

# Saint Augustine's Catholic Primary School



## Mental Health Policy

Version	Date	Author	Reason for Change
0.1	03.07.23	Elaine Goulding	New Policy

Agreed by Governors and staff  
Autumn 2023  
Review Date  
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At St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers).

Our mission statement states:

*Our Catholic school is united in God's love, enabling everyone to grow in love for one another and to develop in faith. We strive for all children to achieve their best by becoming active and confident learners in a nurturing and caring environment. We guide everyone to shine in their own unique way.*

*'Unique and United in God's love. We let our light shine'*

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. We strive to enable the children to have the skills they need to recognise and manage times of change and stress. It is important to recognise that stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way we respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to our overall well-being. A little bit of stress is good and can help us perform daily activities. Too much stress can cause physical and mental health problems. Learning how to cope with stress can help us feel less overwhelmed and support our mental and physical well-being.

With this, we have a role as teachers, parents and carers, to ensure children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, ways in which to manage stress and changes, and enabling them to reach their potential or to access help when they need it.

Additionally, we can help our children to recognise what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making

- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder.

### Teaching about mental health

At We have adopted a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising. We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and well-being.
- Adhering to a positive, restorative approach to behaviour management.
- Helping children to understand what are healthy relationships.
- Teaching children emotional skills and an awareness of mental health so that they understand their emotions and feelings better.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Mental Health and PSHE for all year groups
- Wellbeing week and access to information around the school
- Targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties
- Nurture groups for learning and lunchtimes to focus on wellbeing.

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves 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 each class, but follows the advice from the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach with a progressive and developmental approach in a safe and sensitive manner.

## Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific role are:

Senior Mental Health Lead – Elaine Goulding (Assistant Head, KS2 Lead, DSL)

Mental Health Team Member - John Entwistle (Headteacher, SDSL)

Mental Health Team Member – Lindsay Walsh (Assistant Head, KS1 Lead, DSL)

Mental Health Team Member – Lynn Catterall – (Family Support Worker, Pastoral Team Lead, DSL, ELSA)

Mental Health Team Member – Gabby Finley-Cookson – (Pastoral Team, ELSA)

Mental Health Team Member – Lyndsay Richards – (Pastoral Team, ELSA)

Named Mental Health Governor – Sarah Bennett – (SEND/CO, Governor, DSL)

Our Mental Health Team:

- Work together to co-ordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Liaise with the PSHE subject lead
- Provide advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Liaise with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them
- Use targeted support in a timely manner to support individual pupil or groups of pupils
- Use resources to manage feelings – worry worms or the worry monster
- Offer therapeutic activities - art, Lego and relaxation, music and mindfulness techniques.

## Early Identification and Warning Signs

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also 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 via CPOMS as appropriate, under the heading of Pastoral.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

#### Assessment, interventions and support

When concerns are highlighted via CPOMS, needs are discussed between Pastoral, SLT, class teachers and SENDCO to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

#### Working with parents and carers.

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be recorded on CPOMS so support can be actioned via the Pastoral Team.

To support parents and carers we will:

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home.
- Organise workshops and presentations on mental health, anxiety, resilience and steps to wellbeing.

When a concern has been raised, teachers or the Mental Health Lead and SENDCO will:

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (Although there may be cases, parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues.)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Create a chronology of actions and events.
- Agree mental health care and protection plan where appropriate including clear next steps.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

#### Working with specialist services

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Children may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- Behaviour support
- Educational Psychology Services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)

- School Nursing Service
- Children's and Family Services
- Therapists
- Family support workers
- Counselling Services

### Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of the regular child protection 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 performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils.

### Links to other policies

This policy links to our Child Protection Policy, Anti Bullying, SEND Offer and our Behaviour Policy.

### Monitoring and evaluation

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be published on the school website - hard copies are available on request. The policy will be reviewed every three years.