

St John's C of E Primary School



Policy for Mental Health & Well-being

Adapted from The Church of England Education Office May 2021

Adapted and written by AL May 2021 and renewed biannually

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)

At St John's our Christian vision shapes all we do. Positive interactions between all members of our school community are encouraged. School life is centred upon our values which are based on the fruits of the spirit.

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 such as Lego therapy and 'Drawing for Talking'.

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 safeguarding policy. In cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with a medical issue this policy should be read in conjunction with the medical needs policy. Similarly, it should be read in conjunction with the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all 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

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should log it on CPOMS in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy lead should be notified in person and the concern also logged on CPOMS.

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 a person with knowledge and insight into the child.

Individual Care Plans

It may be helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health where pupils require something additional or different to other pupils. 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 taught using the iSpace programme in KS1 and KS2.

The iSpace Curriculum integrates evidence-based, fun to use strategies, a common language, positive psychology and mindfulness tools to help support children's well-being and development.

In Early Years children access the SMILE programme which links together PSE, mental health and behaviour in an age appropriate way.

The detailed content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort 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.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils as part of each iSpace lesson.

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 log their concerns on CPOMS.

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

Mental Health Pathway

Following concerns about a child's mental health being raised, this is the pathway that we would take.

The child's class teacher talking to the child and their parents or carers to explore reasons and triggers for anxiety alongside what individual responses and strategies are most helpful.

Minor adjustments can be made. Possibilities include:

Safe spaces.

Fidget toys.

Visual timetables or other ways to prepare children for changes.

Personalised working environments.

Check in times with an adult.

Positive language.

iSpace techniques such as raindrops or pick a pear.

Lunchtime activities.

Talk for me buddy.

Quiet space to eat.

Use of different entrances and exits.

If mental health needs continue or escalate, we may do a My Star assessment with a child. Through talking to the child, we hope to identify which areas or aspects are a child concern or anxiety and which aspects they are confident or happy about. This information can then be used to offer relevant support.

Support may include:

Lego Therapy

Emotional Lego

Drawing for Talking

ELSA emotional literacy support

Circle of Friends

Should a referral to CAMHS (Child and Adult Mental Health Service) be needed, we will support parents and carers to make the referral through school or the child's GP.

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 in the same way that staff would receive a safeguarding disclosure. 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?'

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If 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.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. 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, the issue will be addressed in accordance with the safeguarding policy.

After receiving a disclosure, staff should be mindful of their own well-being. The senior leadership team offer an open door policy for any staff wanting to talk through a situation on their mind. There are also mental health first aiders in school that staff can speak to in confidence.

Working with Parents

When we talk to parents and carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents or carers 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. 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 steps 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 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 (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.

Staff Training

We will 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 a specific issue.

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 training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental

If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to any member of the Senior Leadership Team.