

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy 2024-25

“Learning and Loving on our journey with Jesus”

This policy supports the distinctive nature of our school, which is based upon the teachings of Jesus and the commitment to fulfil each child's potential whilst recognising their uniqueness.

Our aspiration for our students is that their experience of teaching develops in them a lived belief, an authentic sense of true happiness, a lived sense of family, an experience of care and a vocation for service.

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1. Statement of Intent

At St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we have an inclusive, whole school approach to meeting

the educational needs of all our pupils, irrespective of race, SEND or psychological needs. St. Mary's recognises that under the Equality Act 2010, we have a duty to recognise that a mental health condition that adversely affects behaviour amounts to a disability.

As a Catholic school, we are guided by both our mission statement and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, namely: Human Dignity, Solidarity, Common Good, Dignity of work and participation, Option for the poor, Care of God's creation and Peace. These principles are embedded in our curriculum and in the STAR values of our school: Stewardship, Teamwork, Agape and Respect.

At St. Mary's we are committed to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for our pupils, families, staff members and governors. Our open culture allows all voices to be heard and through the use of effective policies and procedures, we aim to provide a safe, supportive environment for our whole school community.

St. Mary's defines Mental Health and Wellbeing as having the ability to:

- Develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- Form and sustain positive relationships
- Use and enjoy time alone
- Empathise with others
- Experience happiness and can play and learn
- Develop a sense of right and wrong
- Address and resolve problems, setbacks and unexpected changes and learn from them
- Build protective factors in our lives to protect and promote our emotional wellbeing
- Develop a sense of self and identity

2. Legal Framework

This policy was written with regard to:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- Articles 3 and 23 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

3. Aim

The World Health Organisation defines mental health and wellbeing as:

"A state of wellbeing 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”.

At St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

This policy focuses on staff and pupils' mental health and wellbeing. It aims to:

- Set out our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all staff and pupils across our school
- Remove the stigma of mental health issues
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues to foster and encourage a mental health friendly environment, where everyone is aware of the signs and symptoms of mental ill health
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques, for example Growth Mindset
- Provide guidance and training to staff on their role in supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which pupils feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues in pupils and each other
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support for themselves and pupils
- Raise awareness amongst our whole school community of mental health issues and encourage staff to disclose any mental health issues in a positive environment
- Provide appropriate support for pupils
- Inform pupils and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from our school in respect of pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources

This policy should be read alongside:

- [SEND policy](#)
- [Behaviour policy](#)
- [Anti-bullying policy](#)
- [Child protection and safeguarding policy](#)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

This policy aims to ensure all staff members take responsibility for promoting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and each other and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil’s mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Pastoral Lead, SENCO or Mental Health Lead.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school.

These members of staff include:

- Headteacher – Rosemary Akehurst
- DSL and DDSL's - Rosemary Akehurst, Kristina Florez, Becky Conroy, Lande Brown
- SENDCO – Kath White
- Pastoral Lead – Kristina Florez
- Attendance Administrator – Gerry Johnstone
- Mental health lead – Rosemary Akehurst
- Family wellbeing and support officer – Lisa Mack
- PSHE & Mental Health Coordinator – Lande Brown

5. Health and Wellbeing of pupils

Some children experience a range of emotional and behavioural issues that are outside the expected range for their age.

Mental health professionals have defined these as:

- Emotional disorders, for example, phobias, anxiety states and depression
- Conduct disorders, for example, stealing, defiance, aggression and other anti-social behaviour
- Hyperkinetic disorders, for example, attention seeking and disturbance
- Developmental disorders, for example, delay in acquiring certain skills such as speech and social abilities
- Attachment disorders, for example, children who are markedly distressed or socially impaired
- Other mental health issues including eating disorders, habit disorders, post-traumatic stress syndromes, sleep disorders and psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and manic depression

When an issue is particularly severe or persistent over time, or when a number of the above issues are experienced at the same time, children are often described as having a mental health disorder.

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the Mental Health Lead, Pastoral Lead/SENCO and safeguarding team will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above in section 8.1.

Our school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the pupil's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

At St. Mary's, we believe every member of staff has a responsibility to promote positive mental health. We recognise that stigma around mental health can prevent understanding and awareness. We are therefore working to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health and wellbeing.

