



# Al-Burhan Grammar School

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*Dedicated to learning as the  
foundation of life*

## Pastoral Care & Pupil Wellbeing Policy

<b>Date updated:</b>	August 2024		
<b>Review cycle:</b>	Annually		
<b>Next review:</b>	July 2027		
<b>Statutory?</b>	No	<b>Publish online?</b>	No
<b>Type:</b>	Pastoral, Behaviour & Inclusion		



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### 1. Overview

#### 1.1 Introduction

A focus on pastoral care and ensuring pupil wellbeing is a core part of our overall school aims. Part of our vision is to create and maintain a secure, warm and family-like environment where pupils can focus on their personal development and can grow into successful British Muslims who are confident in all aspects of their identity.

We recognise that the pastoral and academic elements of a girl's life are completely intertwined and interdependent. Pupils who are relaxed, happy, and enjoy coming to school will flourish personally and academically.

In Islam, wellbeing and good mental health are seen as crucial for a fulfilling life. Islam places great emphasis on the balance of the mind, body, and spirit. The Quran and Hadith offer guidance that supports mental health, emphasizing compassion, community, and personal accountability. Believers are encouraged to seek help when needed, recognizing that caring for one's mental health is as important as caring for one's physical health.



### **1.2 Aims of this policy**

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils across our school
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which pupils feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Inform pupils and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources

### **1.3 Links to other policies**

- Vision and ethos policy
- Curriculum policy
- Teaching and learning policy
- Child safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and tarbiyyah policy
- SEN policy

### **1.4 Legislation and guidance**

This policy was written with regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

### **1.5 Responsibilities**

We believe that all members of staff have a pastoral responsibility. All staff act as role models and guides for students, including subject teachers. All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across our school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the pastoral lead/designated safeguarding lead.

The pastoral support officer and pastoral lead will keep records relating to interactions and incidents. The pastoral administrator will ensure pastoral meeting minutes are taken and circulated as appropriate.

#### **Training**

All staff are offered training so that they have a good understanding of what pupils' mental health needs are, know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health and know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil in need of help.

### **1.6 Monitoring and review**

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Pastoral, behaviour and Inclusion Lead in conjunction with the Headteacher. At a minimum, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years but may be reviewed and updated ad hoc if needed.



## 2. Our pastoral system

### **2.1 Our approach to pastoral care and pupil wellbeing**

#### **Community is key**

Islam teaches that community support is crucial for emotional wellbeing. The concept of Ummah (community) underscores the importance of social connections. The Prophet (saw) encouraged community ties, reminding us that we are not alone in our struggles.

Pastoral care provision at Al-Burhan is therefore underpinned by good relationships between staff, parents/carers and pupils. Every adult here cares about the pupils in their care. No worry is ignored, or too big or small to be resolved.

#### **Prayer and reflection**

Salah not only serves as a spiritual practice but also as a means of mental grounding. The practice of prayer allows for reflection, mindfulness, and connection with Allah (swt). These moments of stillness can provide relief from anxiety and stress, offering a break from the chaos of daily life. Furthermore, dua is a powerful tool for expressing emotions, seeking guidance, and finding solace.

Pupils take part in a daily act of collective worship. They come together during the lunch hour to pray the early afternoon (Dhuhr) prayer, followed by time for extra nawaafil and dhikr. Pupils who are not praying take part in this quiet reflective time, and are encouraged to engage in dhikr and reflection.

#### **Self-care and personal accountability**

Islam promotes the concept of self-care, encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their mental and physical health. The Prophet Muhammad (S) emphasized moderation and balance, advising against excess in any aspect of life. This principle encourages believers to prioritize their wellbeing, recognizing the importance of rest, nutrition, and mental health.

Gratitude is a central theme in Islamic teachings. Practicing gratitude can significantly improve mental health by shifting focus from negative thoughts to positive ones. The Quran reminds us to reflect on our blessings, which can cultivate a sense of contentment and reduce feelings of anxiety and depression.

All teachers reinforce these concepts whenever they can, in lessons, if related to the topic, in assemblies, or in relation to a behaviour matter. We take advantage of any opportunity to provide tarbiyyah (character/personal development).

#### **Addressing stigma and encouraging open dialogue**

Mental health issues can sometimes carry stigma within communities. Islam encourages open dialogue and understanding. By discussing mental health openly, we can create a more supportive environment for those struggling. Scholars and community leaders can play a pivotal role in educating others about mental health, encouraging those in need to seek help without fear of judgment.



We mark Children's mental health awareness each year, with a related assembly, and a related Hadith of the week. Mental health issues are also openly discussed and explored in PSHE lessons and frequently come up in Living Islam lessons.

## **2.2 Our pastoral team**

The pastoral team at Al-Burhan consists of:

1. Form tutors
2. Pastoral Support Officer
3. First aiders
4. Pastoral Administrator
5. Pastoral Lead
6. Headteacher (DSL)

**Form tutors** are usually the first point of contact for any questions or concerns from students of their parents. Form tutors meet with the girls most mornings, providing a regular point of contact. We try to ensure that form tutors move up with their year group from Year 7-11, so that they can form excellent and lasting relationships with parents and pupils during their year at School.

