

St. John's C.E. Primary School



Vision Statement

Shine like stars

Through God's love, we will flourish and develop our gifts in our nurturing community, as we strive to be an inspiration to all.

Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.' Matthew 5:16

Policy: Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Reviewed: July 2022

Future Review: July 2025

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)

At St John's Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community: children, staff, parents and carers. We believe that God loves everyone, and his values will guide and inspire us. We recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives; in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement.

The Department of Education (DFE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

St. John's is a small, supportive and nurturing environment providing positive experiences to develop self-esteem and help build resilience. At St. John's Primary School our vision statement is key and we want all our pupils to grow and to flourish whilst feeling safe and secure.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

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

- All children are valued and loved by God.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

We aim to recognise and respond to mental health and wellbeing needs as they arise. We can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues and this document describes the school's approach.

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors and should be read in conjunction with other policies such as Behaviour, Medical and SEND etc.

This 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 role include:

- Mrs. Sue Notley - Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer and Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead
- Mrs. Jane Flanagan - Lead First Aider
- Mrs. Sue Notley/ Mr. Joe Law - Pastoral Lead
- Mrs. Sue Notley - CPD Lead
- Mrs. Lucy Gatward- Head of PSHE
- Ms Sylwia Hocyk – Emotional Health Mentor

We also are part of the SEN Services Parent Mentor Scheme and have access to other fully trained Emotional Health Mentors who can support individual pupils in school.

Any member of staff who are concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead 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 with 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 the Parent Support Unit (PSU) or Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is necessary, this will be led and managed by Mrs. Lucy Gatward and supported by Ms Gaynor Nelson.

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

We believe the School has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. We use a range of strategies and approaches including:

- Assemblies to raise awareness
- PSHE lessons/Circle Times
- Reminders of resilience and how to have a positive self-concept
- Smart Thinking – adult led with individuals and small groups
- Play leaders
- Emotional Health Mentor to support individuals and small groups
- Transition Programmes to support change from Key Stage to Key Stage
- Brilliant Books
- Specific Interventions for SEBD i.e. Lego Therapy, Fun Friends

Through PSHE and RE lessons, as well as our consistent reference to God's values, we can teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

EYFS & Key Stage 1 children learn:

- To recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings.
- Simple strategies for managing feelings.
- How their behaviour affects other people.
- About empathy and understanding other people's feelings.
- To cooperate and problem solve.
- To motivate themselves and persevere.
- How to calm down.
- About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing toys, pets or friends).
- Who to go to if they are worried.
- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable.
- How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, whom to go to and how to get help.

Key Stage 2 children learn:

- What positively and negatively affects their mental and emotional health (including the media).
- Positive and healthy coping strategies.
- About good and not so good feelings.
- To describe the range and intensity of their feelings to others.
- To recognise and respond appropriately to a wide range of feelings in others.
- To recognise that they may experience conflicting emotions and when they might need to listen to their emotions or overcome them.
- About resilience.
- How to motivate themselves and bounce back if they fail at something.
- How to empathise and be supportive of others.
- About change, including transitions (between Key Stages and schools), loss, separation, divorce and bereavement.
- About the consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including online bullying, prejudice-based language), as well as how to respond and ask for help if they are victims of this themselves.
- About the importance of talking to someone and how to get help.

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.

Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of all children.

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)

- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support children receive and keep parents and carers updated.

Early Identification

All school staff are trained on possible warning signs which may 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 the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead, Sue Notley, Headteacher.

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

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:

- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room/school nurse, attendance and sanctions
- Liaising with preschools and families to identify children in EYFS who need support.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Pupil Progress Review meetings termly.
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.
- Parental meetings in EYFS.
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.

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. If there is a medical emergency, then the School's procedures for medical emergencies are followed.

Individual Care Plans

The school will write an Individual Care Plan for any pupils identified as having Emotional Health needs. This will be written involving the Mental Health Lead, pupil, the parents, teacher and other relevant health professionals.

The following services are those which are most commonly consulted by the school for support with Mental Health and Wellbeing:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Behaviour Support Service (BSS)
- Parent Support Unit (PSU)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Education Welfare Officer (EWO) for attendance and punctuality concerns
- Social Services
- School Nurse
- Early Years Social Inclusion (EYSI)
- LA SEN advisory service

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. These are displayed in areas that all can access, and key parts are highlighted so everyone knows:

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

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?' All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file. 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, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality and our staff will never agree to keep a secret. We will tell the pupil that we may need to tell someone else in order to be able to help them, and inform the pupil of:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

Parents will be informed if there are concerns about a pupils' mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed, but the child protection office, Mrs Notley, must be informed immediately and appropriate action will be taken.

Working with Parents

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 within reason and give the parent time to reflect.

We will provide information of further support aimed specifically at parents such as PSU or CAMHS.

At St John's Primary School, we invite parents to weekly Parent and Child sessions. These give parents an opportunity to have a cup of tea, chat with other parents and the SENCO and learn new art skills in the first half of each session, before the children join in for the second half.

All parents are always welcome to discuss concerns they have about their child's mental health and emotional wellbeing. As a school 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. St John's Primary School can provide support, usually with one of our Emotional Health Mentors.

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.

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.

The School Nurse and other professionals such as the Educational Psychologist and CAMHS are also available to discuss individual cases with the mental health lead when necessary.

Support for staff and parents

Mental Health Crisis contact number: 0800 151 0023