

# Whole School Approach to Emotional & Mental Well-being Policy

At Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School we are committed to embedding the principles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC](#)). This policy enables our students to access and enjoy the following articles of the convention:

Article 1: Every child under the age of 18 has all the rights in the convention

Article 2: All children have these rights

Article 3: Decisions are made in the best interests of the child

Article 12: Respect the views of the child

Article 19: Every child has the rights to be protected from being hurt or badly treated

Article 28 – The right to an education and discipline that respects the child’s dignity and their expression

Article 34 – Every child has the right not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, unsafe or sad

Article 42 – Every child has the right to know their rights

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## **School Vision**

Nurturing our students' well-being is the cornerstone of all we do. Students need to feel safe and happy coming to school in order to thrive and reach their full potential. Every one of our students will receive the respect, encouragement, support and opportunity they need to prepare them to become happy and effective members of society.

## **School Ethos**

At Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School we aim to be a happy, exciting and purposeful place where all can learn, grow and achieve their full potential with enthusiasm and enjoyment. A place where students and staff are aware of their rights and given the opportunity to access those rights, in accordance with the 'Framework for embedding whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being', published by Welsh Government, March 2021.

We want to establish and maintain a school ethos and environment that ensures the holistic wellbeing of all stakeholders, fostering a love of learning, instilling strong values and celebrating the achievements of everyone. We want our relationships to be based on mutual respect so that adults and students can work together cooperatively in safety and enjoyment. We are a nurturing school and we want our students to develop in an atmosphere that promotes honesty, trust and increasing responsibility.

## **Why is emotional and mental well-being so important?**

At Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School, we aim to promote positive emotional and mental well-being for our whole school community (students, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important emotional and mental well-being is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that an individual's emotional and mental well-being is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning, teaching and achievement.

## **Students**

School can be a place for students and young people 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 students' wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that students are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that students learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects

their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

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

- All students are valued.
- Students have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Students feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

In addition to students' wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing

### **Staff**

The biggest asset our school has is its staff; the biggest asset they have is their health and wellbeing.

We spend more daylight hours in school than at home, so it is important that we can have ownership of many of the decisions that affect us in our working lives. We can do this, even in areas where we have no choices about what we do (e.g. reports, or deadlines for assessments), by taking responsibility for these actions and approaching the tasks in our own way. All our work should be healthy, safe and supportive and governors have a responsibility to ensure our practices contribute to staff wellbeing. This includes monitoring staff absence and regularly requesting feedback from staff governors about wellbeing. Governors recognise the importance of the wellbeing of staff in our school.

We advocate a holistic, proactive approach to maintaining and supporting emotional and mental wellbeing at work, with everyone working together: staff, leadership team, governors, local authority, occupational health and health and safety professionals, to:

- tackle the causes of workplace injury and ill health, including stress and anxiety
- address the impact of health on employees' capacity to work, providing support for those with disabilities and health conditions and rehabilitation
- promote healthier lifestyles and wellbeing to help improve the general health of the workforce

Where requested, confidentiality can be important in establishing trusting relationships providing the safety of the person or others not compromised. However, where possible, staff are encouraged to share their emotional / mental and/or physical needs in an open way with colleagues, to maximise support networks available. This practice also helps to de-stigmatise issues related to health conditions in the workplace.

### **Links to other Policies**

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Keeping Learners Safe and Prevent. Links with the Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet emotional or mental health need.

## **Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being**

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help students and staff to become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses the following aspects:

- Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support emotional and mental well-being and resilience, and which everyone understands. Helping students to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
- Helping students to be resilient learners.
- Teaching students social and emotional skills and an awareness of emotional and mental well-being.
- Establishing robust systems of monitoring, identification and support in order to safeguard students' mental health and promote their wellbeing.
- Planning bespoke support to meet individuals' needs, including working with outside agencies and specialist services.
- Effectively working with parents, guardians and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Reflecting on staff workload for a positive work / life balance
- Promoting openness about emotional and mental well-being

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues

### **Role of Governors**

The Governing Body of our school has a critical role to play in developing our strategic aims and setting the school budget. Our governors ensure that the emotional and mental well-being of our students and staff is at the heart of our school culture. Governors understand that when we look after the well-being of our students, they want to attend school and their attainment and attendance improves. When we support staff well-being and invest in professional learning, staff want to attend work and staff absence and turnover decreases.

