

Frederick Bremer School

Trauma Informed Policy

2022-2023



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Frederick Bremer School Trauma Informed Policy

Trauma Informed Policy.

This policy is written alongside the school's Safeguarding policy, Behaviour policy and Harmful Sexual Behaviour policy. The policy is written with a view to ensuring the school takes a trauma informed approach and practice to working with and supporting children, young people and families.

What is a Trauma Informed Practice?

A trauma informed practice is one that supports children, teenagers and families who have suffered trauma. This is based on the growing understanding that an increasing number of young people have experienced trauma within the borough and wider community.

A trauma informed approach has been described as a method that;

“Realises the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in families, staff and others involved with the system; responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices; and seeks to actively resist re-traumatisation.”

(The American Substance Abuse and Mental Illness Administration, 2017)

Rationale

At Frederick Bremer we take a trauma informed approach because it aligns with our school's vision and values. In order to live our school motto, 'Be the best you can be', a trauma informed approach is vital. Children and young people can struggle to thrive and succeed in an educational setting if they have suffered trauma. We also live by the 'High challenge, Low threat' value, a trauma informed practice seeks to ensure students feel no sense of threat but support, compassion and kindness. Frederick Bremer is committed to a relational behaviour policy, which, as outlined in the behaviour policy, aims to 'to build relationships with students and encourage them to make the right choices.' Frederick Bremer recognises that, in order to achieve these relationships, we must seek to understand the underlying causes of poor or unsafe behaviour and adapt our practice to support this. We believe we need to consciously work hard to avoid trigger factors. Frederick Bremer is committed to safeguarding and we recognise that a trauma informed approach will ensure we take a child centered approach to supporting the welfare and safety of children and young people in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022. Our behaviour expectations are centered around our values of 'Integrity, respect and responsibility' and these are at the heart of our trauma informed approach.

Introduction

Waltham Forest Early help service has published a manual in order to support children, young people and families build resilience in response to trauma. The findings of an analysis in 2018 which revealed that; high prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) originating from a number of traumatic events such as: fleeing a war-torn country, neglect, bereavement and, principally, having grown up in a household witnessing and/or experiencing domestic abuse. The borough is seeing more and more families that have also experienced similar traumatic experiences and others such as: FGM, trafficking, extreme poverty, family members with complex mental health issues and alcohol and drug dependency.

Trauma of types such as these act as a barrier to learning, a barrier to building healthy and stable relationships and a barrier to having good mental health and wellbeing. In line with the school's relational behavioural approach and expectations; we are actively committed to embracing a kind community and this ethos supports the aims of this policy



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Related school policies

Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour Policy

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

Overall Aims

The policy aims to;

To create an environment where those who have experienced trauma can feel safe

To create an environment where those who have experienced trauma can build relationships

Develop staff awareness of trauma and ACE experiences

Develop student awareness, empathy and understanding of those who have experiences trauma and ACE

Create an inclusive curriculum that raises awareness surrounding traumatic events

To ensure that families are also supported following trauma

Support and encourage resilience and repair

Develops emotionally literate staff

Key Principles

- The safety and wellbeing of children and families always come first.
- Do not ignore any signs that a child may have experienced trauma and this may be impacting them
- Take a kind, caring and trauma informed approach to all interactions with children
- Ensure a trauma informed approach when working with the families of children.
- Always report any concerns, however small, in line with the safeguarding policy.
- Ensure that the curriculum and enrichment is trauma informed, supporting wellbeing and raising awareness amongst staff and students.
- Ensure each child feels they have a safe space and a person they can talk to and approach in school
- Ensure there is a focus on resilience and repair in school.
- A trauma informed approach aims to understand what a student's behaviour is telling

Key processes and Expectations

All staff will undertake trauma informed and HSB training alongside safeguarding training and Part 1 of KSCIE

All staff and pupils will be aware that we are a trauma informed school

All staff will be familiar with this policy and the related policies

All staff will be kept informed (where appropriate with confidentiality measures) of children who have experienced trauma.

