



Archdiocese of
Birmingham



St Maria Goretti Catholic Academy

Mental Health Policy

POLICY

Approval and review

Committee to approve policy	Curriculum Committee
Date of Academy Committee Approval	
Chair of Academy committee	
Signature	
Chair of Academy Committee	
Policy review period	12 months
Date of policy review	

Version Control			
Version	Date Approved	Changes	Reason for Alterations



A Policy for Mental Health

Why Mental Health is important

At St Maria Goretti Catholic Academy, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (Children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just 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. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. The UK had the least mentally healthy children in Europe (UNICEF). In 2017, about 1 in 10 children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it is life-limiting. Half of mental illnesses in adults first occur before the age of 14 years. Mental health patterns are laid down in childhood and this will determine a child's mental health throughout their life.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children 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 children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community. According to Barnardos (2015) 7 in 10 children are not getting help when they need it,

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children 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 to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children 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.
- Children who require support to manage their mental health will be identified and supported quickly.
- We promote the importance of staff mental health and wellbeing.

Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out:

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

Definition of mental health and wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing " 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".

Mental health and wellbeing 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

These will be achieved by the 5 ways of wellbeing which underpins mental health ethos of the school. These are:-

- Connecting with people (family, friends, colleagues and neighbours).
- Be active (outdoor learning).
- Take notice and be curious (appreciating Gods beautiful world).
- Keep learning.
- Give (seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community).

Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Medical Needs, Anti-Bullying, SEND and Equalities. Links with the School's 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.

Lead Members of staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific relevant role include:-

Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Z Cooper

Safeguarding Governor: Mr. R. Chadwick

Mental Health Leads. Mrs E Stone and Mrs A Bedson

Mental Health First Aiders: Mrs E Stone and Mrs A Bedson

SENCO/PSHE Lead: Mrs E Stone

Family Support: Mrs A Bedson

Outdoor Learning Lead: Miss R Clarke

Any member of staff who had concerns about a child's mental health or wellbeing should in the first instance speak to the Mental Health Leads. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures

should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Principal.

Individual Person Centred Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual Person Centred Plan care plan 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 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

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. We also offer Nurture interventions for those children identified with a social, emotional or mental health need. This will be identified in a child's individual learning passport. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. We will follow up to date guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student or colleague 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 our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead. Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changing 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
- 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

Expressing Our Feelings

We recognise that teaching children to express their feelings positively and appropriately is a very important for a child's mental health and wellbeing. We will promote this by encouraging children to complete the feelings boards displayed in each classroom. Everyone is aware that our feeling can change during the day, staff are aware to check feelings walls.

Staff are asked to speak with a child who says they are feeling unhappy, sad etc. as soon as possible.

At the end of the school day, children will be encouraged to identify something positive about their day to promote positive thinking and ending the day on a positive.

Confidentiality

Staff should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass on concerns about a student, then a staff member should follow the safeguarding policy.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually one of the mental health leads, this helps to safeguard a member of staffs own emotional wellbeing as they are no longer solely responsible for the child, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. Staff should explain this to the child and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. Parents must be informed.

Working with Parents

When discussing a mental health or wellbeing need with a parent, a mental health lead will make an appointment to meet face to face at a suitable time and as quickly as possible.

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. We should always highlight further sources of information and work in partnership with parents to identify the next course of action and a record made of the meeting.

School will 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.

Training

St Maria Goretti Catholic Academy have staff that are mental health first aid trained. 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 deemed appropriate.

This policy was shared and agreed by staff on _____

This policy was approved by the Academy Committee on _____

Signed

Chair of Academy Committee

Signed

Principal