

Brynlywarch Hall School



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY, Annual Review

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Together for Mental Health: A Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales (Welsh Government)
- Thinking Positively: Emotional health and well-being in schools and Early Years settings (Welsh Government's Cymru Ifanc: Young Wales)
- Welsh Government (April 2019) Draft Curriculum for Wales 2022: Draft Statutory Guidance – Area of Learning and Experience; Health and Well-being
- Education in Wales: Our national mission: Action Plan 2017-21 (Welsh Government)
- The Welsh Assembly Government's strategy document on Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Everybody's Business (2001)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

Brynllwarch Hall School Vision

Brynllwarch Hall School provides as fresh start where there are high expectations through challenge for all and by all. Quality teaching and nurture enables all of our students to manage their emotions and take their place in society as lifelong learners.

The Values that are important to our School are:

- Respect
- Friendship
- Tolerance
- Resilience
- Trust
- Empathy
- Kindness
- Responsibility
- Forgiveness
- Honesty

Policy Statement:

Mental Health affects all aspects of a child's development including their cognitive abilities and their emotional wellbeing. Improving mental health, strengthening psychological wellbeing, and promoting resilience is a priority at Brynllwarch Hall School.

Some features of good mental health and emotional (psychological) well-being are the abilities to:

- Develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually, creatively and spiritually;
- Use and enjoy solitude;
- Develop a sense of right and wrong, understanding and valuing the differences between people and respecting the right of others to have beliefs and values different to others;
- Recognise and manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger and anxiety;
- Initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships, including friendships;
- Become aware of others and empathise with them;
- Play and learn effectively and cooperatively;

Some pupils at Brynllwarch Hall School may experience difficulties with empathy, managing anxiety, creating and maintaining relationships, accepting praise and working cooperatively due to a learning need rather than having poor mental health and/or psychological wellbeing. It must be considered; however, that continued difficulties with these features may impact a pupil's overall mental health over a period of time.

Data from a survey of over 3,000 young people aged between 11 and 19 carried out by the Mental Health Charity 'Mind Cymru' finds that one in seven young people have poor mental health in Wales. (July 2019)

Purpose:

- To ensure a whole school approach
- To recognise the spectrum of mental health needs
- To recognise a role in identifying & supporting children with mental health difficulties
- Integration of services
- To increase confidence amongst all staff; key staff to be identified and trained
- To ensure that schools and communities continue to become better informed and better placed to identify, understand and support mental health needs

Responsibilities:

All staff at Brynllwarch Hall School are responsible for fostering a culture which supports pupils to openly discuss their problems, including any mental health concerns; if they so wish. No pressure is placed upon any pupil to disclose any information they do not feel happy to share. Where a concern about a pupil's mental health is identified, staff are to report this to the Senior Leadership Team and enter as a concern on Sleuth.

Warning Signs:

If there are signs and symptoms that last weeks or months; and if these issues interfere with the child's daily life, not only at home but at school and with friends, A child might need help if they:

- Often feel anxious or worried
- Has very frequent expressions of anger or is intensely irritable much of the time
- Has frequent stomach aches or headaches with no physical explanation
- Are in constant motion; can't sit quietly for any length of time
- Has trouble sleeping, including frequent nightmares/Falling asleep in class
- Loses interest in things s/he used to enjoy
- Avoids spending time with friends
- Makes little or no progress at school
- Fears gaining weight; exercises, diets obsessively
- Has low or no energy
- Has spells of intense, inexhaustible activity
- Engages in risky, destructive behaviour
- Harms others
- Smokes, drinks, or uses drugs
- Has racing thoughts
- Begins to steal.

Signs and symptoms of mental or emotional concerns:

- Anxiety and Depression
- Suicidal thoughts and feelings
- Eating Disorders
- Self-harm
- Mania
- Dramatic mood swings e.g. very low or very 'high'
- Hallucinations/ Thinks his/her mind is controlled or out of control; hears voices
- Withdrawn/Agoraphobia
- Uncontrollable intrusive thoughts
- Paranoia
- Spends excessive amounts of time on appearance/social media/video games etc
- Changes to usual personality

Procedures:

A whole school approach seeks to support good mental health by building resilience and focusing on prevention and early intervention. When more targeted approaches are needed, it seeks to tackle existing or developing mental illness, and work together with other services in a timely fashion to provide appropriate interventions. Pupils at Brynllwarch Hall School are supported by staff who instil a culture which values everyone's wellbeing.

A whole school approach to mental health and psychological wellbeing is recognised through eight dimensions or principles:

1. **Leadership and Management:** The identification of a designated lead in mental health will ensure that the risks to a pupil's welfare are assessed when/if concerns arise and as necessary, liaise with parents (where appropriate), other members of staff and external agencies (if needed) to determine appropriate action to be taken to safeguard, support and monitor that pupil. Designated lead in Emotional Health & Wellbeing Daniel Hedge working in conjunction with the Wellbeing Co-ordinator Tracy Howells.
2. **School ethos and environment:** Brynllwarch Hall School is a 'mentally healthy' school which is safe, respectful, welcoming, non-judgemental and secure. We recognise, promote and celebrate diversity and value everyone equally. We promote and support mental health and wellbeing through strategy, policies and procedures which are implemented effectively and we also have active child, staff and parent/carer involvement in governance and decision-making.

By integrating positive mental health and wellbeing support into everyday life at school, pupils are likely to develop stronger emotional literacy and manage their emotions more effectively. Brynllwarch Hall School is in the County of Powys and is fortunate to be a rurally positioned school that benefits from idyllic surroundings. This impacts hugely on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Children's natural playfulness has some crucially important functions for healthy physical and mental development. Utilising the 'Forest Schools' area, pupils get the opportunity to challenge themselves and test their limits, which in turn teaches them to self regulate their emotions. The internal school environment also plays a huge part in contributing to good mental health and emotional wellbeing. Each class Form Tutor designs and maintains a class layout that will be directly

beneficial to their students. Class areas have a “Time Out” room where age appropriate. The school is organised into Nurture groups, small student numbers in classes with consistent staff. Students have access to an emotionally available adult.

