




BISHOP CHALLONER CATHOLIC COLLEGE

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Bishop Challoner Catholic College Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Draft - Under Review

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Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Policy

**In our Community of Faith in
Bishop Challoner Catholic College
We give glory to God by developing our full potential and in
Our service to others
In the name of the Father and of the Son and
Of the Holy Spirit**

At Bishop Challoner Catholic College we believe that every individual is special and is made in the image of God. In living out our mission statement it is the duty of all to respect each other and offer an environment where all feel secure and valued.

Bishop Challoner Catholic College fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding all members of our community.

Bishop Challoner Catholic College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its students. We believe that all staff and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding.

Policy Statement

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization, 2018)

At Bishop Challoner Catholic College (BCCC), we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental health issues. We recognise that in an average UK classroom, three children may be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue (Young Minds, 2017). By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students 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 support staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 (KCSE 2018), Bishop Challoner Catholic College Safeguarding Policy, School Medical Conditions Policy, in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with, or is linked to, a medical issue and our SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

The Policy aims to promote positive mental health for the school community by;

- Increasing understanding and awareness of mental health issues
- amongst students, staff and parents/carers;
- Alerting staff to early warning signs of mental health issues;
- Providing support to staff working with young people with mental health issues;
- Ensuring that appropriate advice and support is given to students (and their peers and parents/carers) suffering with mental health issues;
- Ensuring that appropriate referrals for students are made to external agencies for support with mental health issues.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, the staff who form the Mental Health Team (MHT) and have been specifically trained in mental health first aid. The MHT are as follows:

E Breen – Vice Principal/DSL

K Peckover – Student Support Manager/DSL

M Nutt – Associate Principal- Sixth Form/DSL

S Clarke – Head of Year 11

R Reynolds – Sixth Form Student Service Administrator

S Tipping – Student Support Coordinator

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should, in the first instance refer in person or via email to the MHT (**staff-MHT**). However, if there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal safeguarding procedures **must** and will be followed with an immediate referral to a DSL. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies **must** and will be followed, including alerting first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to specialised services i.e. Forward Thinking Birmingham is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the MHT in liaison with DSLs, parents/carers and, where appropriate, the school nurse and/or the student's GP.

Risk Assessments

It is helpful to draw up a risk assessment for students of concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up with involvement from the student, the parents/carers and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a student's behaviours and/or condition;
- De-escalation strategies and/or special requirements and precautions;
- Medication and any side effects;
- What to do and who to contact if concerns arise or in an emergency.

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 PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught 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.

Signposting Support

The MHT will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of relevant sources of support within school and in the local community. This will include:

- What help is available;
- Who it is aimed at;
- How to access it;
- Why to access it;

The MHT will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and advertise drop-ins. The MHT will ensure sources of support are made known to students through the curriculum.

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 must and will always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns to a member of the MHT. However, if there is a crossover with a safeguarding concern and a mental health concern then, all concerns must and will immediately be referred to a DSL.

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;
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause;
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff. 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?'

All disclosures must be discussed with a member of the MHT. The MHT will speak to the student and parents/carers regarding the concern and offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

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

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

Working with Parents/carers

When speaking with parents/carers we will be sensitive in our approach. It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/carers 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 will highlight any further sources of information and give leaflets to take away where possible, as parents/carers can find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents/carers can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We will always provide a clear means of contacting school for further questions. Each meeting will finish with agreed next steps and a record of the meeting will be kept on the child's confidential record.

Parents/carers 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/carers we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about relevant mental health issues;
- Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to get help regarding this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child;
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents/carers;
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about at school and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home;
- Facilitate parent information sessions.

Support for peers and friends

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 friends/peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be guided by conversations with the student and their parents/carers.

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 safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep students safe. 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. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the MHT team who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Link Governor for Mental Health is Mrs Angela Gilbride.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.