

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School



With Faith, Hope and Love we can achieve greater things.

***Mental Well-Being Policy
September 2018 - September 2020***

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 Organisation)

At our school, we promote positive mental health for every member of our school community. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at identified and vulnerable individuals. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for all at St. Andrew's affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

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 medical policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need, as well as the behaviour and discipline and safeguarding policies which identify school procedures.

The Policy Aims to:

- ♣ Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- ♣ Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- ♣ Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- ♣ Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- ♣ Provide support to students 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 students. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- ♣ Mrs L Thompson, Mrs J Humphries and Miss K Smith - designated child protection leads
- ♣ Mrs Julie Humphries - mental health lead
- ♣ Mrs Ann O'Connor - lead first aider
- ♣ Miss K Smith - pastoral lead
- ♣ Mrs L Thompson - CPD lead
- ♣ Miss S Humphries - Head of PSHE

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. 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 child protection officer and/or the head teacher. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary - this would include and children who have, or are at risk from, self-harm. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Mrs J Humphries, mental health lead. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in Appendix A.

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'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 the PSHE Association Guidance through the Jigsaw Programme for PSHE to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix B and C.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students 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 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 communicate their concerns with Mrs J Humphries, our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead. Please see Appendix D for Signs and Symptoms.

Managing disclosures

A student 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 student 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 student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' The school's usual safeguarding procedures should be followed.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on then we should discuss with the student:

- ♣ Who we are going to talk to
- ♣ What we are going to tell them
- ♣ Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a student without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead; this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed if a mental health concern is raised. Students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection

officer Mrs L Thompson, or her deputies, must be informed immediately and advice sought from MASH (3192).

Working with Parents

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 student, 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. We should always highlight further sources of information and remind them that they may always come back into school to discuss anything further.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g., parent helplines and forums. Finish each meeting with an agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. 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 to talk to, and how to go about 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 our regular information evenings
- ♣ 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.

Supporting Peers

When a student 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 student 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 about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe. The MindEd learning portal² provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with Mrs L Thompson, our CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Appendices:

A - CAMHS referral form and guidance

B - School provision to meet Mental Health needs

C - Outside agencies to support Mental Health difficulties

D - Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health difficulties