Strategies to support these students will be disseminated to staff by mentors, key workers, the SEN team and other key staff. This is evidenced in our pupil profiles, IEPs and the traffic light profiles as some examples.

Staff will make use of appropriate meetings to ensure students who have experienced trauma receive appropriate



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intervention to support their need, for example, referral meetings.

Staff will use CPoms to log and record disclosures of trauma

Staff, in particular, key pastoral staff will receive training on the effects of trauma on children and young people and the signs. This takes place in the form of staff CPD sessions, external training and strategic staff briefings.

Staff will follow a restorative approach for example, the redeem and repair conversations.

Staff will support the de-escalation process

Staff ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging and not socially defensive, to decrease likelihood of children relating defensively

There will be a whole school commitment to cease use of harsh voices, shouting, put downs, criticism and shaming (proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically)

Key terminology and linked topics

Students may experience trauma (a sudden, unexpected, isolated incident or event), or complex trauma (traumatic events which are repeated).

Staff will recognise that there are a wide range of experiences that are traumatic and be open to the fact that children and young people may have experienced trauma. The list below is exemplary of traumatic experiences but not exhaustive;

FGM

Trafficking

Extreme poverty

Complex mental health issues and alcohol and drug dependency.

Bullying

Abuse (emotional, sexual, physical, neglect) Exposure to war, conflict

Experience of displacement and immigration/asylum

Violence (knife crime/physical assault)

Child on child abuse

County lines involvement

Gang related violence's

Signs may include;

Student loses interest in friends, family, and fun activities

Student has nightmares or other sleep problems, is tired and lethargic.

Becomes irritable, disruptive, or angry.

Struggle with school and homework

Complaints of physical problems

Appears unmotivated or disengaged



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Develops unfounded fears, feels depressed, emotionally numb, or guilty over what happened

Has flashbacks to the event, nightmares, or other sleep problems

Avoid reminders of the event through substance or alcohol abuse

Acts in a disruptive, disrespectful, or destructive ways

Internalising - often presents as depression, anxiety and social withdrawal

Externalising – often presents as aggression, risky activities, substance misuse, hyper activity

Creating a safe culture that is trauma informed

Frederick Bremer School will routinely screen for trauma exposure and related symptoms through student and staff surveys, student leadership, curriculum, staff training, conversations. We endeavor to educate our school community about why we are a trauma informed school and we achieve this through a number of methods, the list below is exemplary not exhaustive;

Events such as parent information evenings, posters, parent evenings, the school website and social media, the school will make resources available to children, families, and providers on trauma exposure, its impact, and treatment.

Through the behaviour model and the curriculum the school will engage in efforts to strengthen the resilience and protective factors of children and families impacted by and vulnerable to trauma.

The school emphasise continuity of care and collaboration across child-service systems through referrals and external liaisons with professionals and agencies.

The school recognises that managing trauma is in itself stressful and challenging and will maintain an environment of care for staff that addresses, minimises, and treats secondary traumatic stress, and that increases staff wellness through line management, the employee assistant program and other services

The curriculum, assemblies and wellbeing program will actively encourage resilience and repair.

The half termly behaviour curriculum which adapts half termly trauma informed behaviour schemes of leaning, for example our 'trauma informed transition program' and 'the right to learn kind learning spaces' campaign

Trigger factors

Staff will be made aware of trigger factors that can set off a flashback of the traumatic event/experience and be considerate of this, attempting to avoid high risk environments. The policy recognises that these can be wide and varied. The list below is exemplary of the trigger factors the school considers and attempts to avoid;

Sight

Any situation where someone else is being mistreated, child to child bullying for example, verbally or non-verbally communicated.

Specific items of objects, weapons, alcohol, objects used to harm or associated with violence

Sound

Anything that sounds like anger, shouting, harsh tone of voice, loud bangs or crashes

Anything that sounds like pain, whimpering, crying, whispering, fear



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Words of abuse, labels put downs, criticisms

Smell

Certain foods and often alcohol, tobacco, substances

Responding to disclosures of trauma or signs, the de-escalation process.

