



Mental Health: Inclusion, Diversity and Behaviour

'Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.' (Aristotle)

Introduction

At Alfreton Nursery School, we endeavor to make every child's unique learning journey an exciting adventure, which promotes a real love of learning that will last a lifetime.

This policy incorporates the legal requirements and school aspirations, at an age appropriate level, of an anti-bullying stance. The '**rights respecting**' agenda threads throughout all work in school and tackles explicitly the personal and social consequences of behaviour.

All staff are trained as trusted adults in school. Therefore, we do not operate a key worker system. Our trusted adult system, promotes positive mental health and pupil voice.



Our school is based on biophilia practice. Our central focus revolves around the belief that positive mental health, prosocial behavior & respect for diversity and inclusion, all rest on a love for nature and animals. Our school environment has a focus on the outdoors, natural spaces, plants inside and animal interactions. Children benefit hugely from the symbiotic relationship between themselves and nature. This approach also supports our communication with adults, in relation to strategies to support poor mental health.

Aims

- To protect and promote the significance of mental health and wellbeing at all times, for all stakeholders.
- To protect and promote a biophilia approach to school values.
- To remain vigilant to any prejudice, discrimination or bias towards children or adults with protected characteristics.
- To ensure that all practitioners in school understand that behaviour in all its forms is a means of communication.
- To maintain the fundamental belief in the philosophy of a 'Rights Respecting School', providing the secure base on which all of our work is developed.
- To support all children to achieve, regardless of their background and approach every child as unique.
- To remain up to date with all developments in neuroscience and ensure at all times that children are not judged and do not experience shame within the practice of this school.
- To maintain an approach to behaviour and inclusion, from a position of equity at all times.

Consultation:

Policy written by Amanda Hubball in consultation with Alfreton Nursery School SMT. Approved by governing body.

Sources and references:

The following documentation underpins all practice, provision and policy/procedure in school

Keeping Children Safe in Education

EYFS Framework 2021

Equalities Act 2010

DfE & DHSC 2017

In addition to the above, the latest research in neuroscience is always taken into account when considering our approach to behaviour. Cozolino, DeThiery, Cairns and many other practitioners/scientists/authors etc are all reflected directly in our practice.

Mental Health lead receives annual development from various current and research driven sources of CPD, including the Kate Cairns Institute, Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, Anna Freud Centre, Young Minds, Derbyshire DT conference, Rainbow Flag . . . This training is disseminated to all staff.

Procedures and practice

The ethos of our school is to understand individual children and their needs in terms of their social interactions around the school. All practitioners model high standards of personal and social behaviour; expectations are high and children are taught from entry about respect for themselves, for others and for the environment around them. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of their spiritual self, to empathise and feel compassion towards each other and to strengthen their levels of resilience through embracing their own talents and interests. Practitioners work to encourage children to understand that kind and unkind behaviour has consequences for others as well as for themselves.

Weekly drop-in sessions ensure that the mental health of adults within our school is consistently supported. Staff are trained to a high standard, in relation to offering support for mild to moderate mental health vulnerabilities:

'Appropriately trained and supported staff such as teachers and teaching assistants can achieve results comparable to those achieved by trained therapists.' (DfE & DHSC, 2017)

Equal opportunities and equity for all:

We are a Trauma Aware and an Attachment Aware school and our approaches to behaviour are tailored to each individual child and driven by a focus on every child's right to have their well-being nurtured and their sense of belonging fostered. The development of loving and trusting relationships between practitioners and children is pivotal to the work on behaviour support in school and above all else children are protected from experiencing rejection and shame. As a staff we work with the latest developments in neuroscience and work tirelessly to support healthy brain development. Brain development and ultimately individual child behaviour is supported by enabling ALL children to succeed.

As a school we are aware that research shows children of colour, especially black children, are often treated in a disproportionately harsh way in relation to their behaviour and emotional regulation. This has significant impact on the mental health of these children. As a school we remain acutely aware of unconscious bias and make every effort to eradicate this from our practice.

We are aware that children attend our school from vastly different backgrounds and can be adversely affected by many family and cultural contexts. We consistently celebrate uniqueness and support families to connect with individuals, groups and organisations who can share commonality and reduce isolation. Our curriculum offer explicitly embraces awareness around gender inequality, racial diversity, LGBTQ+ discrimination, SEND opportunities, foster and adoptive family support and family poverty. The following list states explicitly the areas of support into which we place extensive support:

- Mental Health and wellbeing
- Physical Health
- Poverty
- Relationship breakdowns
- Domestic abuse
- Child Abuse
- Online exploitation
- Bereavement

Health and safety:

A generic approach to the health and safety of children is appropriate, as no specifically risk attributed activities are routinely included within the inclusive practice of staff when approaching individual children's behaviour.