Our Governing Body enables and supports our Senior Management Team (SMT) to develop long-term development plans to promote and improve the emotional and mental well-being of students and staff.

We have a link governor for well-being and their role is to:

- act as a point of contact
- ensure the well-being of students and staff is on the agenda at every meeting
- provide support for staff who lead on well-being
- ensure policies, training and provision are fit for purpose

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some students and staff will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of emotional and mental well-being issues and ensure that those who need help get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some students and staff more likely to experience problems, such as physical long-term illness, family difficulties, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying.

Our Well-being Team:

- Leads and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Leads on curriculum development for teaching about emotional and mental well-being.
- Provides advice and support to staff, organises training and updates.
- Is the first point of contact with outside agencies and specialist services, and makes individual referrals to them.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional challenges can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some students and staff will need support that is more intensive at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to students / staff with mental health needs and their families.

## **Supporting Students Emotional and Mental Well-being**

We believe the School has a key role in promoting students' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems.

Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches to support students' emotional and mental well-being and can be found in **Appendix 1**.

These support strategies are categorised into three sections:

- Universal support – strategies that all students can expect to access without needing additional resources
- Targeted Support – strategies in place for students with additional needs over and above what is available through universal support
- Specialist Support – specialist services are those, which students may require following an individual assessment or referral.

## **Identifying, referring and supporting students with emotional and mental well-being needs**

Our approach:

- Provides a safe environment to enable students to express themselves
- Ensures the welfare and safety of students are paramount.
- Identifies appropriate support for students based on their needs.
- Involves parents, guardians or carers when their child needs support.
- Involves students in the care and support they receive.
- Monitors, reviews and evaluates the support with students and keeps Parents, guardians or carers updated.

### **Early Identification**

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify students with mental and/or emotional health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Class Charts well-being check-in app
- Well-being questionnaires
- Analysing attendance, behaviour, consequences and exclusions
- Staff report concerns about individual students to the relevant Head of Learning
- Regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- Parental information and health questionnaire on entry to the School
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Regular parental contact
- Enabling students to raise concerns to any member of staff, or online
- Enabling Parents, guardians or carers to raise concerns to any member of staff
- Named 'go to' adult for those students who need it

Any member of staff concerned about a student will take this seriously and talk to the Head of Learning, Well-being Team or any member of SMT.

These signs might include, but are not limited to:

- Isolation from friends, family, and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity, mood, or eating/sleeping habits.
- Falling academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do PE or change for PE.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Drugs or alcohol misuse.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Staff are aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour that could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development. If there is a

concern that a student is in danger of immediate harm then the school's Child Protection procedures are followed.

If there is a medical emergency then the school's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

### **Disclosures by students and confidentiality**

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to students who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our students is paramount and staff listen rather than give advice.

Staff make it clear to students that the concern will be shared with the Well-being Team, or Designated Safeguarding Person if needed, and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the student. All disclosures are recorded and held on the student's confidential file, including date, name of student and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

### **Assessment, Interventions and Support**

All concerns are reported to the Well-being Team and recorded. We then implement our assessment system, which is based on levels of need to ensure that students get the support they need, from either within the School or from an external specialist service.

Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

### **Evidence-based Intervention and Support**

The kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and students. For example: Learning Coaching, 1:1 counselling, group intervention, family counselling, Educational Psychologist assessment, referral for Step 4 SEBD provision, and consultation with local authority support services.

If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health and care assessment is required, we refer to the ALN Statutory Code. All students needing targeted individualised support will have a One Page Profile (with targets) and IDP drawn up setting out:

- The needs of the students
- How the student will be supported
- Actions to provide that support
- Any special requirements

Students and parents/carers will be involved in the plan. The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to assess the impact e.g. through observation, SMART targets.

The ALNCo oversees the IDP.



## **Working with Specialists**

In some instances, a student's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders.

