

## **Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

### **You are precious in my eyes**

*“Together as a family community we aim to shine and achieve”.*

### **We aim to:**

- Love and value every individual
- Seek to help everyone to be the best that they can be.
- Keep God at the center of all that we do.

### **Jesus taught us to:**

- Love God
- Love each other

### **So we will always try to:**

- Love, respect and be kind to each other
- To follow the right path
- To forgive each other
- To take pride in all that we do
- To be the best that we can
- To look after everyone

We follow the example that Jesus gave us, so that we can laugh together, work together, smile together, pray together and bring joy to others.

### **Policy Statement**

At St Bernard’s Catholic Primary School and Nursery, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

We have a supportive and caring ethos, and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

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.

The Leadership Team, governing body, teaching and non-teaching staff, will work towards an ethos where everyone is valued, where respect, kindness and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships and where health and well-being are seen as important. We expect all staff to treat confidential information sensitively and in-line with school policy.

At our school we promote a mentally healthy environment through:

### **Children**

- 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.

### **Staff**

- Develop a healthy, motivated workforce who can deliver a high standard of education to pupils.
- Help ensure that our school promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health.
- Recognise that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness and to agree on flexible working practices where possible without damaging opportunities for pupils to succeed.
- Communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly.
- Respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members.
- Provide staff with training to deal positively with stressful incidents and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies via training.
- Improve staff development, cooperation and teamwork by creating effective leaders.
- Make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work-related health and wellbeing issues.
- Encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional well-being.
- Comply with statutory requirements, considering equality implications.

- Develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture through communication and consultation with staff and their representatives on health and safety matters.

### **Whole School**

- Develop an open culture in which mental, physical and emotional wellbeing is taken seriously and in which staff are encouraged to seek any help and support they need.
- 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

### **Scope**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE and SMSC policies. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

### **Lead Members of Staff**

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

Roy Turner- Head Teacher, DSL

Alison Burrow - Pastoral Manager, Mental Health lead, DSL

Christina Terry- SENDco

Steph Mercer- ELSA

Rachel Webster Wellbeing Governor

## **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum using TEN TEN resources.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association Guidance and TEN TEN resources to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'
- Primary Group Work/Mental health and wellbeing groups
- ELSA support groups.

Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- Emotional literacy scales
- ELSA

## **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns

- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicator

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking 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

### **Working with Parents**

To support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- 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.

### **Working with other agencies and partners**

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- Primary Mental Health Support worker
- Senior Family Support link worker
- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support from REACH
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Opening an EHA
- Therapists

### **Training**

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training in recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

The MindEd and Anna Freud 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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.

### **Staff wellbeing**

#### **Principles and Values**

At ST Bernard's we believe and recognise that our staff are our most important resource and are all valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, purposeful learning community. We recognise that there is a direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and ethos of a school is determined by the extent to which staff work towards a shared vision. We believe that it is essential that all staff feel valued as a team member, can express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance. We embrace the many school practises that support staff's health and wellbeing, to minimise the harmful effects of stress and ensure that there is cohesion in working towards health and

well-being for all staff. We commit to maintaining staff wellbeing and recognise each individual member of staff and understand that each staff circumstances are different.

The governing body will:

- Take overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Adopt the appropriate policies in respect of 'family friendly' employment, including consideration of part-time working, flexible working patterns etc., where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the school.
- Ensure that clear procedures are in place that will minimise the levels of stress caused to staff when following formal procedures such as the Disciplinary Policy
- Provide a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes.
- Review the demands on staff and seek practical solutions wherever possible.
- Provide personal and professional development such as stress management, team building, etc.

The headteacher will:

- Recognise the value of good management practice with systems in place to effectively manage staff and encourage a partnership approach with staff and workplace unions.
- Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.
- Promote a healthy workplace and practices that ensure that members of staff can develop a healthy mind.
- Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress.
- Understand the differing needs of staff, at different points and events during their life cycles, and offer support accordingly, if and when required. This may include support for pregnant women, older women during the menopause, and those with caring responsibilities.
- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems.
- Ensure that the established return-to-work protocol is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work.
- Carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible.
- Ensure that all staff have access to regular training sessions on health and wellbeing in schools, including practical sessions to deal with mental, physical and emotional wellbeing issues, and that they are given the appropriate time and resources to undertake this.
- Carefully plan and agree work-life balance solutions including flexible working practices where possible and appropriate.

- Demonstrate commitment, via systems and practises in place to employees maintaining a good work/life balance and ensure that such practices are communicated to all staff.
- Manage pressures which may affect staff, including the impact of workload pressures, and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.
- Conduct monthly staff survey, including a section on health and wellbeing, and share and act upon results.

Senior Leaders / Line Managers will:

- Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.
- Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress.
- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work-related stress and other mental health problems.
- Demonstrate commitment to staff by encouraging a good work/life balance.

Members of staff should:

- Take care of their own health and safety at work and communicate with key staff when they think they are experiencing a problem.
- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves or others whilst in the workplace.
- Consider wellbeing support mechanisms offered; e.g. counselling.
- Consider attending training on health and wellbeing issues where they feel that this is appropriate.
- Where possible, be watchful of any indication of changes of behaviour in colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress.
- Be committed to the ethos of staff well-being, keeping in mind the workload and well-being of others.
- Value all members of staff in the school, acknowledge the important role that everyone takes, treat one another with honesty, respect and kindness.
- Contribute to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible, to enhance morale and effective team spirit.
- Develop and respect shared areas so that there is an appropriate space to relax.