



## Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Our nursery Designated Mental Health Lead is **Shannon Ralph (Manager)**

At Twinkling Toddlers Nursery, we are extremely committed to supporting the emotional health and well-being of all of our pupils and our staff.

Particularly in the current climate, there are many challenges that everyone is facing and experiencing. We know and understand that these life challenges and experiences that many of us are faced with require some additional emotional support.

We understand that these challenges may make us feel particularly vulnerable at times, and we are committed to support anyone who may need any addition emotional support. Everyone deserves to have positive mental health, and everyone has a role to play to support you to get there.

Our nursery

- A safe welcoming place
- Everyone is respected
- Everyone feels valued, listened to and heard.
- Positive mental health is promoted.
- Zero tolerance to bullying, discrimination in any form

At Nursery, there are many ways in which we support the children's mental health and well-being. For example:

Throughout our curriculum and everyday school life we encourage and support the children to understand their feelings and emotions.

Embedded in our behaviour policy, we encourage the children to be resilient when challenges occur, to be ready to learn having a positive mind set, and to be respectful to others.

We encourage the children to be self-confident and develop their self-esteem, ensuring that they all know that they matter.

We support children to know that they can talk to us and open up, sharing their feelings and worries.

We support the children to build and maintain positive social relationships with others.

As part of our ongoing observation and assessment your child's key person will be monitoring their well-being & involvement and planning activities to support the children in this area. This will be shared with you as part of our parent consultation process. We record children's

well-being & involvement once a term. These are kept in the child's learning journey. You can view this at any time and add to it if you wish.

Early years practitioners should identify factors that may pose a risk to a child's social & emotional well-being as part of the on-going assessment of

their development. This could include

- A child being withdrawn
- A child being unresponsive
- Children showing signs of a behavioural problem
- Delayed speech or poor communication & language skills

Practitioners understand children's emotional health needs and have the time & skills to develop nurturing relationships.

### **Parents and carers**

Twinkling Toddlers Nursery recognises that mental health and stress can affect anyone and at any point in their life. The staff team will be able to support

families and signpost them to appropriate services. We offer an open door policy and parents and/or carers are welcome into the setting to discuss

their concerns. All conversations will remain confidential unless we have a safeguarding concern (please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy).

### **Children**

At nursery we want all our children to feel supported, and they have open conversations will all of our staff members in doing so we supportively teach children:

- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- Develop resilience and cope effectively with set backs
- Have fun
- Lean and achieve
- Manage the stress of everyday life and be able to deal with change
- Understanding how our actions have effects on others emotions, feelings and experiences
- Understanding of their own emotions, feelings and experiences

We maintain an on-going positive environment by

- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements
- Encouraging the use of EAL and cultural customs, celebrating festivals and celebratory days.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Open door policy

- Promoting nursery values, rules and a sense in belonging
- Providing information for support and advice.
- Raising awareness amongst employees regarding the warning signs for mental health issues.
- Valuing the individual and their capabilities

## **Bereavement policy**

### **Family Bereavement**

When nursery is informed of bereavement or loss the following action should be considered:

- The family should be contacted for appropriate support.
- The family should be asked how much and what the child already knows and how they have been involved.
- It should be explained to the family how the nursery can be involved to support the child and family.
- The importance of working together and liaison will be explained - both parties assessing any changes in behaviour. (Eating and sleeping patterns may change or behaviour in nursery may deteriorate or the child becomes withdrawn.)
- Involve outside agencies as appropriate e.g. health workers, Educational Psychological Service, Family Partnership,). For a member of staff experiencing close family bereavement, absence will be arranged for attendance at a funeral and appropriate time off discussed. Additional time may be given through sick leave as appropriate.

### **Death of a child or member of staff**

When the nursery is informed of the death of a child or member of staff, the following action should be considered;

- Discussion should take place with the family and their wishes taken into account before decisions are taken on how and what to tell the children in nursery.
- Counselling should be available if necessary e.g. in cases of sudden or violent death
- (Outside agencies should be involved with this e.g. Psychological Service).
- The nursery may be closed, or as many people as possible released to attend a funeral or memorial services should it be appropriate and they wish to do so.
- Staff and children should be supported throughout the grieving period; anyone displaying signs of stress should be offered appropriate support.
- Childs and staff may express a wish to attend, or take part in the service, but they should only do so with the prior agreement of the deceased's family, relatives or next of kin, as well as the agreement of their own parents/carers.

- The class most affected might like to write down their thoughts and feelings; these could then be given to the bereaved family to assist in the planning of the service.
- After the service, staff and children should be encouraged to meet and express their thoughts and feelings as such services are important in the grieving process.