We have access to a range of specialist services and during the support will have regular contact with the service to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the students' Individual Education / Care Plan.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Well-being Team or the ALNCo following the assessment process and in consultation with the student and his/her parents and carers.

Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the student and parent/carer when it is the most appropriate support for the student's specific needs.

## **Main Specialist Service Referral process**

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) accessed through school, GP or self-referral
- Educational Psychologist accessed through the Headteacher, Health and Well-being Lead or ALNCo
- Space Well-being Panel accessed through the Headteacher, Health and Well-being Lead or ALNCo

Persistent mental health problems may lead to students having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. In some cases, the child may benefit from being identified as having an Additional Learning Need (ALN).

## **Involving Students**

We regularly seek students' views about the various elements of our whole school approach to mental and emotional well-being.

We always seek feedback from students during, and after, a support programme has been provided. This is to ensure that students receive the right support at the right time and to help improve the services we provide.

## **Involving Parents, Guardians and Carers**

We recognise the important role played by parents, guardians or carers in promoting and supporting the emotional and mental well-being of their students, and in particular supporting students who do have emotional or mental well-being needs.

We share information, which includes who parents can talk to if they have concerns about a child and where parents can access support for themselves.

When a concern has been raised, the school will:

- contact parents, guardians or carers and meet with them (in almost all cases, Parents, guardians or carers will be involved in their students' interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.)
- offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls.
- Make a record of the meeting.
- Agree a plan for support, including clear next steps.
- Discuss how the parents, guardians and carers can support their child.
- Keep parents, guardians or carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions provided.

Parents, guardians or carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger. Students may choose to tell their parents, guardians or carers themselves.

We make every effort to support parents, guardians or carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the students, and in the rare event that parents, guardians or carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority.

We also provide information for parents, guardians or carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

### **Supporting Staff Emotional and Mental Well-being**

We believe the school has a key role in promoting and supporting positive emotional and mental well-being for all staff. See **Appendix 2**

These support strategies are categorised into three sections:

- Universal support – strategies that all staff can expect to access without needing additional resources
- Targeted Support – strategies in place for staff with additional needs over and above what is available through universal support
- Specialist Support – specialist services are those, which staff may require following an individual assessment or referral.

### **Promoting Staff Well-being**

Research indicates that taking the following steps can be important in the promotion and maintenance of mental well-being.

At our school, we promote these strategies to maintain positive emotional and mental well-being:

- Knowing personal limits and having the ability to say 'no' when necessary.
- Identifying supportive people that you have in your life, both in and out of school.
- Talking.
- Being flexible around change.
- Self-compassion.
- Being responsible for your own self-care.

## **Identifying, referring and supporting staff with emotional and mental well-being needs**

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable staff to express themselves
- Ensure the welfare and safety of staff are paramount.
- Signpost staff to a range of support services.
- Provide opportunities for staff feedback.
- Monitor staff sickness and reasons for sickness
- Identify appropriate support for staff based on their needs.
- Involve external services if needed, with the permission of the staff member.
- Involve staff in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with staff member.

Supporting and promoting the emotional and mental wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing, such as:

- celebrating special occasions,
- staff social/sporting activities

### **Staff Training**

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of emotional and mental wellbeing. Staff will be able to promote positivity throughout the school, identify emotional and mental well-being needs early in students and know what to do and where to get help.

Our staff, who undertake specific roles in relation to emotional and mental well-being, have access to professional support and training appropriate to their role. As a school, we understand how important training is for staff and individual training needs are identified annually as part of our performance management cycle.

### **The Advocacy Project**

As part of our whole school approach to health and well-being, we are developing a number of volunteer 'advocates' on the staff to build up expertise in areas of emerging or increasing need. These advocates are supported to undertake professional learning to consolidate their own knowledge and understanding in an area which they feel passionate about, with a view to becoming an in-house expert. Advocates are not required to provide support groups or counselling for pupils; they will be a source of guidance for staff and governors and will deliver occasional talks/assemblies to cohorts as part of the Health and Well-being curriculum.

