

St John's Church of England Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
Jeremiah 29.11*

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: September 2021

Date of next review: September 2024

Key Contact Personnel in School

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific remit with regards to mental health and wellbeing include:

Name & Role	Wellbeing & Mental Health Responsibilities
Kirsty Pellant <i>Head of Inclusion and Welfare</i>	Lead DSL, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead, PSHE Team
Lesley Ogle <i>Acting Headteacher</i>	DSL
Kirsty Minnett <i>SENDCo</i>	Deputy DSL, PSHE Team
Tasha Gillett <i>Assistant Headteacher KS2</i>	Deputy DSL, PSHE Team
Kylie Hodge <i>Assistant Headteacher EYFS</i>	Deputy DSL
Veronica Pellant <i>FLO</i>	Deputy DSL
Bev Johnson <i>PA to Headteacher</i>	Deputy DSL, CPD Lead
Elena Garrett <i>Librarian &</i>	Deputy DSL
Joe Christmas <i>Forest School Leader</i>	Deputy DSL
Harriet Miller <i>Class Teacher</i>	PSHE Team
Kat Sanger <i>Class Teacher</i>	PSHE Team

In addition, there are 12 trained first aiders in the school.

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1. Policy Statement & Aims

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.

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.

At St John's our Christian vision shapes all we do from the nurturing that we show the children to the compassion, care and understanding that we show each other.

We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for every member of our staff and pupil body.

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)

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, staff and associated school community
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Identify the support for staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Highlight the key indicators of poor mental health and wellbeing and the support available to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Concerns about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Head of Inclusion and Welfare 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 Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Headteacher. 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 CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Head of Inclusion and Welfare or SENDCo

2. Support for Mental Health & Wellbeing

We support our pupils, staff and parents using a range of approaches:

For our Children...

- *Head of Inclusion & Welfare*: focuses on the welfare aspect of our community within education
- *Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) x2*: offering help and support to our children and parents.
- *Mental Health First Aiders*: A number of staff are trained as Mental Health First Aiders
- *Counsellor & Creative Arts Therapist*: working on an individual, group and class basis with the children
- *School Ethos*: encouraging mindfulness, emotional resilience and positivity strategies as well as supporting key transitions.

For our staff...

- *Counsellor*: offering support for staff and an independent listening ear to discuss professional and/or personal concerns they may have that are having a negative impact on their wellbeing and mental health.
- *Wellbeing Breakfasts*: termly staff are offered a free breakfast offering them time to socialise with their colleagues in an informal manner.
- *Wellbeing Champions*: with a focus on championing wellbeing and positive mental health and establishing and leading a range of collegiate activities e.g., events, games and challenges.
- *Wellbeing Literature*: signposting to, and the provision of, a range of articles and texts on the topic of wellbeing and mental health
- *Staff Development*: signposting and offering staff a range of development linked to wellbeing and mental health
- *Allocated Staff Governor*: a named governor with oversight of staff wellbeing and mental health alongside an area on monitoring forms to comment on workload and wellbeing for all governor monitoring visits.

For our Governing Body...

- *Training*: all Governors are invited to whole school training
- *Governor Support*: an allocated administrative support for governors is available to support their administrative needs as well as to provide support and refreshments at governance meetings.

For parents...

- *FLO (x2)*: supporting parents as and when they require.
- *School Facebook Page*: highlighting advice and tips regarding mental health and wellbeing to support parents
- *Mental Health Support Team*: providing group work for parents of children with communication difficulties or who are suffering issues of self-harm, anxiety etc.

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.

3. Educational and Pastoral Provision and Approaches

The following approaches should normally be followed and/or engaged with by teaching and non-teaching staff as appropriate in order to support both the educational and pastoral development of our children.

3.1 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 plan should be drawn up involving the pupil, parents and relevant health professionals. This may include: strategies for home and school, other professionals that the pupil can gain support from and feel safe confiding in, a safety plan.

3.2 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 curriculum.

The specific lesson content is determined by pupil voice, cohort needs and current trends or issues. There is an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We 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.

3.3 Signposting

We ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources and types of support within school and the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it.

We display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within appropriate areas of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking by ensuring pupils understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Reasons to access it
- What is likely to happen next

4. Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil or colleague 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 to the Head of Inclusion and Welfare or SENDCo.

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
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

5. Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff therefore, 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 prioritise the pupil's emotional and physical safety over exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing on a green form. Forms should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps as part of the safety plan identifying any key members of staff or family members who can be a support

This information should be shared with the Head of Inclusion & Welfare, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

5.1 Concerns about a colleague

There may be times when a member of staff has concerns about the wellbeing and/or mental health of a colleague. This should not be ignored. Any member of staff who has such concerns should inform The Head of Inclusion and Welfare of their concerns.

5.2 Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on 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/colleague 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/carer.

Always share disclosures with the Head of Inclusion & Wellbeing, 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/colleague and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

For pupils, 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 until the Designated Safeguarding Lead has made contact with Social Services or the Police if appropriate.

We have a duty of care to our staff and whilst confidentiality is maintained there may be instances when information needs to be passed on through a cause for care and concern.

5.3 Sharing Disclosures with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be distressing and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect as is part of our fundamental values here at St John's.

In the passage *Luke 8:40-56- Jesus healed the little girl and the old woman which is based on one of our living values 'we love each other'*

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they may find it hard to process the news you are sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with an agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to and procedures for doing this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

5.4. Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend is in need of help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Our Junior Leadership Team receive training in basic safeguarding and mental health awareness to act as peer support.

6. Training

All staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

We host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about specific issues. <https://www.minded.org.uk/>

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional relevant CPD will be provided throughout the year as appropriate and as a result of discussions with line managers.

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