



Respect, Courage, Compassion, Friendship, Trust, Perseverance

Head Teacher:
Mrs C. McManus

Our School Vision Statement: 'seeking life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

St. John's Church of England Primary School has a Christian vision for education rooted in wisdom, hope, community and dignity. It is a community where all are welcome and nurtured in a spirit of Christian love, compassion and encouragement.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS: 18 October 2021

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED: October 2024



1. School Vision Statement

St. John's Church of England Primary School has a Christian vision for education rooted in wisdom, hope, community and dignity. It is a community where all are welcome and nurtured in a spirit of Christian love, compassion and encouragement.

It is a place which enables everyone in the school community to develop and experience life in all its fullness and realise true potential through an excellent, broad and creative education. Christian hope, aspiration and resilience for the future are central to the learning experience.

The school's vision is rooted in Christian love which is the foundation of our Christian values:

- Friendship
- Courage
- Trust
- Respect
- Compassion
- Perseverance

School aims:

- To provide a caring, safe and happy environment where the whole school community can flourish knowing that they are unique and special in the eyes of God
- To build confidence and self-esteem to enable children to develop resilience and become successful, independent life-long learners
- To enable all children to achieve their full potential
- To develop the teamwork and leadership skills and qualities in all our children so that they can be responsible citizens of the future
- To be fully committed to equality of opportunity
- To create a stimulating environment in which Christian attitudes of positive relationships, mutual respect, responsibility, forgiveness and understanding are fostered at all times
- To foster strong links between communities: home, school, church, the local community, the diocese and, internationally as *Global Neighbours*.
- To enable staff to develop their own talents and expertise so that they too can thrive
- To promote high standards and expectations of behaviour towards one another and 'love your neighbour as yourself' Luke 10:27
- To be committed to providing opportunities for spiritual growth through RE and collective worship as well as a wealth of stimulating experiences and extra-curricular activities

To promote children's cultural experiences and opportunities to help develop a positive understanding of their place in a diverse world

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 of 'seeking life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) shapes all we do. St. John's Church of England Primary School has a Christian vision for education rooted in wisdom, hope, community and dignity. It is a community where all are welcome and nurtured in a spirit of Christian love, compassion and encouragement.

We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing 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. It should also be read in conjunction with our safeguarding and child protection policy.

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 Mental Health and Wellbeing Members of Staff

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

- Designated Safeguarding Leads – Miss Morgan and Mrs McManus
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead - Mrs. McManus
- Nurture Lead and Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) – Mrs Dunleavy
- SENDCo – Mrs Francis
- PHSE Subject Lead - Miss Skates

Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

At St. John's CE Primary School, we take a whole school approach to promoting good mental health and wellbeing, through our School Christian vision, 'seeking life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) and our Christian values of love, friendship, trust, respect, compassion and perseverance. We seek to enable all in our school community to flourish through the approaches of the PERMA model of wellbeing (Seligman, M. E. P. 2011):

- Positivity – recognising that positive emotions are a prime indicator of flourishing and can be nurtured and learned
- Engagement – being fully committed to equality of opportunity and participating in meaningful activities, and encouraging our pupils to learn about their personal strengths to enable them to thrive. Providing opportunities for spiritual growth through a wealth of stimulating experiences and extra-curricular activities
- Relationships – creating a stimulating environment in which Christian attitudes of positive relationships, mutual respect, responsibility, forgiveness and understanding are fostered at all times. Promoting high standards and expectations of behaviour towards one another and to 'love your neighbour as yourself' Luke 10:27
- Meaning and purpose – developing teamwork and leadership skills and qualities in all our pupils so that they can be responsible citizens of the future and make valuable contributions at home, in school, home, church, the local community and more widely
- Accomplishments – providing opportunities which build confidence and self-esteem to enable pupils to develop resilience to achieve and accomplish and become successful, independent life-long learners

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils for their good mental health and wellbeing and to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. Information about our PHSE curriculum can be found on our school website: www.stjohnscephprimarywaterloo.co.uk/pshe/

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 safely and sensitively which helps rather than harms.

Mental Health or Wellbeing Support

Any member of staff who is 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 Lead staff or the head teacher. If the pupil presents a

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)

medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Nurture Sessions

The School's Nurture Lead coordinates and leads nurture sessions.

The school provides nurturing support for children who may be experiencing difficulties for a variety of reasons. These may include:

- Friendship difficulties – keeping/making friends
- Quiet, shy, withdrawn
- Finding it hard to listen to others or join in
- Finding it difficult to settle into class
- Low self-esteem
- Bereavement

The purpose of the support is to provide positive learning experiences for children who are experiencing such difficulties. There is much research evidence that children's learning is most effective when they have a sense of emotional wellbeing, good self-esteem, and a feeling of belonging to their school community. If we feel that your child would benefit from nurture support, we will contact you to discuss the type of support we think would help, what the support will look like and why. This support may be a small group or 1:1 with either a teacher or a teaching assistant, and it will consist of short-term, focused, and specialised help. The children may do a range of activities, including sensory play, role play, speaking and listening activities, stories, and social interaction programmes. These activities will be specifically designed to meet the needs of each child.

The support aims to:

- boost confidence and self-esteem
- support to improve social skills and independence
- build up and maintain friendships with their classmates
- help them understand what they are feeling

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. 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

Early Help

Early help may be appropriate to support children and families experiencing mental health needs.

