

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

2022-23



Our Light Shines Always

We want the best teaching, the best opportunities and the best support and encouragement for every child.

We are a friendly, happy, Catholic school, where everyone is valued for their individuality and special gifts.

Academic year	Designated Lead	Head Teacher	Chair of Governors
2022-23	Meidbin Limer	Samantha Henzell	Christine Baker

Policy review dates:

Review Date	Changes made	By whom	Date Shared

Safeguarding Statement:

At Our Lady & St Anne's Catholic Primary School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by or invited to deliver services at Our Lady & St Anne's Catholic Primary School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Rationale

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)

At Our Lady and St. Anne's Catholic Primary School, we aim to promote mental health and well-being for our pupils, staff, parents and carers and recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being is to our lives in the same way as physical health.

We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need. All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils' well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where:

- All pupils are valued
- Pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma positive mental health is promoted and valued
- Bullying is not tolerated
- In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being.

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health
- How we prevent mental health problems
- How we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- Key information about some common mental health problems
- Where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- Feel confident in themselves
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- Be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life
- Manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- Learn and achieve

Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), Relationships, Sex and Education (RSE) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy. Links with the Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.

A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands.
2. Helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to.
3. Helping pupils to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
6. Effectively working with parents and carers.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues.

Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

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

The school's Senior Leadership Team, including SENCO and Designated Safeguard Lead:

- Leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- Keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- Ensures each class are taught about mental health through PSHE lessons
- Is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- Leads on and makes referrals to services

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families.

Sources of relevant support includes:

- Our Senior Leadership Team
- Our designated Safeguard Leads (Mrs Henzell, Miss Justice, Mrs Milligan, Miss Limer)
- Our SENCO (Miss Limer)
- Support staff trained in relevant interventions (Rainbows, nurture groups)
- External agencies when school have made referrals

Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

- Positive behaviour strategies in class and around school
- Zones of Regulations encouraging children to understand and regulate their emotions.
- Rainbows support for those who have experiences bereavement or loss.
- Y6-Reception buddy system
- Nurture groups and emotional check-ins
- Feelings boxes and Feeling Monster in classrooms
- Celebration assemblies

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Through PSHE and our 'Life to the Full' scheme, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

Children from Reception to Year 6 learn to explore mental health and wellbeing through the following topics:

Me, my body and my health.

Emotional wellbeing

Life cycles

Personal relationships

Keeping safe

Living in the wider world

Our approach:

- Provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- Ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- Identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- Involve pupils in the care and support they have
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse.

We do this in different ways including:

- Analysing behaviour and absence.
- Staff report and record concerns about a child's mental health on CPOMS.
- Pupil progress reviews
- Regular SLT and staff meetings to give opportunities to share concerns.
- Gathering information from previous schools at transfer
- Termly parent meetings and more regular if needed
- Enabling children to report concerns to any member of staff.

All staff at OLSA are aware that they must report to the head teacher and record on CPOMS if they recognise that any child may have needs.

These signs might include:

- Non-verbal behaviour
- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- Lowering academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as noncompliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed.

Disclosures by children and confidentiality.

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise.

Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

All disclosures are recorded confidentially on CPOMS and are monitored closely by the school staff involved in this child's care. Identification and completion of actions are noted.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

A member of the Designated Safeguarding Team will decide how disclosures are dealt with which may be a conversation with the child or a parent/carer. It may be that the child requires some one-to-one or group nurturing time or support may be required from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some cases a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs. We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SENCO following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents/carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Involving Parents and Carers - *Promoting Mental Health*

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs.

To support parents and carers:

- Staff are available before and after school, and also via email to discuss any issues.
- We arrange meetings with parents and carers if they need further support.
- We have a family support worker who will contact parents/carers and provide information about organisations which support mental health issues and parenting programmes.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.)
- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls
- Make a record of the meeting
- Agree an Action Plan
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.