

St George's School, Bourton

Mental Health and Well-Being Policy

In this school community, each person is valued and respected in the belief that all people are created and loved by God

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)

At St George's School every child is enabled to do their best in a supportive, loving and Christian environment. We believe that Primary School should be a very special and memorable time, a time to grow, participate and succeed in all areas of school life.

Our aim is to encourage children to flourish in a supportive atmosphere where developing confidence, respect, independence and resourcefulness is as important as achieving our high academic standards. Our children are the stars and they SHINE!

We aim to create a stimulating learning environment underpinned by the Christian Ethos, valuing every child as an individual; enabling them to fulfil their potential emotionally, socially, physically and academically, giving them confidence and enthusiasm for their future.

As a small church school, we develop a knowledge and understanding of Christianity and foster a respect for other people and their beliefs.

In addition we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and every child.

We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and well-being, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and well-being policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental health and well-being issues.

Scope and Aims

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being. 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 pupil's mental health and well-being overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and well-being 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 well-being
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and well-being 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:

The Head teacher (Mrs Jill Farndale) is the Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Lead.

The Deputy Head (Mr Tom Abbott) is the Deputy Designated Child protection/Safeguarding Lead.

The SENDCo (Mrs Westerman-Loe) is the school's Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Ambassador and Pastoral PHSE Lead.

School First Aiders oversee First Aid needs.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or well-being of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the pupil 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.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the SENDCo and Headteacher. Guidance about referring to CAMHS can be sought from the school's SENDCO.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern/who receives 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 and Well-being

Emotional health and well-being cover the spectrum of activities in school and the range of educational and health/welfare agencies who support our children. Our school is proactive in its approach and welcomes opportunities to promote emotional health and well-being through the formal and informal curriculum.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

Staff use a variety of methods for ensuring sound emotional health and well-being for children. These complement and reflect the overall aims and philosophy of the school.

As a school we use SCARF (Corum Life Education) a values-based and 'Growth Mindset' approach, for Primary Schools in promoting positive behaviour, mental health, well-being, resilience and achievement. Crucial skills and positive attitudes developed through comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) are critical to ensuring children are effective learners. SCARF provides a whole-school approach to building these essential foundations – crucial for children to achieve their best, academically and socially. Children's emotional health and wellbeing has a huge impact on their ability to learn. Following this program ensures that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

We also continue to provide (with supervision support) our ELSA provision and a Nurture group.

The school places emphasis on problem-solving, positive self-assessment, time for reflection, quality feedback and encouragement to participate in school and community events.

We also promote emotional health and well-being through our Christian Values which are embedded into all our learning: respect, welcome, community, creativity, forgiveness, peace, joy, inspiration, kindness, trust, and cooperation.

Children are grouped in a variety of ways. In the classroom, there are opportunities for children to work in both friendship and ability groups. Regular review of seating arrangements helps to ensure that children gain maximum benefit.

We see parental involvement as a vital part of emotional well-being. Regular opportunities exist to promote partnership with parents, including:

- Welcome meeting in the Summer term – a chance to meet the EYFS staff, find out about the organisation and routines and curriculum in the class.
- 10 minute Parents' meetings in the Autumn or Spring Term.
- Parental workshops- phonics, reading, maths calculations including a bedtime story session for the children.
- Annual parental questionnaires, to help us build on what we do best and identify areas for improvement.
- Involvement in pupil Support Plans and reviews for children with special educational needs.
- Inviting parents to assembly every Friday and to church services each term.
- Inviting parents to Christmas Nativities, Carol Service, Easter Service and End of Year Service.
- Regular updates on the website, through our weekly newsletter and Tapestry in Reception.

Inclusion

All curriculum policies make reference to inclusion key to our school ethos. Curriculum provision is based on an understanding that we may need to cater differently for individuals in order to provide equality of opportunity. This approach to equal opportunities is extended to all members of our school community and included in our Equal Opportunities and Race Equality Policies. These needs include specific policies for SEN children. Differentiation and awareness of a variety of teaching and learning styles are used to provide appropriate curriculum approaches for different children's needs.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas, on our newsletters and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils 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 access it
- What is likely to happen next

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing poor mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the schools Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead (SENCO) and or the Head teacher.

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 and held on our My Concerns log. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

Confidentiality

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

We should never share information about a pupil 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. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Lead, this helps to safeguard our own emotional well-being as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and well-being and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours 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 child protection issues, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents

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. The school will aim to highlight further sources of specific information e.g. parent helplines and forums, where appropriate.

In addition to specific support, we will also where appropriate:

- 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 get 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 sending out of regular information.
- 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 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:

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

All staff will receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe. Staff also receive regular training from Life Education with relation to using SCARF materials.

The MindEd learning portal 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 pupils (especially training up our ELSA leads).

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 the Head teacher (our CPD Coordinator) who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in Spring 2023.