### **Bereavement / Compassionate Leave**

- You are entitled to take paid compassionate leave in the event of serious illness or death of a member of your immediate family (being a spouse or partner, child, stepchild, grandchild, parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, brother or sister, stepbrother or stepsister or brother or sister-in-law) of up to three consecutive days (excluding weekends) in any 12-month period.
- We may exercise discretion to grant paid compassionate leave in respect of any other relative or close friend, depending of the circumstances of each case.
- If you are unable to return to work following a period of compassionate leave you should inform the manager/ director.
- It may be appropriate to take a period of annual leave or unpaid leave in those circumstances.
- We recognize that it may not always be possible to request compassionate leave in advance. However, where it is possible, you should make a request to the Manager or you should tell them the reasons for your request and the number of days leave you would like to take.
- Where it is not possible to request leave in advance, you should contact the Manager or director as soon as possible to tell them the reason for your absence and the number of days you expect to be absent. Someone can do this on your behalf.
- Terminally ill Child/Staff
- In the event of a child or member of staff becoming terminally ill, their wishes and those of their parents/guardians/next-of-kin should always be respected.
- Should the child wish to attend nursery, the class teacher may need to inform the class of the child's condition.
- Occasionally, the child may wish to talk to their fellow classmates about their predicament themselves. Honesty about death and dying may be the best line approach. Sometimes there is just no other way.

### **Return to nursery**

- For the bereaved child or member of staff, returning to nursery may be traumatic.
- Where there has been a close family bereavement, in most cases everyone (teaching, support staff, volunteers if appropriate and child's) should be made aware of the situation before the child returns (providing the parents/guardians of the bereaved child agree).

- Staff should show appropriate compassion and allow expression to those suffering grief.
- Teachers should try to foster an environment that is compassionate, yet disciplined.
- Family life at this traumatic time can be particularly distressing, routines upset, relationships strained, and the future uncertain. For this reason, nursery routines should be kept as normal as possible in order to provide a respite.
- Staff should be aware of anniversaries as this can spark a revival of feelings of bereavement.
- Staff might keep an eye on those particularly affected by the death of a close associate.

### **Talking to the Bereaved Child**

- Try to be available to listen and support if possible,
- Be calm and show them that you are listening and understanding by occasionally repeating what they have said and by acknowledging their emotions.
- If people feel like crying they should cry - crying is not a sign of weakness, but often a sign of deep feeling.
- Beware of using platitudes e.g. "I know how you feel", (some people may feel offended that you presume how they feel).
- Don't stop the child talking. Accept all that the child is saying and allow them to express their feelings their way
- Let them know their feelings are normal, talk honestly and share your feelings. Don't tell them how they should or should not feel. Don't be frightened of sharing your own feelings or experiences.
- Be honest
- Have eye contact
- Have appropriate physical contact
- Let them know that it is not their fault
- Be aware of the home situation, changes (possible Early Help Assessments)

### **Additional Supportive Links**

**Child Bereavement-** supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement. phone: 0800028840  
[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

**Samaritans-** works to make sure there's always someone there for anyone who needs someone phone: phone: 116 123 [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**Winston's Wish Family Line** - Phone: 08088 020 021- national helpline offering guidance, Information and support to anyone caring for a bereaved child, including professionals and family members. [www.wintonswish.org](http://www.wintonswish.org)

**Mind:** the mental health charity. We're here to make sure no one has to face a mental health problem alone. Phone: 0121123393 text: 86463 [www.mind.org](http://www.mind.org)

**Birmingham Healthy Minds:** Phone: 0121 262 3555/ 08009159292. (24/7. 7 days a week)

**Asian Community Advisory Centre:** 487 Green Lane, Birmingham, West Midlands, B9 5PR.  
Tel: (0121) 753 2407

**Asian Resource Centre:** 10 Hamstead Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B20 2QS. Tel: (0121) 523 0580.

**The Mix:** (support or under 25's) call: 0808 808 4994.

**Cruse** offers grief and bereavement support via phone, email, and face-to-face. You can call their free helpline on 0808 808 1677 (Monday - Friday, 9.30 - 5pm, extended to 8pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays) or visit their website for more support.

**Hope Again** is a website created for young people by young people affected by bereavement. It offers a community of peer support, as well as a support service via email:

[hopeagain@cruse.org.uk](mailto:hopeagain@cruse.org.uk)

**Marie Curie** offers emotional support and practical information for anyone affected by terminal illness, and their friends and families. Call Marie Curie's helpline on 0800 090 2309 from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 11am to 5pm Saturday.

**\*\*\*All copies of policies are available upon request**

Policy was:

| Implemented    |                 | Reviewed                   |  | Amended | x |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--|---------|---|
| Date: 26/10/23 |                 | Next Review Date: 26/10/24 |  |         |   |
| Manager        | Shannon Ralph   | Manager Signature          |  |         |   |
| Deputy Manager | Shabana Hussain | Deputy Signature           |  |         |   |
| Director       | Sajid Hussain   | Director Signature         |  |         |   |