However, there is an overarching understanding that if children display aggressive behaviour or behaviour that could in anyway place others at risk, the area around the child in question should be cleared of children, adults and any items that could be used as 'missiles'. A trauma aware practitioner will remain present to support the child as appropriate and reintegrate them into the nursery session when it is considered safe and emotionally appropriate to do so.

Planning:

The diversity and depth of our planning systems ensure that all children, regardless of their characteristics, can achieve, progress and develop their skills in a developmentally appropriate way. Our planning systems are fully inclusive and the range of approaches and interventions used, prevent children from suffering a sense of frustration, and instead fosters a sense of purpose and self-belief. As a result of this, many behaviour 'issues' are avoided. Our biophilia approach to provision supports children's sense of belonging and connection to their world.

Teaching:

All teaching is fully differentiated and all staff are fully trained and in possession of information related to the latest developments in behaviour support and inclusive practice. As a staff we understand that from the point a child is born they are responding to the physical and emotional world around them. These responses are the product of thought. Thinking underpins all human behaviour and as such we apply a metacognitive approach to our teaching. MetaMe is a framework of support which we use in school, to support children with the subtle interplay between cognition and emotion. Enabling children to

understand their thinking and thus take ownership of their thinking, can support them to make prosocial behavioural choices.

These metacognitive strategies are used to support with the mental health and wellbeing of adults within the school community.

Organisation/Resources:

There are a range of behaviour support resources available in all areas of the school, including the magic room, attachment toys, belonging displays etc. The Inclusion and Behaviour Coordinator has overall responsibility for the organisation, upkeep and renewal of these resources, but this is done in conjunction with the highly skilled team of professionals in school.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Behaviour and Inclusion Coordinator – Amanda Hubball

Rights Respecting School Coordinator – Amanda Hubball

PSED Coordinator – Amanda Hubball

MHFA/Mental Health Lead – Amanda Hubball

- To review and maintain an overview of the breadth and quality of experiences being offered and received in school, with a view to inclusivity, diversity and mental health.
- To ensure that the mental health of children and families is protected and promoted through an explicit focus on race, gender, LGBTQ+, pupil premium, SEND, EAL, More able learners and relationship awareness.
- To ensure that a clear intent informs the implementation of MetaMe and that the impact of this approach is monitored
- To maintain an explicit awareness of the protected characteristics, stated in the Equalities Act 2010, and make efforts to ensure that the school environment, pedagogy, curriculum and values, supports the needs of every child and adult in school at all times.
- To lead by example and to support practitioners in their skills and awareness of how to work with challenging behaviour.
- To lead and train on all matters concerning mental health practices in school
- To take responsibility for the up-keep and purchasing of specialised resources
- To ensure a consistent focus on a biophilia based curriculum offer
- To attend CPD opportunities, adopt and implement relevant new initiatives and keep other members of staff up to date in their knowledge and skills.
- To remain up-to-date with the latest developments in brain development, attachment theory, trauma awareness and behaviour support theory.
- To encourage and support with the continued professional development of all staff with their understanding of all behaviour related matters and the links with metacognition.
- To monitor the attainment and progress of children who are identified as vulnerable learners and initiate the modification of school practice, systems and procedures accordingly.
- To plan for, implement, monitor and evaluate specific belonging groups (with a MetaMe focus) to support vulnerable learners in school
- To support other practitioners to plan for, implement, monitor and evaluate specific belonging groups to support vulnerable learners in school. Maintain an overview of overall practice and its impact.

Teaching Staff

- To deliver lessons and other learning activities which offer differentiation and creativity to all children.
- To embed the MetaMe teaching approach into day to day teaching and learning.
- To support children to understand their thought processes, when involved in situations which require behavioural choices.
- To take responsibility for personal skill development and communicate any perceived weaknesses to the coordinator- therefore ensuring support and training.
- To support the behaviour of children in a positive and creative way, ensuring at all times that children are never exposed to feelings of shame or rejection.
- To remain aware at all times that behaviour is a means of communication and to respond to every child individually
- To attend CPD/PSED meetings, thus ensuring high professional standards
- To build positive relationships with all children and become attachment specialists for those children who need it.
- To challenge any form of discrimination, prejudice, or bias (conscious or unconscious), at all times.
- To ensure that the mental health of children and families is protected and promoted through an explicit focus on race, gender, LGBTQ+, pupil premium, SEND, EAL, More able learners and relationship awareness.
- To remain aware of the impact of attachment and trauma on children's behaviours and respond accordingly.
- To remain non-judgemental and compassionate towards adults who demonstrate/communicate mental health vulnerabilities.
- To seek/accept all offers of support/supervision with a view to enhancing their practice

