

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Learn with Love, Flourish in Faith

Do everything in love (1 Corinthians 16:14)

For nothing will be impossible with God (Luke 1:37)

As an inclusive Christian school, Church of the Ascension C.E Primary School aims to create a loving, caring and respectful community, where individuals can flourish spiritually, socially and academically as children of God in a rich learning environment. Our vision is to inspire lifelong learning, whilst encouraging resilience, independence, aspiration and an appreciation of God's wonderful 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 shapes all we do. We believe that every person in all their unique difference should be able to thrive, fulfilling their God-given potential in all aspects of their personhood. Our shared Christian values of respect, honesty, forgiveness, generosity, perseverance and thankfulness are at the heart of our nurturing school community.

In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health 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 members of our school community. Furthermore, 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 those 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 safeguarding policy and the SEND policy, where a pupil has an identified special educational or medical need.

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 Members of Staff

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

Mr Steve Hudson - Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr Chris Bradley - Deputy Headteacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Helen Moore - Senior Mental Health Lead

Miss Abigail Jones - SENDCO

Mrs Emma Birad - PSHE Curriculum Lead

Mrs Fiona Walley - Pastoral Mentor

Mrs Deb Brown - Governor responsible for Safeguarding

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to Mr Steve Hudson, Headteacher, or Miss Abigail Jones, SENDCO, in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed. If the pupil presents a medical emergency, the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting first aid staff and contacting emergency services if necessary. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Miss Abigail Jones, SENDCO.

Individual Support Plans and Risk Assessments.

It is helpful to draw up an individual support plan or risk assessment (for pupils whose behaviour may escalate to aggressive), for pupils causing concern or who receive 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 pupil's condition.
- Special requirements and precautions.
- Strategies that have been discussed with the child and parents/ carers.
- Medication and any side effects.
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency.
- The role that the school can play in supporting the child and family.

Teaching about mental health.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE 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 students to develop skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as

needed, for themselves or others. We will follow PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Mental health support will be signposted to parents as an item on the school newsletter and through our school website.

We operate an open-door policy; parents are able to speak to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher regarding mental health support for themselves or their children. Our Pastoral Mentor, SENDCo and Senior Mental Health Lead are also available for parents and families as a listening ear, able to offer support and advice.

For pupils in school, our Pastoral Mentor, a support post within our staffing structure, has time allocated to offer nurture support. Relevant sources of support for pupils are displayed in communal areas, and are regularly highlighted 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 wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Mr Steve Hudson, Headteacher.

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

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 in writing on the CPOMS system and held on the pupil's confidential file. This information should be shared with Mr Steve Hudson, Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. Please see our Child Protection Policy for further information regarding disclosures.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we believe it is necessary for us to share concerns about a pupil, 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

Disclosures must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr Steve Hudson. This helps to safeguard staff emotional wellbeing to ensure there is not only one member of staff responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in absence of staff and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. This should be explained to the pupil and who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share any relevant information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about a 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 appropriate time 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.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying safeguarding concerns or issues, parents should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr Steve Hudson, must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents

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 they can talk to, and how to arrange 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 newsletter items
- Inform parents regularly about the mental health topics their children are learning

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, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect. Further sources of information and support will be offered.

Parents will be provided with clear means of contacting the school if in the case of further questions and queries, including the opportunity to arrange a follow up meeting or phone call.

Each meeting will finish with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting may be kept on the child's confidential record.

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 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 and updates about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as necessary and additional staff development will take place throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate, responding to changes in legislation and the needs of the school.