**The pastoral support officer** can be approached directly by students for support, or may be asked to support a student at the request of a teacher or form tutor. She works with students 1:1, provides counselling and will also liaise with parents where necessary.

**The Pastoral Lead** oversees all elements of pastoral provision at Al-Burhan. She can also be contacted directly by parents if the matter is more significant or they have been unable to contact the form tutor.

**External agencies** will be contacted by the school for more specialised counselling/support, should the need arise.

**All adults** in the School work hard to build pupils' self-esteem, resilience and independent to not support them in school, but also support them for later life.

Subject teachers get to know students very well over the year. Equally, students get to know their teachers and so some may approach subject teachers first if they are having trouble. Therefore, subject teachers should also support them and give them guidance if they are able. If a teacher is not able to, pupils will be referred to their form tutor or the pastoral support office.

The majority of our staff are **first aiders**. First aid training is kept up to date every 3 years. Pupils can approach any first aid for help with physical problems.

## **2.3 Other elements of pastoral and wellbeing provision**

As part of our school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, our school offers support to all pupils by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, tutor time and Children's mental health awareness week.
- Having open discussions about mental health during weekly PSHE (Personal, social, health and economic) education lessons, which are used to promote good mental health and wellbeing, develop skills for living in the wider world and build positive and healthy relationships.



- All adults in the School work hard to build pupils' self-esteem, resilience and independent to not support them in school, but also support them for later life.
- A rewards system which recognises the achievements of students and celebrates their successes
- Annual off-timetable Tarbiyya/wellbeing days

## **2.4 Specific issues**

### **2.4.1 Serious concerns procedure e.g. self-harm and suicidal ideation/intent**

*Refer to the child safeguarding policy.*

### **2.4.2 Bereavement**

Bereavement is difficult to manage even for adults. For pupils during their teenage years, bereavement can be an even more difficult period as they may not know how to react. We will endeavour to support them in the following ways:

1. Contact the family to confirm news of a death and determine the wishes of the family in terms of what can be shared with the rest of the school community and how.
2. The Headteacher will share the news with staff via email, due to the part-time nature of the majority of our staff to ensure that all staff receive the news.
3. Reintegration meetings for pupils or staff returning to school after a bereavement.
  - For pupils these will be carried out by the a member of the pastoral team or the headteacher, and likely will include the parents/carers, with the following purpose:
    - Determine whether the pupil is emotionally ready to return to the classroom either full time or with adjustments to the timetable to allow for a phased return
    - Address any concerns the pupil and their parents/carers have about the return to school
    - Consult with the pupil about how or even if they want their classmates to know of the death (where relevant)
    - Open lines of communication between the pupil and relevant staff to ensure support should the pupil feel overwhelmed
    - Open lines of communication between the school and the pupil's parents/carers to coordinate support
    - Consider any additional support needed for a pupil who is vulnerable or has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability
  - For staff, these will be carried out by the Headteacher. The purpose will be to:
    - Determine whether the staff member is ready to return to work and the best way to make that return (e.g. a phased return to work or a temporary change in duties)
    - Address any concerns the staff member may have about the return to school
    - Consult with the staff member about how or even if they want their pupils and colleagues to know of the death (where relevant)
    - Set guidelines for communication between the staff member and their line manager to monitor and support the staff member
4. Ongoing monitoring and support by the pastoral team:
  - Direct support
  - Signpost to external support e.g.
    - <https://winstonswish.org/supporting-you/support-for-schools/>



- <https://www.cruse.org.uk/organisations/schools/>
- Organise a safe quiet space for bereaved pupils to take a short time out.

### **2.4.3 Looked after children (LAC)**

Looked after children are more likely to have SEND and experience mental health difficulties than their peers, and are also more likely to struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings, sensory processing difficulties, and coping with change.

Where a pupil is being supported by children's social care services, the school works with their allocated social worker to better understand the pupil's wider needs and contextual circumstances. This collaborative working informs assessment of needs and enables prompt responses to safeguarding concerns. We will ensure we have a copy of their Personal Education Plan (PEP).

If there is a concern about a looked-after child's behaviour, this should be raised with the pastoral lead and headteacher so that they can help determine the best way to support the pupil.

### **2.4.4 Concern regarding a mental health condition/illness**

Adolescence can be a difficult developmental time, and this period of change can result in the gradual onset of mental illness, especially if pupil are not supported in their personal development.

It is important that warning signs are recognised and an appropriate, supportive response is put in place as soon as possible. School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. Possible warning signs include:

- The student has told you there is a problem, for example, they have been feeling low or anxious recently
- Significant changes in the student's appearance, for example: weight loss/gain, decline in personal hygiene, noticeable signs of self-harm
- Changes in mood, for example: mood is very up and down, miserable, tired, withdrawn
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating patterns or sleeping habits
- Concerns expressed from friends, family, other staff members
- Changes in behaviour, academic achievement, extracurricular activity engagement, or among peers. For example, doing too much work, not socialising as much as usual, withdrawn, not attending school, being late or, failure to meet deadlines
- Increased isolation from friends, family.
- 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
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns to the pastoral lead or pastoral support officer, as well as the pupil's form tutor.