At St. Mary's, we have a nominated Mental Health Lead on the Senior Leadership Team and a Pastoral Support Worker, who alongside the SENDCO work together to coordinate provision for pupils with mental health and wellbeing needs.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional issues will be experienced as mild and transitory challenges for the child and their family and can be supported within school, or with advice from external professionals. Other issues, however, will have serious and longer lasting effect.

Mental health topics feature in our PSHE curriculum and through both PSHE and RE, we teach the knowledge, social and emotional skills to support pupils' understanding of mental health and wellbeing and to be more resilient and less affected by stigma.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for pupils with mental health needs to ensure full access to the curriculum. These may include:

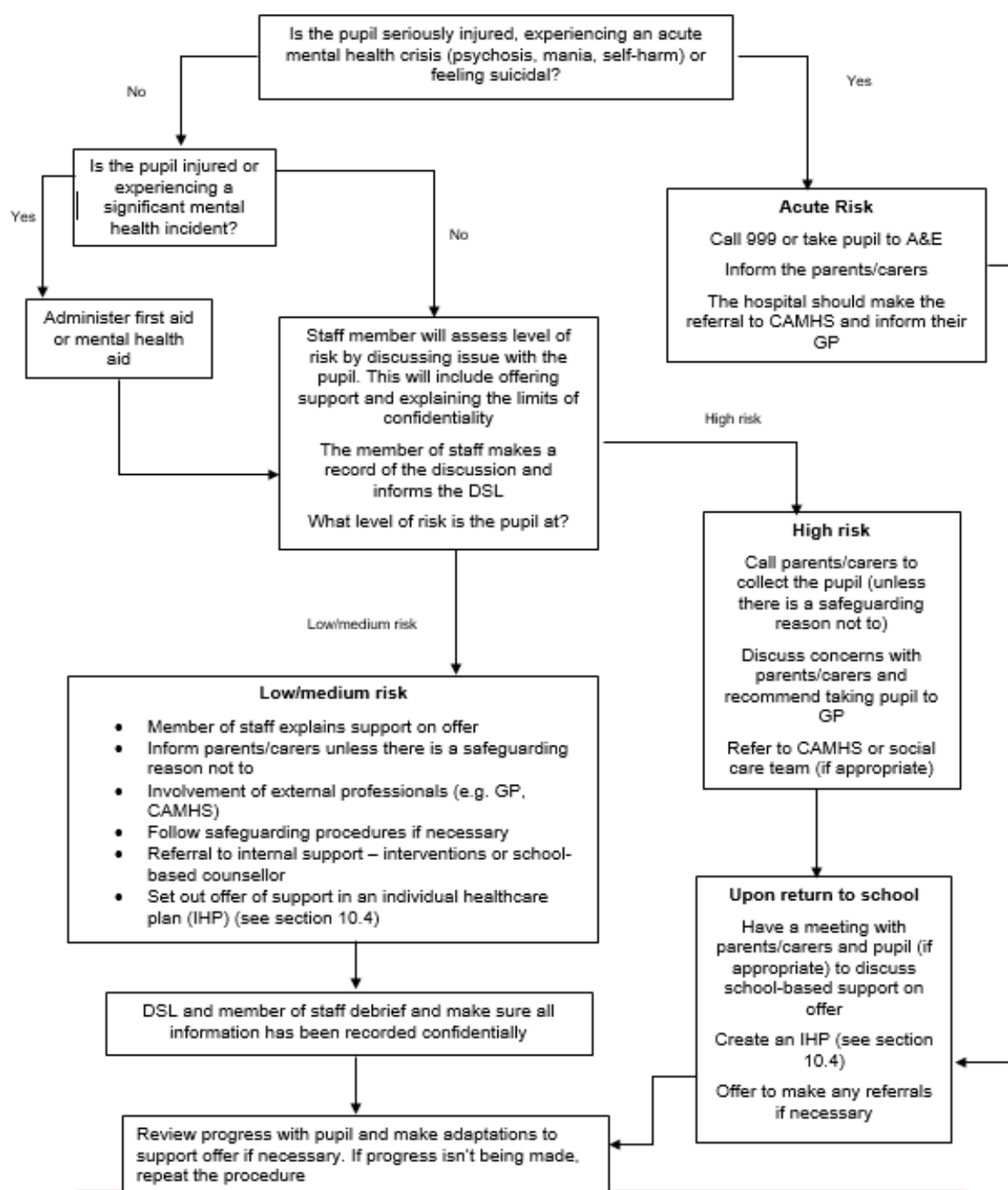
- Breaks from class when required
- Provision of stress relief toys
- Work broken into small chunks
- Individual behaviour plans

In addition to the above, we will ensure that:

- Opportunities to experience the outdoor environment are taken
- Pupils are encouraged to act as role models within the school
- Promotion of a healthy lifestyle is developed through participation in varied, relevant and enjoyable activities.