Link Practitioners – Louise Ashmore

- To support the Inclusion and Behaviour Coordinator (MHFA . . .) in disseminating and training staff in the practice of behaviour support
- To challenge any form of discrimination, prejudice, or bias (conscious or unconscious), at all times.
- To seek CPD opportunities and work in liaison with the coordinator to drive up standards and ensure a creative and needs driven experience for all children and staff.
- To remain aware of the impact of attachment and trauma on children's behaviours and respond accordingly.
- To apply and role model MetaMe within school.
- With the support of the coordinator, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate belonging groups for vulnerable children.
- Explicitly promote the focus on mental health and wellbeing in school.

Head Teacher

- To have overall responsibility for all matters relating to the well-being of children and staff within the school, and take overall responsibility for behaviour support in school.
- To ensure appropriate and up-to-date CPD for the coordinator in order to drive standards and provision forward.

Link Inclusion and Behaviour Governor – Louise Calow

- To monitor annually the provision in school to support behavior, mental health, diversity and inclusion
- To monitor termly the provision mapping and its effectiveness when meeting the needs of vulnerable learners.
- To be a critical friend to school practitioners, challenging practice where appropriate and driving up standards.

The work of the coordinator will be subject to review by the Head Teacher as part of the school's performance management arrangements. The Head Teacher and Senior Management Team will review the policy in line with the School Improvement Plan Overview and monitoring schedule

Assessment:

Informal monitoring and assessment procedures conducted by all staff, e.g. observations, discussion and staff meetings, form the backbone to our assessment of children's progress. More formal assessment systems include a My Concern tracking, Tapestry data analysis system, MetaMe progression planning and monitoring, Tapestry online learning journal, curriculum tracking systems, internal moderation systems and Ferre Laevers well-being and involvement monitoring system. These systems are applied to teaching and learning, as well as to reflections on the impact of adult support. For more information on assessment and monitoring, please see the Recording and Assessment policy.

Monitoring and review:

Mental health vulnerabilities have a profound impact on our school community and we are in the privileged position, as a community hub, to offer support in different ways. The list below is monitored for impact, and curriculum tracking systems, parental surveys, and internal monitoring within our safeguarding system My Concern, are all used to support reflections and adaptations to practice.

- Our curriculum is open ended and responsive to the needs of the children, with a foundation in biophilia.
- An enquiry based learning ethos underpins our work, thus enabling and supporting children to explore their thinking and their emotions and express these in creative ways.
- Our school environment has been designed to balance the positive impact of school with a homely space. There are specifically designed 'safe spaces' for children to access, often mirroring positive life experiences and developmentally enticing opportunities.
- Staff are trained and have the responsibility to challenge any form of discrimination, prejudice, or bias (conscious or unconscious), at all times.
- Our beautiful outdoor spaces are being used to maximum effect, both for the physical health and mental health benefits they offer.
- The mental health first aider (MHFA) has made contact with all families to ensure that they are aware of the level of support available in school for adults and children alike.
- Staff have been trained on trauma and attachment practice and as such are all well placed to offer differentiated levels of community, adult and child support.
- There is a strong focus on staff offering support to each other with any concerns and anxieties – ensuring that the mental health of all staff is of the highest priority
- We are supporting parents and family members by ensuring that there is time and space available for support meetings as necessary.
- We make explicit with school and in the wider community, our support for families with protected characteristics, for example families from our LGBT+ community.

- Our parental support is designed to enable multi-professional liaison (food bank, health visitor, citizens advice etc.), whilst minimising any sense of stigma and shame for families who are experiencing vulnerability.
- Tapestry is used as a vehicle for communicating with parents and also for parents to access support from school.

For more information on how we identify and support children who need interventions, please refer to our Provision Mapping Procedures.

Staff are supported through supervision on a termly basis and more often if required.

Concluding notes

The Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) who is responsible for sharing good practice in the area of Inclusion, Mental Health, Behaviour and Metacognition within and beyond the school, is Amanda Hubball.

There comes a point where we need to stop pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in.' (Desmond Tutu) ‘