We are currently developing advocates in the following areas:

- Improving mental health (including self image/self esteem, self harm and suicidal thoughts, stress and anxiety)
- Understanding sexual relationships (including sexual health, consent, media representation, sexual violence)
- Tackling racism in schools
- Human Rights (UNCRC) including promoting disability rights
- Promoting LGBTQ+ equality and how to support transition and gender diversity

Our students are always best served by approaches designed for them by the teachers who know and care about them. Developing in-house expertise in this way will be of great value in providing them with the support they need (and providing us with the tools we need in order to do so).

### **Monitoring and Evaluating**

The Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being Policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All mental health professionals are given a copy of this policy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our emotional and mental well-being work.

The policy is monitored at an annual review meeting led by the Health and Well-being Lead and involves staff with a responsibility for emotional and mental well-being, including specialist services supporting the school and governors.

**Agreed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Date)**

**Review:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Date)**

## Appendix 1 – Stages of Student Support

The diagram below outlines universal, targeted and specialist support services.

### Stage 1: Universal Support

- Students are met and greeted at the start of the school day / lessons
- All students are encouraged to log their wellbeing on a five point scale twice weekly via the Class Charts app
- All students are able to flag a well-being issue at any time via the Class Charts app and will be seen by a member of the Well-being Team the same day (or on the next school day if out of school hours)
- A programme of assemblies aimed at raising awareness of emotional and mental well-being delivered as part of the Advocacy Project
- Transition programme to secondary school for all Year 6 students, including induction appointments with members of SMT for all students
- Positive points and rewards store to celebrate students for certain duties, tasks or achievements
- Information around the school and shared online about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- Staff modelling of positive relationships and help seeking behaviours
- Health and Well-being AoL / RSE Curriculum, which includes a varied programme of guest speakers
- Whole school well-being questionnaire
- Regular student consultations on school processes and practice
- Monitoring of attendance, behaviour, academic performance and general wellbeing by Attendance Team, Heads of Learning, form tutors and class teachers

### Stage 2: Targeted Support

- Learning Coaching
- The Baxter Project (dog therapy)
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Jason Clark)
- Support for parents and carers (Jason Clark)
- The Flourish Project
- YEPS
- Eye 2 Eye counselling
- ELSA
- Lego therapy
- Art therapy
- Spectacle Theatre workshops
- Youth homelessness prevention workshops
- Diversity support group
- Nurture groups
- Modified timetable
- Safe spaces
- Red card and 'go to' adult
- School Health Nursing Service
- Police Liaison Officer

### **Stage 3: Specialist Support**

- Step 4 SEBD provision
- LA support e.g. Educational Psychology Services, ALN and Inclusion Officers
- Youth Offending Services
- Young Carers
- Resilient Families
- Miskin Project
- CAMHS

## Appendix 2 – Stages of Staff Support

The diagram below outlines universal, targeted and specialist support services

### Stage 1: Universal Support

- Dedicated staff rooms
- SMT 'open door policy' for any concerns
- Regular signposting to staff well-being information and support services
- Culture of no blame and stigma for the mental and emotional well-being needs of members of the school community
- Anonymous online staff suggestion box where staff can share ideas for improvement
- Being able to attend family commitments e.g. concerts and sports' days
- Fortnightly staff coffee and cake mornings
- Inset days always incorporate time for individual work/admin
- Staff are encouraged to pursue professional development in areas that interest them (e.g. the Advocacy Project).
- Staff can communicate concerns and ideas in person, email or text
- SMT available to all members of staff throughout the school day via their individual mobile telephones
- Regular briefings and communication accessible to all staff
- Designated Emotional and Mental Well-being Lead in the school
- Whole staff CPD on mental and emotional well-being
- Staff social activities
- Weekly staff sports (football, netball, badminton, rikoshake)
- Staff choir

### Stage 2: Targeted Support

- Check-ins (a regular reflective conversation with a chosen member of staff to support well-being, not part of performance management)
- Training around specific areas of mental and/or emotional well-being
- In house counselling
- Reduced/altered timetable
- Restorative conversations
- Regular check-ins / 'off load' sessions for staff working closely with high tariff students (e.g. the Wellbeing Team)

### Stage 3: Specialist Support

- Employee Assistance Programmes (Able Futures, Care First)
- Crisis support
- Referrals to occupational health
- Education Support Partnership