

St Peter's R.C. Primary School

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy



Policy	Mental Health & Wellbeing
Date	June 2025
Date of review	June 2026
Signed Chair of Governors	To be ratified by Governors on 7/07/2025
Signed Headteacher	<i>C Scott</i>

Mission Statement

We, the family of St Peter's, united by our faith in God, love, learn and grow together.

Policy Statement

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community.

At St Peter's we define Mental Health and Resilience as:

Individuals are mentally healthy when they have the ability to:

- develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- use and enjoy solitude
- are aware of others and empathise with them
- experience happiness and can play and learn
- develop a sense of right and wrong
- resolve (face) problems and setbacks and learn from them.
- develop a sense of self and identity

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from the disappointments and difficulties we all experience. It is the ability to build protective factors in our lives which promote and protect our emotional wellbeing when faced with challenges and unexpected changes.

At St Peter's Primary School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all pupils, families, members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows all voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for the whole school community. We pursue this aim using workplace practices, universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. 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 mental health policy and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for staff and pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

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

It should be read in conjunction with our:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (where the mental health of a pupil overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue)
- Special Needs Policy (where a pupil has an identified special educational need)

Aim of the Policy

At St Peter's we aim to create an environment that promotes positive mental health by:

- Increasing understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Providing opportunities for staff to look after their mental wellbeing
- Providing support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Providing support to pupils suffering from mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers
- Remove the stigma of mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils and each other.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support; both for themselves and pupils; who may have mental health issues.
- Develop resilience amongst pupils and raise awareness of resilience building techniques, creating a safe and nurturing environment for all.
- Raise awareness amongst our community of mental health issues and encourage staff to disclose any mental health issues in a supportive environment.
- Encourage a mental health friendly environment where everyone is aware of the signs and symptoms of mental ill health and can effectively sign post pupils and families.

Lead Members of Staff

Staff with a specific remit includes:

- Designated safeguarding lead (DSL), Mrs F Sapiano
- Wellbeing Lead, Mrs F Sapiano
- Mental Health Lead, Mrs F Sapiano/ Mrs C Casey
- Head Teacher, Mrs C Scott
- SENCO, Mrs F Sapiano
- PSHE Lead, Mrs F Sapiano
- Deputy Head, Ms R Anthony
- Welfare officer, Ms S Doe

Responsibility

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the DSL 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 Safeguarding team. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the School Nurse and contacting the emergency services if necessary. This procedure would be the same with any mental health emergency which could include; serious self – harm, suicidal ideation, plan and intent of suicidal activity.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by DSL

All school staff are encouraged to:

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required
- Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing St Peter's school.
- Support fellow staff in their awareness of this policy
- Support and contribute to St Peter's aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all staff.

All school staff have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health
- Take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being

Managers and Senior Leadership have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that all school staff are made aware of this policy
- Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals
- Manage the implementation and review of this policy
- Champion good management practices and the establishment of a work ethos within St Peter's which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables staff to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements at both a school-wide and departmental level.
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to the school's Occupational Health advisers where appropriate.
- Collate management information which will enable the school to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as:
 - Sickness absence data
 - Staff turnover, exit interviews
 - Number of self-referrals to the counsellor services
 - Number of referrals to Occupational Health support
 - Numbers of grievance and harassment cases
- Seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of the School's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.

Mental health problems in children

Some children experience a range of emotional and behavioural problems that are outside the normal range for their age or gender. These children could be described as experiencing mental health problems or disorders.

Mental health professionals have defined these as:

- emotional disorders, e.g. phobias, anxiety states and depression;
- conduct disorders, e.g. stealing, defiance, fire-setting, aggression and anti- social behaviour;
- hyperkinetic disorders e.g. disturbance of activity and attention;
- developmental disorders e.g. delay in acquiring certain skills such as speech, social ability or bladder control, primarily affecting children with autism and those with pervasive developmental disorders;
- attachment disorders, e.g. children who are markedly distressed or socially impaired as a result of an extremely abnormal pattern of attachment to parents or major care givers;
- other mental health problems including eating disorders, habit disorders, post-traumatic stress syndromes; sleep disorders; and psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and manic-depressive disorder.

Many of these problems will be experienced as mild and transitory challenges for the child and their family, whereas others will have serious and longer lasting effects. When a problem is particularly severe or persistent over time, or when a number of these difficulties are experienced at the same time, children are often described as having mental health disorders.

