



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy:	Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
Approved by:	Draft for consultation
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Review cycle:	3-yearly or sooner if deemed necessary

VERSION CONTROL			
VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
V1	Spring 23	M Parkin	New policy

Introduction

At St Marys CE Primary School our core values are:

Our Christian values of justice, love, endurance, forgiveness, dignity and thankfulness are at the root of our curriculum; central to all we do. Safe in the knowledge of God's love and from the dignity afforded to all as His precious children, it is possible to take risks; to find out for ourselves and find our place in His world, learning from our mistakes and working together to make a difference as stewards of His creation.

We aim, within our small school, to develop thoughtful individuals, confident and resilient children of all ages who understand the positive contribution which they can make to the world and their status as God's precious children.

Our vision is for a community of learners who flourish; who, grounded in the dignity and knowledge of God's love for each one can say, 'I am happy to be me'. We are committed to nurturing a community who, confident in the hope of the Gospel message feel safe to be inquisitive, to challenge themselves; who know that difficulties are opportunities to 'bounce forwards', strengthened by the grace of God. This community also understand and are committed to act out their responsibilities not only to and with each other, but as stewards of God's creation; from the doorstep of Sherwood Forest to a world-wide impact. We foster enthusiasm, our learning, rooted in the Christian values of justice, love, forgiveness, dignity, endurance and thankfulness will equip all to take their place in society, making wise choices both now and in the future. In so doing, our children take with them into an ever-changing world, the humble confidence which comes from knowledge of the constancy of God's all-encompassing love; awareness of the broad opportunities available to them and determination to live the life which God intended for them; life in all its fullness.

As a consequence of our values we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for learning for all our pupils to allow them to improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential.

We recognise that positive mental health and wellbeing is central to the lives of those within our school community as individuals and as part of a positive community of learners. Our core value of dignity plays a pivotal role in the development of a positive self-image. The development of our spirituality, as we come to understand what makes each of us unique; our sense of self in relation to the world, others and God together with our celebration and enjoyment of the wonder of creation complement this understanding of dignity; or worth as children of God.

At St. Mary's we recognise that mental wellbeing can also affect behaviour, learning and achievement.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as out of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

According to the Department for Education (DfE) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools' document, 2018 : 'Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and

wellbeing of their pupils, by developing approaches tailored to the particular needs of their pupils’.

Whilst short term worries or stresses are a normal part of life and many issues can be experienced as mild or transitory, these experiences can be felt to a more serious degree or have longer-lasting effects in some people; in these cases or where a number of difficulties are experienced at once, these may be classified as mental health problems.

The DfE recognise the importance of creating a safe and calm environment in reducing the likelihood of mental health problems. Schools can create positive experiences which promote resilience and overcoming adversity. Our role is therefore to enable pupils to be resilient and supportive by managing times of change and stress and to access help when needed. Pupils need to be given the tools to be able to talk about mental health; to know how they can promote their own wellbeing; to know how they can help to normalise these discussions and where to go for help and support.

We understand the positive impact which physical activity and being outdoors has on mental health. Our pupils are therefore encouraged to take part in active playtimes and to supplement their PE lessons with the attendance of a range of sporting clubs to support this.

Use of Forest School enables the pupils at St Mary’s to both be physically active and connect with their environment, promoting positive mental health alongside the development of resilience, self-confidence and teamwork.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where

- all-pupils and staff- are valued
- all-pupils and staff-have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma; staff are aware of the channels through which support can be found
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying is not tolerated

Purpose of the policy:

This policy sets out

- how we promote positive mental health
- how we prevent mental health problems
- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

We use the World Health Organisation’s definition of mental health and wellbeing: *... 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.’*

Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all members of our school community to

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

Links to other policies:

This policy should be set in the context of our safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour, relationships and health education, spirituality and special educational needs and disabilities policies, together with our personal, social and health education scheme of work.

Links to the behaviour policy are especially important since negative behaviour may be related to an unmet health need. Behaviour can be considered a message.

A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health:

In order to be successful, a whole-school approach to promoting positive mental health, combined with clear links within the whole school community, including representatives from the pupil, parent and governor stake holders. To facilitate this, a mental health lead, Miss Parkin, the head teacher, has been appointed and undergone training.

This whole school approach to promoting positive mental health therefore aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands and can benefit from, no matter what their role
2. helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
6. effectively working with parents and carers
7. supporting and training staff to develop their own skills as well as to develop the resilience of their pupils.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues.

Roles and responsibilities:

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems; such a physical long-term

illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The school's Mental Health Team (Mental health lead, Emotional support assistant, Mrs Sheppard, SENCO, Mrs Sambrook and members of the Mental Health Action Group (also including parent, governor and pupil representatives)

- lead on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health

- reviews current policy and practice
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- liaises with the class teachers on teaching about mental health
- is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- leads on and makes referrals to services

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families.

Support includes:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- SENCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- SNMAT mental health network
 - Sherwood Area Partnership
 - CAMHS
 - For staff: support through Staff Absence Insurance and Employee Assistance Programme

Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health:

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Transition Support

- Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT) support small group and individual work
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
- Key Adults might support secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils
- Extended transition arrangements; social stories and transition booklets for vulnerable pupils
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Class and whole school Activities

- Active playtimes

- Forest school
- Invitation to sports clubs
- Friday Achievement Book assembly
- Worry boxes/ monsters
- Kindness/Compliment activities
- Mindfulness activities in class
- Wellbeing Wednesday resources
- Using the Power of Reading to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience, etc

Small Group and one to one Activities

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Sanctuary room
- Draw and Talk therapy
- Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

Our approach is to:

- provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- involve pupils in the care and support they have
- monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

Early Identification:

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- working with the School Office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- home visits in Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2 to identify needs
- induction meetings for pupils / families joining after the Reception year
- analysing behaviour, exclusions, attendance, behaviour and anti-bullying incidents
- using bespoke systems to track children identified as having difficulties
- pupil surveys at the beginning of the school Year
- staff report concerns about individual pupils to the head teacher
- worry boxes in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher
- weekly staff briefing for staff to include concerns about individual children
- gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- parental meetings
- enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff
- Staff training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems.

Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the SENCO/head teacher. These signs might include:

- non-verbal behaviour
- isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- lowering academic achievement
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- drug or alcohol misuse
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development. If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed. A risk assessment and plan will be made.

Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

Non-Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or message.

Confidentiality All disclosures are recorded using CPOMS and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating. We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes, there are no absolutes.

Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs. We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision. School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the mental health lead/SENCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent.

Involving Parents and Carers

Promoting Mental Health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

To support parents and carers:

- we provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- . • we have an Open Door Policy and promote partnership between staff and parents
- . • supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

- contact parents and carers and meet with them
- in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- be available for follow up calls
- make a record of the meeting
- agree an Action Plan
- discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger. We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Involving Pupils

- we seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through Pupil Voice, surveys, class questions and suggestion boxes
- the school council and pupil members of the mental health action group are consulted in matters related to mental health

Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help.

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and where possible access to supervision from mental health professionals. Staff training to raise awareness of Mental Health and emotional well-being topics have been accessed.

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance, such as use of release time; flexibility to work from home in non-contact time; half-termly meetings to celebrate successes and discuss next steps; engagement with the SNMAT 'Above and beyond' scheme; bring and share lunches at INSET. Staff have access to counselling services through absence insurance and an employment assistance programme.

This policy was made in collaboration with representatives from the whole school community. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the Mental Health lead in consultation with the Mental Health Action Group SLT and reported to the local governing body.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if deemed necessary.