3. **Curriculum, teaching and learning:** Health and Wellbeing is one of the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AOLE) within the new Curriculum for Wales (Curriculum 2022) and provides a holistic structure for understanding health and well-being. It is concerned with developing the capacity of learners to navigate life's opportunities and challenges. The fundamental components of this AOLE are physical health and development, mental health, and emotional and social well-being. It will support learners to understand and appreciate how the different components of health and well-being are interconnected, and it recognises that good health and well-being are important to enable successful learning. It is well documented that exercise reduces stress and symptoms of mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. It also helps with recovery from mental health issues. Brynllwarch Hall School thrives on having a full and varied schedule for physical education and team games; providing pupils the opportunity to take part and if they so wish to compete. Including Cycling, Rugby Hub Officer, Gym area and playing fields.
4. **Student voice:** Pupils are actively encouraged to participate in their development and BHS supports this in the following ways.
Student self-evaluation surveys are held bi-annually to enable the student to consider their attitude to school, capacity and willingness to learn, attitude to staff and own self-perception, the results are fed back to assist staff in identifying students struggling with low self-esteem and other precursory factors relating to mental health and wellbeing.
Students input into their Individual Development Plan and One page Profile (found on Tyfu).
Annual review meeting – held with students, staff and parent / carers
Sleuth – is utilised to monitor Student Concerns
Twice Daily Staff briefings ensures all staff are aware of pertinent issues that have occurred during the day or outside occurrences that may impact on the students behaviours / attitude throughout the day.
5. **Staff development, Health and Wellbeing:** All staff are regularly trained in a variety of strategies/approaches and programmes that aim to support pupils who may be suffering with mental health issues and/or poor emotional wellbeing. Staff at school recognise that some pupils may be suffering due to underlying conditions such as ‘Trauma’, ‘Attachment Difficulties’ or Adverse Childhood Experiences. Staff have also completed training in Youth Mental Health first Aid delivered by CAMHS.
6. **Staff Wellbeing Policy** – Staff are fully encouraged to engage in the “Open Door” policy of the SMT to voice any concerns or issues they may have. Support is available via Powys Council Care First Programme, Staff Communication is highly valued and encouraged throughout the school. Specific training is a major focus for staff to better equip them as individuals and the school as a whole to be competent and responsible regarding their own and others mental health and wellbeing.
Staff support includes “Wellbeing Wednesdays” sessions comprising a variety of activities to promote staff wellbeing.
Fortnightly meetings between the Mental Health Lead (Daniel Hedge) & Wellbeing Co-ordinator (Tracy Howells) are held to constantly review mental health strategy within the school.

7. **Working with parents/carers and external agencies:** As previously stated in this policy, where appropriate and relevant we will always contact parents should problems arise. Regular contact with the parent/carer is an established occurrence and gives the opportunity to raise, if appropriate, concerns for the students mental health and /or emotional wellbeing. At Brynllwarch Hall School we are effective in information sharing with relevant bodies, in order for pupils/families to access the support they need. We work closely with the School Community Police Officer who delivers the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme, Youth Intervention, TAF, Action For Children, Social Services, Health Services, CAMHS and MIND/Counselling services to secure support for pupils as and when needed.
8. **Targeted support:** If our universal strategies for supporting good mental health and emotional wellbeing (see all of the above) is not addressing a pupils difficulties then we will seek internal or external targeted support. The internal interventions offered at Brynllwarch Hall School is:
- i. ELSA
 - ii. Lego Therapy
 - iii. Music House
 - iv. Animal Therapy
 - v. Emotional Support Dog
 - vi. Footprints on the Farm
 - vii. Game Changer Project
 - viii. Hope Initiatives
 - ix. Thrive
 - x. KIVA
 - xi. TISUK Practitioner Support
 - xii. Bespoke Timetables
 - xiii. The external agencies we can refer to are:
 - xiv. School Counselling Service (Xenzone/Kooth)
 - xv. Primary Mental Health.
 - xvi. CAMHS
 - xvii. MIND Cymru
 - xviii. Samaritans
 - xix. Childline
 - xx. CAIS
 - xxi. Kaleidoscope
 - xxii. Fire Service Programme – Fire Starters
9. **Identifying need and monitoring impact:** The need for internal or external support can derive from a PCP Review, a 'Care and Support' meeting (IDS) or a request from a parent/teacher/pupil. There is a referral system in place, which the Assistant Head Teacher and Lead for Wellbeing uses to prioritise and systematically review pupils needs. Any internal intervention will be reported upon termly by the intervention lead and also discussed with parents during Parents Evening. Parental/Carer consent is always sought before a school based intervention takes place. Exit criteria depend on a number of key factors including behaviour logs, pupil engagement, progress made during sessions and ultimately the thoughts and feelings of the intervention lead and pupil. If an intervention is needed this will be reflected in the pupil's ISP; elevating them from Tier 1 (Universal Prevention) to Tier 2 (Secondary Prevention). External support may be at Tier 2 or Tier 3 (Tertiary Prevention), depending on the support given. It must be noted that school based interventions

cannot be offered on an indefinite basis, rather a 'need' basis and dependent on the number of pupils needing support. If there is no availability for school based intervention and a pupil is in need of immediate support, the school will consult with relevant agencies.

This policy will be reviewed annually unless changes in circumstances or legislation require it to be amended earlier.