Our school is committed to using the Early Help process to support children and their families. We have staff that are trained in delivering early help support and using the early help system. If we require an additional Early Help service for a family, we will make a referral through Sefton's Children's Service Integrated Front Door to assess the appropriate level of need and support.

The Locality Teams in Sefton are located across Family Well-being Centres. Our school has an Early Help Worker who is the single point of contact and they will offer support, advice and guidance to the school.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils, and parents are aware of sources of support within the school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, to whom it is aimed, and how to access it is outlined in Appendix 1. The school website is also a source of mental health and wellbeing information and resources to support our school community:

www.stjohnscephprimarywaterloo.co.uk/wellbeing/

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and regularly highlight support sources 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 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 the safeguarding 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
- Avoidance of 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

Staff must be aware that:

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-judgmental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety. They cannot promise a child complete confidentiality - instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe

Listening to Children

Experience and consultation with children show that a child will talk about their concerns and problems to people they feel they can trust, and they feel comfortable with. This will not necessarily be a teacher. It is therefore essential that all staff and volunteers in a school know how to respond sensitively to a child's concerns, who to approach for advice about them, and the importance of not guaranteeing complete confidentiality.

Any member of staff or volunteer in our school who is approached by a child wanting to talk will listen positively and reassure the child. They will record the discussion with the pupil as soon as possible.

If a child chooses to disclose, the member of staff or other adult in the school will:

- Be accessible and receptive
- Stay calm listen carefully at the child's pace
- Accept what is said - take what is said seriously
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell
- Tell the child that this information must be passed on
- Make a written record, which should be signed and include the time, day, date, and your position in school
- This information should be shared with the safeguarding leads who offer support and advice about next steps.

For children with communication/language difficulties or who use alternative/ augmented communication systems, staff and other adults may need to take extra care but concerns should be reported in the same manner as for other children.

Working with All Parents

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their child's 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.

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. This must be handled sensitively, and member of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead Staff will contact the parent in the event of a concern.

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
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our signposting on the school website
- Share the mental health topics their children are learning in PSHE on the school website or through notifications on Class Dojo or email
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing awareness and events

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could be a child protection concern which could increase risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from the Sefton Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH) team.

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 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.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 developing situations with one or more pupils. Where the need

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

to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the SENCO/Mental Health Lead, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals needed.

Policy Review

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

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

Appendix 1: Sign-posted information and guidance for parents and staff

Ways to support positive Mental Health and Wellbeing:

Our school website sign posts lots of useful information about **promoting positive mental health and wellbeing** <https://st-johns-ce-primary-school-waterloo.secure-primariesite.net/wellbeing/> such as:

- ⇒ action for happiness: <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys-to-happier-living>
- ⇒ The resilience framework: <https://www.liverpoolcamhs.com/aces/resilience-framework/>
- ⇒ Mindfulness: <https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-for-kids/>
- ⇒ Five ways to mental wellbeing: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>
- ⇒ Wellbeing advice for all those supporting children and young people: <https://www.annafreud.org/coronavirus-support/>

Mental health and Wellbeing Support:

LIVERPOOL CAMHS

Children and young people, parents and carers in crisis can call the **Alder Hey CAMHS crisis care line 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 0151 293 3577**

You should only present to Accident Emergency Department if your child needs medical treatment or you are struggling to keep them safe in the immediate moment.

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk

Mind www.mind.org.uk

Minded www.minded.org.uk for e-learning opportunities

Self-harm

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special educational needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

Online support

SelfHarm.co.uk: www.selfharm.co.uk

National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk

Books

Pooky Knightsmith (2015) *Self-Harm and eating Disorders in Schools: A Guide to Whole School Support and Practical Strategies*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) *By Their own Young Hand: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Carol Fitzpatrick (2012) *A Short Introduction to Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People Who Self-Harm* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Depression

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

Online Support

Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression

Books

Christopher Dowick and Susan Martin (2015) *Can I Tell you about Depression?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Anxiety, Panic Attacks and Phobias

Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person's ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

Online Support

Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Books

Lucy Willets and Polly Waite (2014) *Can I Tell you about Anxiety?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Carol Fitzpatrick (2015) *A Short Introduction to Helping Young People Manage Anxiety*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Obsessions and Compulsions

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our mind which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don't turn off all the switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms – it is not just about cleaning and checking.

Online Support

OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd

Books

Amita Jassi and Sarah Hull (2013) *Can I Tell you about OCD?: A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Susan Connors (2011) *The Tourette Syndrome and OCD Checklist: A practical reference for parents and teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Suicidal Feelings

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue

Online support

Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/research-and-resources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight/

Books

Keith Hawton and Karen Rodham (2006) *By Their Own Young Hands: Deliberate Self-harm and Suicidal Ideas in Adolescents*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Terri A. Erbacher, Jonathan B. Singer and Scott Poland (2015) *Suicide in Schools: A Practitioners Guide to Multi Level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention*. New York: Routledge

Eating Problems

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day-to-day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorders and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or pre-school age, may develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey.

Online Support

Beat – the eating disorders charity: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders

Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and When to Worry: www.inourhands.com/eating-difficulties-in-younger-children

Books

Bryan Lask and Lucy Watson (2014) *Can I Tell you about Eating Disorders? A guide for friends, family and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Pooky Knightsmith (2015) *Self-Harm and eating Disorders in Schools: A guide to whole school support and practical strategies*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Pooky Knightsmith (2012) *Eating Disorders Pocketbook*. Teachers' Pocketbooks

