



# St John's Church of England Primary School

## Mental Health and Well-being Policy

Date Approved:	March 2023
Headteacher:	Miss Anna Pyatt
Chair of Governors:	Mr Robin Davis
Review Date:	March 2025

**Love, Respect, Value**

Part of a school's task is to help infants and adolescents on their journey to maturity. To grow in a self-giving love is to be on that journey in the presence and with the guidance of Jesus and his Spirit.

*John Cox - More Than Caring and Sharing p55.*

## **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 our Christian ethos lies at the heart of all we do. 'Growing Together in Love and Respect' sets a foundation for all to develop healthy hearts and minds as well as thriving in all other aspects of school life and beyond. From our Vision, 'The Development of the Whole Child' encompasses the importance of mental health and well-being and our monthly values give space and time to learning about growing in God's light to greater self awareness; along with the importance of being reflective.

We recognise that mental health is a crucial factor in our overall well-being. In children, persistent mental health problems can affect learning and achievement and may lead to children having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that, 'In order to help pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy'.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and well-being, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and well-being policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils and staff affected both directly and indirectly by mental health and well-being issues.

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

- all staff and pupils feel valued
- pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying is not tolerated

## **Scope**

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff, including non-teaching staff, and for Governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with the SEND and Safeguarding policies.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and well-being 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 well-being
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and well-being issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

## **Roles and responsibilities:**

We believe all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand protective and risk factors for mental health. All staff understand about risk factors that may make some children more likely to experience difficulties; such as: a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss - including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect

children from adversity; such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The named Mental Health Wellbeing Lead Miss Anna Pyatt (Headteacher) works with the school's Mental Health Team (SEND Team and the Designated Safeguarding Team) leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and:

- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- Keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- Liaises with PSHE Lead on teaching about Mental Health
- Is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- Leads on and makes referrals to services

Our close links with St John's Church also means **that we are able to provide pastoral support to children**, staff and families.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or well-being of a pupil should speak to a member of the Mental Health team 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 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 the SENCO.

Named Mental Health Lead: Miss Anna Pyatt (Headteacher)

Named Mental Health Governor: Mr Rabi Martins

### **Teaching about Mental Health and well-being**

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, Jigsaw. 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.

Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

#### *Pupil Led Activities:*

-campaigns and Collective Worships to raise awareness of mental wellbeing

#### *Transition Support:*

-support for vulnerable children (targeted support or group work such as Lego groups)

-transition meetings with parents/carers, pupils and relevant staff

-care plans for all staff to be aware of specific children's needs

-planned transition between Year 6 and Secondary schools for vulnerable children

### *Class activities:*

- worry boxes
- kindness/compliment boards
- moments to 'take notice' and breathe
- restorative approach to behaviour management followed by staff and children

### *Whole school:*

- well-being day planned into the year

- all staff are entitled to one day's paid leave and two days' unpaid leave throughout each school year (pro-rata for part-time staff)

- Jigsaw resources used in PSHE across whole school

- Collective Worship themes

- Protective Behaviours - all staff trained

- Zones of Regulation

-the importance and power of reading across the school- opportunities to explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience. Knowledge that sharing a book can raise levels of well-being and reduce stress and anxiety.

### **Early Identification**

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 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 well-being 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 Team.

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

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 challenges, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

### **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 on CPOMs and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will automatically be alerted. If appropriate, this information will be shared with the Mental Health Team who will respond to the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

### **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.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Lead, this helps to safeguard our own emotional well-being 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 a pupil's mental health and well-being 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 informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, then safeguarding procedures are to be followed.

## **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 or fear or may become 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 an 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 and Well-being Policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children via our Senco
- Consider access to our 'Loaves and Fish' fund which can assist with financial support for some families

## **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 needs 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

## **Supporting Staff in our School**

We recognise that happy staff equal happy children and we consider staff well-being to be at the centre of our ethos of Growing Together in Love and Respect. Our Mental Health team is the first port of call for any concerns but we regularly maintain the following as good practice:

- A staff well-being budget helps funds tea, coffee, staffroom treats and other celebrations
- Staff have free access to the Education Support Advice line
- Secret angels amidst the team
- Positive affirmation opportunities
- An annual well-being day
- Regular reminders about 'Feeling Good 5'
- HR updates inviting staff to take part in reading breaks, exercise groups and reminders to 'Take 10'
- Encouragement to leave the school building during unpaid time
- Access to training and courses via Anna Freud and Be Mindful
- Staff belonging to Unions are encouraged to seek support and to know what support is available
- A reduction in emails and no expectation for staff to reply out of hours
- An ambition for clear structures and procedures to enable all staff to be the best they can

## **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. This includes staff training on Mental Health First Aid courses.

See Appendix 2 for further support and advice:

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum.

## Appendix 1

### Protective and Risk Factors (adapted from Mental Health and Behaviour DfE March 2016)

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genetic influences</li> <li>Specific development delay</li> <li>Communication difficulties</li> <li>Physical illness</li> <li>Academic failure</li> <li>Low self-esteem</li> <li>SEND</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being female (in younger children)</li> <li>Secure attachment experience</li> <li>Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>Being a planner and having a belief in control</li> <li>Humour</li> <li>Problem solving skills and a positive attitude</li> <li>Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>Faith or spirituality</li> <li>Capacity to reflect</li> </ul>
In the Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect</li> <li>Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>Affection</li> <li>Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>Support for education</li> <li>Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord</li> </ul>
In the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bullying</li> <li>Discrimination</li> <li>Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>Negative peer influences</li> <li>Peer pressure</li> <li>Poor pupil to teacher relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear policies on behaviour and bullying</li> <li>'Open door' policy for children to raise problems</li> <li>A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health</li> <li>Positive classroom management</li> <li>A sense of belonging</li> <li>Positive peer influences</li> </ul>
In the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socio-economic disadvantage</li> <li>Homelessness</li> <li>Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events</li> <li>Discrimination</li> <li>Other significant life events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wider supportive network</li> <li>Good housing</li> <li>High standard of living</li> <li>High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying</li> <li>Opportunities for valued social roles</li> <li>Range of sport/leisure activities</li> </ul>



## Appendix 2

### Where to get information and support

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)

Anna Freud resources and free online training for staff and parents <https://www.annafreud.org/>

For support on specific mental health needs

Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

OCD UK [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)

Depression Alliance [www.depressoinalliance.org](http://www.depressoinalliance.org)

Eating Disorders [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) and [www.inourhands.com](http://www.inourhands.com)

National Self-Harm Network [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)

Self-Harm [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

For general information and support

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems

[www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning) [www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health