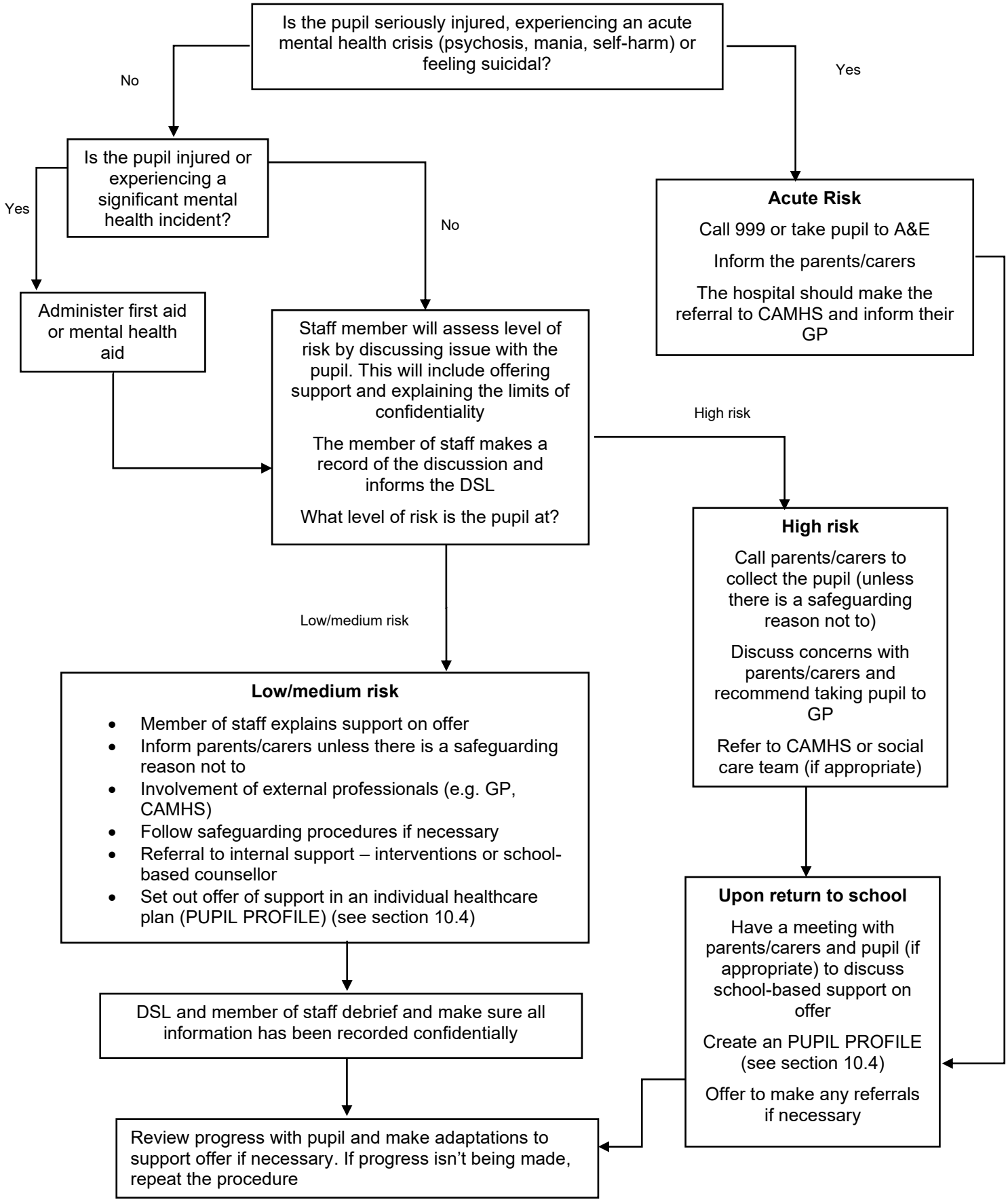
3. Roles and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across our school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

- Headteacher
- Designated safeguarding leads (DSL)
- Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Mental health lead
- Attendance lead

4. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



5. Warning signs

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a pupil's mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

- Changes in:
    - Mood or energy level
    - Eating or sleeping patterns
    - Attitude in lessons or academic attainment
    - Level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Rapid weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn’t have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

6. Managing disclosures

If a pupil makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the pupil’s emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow our school’s safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil’s confidential child protection file.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

7. Confidentiality

Staff will not promise a pupil that they will keep a disclosure secret – instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a pupil's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least 1 appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first.

Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the child protection/ safeguarding policy will be followed.

7.1 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

1. Pupil makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil who the information will be shared with and why
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
6. The DSL will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

8. Supporting pupils

8.1 Baseline support for all pupils

As part of our school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, our school offers support to all pupils by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, PSHE and mental health awareness week
- Signposting all families to sources of online support on our school website
- Providing pupils with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of our school that is negatively impacting their mental health

- Monitoring all pupils' mental health through assessments, e.g. a strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing

8.2 Assessing what further support is needed

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the school will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above in section 8.1.

