

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Mental Health Policy



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POLICY STATEMENT

At St. Mary's, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff.

Our culture is supportive, caring, and respectful, with Jesus at the centre of all we do. We encourage students to be open and we want each pupil to have their voice heard.

At our school, we know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. At St. Mary's, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy is a guide to all staff, including teachers, governors, and non-teaching staff. It outlines our approach to promoting pupil mental health and wellbeing. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant school policies.

POLICY AIMS

The aim of our policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health of our staff and students.

At our school, we will always:

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our pupils feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries.
- Help children to form and maintain relationships.
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.
- Help children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks. We will always promote a healthy environment by:
 - Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students and staff.
 - Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
 - Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.

- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting our pupils' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making.
- Celebrating each pupil for who they are and making every student feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any student that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and children about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in children.
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.

KEY STAFF MEMBERS

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of children and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process. These are:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Mrs. Davis (Lead), Miss. Price (HT), Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Richards and Mrs. Tame.

- Pastoral Staff:

Miss. Price (HT), Mrs. Davis (DHT), Miss. Hill, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Richards, Miss. Ruhan, Miss. Smyth and Mrsx. Tame.

- SENCO:

Miss. Hill.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a student, then in the first instance they should speak to: Mrs. Tame.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a staff member, then in the first instance they should speak to: Miss. Price.

If a child presents a medical emergency then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services.

SUPPORT AT SCHOOL AND IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

We have a range of support available in school for any children struggling, as listed below:

Our Pastoral Team meet every fortnight to discuss and implement actions that help support those children who have been brought to their attention. Whether that be by a parent, staff member or peer.

Children's Counsellor: Mrs. Tame (Branches)

Branches is a counselling service for children who require mental health intervention or emotional support. Pupils are referred to Mrs. Tame by their class teacher, senior leadership team, their parent or alternatively, the child can self-refer. Mrs. Tame offers person-centred therapy to the children and is trained in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Sand Tray work, and other relevant methods of therapy.

Mrs. Tame follows the fundamental principles laid out in The National Counselling Society's Code of Ethical Practice Framework. Please note that all sessions are confidential and the children are made aware that any disclosures will be passed on to the Safeguarding Team and other agencies.

External Pastoral Support: Mrs. Huggins (Zacchaeus)

Zacchaeus is a bought in support service who work with children in need of emotional support. Mrs. Huggins is a qualified teacher with years of pastoral experience working in a number of both, primary and secondary schools in Birmingham, specialising in bereavement and loss. The sessions are confidential and disclosures are passed on to the senior leadership team.

As well as this specialised support, children are offered friendship groups, circle time and EAL language groups to build confidence and self-esteem within school. They are encouraged to be part of the school council and are involved in decisions that are made about school to enrich their experience here.

At St. Mary's, we believe that Jesus is in the heart of everything we do and we are encouraged to partake in daily meditation. This encourages the children to take a few minutes from their busy day to reflect on what God has given us.

Our Year six children are paired with a reception class child at the beginning of the school year to help with the transition from pre-school to primary school. All children enjoy getting to know their 'buddy', sharing stories and giving their time to them when needed.

In addition to this, there are also many support networks available for children in the local community. This includes places such as:

The St. Mary's Parish Youth Group, The Stonehouse Gang and Central Youth Services. Pause, is a drop-in centre in Digbeth, Birmingham, who offer clinical support to children who are in immediate need of mental health intervention. As well as, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) otherwise known as, Forward Thinking Birmingham can be contacted by anyone who feels their child needs mental health support.

SIGNPOSTING

We ensure that all staff, pupils and parents are aware of the support that's available in our school for mental health. This includes how to access further support, both inside and outside of school hours.

Young Minds:

020 7089 5050

www.youngminds.org.uk

Forward Thinking Birmingham:

Access Centre Number:

0300 300 0099

www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk

Pause Birmingham:

0300 300 0099

21, Birmingham B5 6BJ

NSPCC:

0808 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline:

0800 1111

IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND WARNING SIGNS

All of our staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems. This means that they will be able to offer help and support to children who need it, when they need it.

These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer as appropriate.

Staff will be able to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:

- Physical signs of harm.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in mood.
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer.
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption.

Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:

- Attendance and absenteeism.
- Punctuality and lateness.
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education.
- Family and relationship problems.

Finally, staff will be well placed to identify any additional needs arising from difficulties that may impact a child's mental health and wellbeing, such as bereavement and health difficulties

MANAGING DISCLOSURES

If a child discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgemental manner.

All disclosures will be recorded confidentially on our 'My Concern' programme within school and only shared with the appropriate authorities if necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

The disclosure record will contain:

- The date of the disclosure.
- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made.
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation.
- Agreed next steps.
- Actions

CONFIDENTIALITY

If a member of staff thinks it's necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil, either to somebody inside the school or somebody outside it, then this will first be discussed with the child. They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell.
- What the staff member is going to disclose.
- Why it is necessary for somebody else to be told.
- When the contact will be.

However, it may not be possible to gain the child's consent first, such as in the case of pupils, who are at immediate risk.

Protecting a child's safety is our main priority so we would share disclosures, if we judged a child to be at risk.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

We take a whole school approach towards the mental health of our students. This means working with parents and carers and with other agencies and partners, where necessary.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

We aim to support parents as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times. To support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school.
- Share and allow parents to access further support.
- Ensure that parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child.
- Give parents guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health.
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health training our school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum.

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND PARTNERS

As part of our whole school approach, we will also work with other agencies to support our children's' emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with:

- The school nurse/s.
- Paediatricians.
- CAMHS. (FTB-Forward Thinking Birmingham)
- Counselling services.
- Therapists.
- Family support workers.
- Behavioural support workers.

SUPPORTING PEERS

We understand that, when a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. In response to this, we will consider, on a case by case basis, any peers that may need additional support. We will provide support in a one-on-one or peer group setting. These sessions will be guided by the child/ren, but they will discuss how peers can help, how peers can access support themselves, and healthy ways of coping with any emotions they might be feeling.

TRAINING

All staff will receive regular training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe. Training records will be held in staff files.

We will post all relevant information, and additional information, on our staff notice board and via emails so staff can learn more about child mental health. We will consider additional training opportunities for staff and we will support additional CPD throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with pupils.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every year. This is so that it remains up to date, useful, and relevant. We will also regularly review it in accordance with local and national policy changes.