



Positive Mental Health Policy

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 Organisation)

Intent

At St Mary Magdalene Primary School, we are passionate about promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (pupils, staff, families and governors). By considering pupil and staff wellbeing in all aspects of school life, a positive, healthy environment can be created that improves pupil engagement, motivation and effort which in turn gives everyone an opportunity to develop and achieve their full potential. This is fostered through our school values, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Our moral purpose, through our curriculum intent can therefore be summarised below -

- Community
- Possibilities
- Initiative

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

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 Safeguarding, Child Protection and Early Help and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policies in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the Inclusion policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

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 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 remit include:

- Miss Hannah Gormley – SENCo, Deputy DSL
- Mrs Ann Robinson – Headteacher and DSL and acting Mental Health Lead
- Mrs Vicky Tooth – Deputy Headteacher and Deputy DSL

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to a 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 DSL or one of the Deputy DSLs. 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 Catherine Medhurst, SENCo and Mental Health Lead.

Individual Health Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil (where appropriate), 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

Where an Individual Health Care plan is deemed necessary, this will be led and managed by Catherine Medhurst, SENCo and Mental Health Lead.

Teaching about Mental Health

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 R(S)HE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are 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 ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access can be accessed via by speaking with our Mental Health Lead, Catherine Medhurst.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as outside display cases and notice boards and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student 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 wellbeing issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Catherine Medhurst, our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead.

Mental health flow chart

LEVEL OF FUNCTIONING	COGNITIVE AND ACADEMIC FUNCTIONING	SOCIAL FUNCTIONING	COPING BEHAVIOURS	PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING	RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Superior/good functioning in a wide range of activities Can identify short and longer term plans for the future	High achieving Performing well in the workplace/studies Concentrates on tasks and seems alert Generally attends school on time Study/work capacity fulfilled	Engaged in a range of activities Positive relationships with peers Displays emotional warmth Spends time in social activities Energy to perform the majority of daily tasks required	Positive coping skills Good functioning overall Able to consider problems/issues in an appropriate fashion	No or minimal symptoms, resilient, generally happy. May have mild anxiety in response to events (e.g. exams) Describes enjoyment in several different activities	Keep socially active Make plans for periods of enjoyment Nutrition is important for all aspects of health Regular physical exercise to help maintain mental wellbeing
Temporary impairment Symptoms may be understandable in the circumstances (e.g. exam stress, bereavement) Generally functioning in several areas of life	Capable student who is experiencing transient problems May have temporary setbacks due to challenge of unfamiliar academic/work task May demonstrate reduced self confidence/ decreased self esteem May use avoidance as a safety mechanism May have reduced level of concentration	Occasional arguments Minor ups and downs in relationships Engaged in social situations with peers May withdraw briefly	Understandable stress reaction to difficult situations Returns to normal once situation resolved Increase in level of irritability	Period of understandable low mood or irritability Anxiety symptoms such as brief sleep or appetite disturbance Worrying thoughts Thoughts of inability to cope	Offer support and problem solving/peer support Encourage to talk to a trusted friend Speak to colleague such as form tutor, head of year or pastoral lead Pastoral team may wish to contact parents to express concern if necessary
May appear disorganised and unreliable May be denying any problems or responsibilities for behaviours Unlikely those issues will resolve without intervention Action required to prevent further distress	Impaired ability due to reduced concentration and learning capacity Unable to prioritise tasks Difficulty meeting lesson and school requirement Conflict in group work or situations Altered decision making Inconsistent behaviour Worrying or anxious thoughts May appear vague Changing beliefs	Few friends, limited integration in team processes Conflict with peers/staff May be withdrawn or isolated Increased hours on internet Behaviour may be having a negative effect on others Others may express concern or make complaints Generating rumours which cause concern to others Low level use of written, verbal or physical abuse (e.g. pushing or shoving) Concerning or unwelcome comments of a sexual nature or relationship seeking Out of character behaviours/out of context behaviours	Poor coping May be demanding of others to find solution Overall functioning compromised Inappropriate, changeable emotional expression (e.g. tearful or aggressive outbursts) Excessive online chat and other internet activity Impulse control problems may lead to high risk behaviours (e.g. unsafe sex, overspending, gambling, self harm or harm to others) Intentional theft Damage to property Threatening communications which make you feel uncomfortable Recent improvements in mood or daily motivation after a period of low mood	Feel out of control or have panic attacks Increase/decrease sleep Impaired judgement and decision making Impaired organisation May appear chaotic Fear regarding poor performance/letting others down Thoughts of escaping Any thoughts or expressions of suicide/fany non-suicidal self injury/harm to others Difficulty making plans for longer term Limited/reduced hope for future Depression Change in levels of energy Thoughts/behaviours out of context or character Guilt Anger/blaming others for how they feel History of harm to self or others Past mental health presentations/admission to hospital High anxiety, distress/agitation	Needs psychological assessment and intervention Encourage them to talk to their family and close friends for support May help to discuss current or future workload Contact designated safeguarding lead immediately Designated safeguarding lead will follow safe guarding policy

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 documented on My Concern immediately following any disclosure or concern being raised in class.

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, Catherine Medhurst who will 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.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the DSL or one of the Deputy DSLs, this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing. 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 must always be informed.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately.

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 student, 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 are accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

It maybe necessary to highlight further sources of information and signpost parents to where further information can be found. It is possible that parents may find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news about their child. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We will always provide clear means of contacting the school 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. We aim to finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a record of the meeting.

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 access this support, 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. 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 student 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 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

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep students safe.

The [MindEd learning portal](https://www.minded.org.uk)¹ provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 students.

¹ www.minded.org.uk

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host 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 Mrs Kelly Duff, our Head teacher who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Staff Mental Health

We recognise that anyone can experience mental health issues for various reasons which may be out of their control. There may also be work related factors that could contribute to poor mental health such as work life imbalance, work load pressure, poor working conditions. To every extent possible, we aim to recognise and address cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues.

We aim to:

- Treat staff mental illness seriously.
- Proactively support resolution of issues causing concern.
- Support staff members who face mental health problems.
- Create pleasant workplaces
- Encourage communication

Policy Review

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

Policy reviewed February 2022.