St. Mary's will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them and how they can gain access to these services and support. Within the school on noticeboards, and through our communication channels, we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

6. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



Get the knowledge you need to act at thekeysupport.com

7. Warning signs

In line with our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, all staff will be on the lookout for signs that a pupil's mental health is deteriorating. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should alert either the DSL or DDSs, the Mental Health Lead, The Pastoral Support Worker or the SENDCO and record observations on CPOMS.

Warning signs might include:

- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns

- Increased isolation from friends or family and becoming increasingly withdrawn
- Changes in mood and energy levels
- Changes in attitude to learning or academic attainment
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Decreased level of personal hygiene
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Rapid weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

All staff are aware of possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience ill mental health, such as physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. Staff should also understand the factors that protect young people from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

We recognise that some children are at greater risk of experiencing poor mental health than others, for example, children in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers/siblings with a mental illness and those living in households where domestic violence occurs.

We work closely with other professionals to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils at St. Mary's. These professionals include:

- Our link Educational Psychologist
- A Social Prescriber
- Young Carers
- Pupil and Wellbeing Officer
- Early Help service

In addition to the above, we offer the following in house provision:

- Access to our Pastoral Support worker
- Access to ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)
- Zones of Regulation

8. Managing disclosures

At St. Mary's, we recognise that negative experiences such as abuse and neglect can have an adverse effect on a child's mental health. Equally, mental health issues can lead to safeguarding concerns and child protection issues. Staff understand the importance of remaining calm, supportive, and non-judgemental and reassuring should a child disclose a concern about themselves, a family member or another child. Staff will focus on the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to enquire why they are feeling that way or offering advice. All safeguarding concerns are treated in confidence and stored in their personal child protection file.

Staff understand that they must make the child aware that the disclosure will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

They should explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil to share their information, but the safety of the pupil comes first.

Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the [child protection and safeguarding policy](#) will be followed.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
- The full name of the pupil(s) involved
- The date, time and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, the school's safeguarding procedures will be followed. If there is a medical emergency, the school's procedure for medical emergencies will be followed.

9. Confidentiality

Staff are aware that they cannot promise a pupil that they will keep their disclosure secret, instead they will be honest and open about the limits of confidentiality and explain the reasons behind it.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a pupil's mental health and wellbeing could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the pupil will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually

be the DSL/DDSL/SENCO/Pastoral Lead or Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

10.Supporting Pupils

As part of our school's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, our school offers support to all pupils by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, circle time, PSHE and mental health awareness week.
- Signposting all pupils to sources of online support on our school website.
- Having age-appropriate open discussions about mental health and wellbeing during lessons.
- Providing pupils with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of our school that is negatively impacting their mental health through the school council and classroom prayer box.
- Informal coffee mornings to include speakers from services such as Young Carers and Social Prescribers
- Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support - children can access this through staff and parental referral or informally children can access this support independently.
- Having a buddy bench in the playground
- Mental Health display board with mental health activity sheets and colouring sheets for each year group that the children can access independently.
- Weekly Friday Breakfast club rotated termly by year groups.
- Observations with a full analysis
- Record keeping using CPOMS
- Transfer of data from previous settings and future settings via CPOMS
- Transition programmes
- Restorative sessions when they are needed
- Celebrating successes with the child's family
- Celebration assembly every week
- Hot chocolate/milkshake reward every week
- Encouraging the development of resilience
- Encouraging and modelling social relationships and how to support one another
- Encouraging behaviour that support mental health
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions such as prayer boxes, class collective worship, circle time and an open-door

policy to teachers at lunch and break times

All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what pupils' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil in need of help
- Effectively safeguard children

Assessing for further support

If a pupil is identified as having a mental health need, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead, Pastoral Lead/SEND/CO and safeguarding team will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support our school can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above.

Our school will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the pupil's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a pupil will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above.