Managing Pupil 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, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than of exploring 'Why?', staff should avoid asking any leading questions.

All disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS. This information should be shared with the DSL, who will store the record appropriately and offer advice about the next step.

Warning Signs and Recommended Management

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 communicated to the Safeguarding team.

Possible warning signs to look out for in pupils/students or their immediate family.

Important Note

The first two points below present a higher degree of risk and will therefore need an urgent risk assessment and response.

- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide, this is a risk and will need a separate risk assessment and action plan to manage the risk accordingly.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope. This is a risk and will need a separate risk assessment and action plan to manage the risk safely

- 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 or mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Abusing drugs or alcohol in the family
- Changes in clothing e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE/Games or getting changed secretly
- Lateness or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Increase in lateness or absenteeism

Realistic Expectations

Mental health issues can be ongoing for a long time. They can be highly impactful on a pupil's ability to access school. We need to ensure that all members of staff are realistic in their expectations of affected pupils, to ensure those pupils are not placed under undue stress which may exacerbate their mental health issues.

Expectations should always be led by what is appropriate for a specific pupil at a specific point in their recovery journey rather than by what has worked well for others, so some degree of flexibility is essential.

Expectations to consider addressing include:

- Academic achievement
- Access to extra-curricular activities including sport
- Duration and pace of recovery
- Ability to interact and engage within lessons

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents/carers and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements or precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Emergency procedures /Actions who will do what and when
- The role the school can play

Confidentiality

We should be honest with pupils and families about confidentiality. We should let them know this and discuss with them that it might be necessary to pass the information on:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without letting them know. Ideally, we should receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another staff member and/or a parent/carer. This would always include pupils up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

If acting to safeguard a pupil against harm or look out for their welfare it is imperative to share any information you deem important.

In many cases, the parent/carers should be informed, and pupils may choose to tell their parent/carers themselves. We should always give pupils the option of the school informing the parent/carers for them or with them. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parent/carers should not be informed, but the DSL must be notified immediately.

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 work closely with the school nurse in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of our pupils. For example, the school nurse runs a drop-in session for parents.

We work closely with other professionals such as:

- Educational Psychologist
- Emotional Health Service
- Inclusion support service
- Thrive support workers

- Young carers
- Family Navigators
- Early Help Service

In addition, we offer the following provision provided by St Peter's staff:

- ELSA Mentoring
- Individual Mentoring
- Use of restorative approach
- Zones of Regulation

When thresholds are met referrals may be made to:

- Emotional Health Service
- Children's services
- CAMHS
- Young Carers
- School nurse

In some cases, a multi professional meeting will be arranged to discuss the case further.

Some children will neither meet thresholds nor be able to access individual therapies. As a school we attempt to offer one to one pastoral support for these pupils. This may be delivered by an individual behaviour plan.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parent/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. It can be shocking and upsetting for parent/carers to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset. We should therefore give the parent/carers time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information as parents/carers will often find it hard to take in much of the news that we are sharing. We should always provide clear means of how contact can be made with the school regarding further questions and the school should consider booking in a follow up meeting right away as parents/carers may have many questions as they process the information. We should keep a record on each meeting in the child's confidential record. We will provide local emergency mental health crisis service contact telephone numbers for parents as required.

In order to support all parent/carers of children at St Peter's school, we will:

- Update our school resources to provide information about common mental health issues
- Ensure all parent/carers know who to talk to if they have any concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parent/carers
- Keep parent/carers informed about the topics their children are learning about in PSHE

Parents and carers are valued and welcomed into school. We communicate regularly, consult and engage with parents/carers through newsletters, assemblies, parent meetings etc.

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional

health and wellbeing. We work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Meeting all EYFS parents in person to discuss their family circumstances
- Encouraging parents into school for events such as coffee mornings, Summer Fayre and parent workshops
- Ensuring Senior Leadership Team (SLT) attendance at all events
- Offering 1:1 SENDCO Parent meetings
- Offering parents the opportunity to meet Educational Psychologist, School Nurse or Speech and Language Therapist
- Ensuring all parents are aware of how to promote social and emotional wellbeing and prevent 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 and academic skills, for example 'How to read with your child' morning or phonics workshop.
- 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. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times
- Providing drop-in sessions with the school nurse
- Providing an open-door policy with access to the Pupil and Wellbeing officer
- Working hard to develop a close relationship with parents and carers which allow us to offer support

Supporting Peers

As a Catholic school we use our school values to promote kindness and support for each other. This is recognised by appointing a pupil Wellbeing Champion to represent each class. This encourages the support of peers and also promotes pupil voice to improve mental health and wellbeing.