Staff recognise that each child and scenario is different and manage signs of trauma in a kind and caring way in keeping with the school relational behaviour policy.

In line with the safeguarding policy, staff must not promise confidentiality, must listen and must not answer any leading questions.

In line with the HSM policy, students must be reassured that they are being taken seriously.

Appropriate internal referrals will be made immediately to students who have disclosed they have experienced trauma. These will be suited to the specific child and/or experiences (i.e. school counselling, mentoring, PSO support)

Appropriate external referrals will be made immediately for students or families who have disclosed that they have experienced trauma (i.e. Early Help, Charity outreach)

There will be a follow up and action plan that seeks to encourage resilience and healing

The De-escalation process

Frederick Bremer trains staff in managing the de-escalation process. The key concept of de-escalation is to try to decrease the person's sense of powerlessness and helplessness in order to minimize their frustrations. Key staff will support students in de-escalating through a variety of skills and strategies;

- Change of space/change of space
- Use of safe sensory spaces
- Detecting danger signals. Is the person safe? Are others in the area safe? Is the staff member safe?
- Skilled, active listening. Staff will actively listen to what the young person is saying, pay attention to what the person is trying to tell you, both verbally and non-verbally.
- Communicating. Staff will communicate in a way that allows the young person to calm and does not agitate them further, staff should be aware of their tone of voice and body language ensuring it is non-confrontational, empathetic and measured. Establish and maintain eye contact.
- Offering the student comfort (water, refreshment, fresh air etc.)
- Remind the person that they are not alone

Strategies to support trauma informed students

Often, children and young people who have received regular negative feedback on their behaviour can develop reputations amongst staff and other children/young people. These reputations often relate entirely to their behaviour, staff should work to challenge these narratives by using the strategies listed.

- Use of restorative language
- Use of praise and reward
- Showing warmth and kindness to students
- Offering support and intervention
- Avoiding language that reflects a trauma informed approach, for example, avoiding language that



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- represents staff control; 'punishment', 'control', 'rule', 'power'
- Bespoke referrals and support
- Trusted adult/case work
- Aim to make day to day routines predictable and clear, routine and predictability can make people feel safe.
- Ensure lessons are high quality and differentiated to engage all students

Frederick Bremer school puts robust bespoke support in place for students who have experienced trauma through our referrals process. The referral meetings take place weekly and students with a trauma profile are discussed resulting in both internal and external support referrals. The list below exemplifies the agencies we work with to support students who have experienced trauma;

- ELOP (East London Pride – LGBTQ mental health and wellbeing team – external)
- VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls – external)
- Behaviour coach (internal)
- MSHT (Mental Health Support Team/CAMHS – internal)
- PCT (Primary Health Care Team – internal)
- School counsellor (internal)
- School social worker (internal)
- Young Carer manager (internal)
- Inclusion manager (internal)
- Spark2Life (Advocates for students at risk of offending – external)

The curriculum

The school curriculum will raise awareness, educate staff and students on the above named issues and other issues that can cause trauma, for example, through the RSE curriculum and wellbeing program.

The school enrichment program will provide safe spaces for groups and individuals who may be more vulnerable, for example LGBTQ+ club

The school assembly cycle and tutor time curriculum will raise awareness around topics such as refugee awareness week, mental health day etc. and sign post help and support within these

Parents/Carers and families

The school recognises that a trauma informed approach includes recognising the impact of trauma on parents, carers and families and will always seek to support the whole family where possible.

Parent/Carers/Family meetings or phone calls will be conducted in a professional and caring manner with the view to offer support.

The school will make external referrals that will also support family members as well as the student, for example, the early help allocation of family support workers.

The school will seek to help educate families and carers and provide support, advice and resources relevant to the type of trauma they have experienced



Ratified