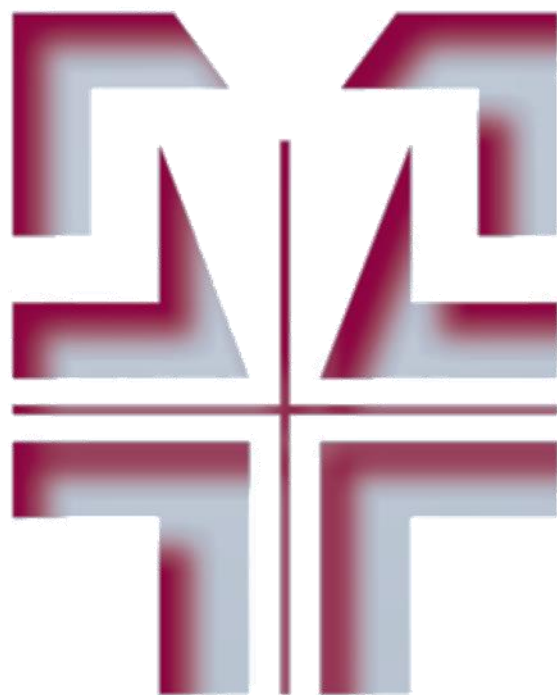


Saint Michael's CE High School

A Church of England Academy



Therefore, choose

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Date of Policy:	January 2025
Review Date	January 2027

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF OUR CHRISTIAN VISION

Our motto is '**Therefore choose [life]**' from Deuteronomy.



Therefore, choose

We understand this to mean growing in **body, mind and spirit**, so that all who learn and work here may flourish, experiencing the joy and hope of '**Life in all its fullness**'.

This is further explained in our Mission Statement,

'As a vibrant learning community
we choose to serve God,
pursue excellence
and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual.'

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy St Michael's Church of England School

Sept 2018

Revised biennially

Last revision: October 2023

Policy Statement

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual 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)

In our school our Christian vision shapes all that we do. We are very much a 'team' at St Michael's; staff, pupils, parents and governors work closely together to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to grow in body, mind and spirit; to flourish as a child of God and experience the joy and hope of 'life in all its fullness'.

In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health for all pupils and members of staff. We continuously endeavour to improve the mental health of the school community by utilising a whole school approach to mental health via the identification and implementation of positive processes and practices which promote good mental health and wellbeing.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we recognise that one in six children and young people and one in six adults may meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health problem, with emerging evidence of a recent rise in anxiety and depression in some groups (as of 2020). By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies, procedures and timely support, we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Policy Aims

By developing and implementing practical, effective and positive policies and procedures relevant to our school and developed in conjunction with students and their parents and carers, we can promote a safe and supportive environment and ethos which is conducive to the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community.

We will:

- Support pupils to understand their emotions
- Help children to manage change and adversity and develop resilience
- Provide an environment which is conducive to students sharing concerns about themselves or others

We will promote a mentally healthy school environment by:

- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Raising awareness in the whole school community of the signs and symptoms of mental health problems
- Supporting staff to manage their own mental health and wellbeing
- Supporting staff to respond swiftly and effectively to any signs of an emerging mental health problem
- Engaging in activities which promote mental health and wellbeing and a sense of belonging in the whole school community
- Celebrating individual differences in students, ensuring all students feel valued and respected
- Valuing and celebrating non-academic achievements

Scope

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 our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need and the document to support staff wellbeing 'Creating a culture to support wellbeing'.

Policy Objectives:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Reduce discrimination and stigma by increasing awareness and understanding of mental health problems
- Increase awareness of early warning signs of mental health problems
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils experiencing mental health problems and their peers and parents or carers
- Provide opportunities for staff and students to look after their mental wellbeing.

Lead Members of Staff

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

John Chadwick - Designated Safeguarding Leader

Caroline Hooley – Senior Mental Health Lead, CPD Lead

Joanne Monaghan - Pupil Engagement Coordinator, Wellbeing and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mental Health First Aid

John Kirkpatrick – Senior Leader, Wellbeing and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Lisa Yates and Susan Evans: Pastoral Support Leaders

Debbie Brotherton - Head of Living Education (PSHE)

Jayne Jenks- Headteacher oversight of Staff wellbeing

Simon Corner- Christian Youth Worker- support for pupil and staff wellbeing

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Pupil Manager and or the Pupil Engagement Coordinator, Wellbeing 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 or deputy DSLs. 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 Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS, also sometimes known as CAMHS) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Joanne Monaghan, Pupil Engagement Coordinator.

Individual Care Plans

Where it may be helpful the school will look to 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. 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
- The role parents and carers can play.

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 Living Education programme.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to identify when mental health problems may be emerging, and to seek appropriate support when needed, for themselves or others. We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms. Additionally, mental health and wellbeing is a focus area on our Christian Values Enrichment Days, Year 9 Curriculum Enrichment programme, Year 7 Character for Life and through Assemblies and Worship.

Signposting

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

We will raise awareness of relevant sources of support through assemblies, the Living Education Programme, tutors, Pupil Managers, The Christian Youth Worker, Pupil Engagement Coordinator Wellbeing and Pastoral Support Leaders. 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 to access it
- What is likely to happen next

The school website, assemblies programme and Wellbeing Evening ensure that pupils, staff and parents/ carers are aware of digital and online support for wellbeing.

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 the relevant Pupil Manager and our Pupil Engagement Coordinator for Wellbeing.

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 or unusual behaviour
- Avoiding PE or getting changed secretly
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Expressing unusual ideas or beliefs.

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 or offer a solution. Our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on Synergy and should include:

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

This information should be shared with the relevant Pupil Manager and the Pupil Engagement Coordinator for Wellbeing who will offer support and advice about next steps.

Confidentiality

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, Mrs Monaghan. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing 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. It may also be necessary to pass on concerns about a student to external services, to ensure that the pupil receives the best possible support and to ensure safeguarding.

In both instances, 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
- When the information will be passed on

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.

Parents / carers should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may be encouraged to tell their parents themselves. In the event that a pupil wishes to speak to their parent/s or carer/s themselves, before concerns are raised by the school, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts their parents or carers.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents / carers should not be informed, but the DSL must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents / Carers

We recognise the importance of working with and supporting parents and carers as part of our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

In order to support parents and carers, we will:

- Ensure that this policy is available in accessible formats including multiple languages where required
- Make the policy, and other sources of information and support about common mental health issues, available in a prominent position on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to contact and how, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Ensure that parents and carers are involved in our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Ensure that parents and carers are aware of the support available within the school and externally
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through information evenings
- Keep parents and carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in RSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Provide opportunities for parents to be involved in any training or other activities which may help them support their child's mental health

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents / carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- What are the aims of this meeting?
- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? What is the best environment? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.

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 give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

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. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents / Carers

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 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 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 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:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best provide support whilst managing their own wellbeing
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause distress
- Warning signs that their friend may need 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 pupils safe.

Training for all staff is also available via the 'wellbeing meetings' each half term.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. 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.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with 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 November 2027.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Policy Revised by CJH/JEM January 2024.