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends, 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 might need additional support. It is important to consider:

- What friends should and should not be told
- How friends can support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- How friends can access further support for themselves from the school
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be facing

Staff Training

All staff will receive regular training or guidance about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of the regular child protection training.

Allocated school staff will attend the Mental Health Lead training and network meetings. In order to work closely with the young people to identify and signpost appropriate support and intervention.

The Designated Mental Health Lead in the school has undertaken training provided by the DFE.

For those staff members who require more in-depth knowledge additional CPD will be suggested and provided. Where the need to provide some becomes apparent, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning and understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group, or whole school CPD should be discussed with the school Mental Health Lead.

Staff Support

School staff may receive additional support from their line manager to develop effective knowledge, skills and understanding in order to support the child or young person that may require a higher level of support for their emotional and mental health needs. Additional support may be received from the SENCO or the allocated staff member for mental health within the school.

It is widely accepted that adversity and trauma does not only affect the child or young person but the people that are supporting them. It is important we recognise the negative impact that of hearing of people's experiences of adversity and trauma can have on our own mental, physical and emotional health. Feeling stressed, overwhelmed or tired from work once in a while is understandable. If you notice this happening regularly it is important to communicate this with your line manager. Protecting our own mental health ensures the children and young people that we work with have the very best care and support from us.

We recognise that a healthy happy workforce is required to deliver the best education for all our pupils. Our expectation is that staff have a responsibility to support their own mental health by accessing appropriate support, looking after their own mental health and to develop resilience and coping strategies. As a school we are committed to encouraging staff to develop a good work life balance and lead healthy working lives.

We offer the following to support our staff's positive mental health:

- A dedicated staff room
- We organise a number of social events throughout the year for staff to participate in, including the termly wellbeing breakfast
- SLT have an open-door policy for all staff.
- SLT proactively support staff who are experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Forward planning and communication about events and deadlines
- Termly wellbeing weeks, no extras or meetings and staff encouraged to go home earlier
- Take staff mental wellbeing into consideration when deploying staff to various roles around school.

- Reasonable adjustments for staff with recognised mental health issues.
- Sign post staff to appropriate support mechanisms such as priest, charities, GP, and talking therapies.
- Wellbeing is regular item on agenda for meetings, where individuals can air their views and feel supported.
- Celebrate staff special occasions.
- Recognise individual staff strengths through initiatives such as positive mentions in newsletters; individual and public thanks and praise; feedback from observations; learning walks
- Senior mental health Lead – this is a member of the SLT with an open-door policy who is a point of contact for all staff.
- Help staff to set professional boundaries for themselves such as not sharing their telephone numbers; not texting parents with personal phones and not having their phones out during Curriculum time.
- No expectation to be at work outside of contracted/directed hours.

We will carry out regular surveys with our staff to find out whether they feel supported around their wellbeing and to help identify the gaps in our provision. This will help to ensure ongoing improvements in this area.

Support for our staff can be accessed via the following:

- SAS- [Counselling service](#)
- Education Support Partnership - <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk>
- Anna Freud- <https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/self-care-toolkit/>
- NHS- <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>
- Every mind matters- <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/every-mind-matters-self-care-tool>
- Mental Health first aid- <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/address-your-stress/stress-container-resource-download.pdf>

Signposting

We will ensure that the school community are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in the wellbeing section of our school website [here](#).

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as staff rooms, library, notice boards and lavatories and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. There are a number of services that are available to the children with different levels of support according to the individual young person's need. Details of agencies, charities and funded organisations can be found on the school website. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils seeking help 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

Teaching about Mental Health

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 the PSHE curriculum which includes 'Mental Wellbeing' within statutory Health education.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Teaching and learning

For all pupils with mental health needs reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure full access to the curriculum. These may include:

- Breaks from class when required;
- Provision of stress relief toys;
- Work broken into small chunks;
- Individual behaviour plans

In addition we will ensure that

- Opportunities to experience challenges in the outdoor environment are taken
- Pupils are encouraged to act as role models within the school environment
- A commitment to follow a healthy lifestyle is developed through participation in varied, relevant, realistic and enjoyable activities.

Policy Review

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

Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:

- feedback from staff, pupils and parents
- review of the policy by SLT and governors to determine if objectives have been met and to identify barriers and enablers to ongoing policy implementation.