

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

Date policy adopted: Summer 2026

Review date: Summer 2027

Mission Statement

"Learning together in Faith and Love"

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School exists to serve the Roman Catholic families of the Parish of Our Lady of the Holy Souls, Kensal New Town and other local parishes. The aims of our school are:

- To promote Christian values where children live, learn and celebrate the teaching of Christ.
- To provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced and meaningful and where children can experience enjoyment and fulfilment.
- To promote the highest standards of teaching and learning within the framework of the National Curriculum.
- To develop in each child a sense of achievement, value and self-worth and to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- To help our children acquire the skills of independent learning and make sufficiently rapid progress.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where children feel valued, and where they respect, help and care for each other.
- To involve parents in all aspects of their child's education and promote good home/school partnership.
- To develop in our children awareness and respect for the different cultures and religions represented in society and their responsibility to the wider community.
- To foster the continuing development of staff, parents and governors in serving the community.

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1. Policy Statement

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community.

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we aim to promote positive emotional wellbeing and mental health for all members of our school community, including pupils and staff. We pursue this aim through universal whole-school approaches, positive relationships, high-quality teaching, pastoral support and targeted approaches for pupils who may be vulnerable or experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing a practical, relevant and effective policy, we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils and staff affected directly or indirectly by mental health difficulties.

This policy describes the school's approach to promoting positive emotional wellbeing and mental health. It is intended as guidance for all staff, including teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors.

2. Safeguarding Statement

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, the emotional wellbeing and mental health of pupils is considered within our wider safeguarding responsibilities. All staff have a duty to act promptly if they are concerned about a pupil's safety, welfare or mental health.

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Where a member of staff has a concern that a pupil may be at risk of harm, including self-harm, suicidal thoughts, abuse, neglect or exploitation, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Mental health concerns must never be viewed in isolation from safeguarding.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm or a medical emergency, staff must follow emergency procedures, including contacting emergency services where necessary.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- PSHE/RSHE Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

3. Aim of the Policy

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we aim to create an environment that promotes positive emotional wellbeing and mental health by:

- increasing understanding and awareness of common emotional wellbeing and mental health issues
- promoting a whole-school culture where pupils and staff feel safe, valued and supported

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- alerting staff to early warning signs of emotional or mental health difficulties in pupils
- providing support to pupils experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties
- providing support to staff working with pupils who may be experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties
- working in partnership with parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate
- providing opportunities for staff to look after their own wellbeing
- ensuring that concerns are responded to in line with safeguarding procedures.

4. Dissemination

St Mary's Catholic Primary School will share this policy with staff, governors, pupils and parents/carers through the following methods:

- staff training and induction
- email or direct link to all staff
- availability on the school website
- reference in relevant parent/carer communication
- discussion with governors as part of policy review
- age-appropriate references through PSHE and wider pastoral support

5. Lead Members of Staff

Staff with specific responsibilities include:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Magdalena Tusting

Mental Health Lead: Christian Larke

Pastoral Lead: Christian Larke

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Occupational Health and Safety Lead: Magdalena Tusting

Welfare Officer / Lead First Aider: Magdalena Tusting

Executive Headteacher: Geraldine Hampton

Head of School: Magdalena Tusting

CPD Lead: Kathryn Weir

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive wellbeing and to report concerns in line with safeguarding procedures.

6. Responsibility

All members of staff have a responsibility to promote positive emotional wellbeing and to be alert to signs that a pupil may be experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. If there is a concern that the pupil is at risk of immediate harm, normal child protection procedures must be followed without delay.

If a pupil presents with a medical or mental health emergency, including serious self-harm, suicidal thoughts, suicidal intent or any immediate risk to themselves or others, emergency procedures must be followed. This may include contacting parents/carers, seeking urgent medical advice and/or contacting emergency services.

Where a referral to external support, including CAMHS or other local services, is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another appropriate senior member of staff.

All school staff are expected to:

- understand this policy and seek clarification from senior leaders where required
- follow the school's safeguarding procedures when concerns arise
- support the school's aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment
- take reasonable care of their own wellbeing and seek support when needed
- raise concerns with their line manager if work-related issues are affecting their wellbeing
- contribute to a school culture where pupils and adults feel respected, listened to and supported.

Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of this policy, receive appropriate training and know how to respond to concerns about pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health.

7. Managing Pupil Disclosures

A pupil may choose to share concerns about themselves or another pupil with any member of staff. All staff should know how to respond calmly, sensitively and appropriately.

If a pupil discloses a concern about their mental health or wellbeing, staff should:

- remain calm, supportive and non-judgmental
- listen carefully and avoid asking leading questions
- reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by speaking to an adult

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- explain that information may need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in order to keep them safe
- record the concern accurately and pass it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

Records should include:

- the date and time of the disclosure
- the name of the pupil
- the name of the member of staff receiving the disclosure
- the main points shared by the pupil, using the pupil's own words where possible
- any actions taken
- agreed next steps.

All records must be stored securely and managed in line with the school's safeguarding and record-keeping procedures.

8. Warning Signs and Recommended Management

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate that a pupil is experiencing emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and communicated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Possible warning signs may include:

- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, hopelessness or worthlessness
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- changes in eating or sleeping habits

- increased isolation from friends or family
- becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity, mood or behaviour
- lowering of academic achievement
- changes in clothing, for example wearing long sleeves in warm weather
- secretive behaviour
- avoiding PE or changing clothes secretly;
- lateness or absence from school;
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause;
- signs of anxiety, panic or distress;
- sudden changes in friendship groups;
- increased tearfulness, anger or emotional dysregulation.

