Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Ratified:	Awaiting ratification January 2024
Review Date:	January 2026

Vision and values

Our school values are: **Love, Trust, Respect** and **Inspire**

They are also the names of our four 'Praise Groups' and underpin the core foundations of St Mark's. As a church school our Christian values are threaded throughout everything we do. Our Christian Vision reflects the school serving as a beacon of support for the community.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12.

Through our core Christian values of Love, trust, Respect and Inspire, we aim to create an environment in which every child feels safe, secure and flourishes. Within a place of kindness, they will grow into individuals who believe in themselves and know that they are an important part of their community. They will show love and respect for themselves, others and the environment. Given outstanding opportunities for learning, they will have the drive to take on new challenges, the resilience to cope with life's hurdles and know that they can learn from mistakes made. By fostering positive relationships with themselves and others, our community will be empowered to be the best they can be, value everyone as individuals and embrace new challenges today and in the future.

Introduction

At St Mark's C of E Primary School we recognise our vision and values can only be achieved in a life of mental health, self-respect and emotional resilience to cope with all that life brings. We aim to equip children and young people with a rich understanding of who they are, why they are here, what they desire and how they should live in order to help them build strong foundations that will carry them through to adulthood.

This document describes St Mark's C of E Primary 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.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

We aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. 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 wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly, by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)– Alison Stephens
- Deputy DSLs – Rebecca Martin, Selina Burton & Vicky Brierley
- SENDCo – Sharon Reddyhoff
- Senior Mental Health Lead – Alison Stephens
- ELSA – Selina Burton
- Family Support Worker – Alison Stephens
- Safeguarding Governor – Paul Knight
- Lead First Aider – Alison Stephens
- PHSE and RSE Coordinator – Rebecca Martin
- E-Safety Champions – Rebecca Martin & Nikki Canning

What is Mental Health?

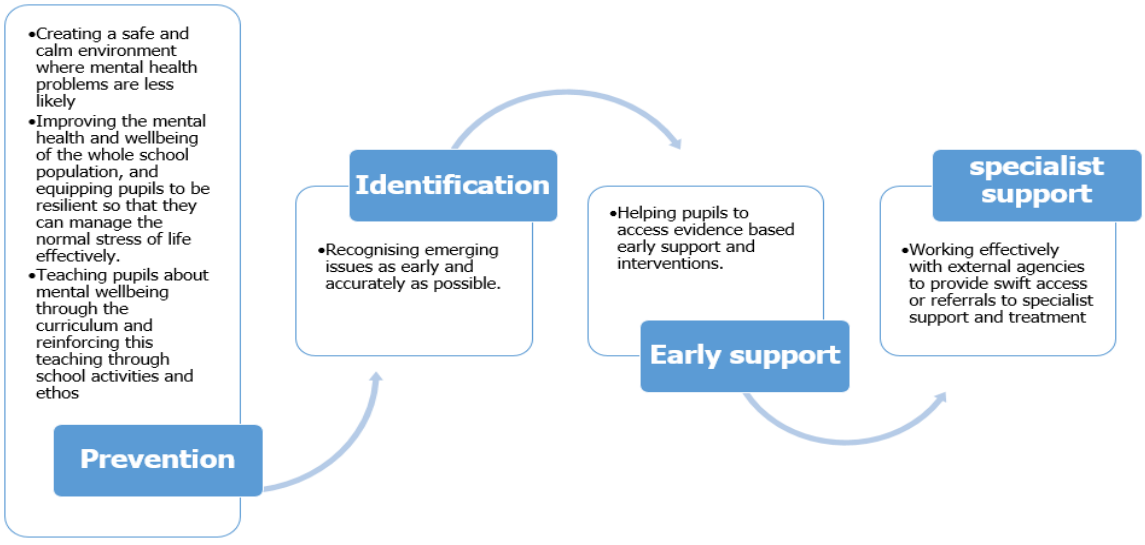
Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

World Health Organization

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Senior Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.
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 Alison Stephens, Senior Mental Health Lead.

Our Approach

There will be a targeted approach to ensure support for child's mental health and wellbeing through identification and referral practices for children at greater risk including children in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAHMS and those living in households with mental illness or domestic abuse.
Our approach to preventing, identifying and supporting mental health needs is built upon the following model.



Prevention

In order to ensure the mental health and wellbeing of all pupils at St Mark's C of E Primary School is supporting, the following processes will be in place.

- Promotion of specific Mental Health Awareness days/ weeks throughout the school year. This will be done through worships (whole school and class/ year group),
- Use of Jigsaw to teach PHSE and RSE
- Anti- Bullying Awareness days and other learning in this area
- Physical Education
- Values Led Curriculum

Identification (Warning Signs)

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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 Senior Mental Health Lead or one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

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
- 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
- Soiling
- Unusual drawings or unusual play

Early Support

Children who have been identified as requiring additional support in managing their emotions and mental wellbeing and may receive the following targeted and personalised interventions.

- ELSA – this is a 1-1 intervention, usually between 6-10 weeks long. There are a variety of ELSA programmes which are used when individuals may require additional support to teacher emotions or strategies to manage emotions.
- Nurture – this is a group intervention that supports children to build confidence, self-awareness, self-regulation and understanding how to work with others.

Specialist Support

If a child requires a more specialist approach, the Senior Mental Health Lead will seek advice, and refer where required, to other agencies.

Individual Care Plans

When a pupil causes us concern regarding their mental health, we will draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals.

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

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.

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 pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We follow the Jigsaw scheme for PHSE which ensures 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, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. This will be displayed on a notice board for parents at both sites (outside the front of the school), a display board created by the children at both sites as well as a dedicated page on our school website. We will also display relevant information posters on the doors in the toilets, both for adults and children.

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 shared with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and recorded on MyConcern. This written record should include the main points from the conversation and agreed next steps

The Senior Mental Health Lead along with the Designated Safeguarding Leads will offer support and advice and make decisions about next steps and complete referrals where necessary.

Confidentiality

When a child discloses information to an adult it is essential that the child knows that this information might need to be shared to support them and keep them safe. It is important that the pupil knows:

- Who the information will be shared with
- What information will be shared
- Why we need to tell them
- What will happen next

Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying safeguarding issues which could lead to imminent risk of harm, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed and the correct procedure followed which may include withholding this information from parents at this time.

Working with Parents

Working in partnership with parents and carers to promote mental health and wellbeing is important when supporting learners with their emotional wellbeing.

Parents will be contacted, when necessary, to discuss the individual child's needs and establish a home and school action plan.

Before discussing with parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil and other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support both within and beyond the school.
- 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

Training

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

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our appraisal process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Please read in conjunction with:

- **CLP Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **CLP SEND Policy**
- **CLP First Aid, Medical Conditions and Managing Medication Policy**