The support offered at our school includes:

- Reduced timetable
- Time-out pass
- ELSA
- Pastoral support
- Lunchtime Support
- Independent access to support activities
- Individualised zones of regulation work

Mental Health Individual healthcare plans

A pupil will be offered a mental health individual healthcare plan (Mental Health IHP) if they do not meet the SEND criteria for EHCP or SEND support plan.

Mental Health IHPs are written in collaboration with the pupil (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

The pupil's IHP will contain the following details:

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)

- The pupil's needs resulting from the condition
- Specific support for the pupil's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in our school needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

External referrals

If a pupil's needs cannot be met by the internal offer our school provides, our school will make, or encourage parents/carers to make, a referral for external support.

A pupil could be referred to:

- Their GP or a paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#), [Kooth](#))
- Local counselling services
- Social Prescribing
- Early Help for the Wellbeing team

11. Mental Health and Wellbeing of Staff, Parents and Carers

We recognise that a healthy, happy cohesive workforce are required to deliver the very best education for our pupils and that our staff are our most important resource. We endeavour to ensure that all staff feel valued, appreciated and that their contribution to the whole school agenda is recognised through personal and professional feedback and support, involvement in school decisions and access to professional development.

In addition to acknowledging the school's responsibility to staff well-being, the school also recognises that staff have a responsibility to support their own mental health and wellbeing in a way appropriate to the individual. Staff can achieve this by being aware of their mental health, seeking support from outside agencies such as NHS Talking Therapies and by developing resilience and coping strategies.

At St. Mary's we are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees and we believe that all employees should have the benefit of a working environment that creates a sense of well-being and security.

We offer the following to support positive mental health and wellbeing:

- Dedicated staffroom for time away from the classroom during lunch and PPA
- Senior Leaders have an open-door policy for all staff
- Take wellbeing into consideration when deploying staff in various roles
- Reasonable adjustments for staff with mental health issues
- Celebrate staff special occasions

- Support staff in setting professional boundaries
- No expectation to be in school outside of contracted/directed hours

We recognise that supporting a pupil experiencing poor mental health can affect that staff member's own mental health and wellbeing.

To support this, we will:

- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer informal staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a positive, inclusive and supportive work environment
- Allow time to write reports
- Provide a calm, equipped staff room
- Provide a basket of non-perishable lunches for staff who may not have a lunch some days
- Initiate social opportunities for all staff
- Offer opportunities for professional development
- Ensure staff have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities and what is expected of them
- Provide training on INSET days to enable staff to be equipped with the knowledge required for their roles.
- In addition to acknowledging the school's responsibility to staff well-being, the school also recognises that staff have the primary responsibility for their own health and well-being. This involves taking care of oneself and letting the school know about any aspect of work or the working environment which may be affecting their mental health.

Additional support for parents and carers includes:

- Offering Listening Spaces with our link Educational Psychologist
- Encouraging attendance at informal coffee mornings with speakers from local services
- Highlighting sources of information through our communication channels
- Working hard to build strong, trusting relationships with parents which allow us to offer support

12. Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers

We will work with parents/carers to support pupils' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so that we can offer the appropriate support
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them as a family

- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support, for example, parent/carer forums
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

When informing parents/carers about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavour to do this face-to-face.

As these meetings can be difficult, staff at St. Mary's will ensure that parents/carers are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the pupil's confidential record.

If appropriate, a mental health individual healthcare plan (Mental Health IHP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers.

13. Signposting

Sources of support are displayed on our Mental Health display board in our main corridor, including activity sheets all children can access at any time. We also have links to support on our website which [children](#) and [parents](#) can access independently. Both the display board and our website signpost to external charities and school staff that the children can talk to as well as activities they can choose to do for self-help if they are not ready to talk to someone.

The Mental Health co-ordinator and Pastoral Support Assistant will be available to provide further information to pupils and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

14. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness

Mental health and PSHE

As a school, we teach mental health through PSHE and discretely across the curriculum. We also have mental health weeks and assemblies to offer guidance and support to children throughout the year.

We follow the [TEN:TEN teaching guidance – Unit 3 Emotional well being](#)

Pupils are taught to:

Understand and articulate their own changing feelings and how others feelings might differ from theirs.

Learn how to manage their feelings and develop healthy coping strategies

Learn to build resilience to negative feelings

- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe

15. Reviewing the policy

The Mental Health and Wellbeing policy will be reviewed at least annually.

This policy was ratified by the Governing Body on

Date

This policy will be reviewed and updated in October 2025