Where there are concerns about self-harm, suicidal thoughts, suicidal intent or risk of harm, staff must report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A risk assessment and action plan may be required to manage the risk safely.

9. Realistic Expectations

Mental health issues can be ongoing and may affect a pupil's ability to access school, learning and wider school life. Staff should ensure that expectations are realistic and appropriate for the pupil's needs at that point in time.

Expectations should be led by what is appropriate for the specific pupil, rather than by what has worked for others. A flexible, individualised approach may be required.

Areas to consider include:

- academic achievement
- attendance and punctuality
- access to extra-curricular activities, including sport
- pace and duration of recovery
- ability to interact and engage within lessons
- relationships with peers and adults
- emotional regulation and readiness to learn.

10. Individual Care Plans

Where appropriate, an individual care plan may be created for pupils who are causing concern or who have an identified emotional wellbeing or mental health need.

This should be developed with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals where appropriate. The plan may include:

- details of the pupil's needs or condition
- special requirements or reasonable adjustments
- medication and any possible side effects
- signs that the pupil may be becoming distressed
- agreed strategies that may help
- emergency procedures and actions
- the role of school staff
- the role of parents/carers
- relevant external agency involvement
- review dates

11. Confidentiality

Staff should be honest with pupils about confidentiality. Pupils should be reassured that staff will listen and support them, but they must not be promised that information will be kept secret.

Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, pupils should be informed that information may need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or other relevant professionals in order to keep them safe. Staff should explain:

- who the information will be shared with
- what information will be shared
- why it needs to be shared.

However, where there is a safeguarding concern or risk of harm, information must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. Staff must not wait to gain pupil consent if doing so could place the pupil or another person at further risk.

Parents/carers will usually be involved where there are concerns about a pupil's emotional wellbeing or mental health. However, parents/carers should not be contacted before advice has been sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead if doing so may increase risk to the child or compromise safeguarding procedures.

12. Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is appropriate to inform parents/carers, staff should be sensitive and supportive in their approach. It can be upsetting for parents/carers to learn

that their child is experiencing emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties.

Where possible, parents/carers should be given clear information about:

- the concerns that have been identified
- what support is available in school
- what external support may be appropriate
- who they can contact in school with questions or concerns
- any agreed next steps.

The school may offer a follow-up meeting where appropriate. Records of meetings and actions agreed will be kept securely.

In order to support parents/carers, the school will:

- make this policy available on the school website;
- ensure parents/carers know who to contact if they have concerns;
- provide information about relevant sources of support where appropriate;
- keep parents/carers informed about relevant PSHE curriculum content;
- work in partnership with families to support pupils' wellbeing.

13. Supporting Peers

When a pupil is experiencing emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties, this may also affect their friends and peers. The school will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether peers need additional support.

Staff will consider:

- what information can and cannot be shared
- how peers can be supported appropriately
- what peers should avoid doing or saying
- warning signs that peers may also need support
- how pupils can access help from trusted adults
- healthy ways of coping with difficult emotions.

Any support offered to peers will be managed carefully and sensitively, while respecting confidentiality and safeguarding responsibilities.

14. Staff Training

All staff will receive regular training or guidance about recognising and responding to emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns as part of safeguarding and pastoral training.

Training may include:

- recognising early warning signs
- responding to disclosures
- understanding safeguarding links
- supporting pupils with emotional regulation
- trauma-informed approaches
- signposting pupils and families to appropriate support.

The Designated Mental Health Lead will access relevant training and updates. Additional CPD may be provided where a need is identified.

15. Staff Support

St Mary's Catholic Primary School recognises that supporting pupils with emotional wellbeing and mental health needs can be demanding. Staff may require support from senior leaders, line managers, the SENCO, the Mental Health Lead or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff are encouraged to speak to their line manager if they feel that work-related issues or the emotional demands of their role are affecting their wellbeing.

Support for staff may include:

- line management support
- supervision or reflective conversations where appropriate
- signposting to external support
- occupational health advice where needed
- staff wellbeing surveys
- wellbeing initiatives and CPD.

Staff may also access support through organisations such as:

- Education Support
- Anna Freud Centre / Mentally Healthy Schools
- NHS Every Mind Matters
- Mental Health First Aid England

16. Signposting

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

Whenever sources of support are shared, pupils and families should be helped to understand:

- what help is available
- who it is aimed at
- how to access it
- why it may be helpful
- what is likely to happen next.

Relevant sources of support may be shared through newsletters, the school website, displays, PSHE lessons, parent/carers communication and individual meetings.

17. Teaching about Mental Health

The knowledge, understanding and skills pupils need to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy are taught through the school's PSHE curriculum, including the statutory Health Education content on mental wellbeing.

Teaching about mental health is age-appropriate and supports pupils to:

- recognise and talk about different feelings
- understand that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life
- know where and how to seek help
- develop healthy coping strategies
- understand the importance of trusted adults and supportive relationships

- recognise the importance of sleep, physical activity, healthy eating and friendships
- understand how to keep themselves safe online and offline.

The specific content of lessons is adapted to meet the needs of each cohort, while ensuring that statutory requirements are met.

18. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance, safeguarding procedures or local support pathways.

The effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:

- feedback from staff, pupils and parents/carers
- review by senior leaders and governors
- monitoring of pastoral and safeguarding procedures
- review of staff training needs
- reflection on pupil voice and wellbeing provision.