Students will be supported internally, but may be referred to the SENCO or if appropriate, advice sought from/referral made to CAMHS (Child & Adolescent mental health service. Unless there is a



specific safeguarding concern relating to parents, parents will be contacted so that a holistic and fully supportive plan can be put in place.

#### **2.4.5 Managing disclosures**

If a pupil makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow our school's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL/pastoral lead. All disclosures are recorded and stored in the pupil's confidential child protection file.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

#### **2.4.6 Confidentiality**

Staff will not promise a pupil that they will keep a disclosure secret – instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality. A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a pupil's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least 1 appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL or one of the deputy DSLs. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first.

Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the safeguarding policy will be followed.

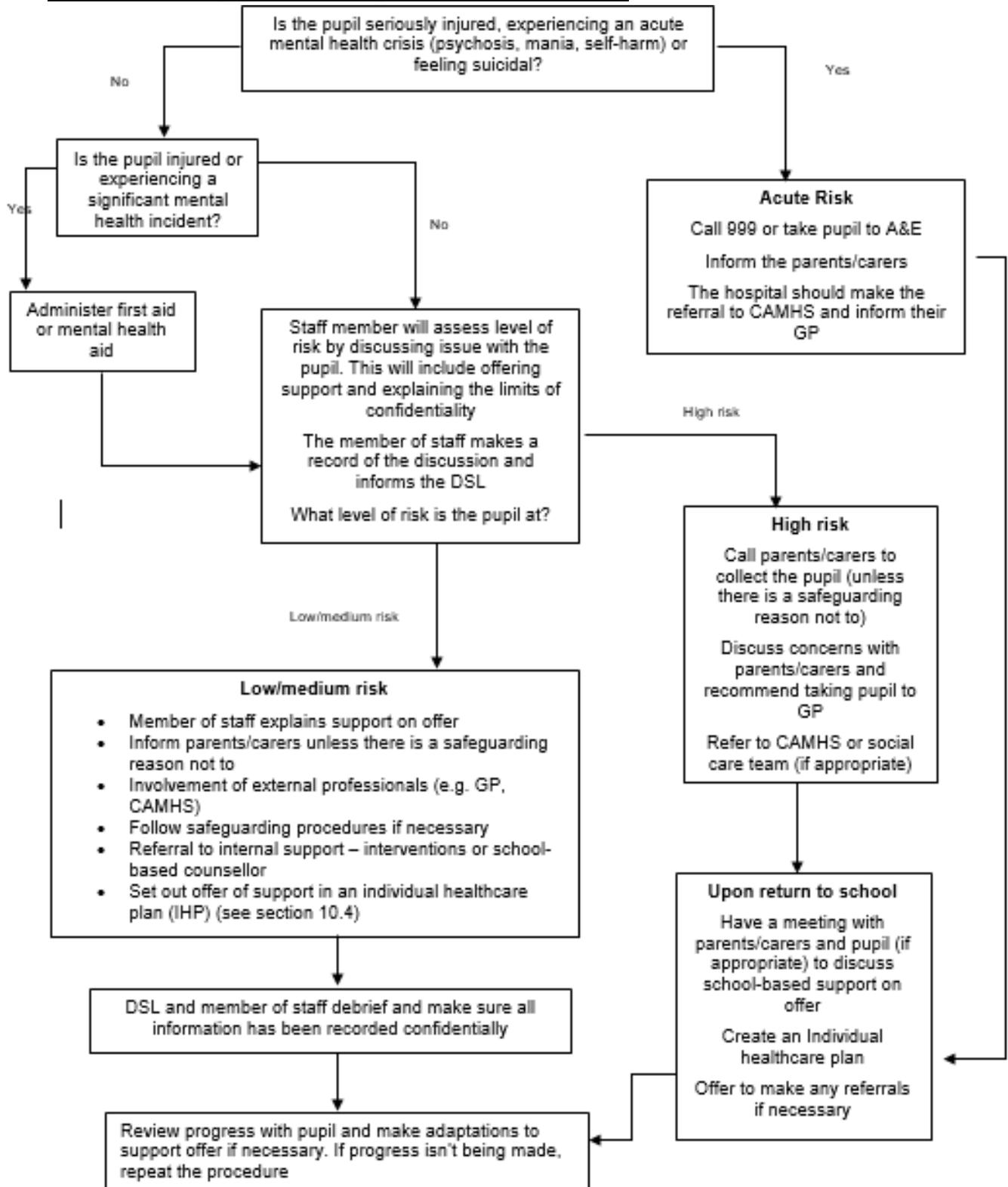
**In summary**, the process for managing confidentiality around disclosures is as follows:

1. Pupil makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL.



4. Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil who the information will be shared with and why
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the DSL.
6. The DSL will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)
7. Other staff/external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

**2.4.7 Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis**





### **2.5 Supporting and collaborating with parents/carers**

We will work with parents/carers to support pupils' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support

When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face-to-face:

- These meetings can be difficult, so our school will ensure that parents/carers are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.
- A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the pupil's confidential record.
- If appropriate, an individual healthcare plan (IHP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers