

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



Life in all its fullness through Learning and Love

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy St Mary & St Paul's Church of England School

Last Updated – **March 2021**

Policy Statement

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. Our Mission Statement of 'Life in all its fullness through Learning and Love is at the core of all of the decisions that are made in relation to all stakeholders in the school. Behind this we have a set of 4 key Christian Values – Hope, Serve, Joy and Aspire. Our aim is for all of our students and staff to be given every opportunity to reach their full potential in all aspects of their character and being.

In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. 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.

Scope

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:

Iain Parks - Headteacher
Tina Neill - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead, Learning Mentor
Kathy Strong – Family Support Worker
SENDco – Philip Eastwood
Paul Brooksbank- Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer
See lists around school- First Aider
Iain Parks - Pastoral Lead
Iain Parks - CPD Lead
Paul Brooksbank - PSHE lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the a member of the pastoral team (Head , Deputy, Sendco, FSW. LM) 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 staff or the head teacher. 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 Family Support Worker and the Mental Health Lead. Guidance about referring to CAMHS can be gained by contacting school.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Medicine Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

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 role the school can play

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 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 Guidance¹ to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms. This is taught throughout the whole year but specifically during the second half of the summer term.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. For information about where to find support please contact a member of the school pastoral team.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts 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
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

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 Tina Neill, our Learning Mentor and Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead.

¹ Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing URL= <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and> (accessed 02.02.2018)

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

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?' For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively see Appendix B.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on CPOMS. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, Tina Neil who will provide and offer support and advice about next steps. See Appendix A for guidance about making a referral to CAMHS.

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 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. Staff should never promise to keep the information to themselves but that they have to inform the correct person so that the child can be supported.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead Tina Neill, 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 at the outset, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Paul Brooksbank) must be informed immediately.

Working 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, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking 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.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're 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 agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents

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 how to get about 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

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 help needs / requires (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

Training

As a minimum, 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 will direct those staff who wish to learn more about mental health to relevant information. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.²

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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Iain Parks, our CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in March 2024.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Iain Parks, by emailing the school maryandpaul@knowsley.gov.uk.

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

² www.minded.org.uk [accessed 02/02/18].

Appendix A

Knowsley Children and young people's services

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

We provide tier 2 and 3 child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) for children and young people up to the age of 18 in Knowsley. We provide assessment, treatment and signposting for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

All referrals to our CAMHS services should be directed to our CAMHS Assessment and Response Team.

Download the CAMHS referral form or call the team for more information on 01925 579 405.

Visit the service page for more information.

<https://www.nwbh.nhs.uk/ourservices/Pages/knowsley-referral-information.aspx#:~:text=You%20can%20contact%20the%20team%20on%2001925%20275%20303,%2D5pm%2C%20Monday%20to%20Friday.>

Appendix B

Supporting pupils with Mental health concerns – how to respond.

Taken from NSPCC website

Talking with a child about their mental health

If you're talking with a child or young person about their mental health and wellbeing, be prepared that conversations may not be easy or straightforward. There are things you can do to make these conversations as easy as possible.

The following principles will help you discuss mental health and wellbeing sensitively.

Use the right language

When talking with a child, use language that they understand. This will differ according to their age and stage of development. Avoid using technical or diagnostic language which children might find unfamiliar, confusing and distant from their experiences.

Make sure you understand the language the child is using and how they are using certain terms. For example, a child may use the word "anxiety" to describe a feeling of general nervousness or as a way to describe severe anxiety attacks.

By paying attention to the language children use to describe their feelings, you can reflect the terms they use in your own language. This will help them feel listened to.

Some children may have difficulty communicating, for example if they have additional needs or disabilities (Fuggle and Redfern, 2019). Make sure you give these children the time and support they need to talk.

Create an open environment

It's important to create an open and safe environment where children and young people are comfortable speaking about their mental health. Make sure children and young people know who they can talk to — and make this pool of people as wide as possible.

In schools, for example, discussions about mental health and wellbeing can be integrated into the curriculum and put on an equal footing with physical health.

Some children with mental health problems will have experienced abuse. An open environment will help them talk about the challenges they are facing and may help them feel able to tell you what's been happening to them.

Promoting mental health and wellbeing

Anyone who works with children and young people has a responsibility to promote their mental health and emotional wellbeing. This can include:

helping with online wellbeing

encouraging exercise

maintaining routines.