Our school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the pupil's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

8.3 Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a pupil will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our school includes:

- Nurture groups
- ELSA support
- Reduced timetable
- Therapy

8.4 Individual healthcare plans (PUPIL PROFILEs)

PUPIL PROFILEs are written in collaboration with the pupil (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals. Where the school decides that a pupil profile

The pupil's PUPIL PROFILE will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The pupil's needs resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the pupil's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in our school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

8.5 Making external referrals

If a pupil's needs cannot be met by the internal offer our school provides, our school will make, or encourage parents/carers to make, a referral for external support.

A pupil could be referred to:

- Their GP or a paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. Samaritans, Mind, Young Minds, Kooth)
- Local counselling services

9. Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers

We will work with parents/carers to support pupils' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent/carer forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face-to-face.

These meetings can be difficult, so our school will ensure that parents/carers are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the pupil's confidential record.

If appropriate, an individual healthcare plan (PUPIL PROFILE) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers (see section 10.4).

10. Supporting peers

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be very challenging for pupils. Pupils may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We will offer support to all pupils impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis.

11. Signposting

Sources of support are displayed around our school, linked on the school website and shared through newsletters and other direct communication with parents/carers, so pupils and parents/carers are aware of how they can get help.

The DSLs will be available to provide further information to pupils and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

12. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

12.1 Mental health is taught in PSHE

We follow the PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Pupils are taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe

For more information, see our PSHE curriculum.

12.2 Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with pupils as appropriate to break down stigma
- Encouraging pupils to disclose when their mental health is deteriorating

12.3 School food standards

- The school adheres to national school food standards and The Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 in our duty to provide nutritious food for pupils, and encourage healthy eating.
- The school complies with the DfE's practical guide to the food standards to help schools to plan and provide healthy food. It states that a healthy, balanced diet for pupils should include:
  - Plenty of fruit and vegetables
  - Plenty of unrefined starchy foods
  - Some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
  - Some milk and dairy foods
  - A small amount of food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt
- The school complies fully with allergen regulations as outlined in the Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019.

12.4 Nutrition and Mental Health

- The school is committed to helping children develop healthy eating habits and demonstrates this commitment through our:
  - Healthy Smiles accreditation
  - Healthy Schools accreditation
  - Engagement with out school food providers to promote healthy living
  - Extra-curricular activities that support a healthy lifestyle
  - Wellbeing Ambassadors
  - Curriculum
    - PSHE
    - PE
    - Science
    - Design Technology

- Approach to dietary requirements
    - Vegetarians and vegans
    - Religious and ethnic groups
    - Food allergies and intolerances

12.5 Benevolent Childhood Experiences

At Fringford School, we recognise that childhood is the most important time in a person's brain development and wellbeing, shaping their future health, relationships and overall success in life.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) were first introduced by Felitti and Anda in the 1990s. However, it is only relatively recently that Benevolent Childhood Experiences (BCEs) have received significant recognition as to their importance in counteracting negative childhood experiences.

What Are Benevolent Childhood Experiences (BCEs)?

BCEs are positive, supportive moments, experiences, and opportunities that help safeguard vulnerable children, particularly those dealing with adversity or living in unsafe environments.

The long-term impact of ACEs has been widely studied and research has shown that such incidents can lead to severe long-term health and behavioural challenges, from creating barriers that make forming relationships difficult, to increasing the risk of mental health problems.

For children experiencing chronic stress or trauma at home, BCEs in schools can offer vital emotional and psychological support. By reducing the impact of, or helping to counteract, ACEs, these positive experiences enhance emotional regulation, support cognitive development, and contribute to healthier long-term outcomes.

How Fringford School can introduces BCEs to Safeguard Children

We prioritise safety, emotional support and inclusion to help nurture Benevolent Childhood Experiences (BCEs) that foster positive relationships, build trust and strengthen resilience.

This may include:

- Maintaining a Safe and Nurturing School Environment: When children feel physically and emotionally secure they are able to thrive and reach their full potential.
- Building Positive Relationships & Trust: Strong relationships built upon trust are vital BCEs for at-risk children. Research shows that even one stable, positive relationship with an adult can offset the effects of ACEs. By focusing on supportive, honest and trauma-informed approaches, we can offer more personalised and valuable support for children.
- Encouraging a Sense of Belonging: Pupils who feel connected to a supportive community are more likely to have positive relationships with their peers and thrive at school. We offer a welcoming, whole-school culture by promoting inclusivity and diverse communities and offering opportunities for children to ask for help from peer support networks.

In conclusion, for vulnerable children, including those affected by safeguarding concerns or challenging home circumstances, we recognise that we can play a vital protective role by weaving BCEs into their everyday culture and practice. By creating an environment that is safe, nurturing and inclusive, we can help reduce the harmful effects of ACEs and support better outcomes for all pupils.

13. Training

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what pupils' mental health needs are

- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil in need of help

14. Support for staff

We recognise that supporting a pupil experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing. To help with this we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- Offer an employee assistance programme

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Mental Health Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body.