

ST MARY'S CE (A) FIRST SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

"Our Vision is to provide the best opportunities to become life-long learners.
Our Christian values rooted in the Good Samaritan recognise everyone is loved by God.
Our ethos is to show love and respect - to ourselves, each other and God's creation"

Philosophy

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do. Through the example of The Good Samaritan, we encourage our children to talk about their feelings and how to respond positively in different situations. The story is used to underpin the work we do at school to ensure everyone has a voice and develop the emotional resilience in an ever-changing world. We enable our children to show:

- love, care and respect for themselves, others and all God's creation.
- Develop good relationships with others, learning to work co-operatively together, offering praise when deserved and support when needed.
- Show respect for those who have different ideas, beliefs and traditions.
- Be open and honest in their life, giving and gaining trust.
- Develop an understanding of both their own strengths and their areas for development whilst being aware of their own and other's health and wellbeing.
- Learn how to be patient and persevere when life presents them with a challenge.
- To strive to attain their dreams and ambitions, showing courage and fortitude.

At St. Mary's CE (A) First School, we work towards positive Mental Health and Wellbeing in the whole of our school community, for adults as well as children. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Guidance

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Jo Moult - Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Lead/Mental Health Lead

Nicky Malkin - Deputy DSL

Kirsty Rowlands - PSHE/RHE Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm,

then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Child Protection Office. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to MHST or CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Jo Moult, Mental Health Lead.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The provision which school can provide.

Teaching About Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE/RHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Jo Moult, our Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood - Lowering of academic achievement
- 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
- Lateness to or absence from school - An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Managing Disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file on CPoms. This written record should include the date, name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made, main points from the conversation and actions.

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, Jo Moult who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We will be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass on our concerns about a pupil, then we should discuss with the pupil:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health Lead Jo Moult, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence, and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Lead, Jo Moult, must be informed immediately.

Curricular and Extra-Curricular Support

We support the mental health and wellbeing of all pupils through:

- A strong school ethos which empowers tolerance and respect, including respect for difference and diversity
- Anti-bullying procedures and policy, events and assemblies
- Establishing clear rules, routines and expectations about behaviour for learning and social cohesion.
- Encouraging positive, caring and constructive relationships
- Having active listeners to whom a child may turn
- Happy Team - child led support for children
- Including a reflection area, both inside and outside
- Recognising the background of individual pupils and their physical, social and emotional needs
- Consistent support for vulnerable children and those with SEND from trained teams of pastoral, learning support, teaching assistants and other agencies where appropriate.
- A balanced curriculum with opportunities for intellectual, physical and expressive development
- Using a range of teaching styles appropriate to pupils' age, ability and level of maturity
- Opportunities for pupil leadership through school council, play leaders, worship team and other roles
- An emphasis on praise and reward
- Opportunities for reflection and spiritual development through our curriculum
- Providing a listening ear through Emotion Coaching

Staff Support

St Mary's First School recognises that the wellbeing and mental health of staff are crucial to providing a positive and supportive environment for pupils. This section outlines the strategies, resources, and procedures in place to support staff mental health and wellbeing in our school.

Promoting Staff Wellbeing

The school aims to foster a culture where staff feel valued, supported, and able to manage their workload effectively. This includes:

- Encouraging open communication about wellbeing and mental health without stigma.
- Regular check-ins between staff and line managers.
- Flexible working arrangements where possible.
- Reasonable allocation of workload, planning time, and breaks.

Staff Support Mechanisms

Internal Support

- Staff wellbeing discussions within teams or with colleagues.
- Staffroom spaces designed for relaxation and decompression.
- Time for well-being following stressful moments/incidents
- Head Teacher wellbeing support

External Support

- Access GP support for further advice or recommendations.
- Head Teacher wellbeing support
- Access to Staff Insurance support for counselling and advice.
- Referral pathways to mental health professionals where needed.
- Signposting to local and national mental health support organisations - Think well

Training and Development

- Wellbeing and mental health awareness training for all staff.
- Stress management workshops.
- Training for line managers on recognising and supporting staff in distress.

Workload and Time Management

- Encourage prioritisation of tasks and delegation where possible.
- Provide planning and preparation time within school hours.
- Set realistic expectations for marking, reporting, and administrative duties.

Monitoring and Review

- Regular surveys or feedback mechanisms to monitor staff wellbeing.
- Periodic review of workload and wellbeing initiatives.
- Adjust policies and support measures in response to staff needs.

Confidentiality

- Staff can access support confidentially.
- Any disclosures of mental health concerns will be handled sensitively and in line with data protection requirements.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to emotional and mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

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