St Theresa's Catholic Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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1. Policy statement

At St Theresa's Catholic Primary School we take a whole school approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing and are committed to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

2. Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining St Theresa's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing.

This policy links to our Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) Policy 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 Links with the Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be communication.

3. Policy Aims

- To promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- To increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- To enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- To enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- To provide the right support to students regarding mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- To develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- To raise staff awareness and secure Senior Leadership Team (SLT) recognition that staff may experience mental health challenges, ensuring they receive appropriate wellbeing support. This will foster a whole-school culture prioritising both staff and pupil welfare, where everyone understands mental health signs and symptoms and is effectively guided to support, reinforced by positive behaviour and welfare practises throughout the school.

This policy is designed to meet statutory requirements set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice 2015, and the DfE's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools (2018). It supports the school's commitment to the Ofsted framework, ensuring mental health and wellbeing are integral to pupils' educational experience and contribute to positive personal development outcomes.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health and wellbeing of students. If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student, in the first instance they should speak to the Senior Mental Health Lead.

If there is a concern that the student is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents as a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

5. Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue and/or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be

drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school and specific staff

6. Teaching about mental health and wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum- JIGSAW. The following areas are taught each year across the school with the learning deepening every academic year.

Autumn 1: Being Me in My World- Includes supporting children to understand their own identity and how they fit into the class, school and global community. This half term a Jigsaw Charter is established.
Autumn 2: Celebrating Difference- Includes anti-bullying (cyber and homophobic bullying included)

Spring 1: Dreams and Goals- Includes goal setting, aspirations, who do I want to become and what would I like to do for work and to contribute to society

Spring 2: Healthy Me- Includes drugs and alcohol education, self-esteem and confidence as well as healthy lifestyle choices, sleep, nutrition, rest and exercise

Summer 1: Relationships -Includes understanding friendship, family and other relationships, conflict resolution and communication skills, bereavement and loss

Summer 2: Changing Me- as we are a Catholic School we follow the Archdiocesan programme of study 'Journey in love' rather than Jigsaw for this topic, as the programme of study is authentic to the teaching of the Catholic Church.

7. Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, leaflets, posters) and through our communication channels (Parent App, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

8. Resources and sources of support at school and in the local community:

School Support

Pastoral Support- students have access to pastoral support as and when needed. Pupils are also aware that they can talk to any adult in the school. In a recent pupil survey all children could name at least one member of staff that they could talk to if they had a worry.

Drawing and Talking- A targeted, child-centred, one to one intervention focusing on supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people.

Nurture Room- A quite safe place for children to have pastoral support, counselling sessions or just take time out when needed.

Sensory Circuits- A range of sensory exercises set up for targeted children to take a brain brake and or self-regulate.

Butterfly Room- A room for children with SEND to access small group support and sensory activities.

Student Council- A place for elected students to voice their views and opinions of their own and their peers

Buddy Bench- A place where children can sit if they have no one to play with and are feeling sad or lonely. Other children will know why they are sitting on the bench and will stop to talk or invite them to play.

Local Support for Children

Mental Health Support Team- St Theresa's has an allocated Education Mental Health Practitioner who provides evidenced based short- term interventions around issues such as anxiety, worry management and separation anxiety. This is an NHS service accessed by referral from the Senior Mental Health Lead.

Listening Ear- Provide counselling for Children and young people experiencing Bereavement/Loss, Family Breakdown or Domestic Abuse. Counsellors can hold sessions in school.

Barnardo's BOSS -Is an Early Intervention Emotional Health and Wellbeing service, working alongside St Helens CAMHS service. The service works with all children and young people (5 – 19). The service supports children and young people through a range of therapy including counselling, art and play therapy and solution focussed interventions, and group work.

Young Carers- Offers support to children and young people aged 6-18 who have a caring role.

Child Bereavement UK- supports children and young people (up to the age of 25) when someone important to them has died or is not expected to live, and parents and the wider family when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying.

CAMHS- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services work with young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties, and their families. The service is for young people up to the age of 18 who have emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties which are causing difficulties in their school, family or social life.

School Nurse- The school nursing service offers a variety of support including termly drop- in sessions at St Theresa's for parents to attend and discuss any health and wellbeing concerns in relation to their children.

9. Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 alert the Senior Mental Health Lead .

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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 secretively
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Staff should also be alert to signs of digital distress such as excessive screen time, cyberbullying, or withdrawal from offline social interactions, which may impact mental health.

10. Targeted support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems.
- Working closely with St Helens Children's Services, CAMHS, St Helens Mental Health Support Team and other agencies and making appropriate referrals.
- Identifying children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems and offering an Early Help Assessment when appropriate.
- Discussing options for tackling issues with the child and their parents/carers.
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective.
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support and are referred to specialist services if necessary
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities

available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns.

- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

11. Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.
All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS and the Senior Mental Health Lead alerted.

12. Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the student. We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- Why we need to tell them
- What we are going to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a member SLT this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must always be informed, but students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues child protection procedures should be followed.

13. Whole school approach

13.1 Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

13.2 Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Highlighting sources of information and support through our communication channels (website, Parent App, leaflets etc.);

- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or making referrals to parenting courses, St Helens Family Hub etc.
- Offering an Early Help Assessment if appropriate.

14. Training

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

The Senior Mental Health Lead has completed a 12-week DFE funded Senior Mental Health Leads Programme.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Mental Health Lead who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Mental Health Lead to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. The policy is available on the school website and in accessible formats upon request.