

The Village Saints Partnership  
Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Presented to Governors 21/11/23

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## **Safeguarding Statement**

At the Village Saints Partnership, we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all academy activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services in the partnership. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access our academies and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

## **Mission Statement**

The Village Saints Partnership strives to be a partnership of academies where children can celebrate the successes of their learning and achievements, can realise and exceed their potential through quality teaching and learning, can communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and develop the skills and attributes necessary to be positive future citizens in our changing society.

## **Vision Statement**

To provide an outstanding education for the children in our academies, to raise expectations, aspirations and promote achievement for all in our community.

## **Statement of Intent**

As a partnership we aim to celebrate our children and our staff and offer a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. In our Early Years classes we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

## **Our Guiding Principles**

At the Village Saints Partnership, we pride ourselves on developing a positive ethos built on the foundations of the Christian faith. This ethos is based on the following principles that, as stakeholders, we all aim to uphold:

- Integrity – we are united as a whole to ensure honesty, fairness and trust are maintained. This quality within our academies means that we follow our principles to ensure that we always do our best for pupils, staff and community.

- Respect – all members of our academies, including pupils, staff, governors, visitors and the wider community, should be treated with respect. We hold politeness in high regard and we are accepting of each individual's uniqueness.
- Positivity –we believe that having a positive attitude towards situations enables us to be forward thinking and supports us in our goal of providing a good and better education for all of our pupils. We demonstrate kindness towards others so that we can all feel happiness and fulfilment.
- Motivation – doing the very best for our pupils is what motivates our staff. We plan lessons and activities that incorporate inspiration, excitement and enjoyment to motivate pupils to achieve their potential.
- Reliability – we expect all of our stakeholders to be reliable by promoting and demonstrating a dedication to life-long learning for all and increasing effectiveness through regular monitoring, evaluation and feedback processes.
- Collaboration – we want all of the members of our community to work as a team, therefore we need to instil confidence in our learners, staff and parents in the role that they play to ensure progress and achievement. We need to ensure approachability and adaptability so that this is possible.
- Achievement – through the promotion of independence and risk-taking we are allowing our children to develop the tools to be life-long learners. Through a high quality curriculum and planning of lessons that are specifically tailored for our pupils, they will have the opportunity to achieve and surpass their potential.

### **Policy statement**

At the Village Saints Partnership, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all children, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows pupils' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

### **Scope**

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining the approach of the Village Saints Partnership to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

### **Policy Aims**

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and children.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in children.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to children with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst children and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Instil a culture of staff and children's welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

### **Key staff members**

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Howe)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding leads (Mrs Beasley, Mrs Lodge and Miss Hurrell)

SENCO / PSHE Lead (Mrs Lodge)

Mental Health Senior Lead (Mrs Lambert)

Mental Health First Aiders (Mrs Bryan, Mrs Lambert, Mrs Peel)

ELSA Support Assistants (Mrs Morley, Mrs Peel and Mrs Smither)

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child, in the first instance they should speak to a DSL. If there is a concern that the child is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

## **Individual Care Plans**

When a child has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals. This plan should include:

Details of the child's situation/condition/diagnosis  
Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions  
Medication and any side effects  
Who to contact in an emergency  
The role the school and specific staff

## **Teaching about mental health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding our children need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE and PE curriculums. Additionally, we will use such lessons to provide children who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting children to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

## **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, children and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (e.g. during classes) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

## **Support at school**

Support is available for children identified as being vulnerable to mental health issues via our mental health first aiders or our ELSAs. Support for adults is also available via our mental health leaders or via our Employee Assistance Programme, who can be contacted via the below methods:

· <https://www.employeeassistance.org.uk/>

Access using the code 'diocese'

· 24/7 freephone: 0800 328 1437

From outside the UK: +44 (0) 1482 661 814

Minicom: 01482 661 911 (8.30 am – 6.00pm)

## **Warning Signs**

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 alert the designated child protection lead/ named persons. Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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
- Avoiding PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

## **Targeted support**

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic

violence. We ensure timely and effective identification of children who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Identifying children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working with Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies services to follow protocols including assessment and referral
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers.
- Agreeing an Individual Care Plan
- Providing a range of interventions
- Provide children with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns.
- Provide children with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; any support offered will take account of Academy policies regarding confidentiality.

### **Managing disclosures**

If a child chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. All disclosures will be recorded confidentially on CPOMS.

### **Confidentiality**

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a child to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the child. It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. Safeguarding meetings of the named persons relieves the burden of concerns and also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur. It also provides opportunities for ideas and support. Parents would be informed if concerns are raised about a child's mental health. If a child gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, *parents should not be informed*, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

### **Whole school approach**

Working with parents/carers

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing concerns about their child can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and process the situation. Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. Lines of communication will be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. A record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to CPOM's and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

### **Supporting parents**

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing.

### **Supporting Peers**

When a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the child 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 support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset

- Warning signs that their friend needs help
- 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 to enable them to keep pupils safe. We have a number of mental health first aiders (Mrs Bryan, Mrs Lambert and Mrs Peel) as well as the mental health and wellbeing leaders (Mrs Bryan, Mrs Lambert, Mrs Peel, Mrs Morley and Mrs Smithers). 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 students.

### **Staff Mental Health**

We recognise that anyone can experience mental health issues for various reasons which may be out of their control. There may also be work related factors that could contribute to poor mental health such as work life imbalance, work load pressure, poor working conditions. To every extent possible, we aim to recognize and address cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues.

We aim to:

- Treat staff mental illness seriously.
- Proactively support resolution of issues causing concern.
- Support staff members who face mental health problems.
- Create pleasant workplaces
- Encourage communication and the promotion of wellbeing by all.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum.

The next review date is November 2024.

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.