

'Shine like stars in the world.'

Philippians 2:15



St Paul's CE Primary School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Our Vision

Our school is one family, united in love and deeply rooted in our Christian values, where together on life's journey we flourish, striving for excellence in all that we do. Inspired by the transformation of St Paul, and enlightened by the glory of God, we will shine like stars to make the world a better place.

Our Core Values

Love, Forgiveness, Faith, Friendship, Hope and Peace

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Policy Statement

At St. Paul's CE Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and, at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they matter
- encourage children to be confident and pursue their interests
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school's Christian values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to discuss and offer their opinions
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties

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 children and young people 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

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Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health and wellbeing needs overlap with this. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Clare Cresswell – Designated safeguarding lead
- Deputy safeguarding leads- Cath Mann, Athena Patsalis, Martha Hawting, Belle Perrin, Julia Drew, Claire Golding (Govenor)
- Jess King- Mental Health and emotional wellbeing lead
- Belle Perrin- SENDCO

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil or 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 leads. 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 the SENDCO and HT.

The policy aims to:

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

A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

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

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. creating policies, behaviours and an ethos that supports mental health and resilience
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 such as CAMHS
6. effectively working with parents and carers
7. supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

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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. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'open door policy'.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves 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 aim to use guidance and resources from Heads Together; Mentally Healthy Schools website <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/> to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Resources such as Anna Freud Centre's campaign 'You're Never Too Young to Talk Mental Health' are useful for assemblies, Y5/6 debate and PSHE lessons.

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/youre-never-too-young-to-talk-mental-health/>

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

Pupil-led Activities

- Assemblies to raise awareness of mental health

Transition Support

- Support for vulnerable children, for example, speech and language (SALT) support
- Small group work such as lego therapy or drama/music therapy
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff

Class Activities

- Managing feelings resources e.g. worry boxes
- Kindness/compliment boards
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class
- Circle time approaches

Whole School

- Anna Freud Schools in Mind resources
- Assembly themes
- Using the Power of Reading to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience, etc.
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school

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- Signposting information on our website

Small Group Activities

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Buddies at lunch
- Buddy bench
- Learning Zone for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

- 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.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil, or a parent/carer 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 a member of our SLT or our mental health and emotional wellbeing 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 P.E. or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Managing disclosures

A pupil or parent 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 or parent 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 on CPOMS. This written record should include:

- Date

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- 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 headteacher, who will offer support and advice about next steps. The person who brings the disclosure to the HT or senior member of staff, also has the right to know the outcome for the pupil, or parent (where appropriate). This may just be an assurance that help was sought, or that the child is now receiving some support in school.

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/carer.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually a member of the SLT, as 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 extra sources 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/carers must always be informed if a child is self-harming, talking of self-harm, saying they are being bullied, bullying others, or expressing low mood. 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 designated safeguarding lead must be informed immediately.

Working with parents/carers

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.

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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 is being shared. 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 CPOMS.

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 go 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 on our school website
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- 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

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.

Some good websites for staff who wish to learn more about mental health are:

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/training/>

<https://www.cwmt.org.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/children-in-care/emotional-wellbeing-of-children-in-care/>

<https://www.adoptionuk.org/campaigns>

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.

Mental Health First Aider

Jess King has been trained as a Mental Health First Aider (MHFA).

The aim of a MHFA in school is to help work with staff to ensure they have a healthy mindset and try to prevent them from developing a mental health problem. A healthy workforce

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means fewer absences, improved employee retention and can boost morale as they feel supported and listened to.

The role of the MHFA includes:

- Understanding the important factors affecting mental ill health
- Identify the signs and symptoms for a range of mental health conditions
- Use **ALGEE** to provide Mental Health First Aid to someone experiencing a mental health issue or crisis
- Listen non-judgmentally and hold supportive conversations using the Mental Health First Aid action plan
- Signpost people to professional help, recognising that your role as a Mental Health First Aider does not replace the need for ongoing support

Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis
Listen and communicate non-judgementally
Give support and information
Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help
Encourage other supports

Appendix: Helpful resources

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/training/>

<https://www.cwmt.org.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/children-in-care/emotional-wellbeing-of-children-in-care/>

<https://www.adoptionuk.org/campaigns>

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