



# **DURANTS SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT**

## **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health**

*Created: March 2022 (Carmel Wraight)*  
*Next review date: January 2024*

### **Policy statement**

At Durants school, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and with effective policies and procedures, we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

### **Scope**

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Durant school's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. This should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

### **Policy Aims**

Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.

Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.

Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill-health in students.

Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.

Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.

Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience-building techniques.

Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, 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 the school.

### **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:

Mental health and wellbeing lead – Carmel Wraight

Designated safeguarding leads – Rachel Carli, Anita Bancarz, Daniela Barzanti, Jackie Burke, and Ann O'Hagan

PSHE lead – Jackie Burke

Mental Health First Aiders: Daniela Barzanti, Rachel Carli, Kay Khing, Jackie Burke, Carmel Wraight, Chrissy Fiorentino

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student, in the first instance they should speak to the designated safeguard leads. This can be via CPOMS or in person.

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 emergency services if necessary.

### **Behaviour plans**

Every pupil at Durants has a positive behaviour support plan. Durants School provides education for children and young people between 11 and 19 years old with complex needs; Autism, severe to profound learning difficulties and multi-sensory impairment. The nature of their special educational needs means that the environment may be difficult for them to

understand and the social world may be confusing. This may lead to anxiety, distress or withdrawal, which will have an impact on their social behaviour, behaviour for learning and mental health. Durants School is committed to promoting, embedding and maintaining the values and principles of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) to enable staff to support and manage behaviours of concern. The overall aim of PBS is to improve the quality of a person's life and that of the people around them. For more information, please see the PBS policy.

When a pupil has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support through either CAMHS/SCAN or another organisation, this information should be included in their positive behaviour plan and an individual risk assessment may be required.

The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals. Suggested details in the positive behaviour plan and risk assessment include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school and specific staff

### **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.

We will follow the guidance issued by ASDAN 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 students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

There are slots in the timetable that focus solely on well-being such as yoga, mindful colouring and meditation.

Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of mental health in school. Some pupils may be supported individually with social stories created by their teachers.

### **Therapy**

The school has a range of therapists that work with the pupils, staff and their families to support them and their wellbeing.

### **Speech and language**

Work on language and communication skills is a focus of the whole school. Speech and language therapists work with teachers and support staff to help all pupils to develop their communication skills (including using visual support for language and communication where appropriate) across the week. Working in the classroom develops functional skills in pupils and promotes sharing of skills between the therapist and the class team.

Daily, the pupils have opportunities to identify their emotions using the zones of regulation. The Zones of Regulation framework and curriculum (Kuypers, 2011) teaches students scaffolded skills toward developing a metacognitive pathway to build awareness of their feelings/internal state and utilize a variety of tools and strategies for regulation, prosocial skills, self-care, and overall wellness. This includes exploring tools and strategies for

mindfulness, sensory integration, movement, thinking strategies, wellness, and healthy connection with others. The Zones of Regulation provides a common language and compassionate framework to support positive mental health and skill development for all.

### **Music therapy**

Music therapy is psychotherapeutic music through which a person can engage creatively in a process to further their emotional, cognitive, physical and social abilities. The use of music is founded on the principle that music is innate in us all regardless of ability and background. Music therapy is the development of a relationship between child and therapist where music-making forms the basis for communication. It allows a child or adult to explore communication and express their feelings through sound and play. Music therapy can motivate the use of fine and gross motor skills and can extend the focus of attention through engagement in an enjoyable, interactive activity. Music therapy can facilitate positive changes in behaviour and emotional wellbeing as well as increasing self-awareness thereby enhancing the client's quality of life. Within sessions, generally, both the music therapist and the client/s engage in the musical activity; improvised and pre-composed music. The therapist does not teach the client but responds musically to the client's music thus supporting and encouraging exploration and communication.

### **Dog therapy**

Therapy Dogs Nationwide is a national charity where visiting volunteers take their dogs into establishments to provide comfort, distraction, and stimulation. The benefits of Animal Assisted Therapies (AAT) have been extensively studied and results range from improvement in general health and wellbeing, increased confidence levels, improved and controlled movement to improved communication skills. The dogs have also been shown to help with special needs and autistic children and adults by giving focus and providing a calming environment.

## **Sources or support at school and in the local community**

### **School-Based Support –**

- Whole school PBS approach.
- Support from therapists
- Sessions incorporated into the timetable supporting wellbeing such as yoga and mindfulness.
- Individual social stories, created by teachers, help pupils to understand their mental health and how they can ask for help and express their needs.
- Each pupil's IEP (Individual education plan) has targets for mental health and wellbeing
- Durants School is proud to be in partnership with Magic Breakfast, providing healthy breakfasts to our pupils so that they are settled and ready to learn. Magic Breakfast provides Durants school with nutritious breakfast food to ensure children start their school day in the best possible way. Breakfast gives children the energy needed for the busy school morning, enabling them to focus on their lessons. Here at Durants school, we are committed to ensuring no child is too hungry to learn.
- Durants school council meet half-termly and pupils can share what is going well at their school and suggest ways to improve their own and their peers' wellbeing.

### **Local Support**

In Enfield, there is a range of organisations and groups offering support.

- CAMHS partnership, a group of providers specialising in children and young

people's mental health wellbeing. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

<https://www.behcamhs.nhs.uk/about-us/enfield-camhs.htm>

In an emergency -Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust- 0800 151 002.  
Out-of-hours service- 020 8379 1000

- **Mind in Enfield** provides counselling, drop-in services, workshops and therapies.  
<https://www.mindeb.org.uk/>
- **Enfield Carers Centre** offers support and advice for all unpaid carers in the borough of Enfield.  
<https://enfieldcarers.org/>
- **Enfield Mental Health Users Group** represents users' views on mental health issues in health and social service areas.  
<http://www.emugroup.org.uk/>
- **Improving Access to Psychological Therapies** provides support to people suffering from depression, anxiety and related problems.  
<https://www.archant.co.uk/>
- **North London Samaritans** gives confidential emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

#### 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, 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

#### Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs, which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should alert (insert name of mental health first aider).

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

### **Targeted support**

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer 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 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 Enfield Council Children's Services, Enfield CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discuss options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers.
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs;
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including Enfield CAMHS/SCAN so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Provide 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.

### **Managing disclosures**

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially including information on:

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

This information will be shared with the school's designated safeguarding leads.

These concerns should also be reported on CPOMS via [Durants.CPOMS.net](https://durants.cpoms.net)

### **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
- What we are going to tell them
- Why do we need 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, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague 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.

Parents must always be informed, but students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

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.

### **Working with parents/carers**

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents 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 on school premises so consider a neutral venue if 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, 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 to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents 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 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 the pupil's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

### **Supporting parents**

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;
- Ensuring all parents are aware the school has a parent advisor they can speak to and ask for advice;
- 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 run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; 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. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

### **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 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

### **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.

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.

We host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

### **Kitemark**

Durants school has signed up to the Sandwell Charter Mark. The Sandwell Well-being Charter Mark is a school's opportunity to commit to improving the mental health and well-being of everyone connected with your school. This will demonstrate that we have made significant improvements in all school areas identified by Public Health England (Leadership, Ethos and Environment, Curriculum, Teaching & Learning, Pupil Voice, Targeted Support, Staff Development, Identifying Needs, Monitoring Impact and Working with Parents).