



## The Safeguarding Team at Belmont

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety, please speak to a member of the school's safeguarding team.



Mrs Clair Veli

Designated Safeguarding Lead  
(DSL)



Miss Rachel Carroll

Deputy Designated Safeguarding  
Lead (DDSL)



Mrs Amy Keen

Family Support Worker

Dear Mums, Dads and Carers,

Welcome to the first Belmont School Safeguarding Newsletter of 2024.

A new calendar year can bring excitement for New Year Resolutions and fresh starts; however, it can also bring mental health issues as the dark evenings, financial strains and social pressures can add extra worries and burden.

It's important to be aware of your mental health throughout the year but, for many, January and the start of a new year can be an especially tough month. If you're feeling low or anxious of late, take some time for yourself with these tips from the Red Cross mental health team.

If you need to talk to someone about your child's mental health, or would like information about agencies who can support, please get in touch with our Mental Health Lead, Kirstin Eccles.



[kirstin.eccles@belmont.sandmat.uk](mailto:kirstin.eccles@belmont.sandmat.uk)

If you're looking for further information on any of the topics raised, or any other safeguarding matters, please drop me an email.

*Clair Veli*

Assistant Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead



## Children's Mental Health

Knowing how to talk to your child about their mental health, or recognising the signs that they might be struggling, can be really hard. Signs of anxiety in children can sometimes look like normal behaviour, particularly in older children who can keep their feelings to themselves. It's also natural for children to feel stressed or anxious about the challenges that come with going to school. Whilst these experiences can be very difficult, they're different from longer term anxiety, which affect how a child feels every day. It can help to think about what's normal for your child and if you've noticed signs that they've been behaving differently recently.

Signs of anxiety in children can include:

- becoming socially withdrawn and avoiding spending time with friends or family
- feeling nervous or 'on edge' a lot of the time
- suffering panic attacks
- feeling tearful, upset or angry
- trouble sleeping and changes in eating habits.

Ways to help a child who's struggling include:

- Letting them know you're there for them and are on their side
- Being patient and staying calm and approachable, even if their behaviour upsets you
- Recognising that their feelings are valid and letting them know it's okay for them to be honest about what it's like for them to feel this way
- Thinking of healthy ways to cope, which you could do together, like going for a walk, breathing exercises or mindfulness
- Encouraging them to talk to a trusting adult at their school - especially if they're finding it hard to talk at home.
- Take care of yourself and get support if you need to.

When to get professional help for a child or young person:

You know your child better than anyone, so if you're worried, first think if there has been a significant change in their behaviour. If there has, is it caused by any specific events or changes in their life? Does it only happen at home, school, or when they're with others or alone? If you're worried or unsure, there is lots of support out there.



## Tips from the Red Cross

“I’m not sure how I’m feeling at all.”

The first step is to notice when you’re struggling. Think about whether your sleeping, eating, and communication with loved ones or colleagues have been affected recently.

The next thing to do is to acknowledge that it’s OK and perfectly normal to be feeling this way. We are living in uncertain and unpredictable times.

Go easy on yourself – many others are likely feeling the same way.

### Battling the winter blues

**- Can’t plan for the future?**

Take it moment by moment. If next week seems uncertain, how about tomorrow?

**- Stick to a routine.**

Maybe it’s making your bed every morning, going for a daily walk, or just sitting by an open window.

**- Feeling stressed?**

Never feel guilty for taking a break or asking to chat with someone you trust.

**- It’s okay to not be okay!**

You don’t have to be positive all the time. We’re living in unusual times, so go easy on yourself.

**Remember what you’re feeling now is temporary.**



### Winter Blues: More support

Mental health problems aren't something that go away once January ends - it can affect people on any day of the year.

If you're struggling with mood changes and want to speak to someone for support, you can [contact Mind](#) on 0300 123 3393 or the [Samaritans](#) on 116 123 for help.

#### Report any concerns

If you suspect a child is being abused or is in danger of being abused, please contact a Designated Safeguarding Lead, or any member of staff. You can also contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on: 01452 426565.

If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police immediately on 999.



## Looking After Your Own Mental Health

Parenting or caring for a child or young person can be tough at times. It's important to look after your own mental wellbeing, as this will help you support yourself while you are supporting others.

Try to recognise and acknowledge when you're feeling low or overwhelmed. Struggling with something or experiencing your own mental health problems does not make you a bad parent or carer.

It's completely normal to be worried, scared or helpless during difficult times, and feeling this way is nothing to be ashamed of.


If you can, tell someone you trust how you're feeling. Maybe there's family, friends or a colleague who could support you or allow you a break?

You should never feel like you must cope on your own, as there's help available. Scope has advice on [managing stress when caring for a disabled child](#) and Young Minds has lots of support for parents.

### Support for Parents and Carers

If you're concerned about a child or young person's mental health, you can get free, confidential advice via phone, email or webchat from the [Young Minds Parents Helpline](#).

**YOUNGMINDS**

 [Action for Children](#) has lots of tips to help you spot signs of mental health issues in children and advice on the action you can take to help.

Experiencing the loss of a friend or loved one can be extremely difficult. The [Childhood Bereavement Network](#) has information and links to national and local organisations you or the child you look after might find helpful.



Any professional that works with children and young people should be able to help you get support. You could talk to a teacher, school nurse, social worker or GP.

You can find more information about [NHS children and young people's mental health services \(CYPMHS\)](#) on the NHS website.

If you look after a child that has additional needs, [Mencap](#), the [Mental Health Foundation](#) and [the National Autistic Society](#) all have excellent resources and support for parents or carers of children with learning disabilities or autism.

**NSPCC**

If you have any concerns at all about a child's safety or wellbeing, including their mental health, you can contact the [NSPCC Helpline](#) 7 days a week, via the website or by emailing [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) or calling 0808 800 5000. It does not have to be an emergency – you might be looking for guidance and support. Dedicated NSPCC child protection specialists will be able to advise and take any necessary action.