

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

# Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



“Doing our best for God”

**Signed:** Karen Pearson (Assistant Headteacher)

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**Review date:** February 2027

"What's your best discovery?" asked the mole.



"That I'm enough as I am," said the boy.

## **Policy Statement**

At St Bernadette's, 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.

## **Scope**

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

## **Policy Aims**

As a school we want to ensure that we:

- Encouraging a sense of belonging through our Gospel Values and the statement of 'Doing Our Best for God'
- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students including
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student 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 our children, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead - Mrs Satterthwaite
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead/Mental Health Lead – Mrs Pearson
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead/RSE & PSHE Lead – Miss Greenhalgh
- SENDCo – Mrs Dowling

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the DSL or SENDCo 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 designated safeguarding leads. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the SENDCo.

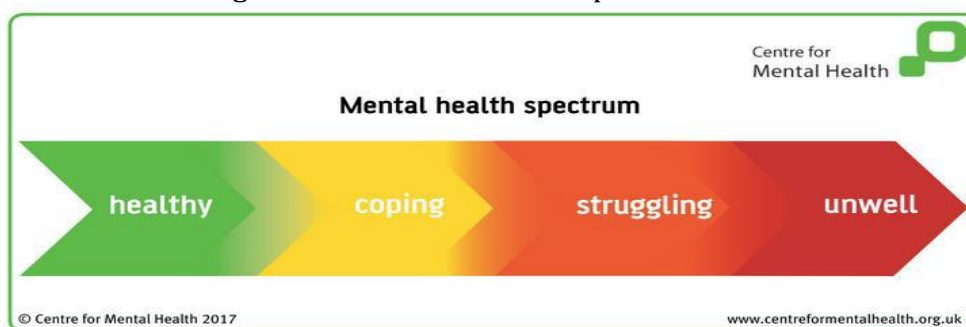
## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and other events that may have an impact on pupils

The balance between the risk and protective factors set out above is most likely to be disrupted when difficult events happen in pupils' lives. These include:

- **loss or separation** – resulting from death, parental separation, divorce, hospitalisation, loss of friendships (especially in adolescence), family conflict or breakdown that results in the child having to live elsewhere, being taken into care or adopted, deployment of parents in armed forces families;
- **life changes** – such as the birth of a sibling, moving house or changing schools or during transition from primary to secondary school, or secondary school to sixth form;
- **traumatic experiences** such as abuse, neglect, domestic violence, bullying, violence, accidents or injuries
- **other traumatic incidents** such as a natural disaster or terrorist attack. Some groups could be susceptible to such incidents, even if not directly affected. For example, schools should ensure they are aware of armed forces families, who may have parents who are deployed in areas of terrorist activity and are surrounded by the issues in the media

It is important that we provide support to pupils at such times, including those who are not presenting any obvious issues. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later, and can also prevent further problems (including mental health problems) arising.

At St Bernadette's we understand that mental health is influenced by different factors overtime and that children may be at different stages on the Mental Health Spectrum over their school career.



<https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/mental-health-among-children-and-young-people>

## **Warning Signs**

Staff may 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 will record these on our reporting system where they will be viewed by the Safeguarding Lead.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Aggressive behaviour towards other children/adults
- 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
- Skipping 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

## **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Plan (SEMH)**

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 and relevant health professionals.

This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition.
- Special requirements and precautions.
- Medication and any side effects.
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency.
- The role the school can play.

## **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum and our RSE curriculum.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

<https://pshe-association.org.uk/guidance/ks1-4/mental-health-guidance>

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote children's wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of children's own emotions as well as those of other people.

Staff deliver a series of linked lessons which cover the following areas:

## *Key Stage 1*

Lesson 1: We all have feelings

Lesson 2: Good and not so good feelings

Lesson 3: Big Feelings

Lesson 4: Change and loss

## *Lower Key Stage 2*

Lesson 1: Everyday feelings

Lesson 2: Expressing feelings

Lesson 3: Change, loss and grief

Lesson 4: Managing feelings

## *Upper Key Stage 2*

Lesson 1: Mental health and keeping well

Lesson 2: Managing challenges and change

Lesson 3: Managing loss and bereavement

Lesson 4: Feelings and common anxieties when transitioning to secondary  
School

## **Ways to Support Children's Mental Wellbeing**

### **Outdoor Learning**

As part of our curriculum, children take part in Outdoor Learning which can boost confidence, social skills, communication, motivation and physical skills and experiencing risk and challenge. They work with other children cooperatively and develop their teamwork skills. Outdoor Learning provides opportunities to develop their gardening skills and all classes have responsibility for one of the beds within the garden to grow fruit, vegetables or wildlife flower garden by planting seeds and bulbs watering them and watching their plants grow. They develop an understanding of the environment, the need for planting and looking after the habitats around the garden

### **Worry Boxes**

All classes in Key Stage 2 have a worry box or in Key Stage 1 a worry monster where children can place a written note about something that worries them (younger classes can write their name to show they have a worry). This could be about school, friendships or a worry from home. All worries are dealt with sympathetically by the class teacher and if necessary may include the Family Support Worker. Where there is a disclosure by the child, teachers will follow the procedures as outlined in our **Safeguarding Policy** for recording and reporting of any disclosure to ensure the safety of the child.

### **The Hive**

Currently, younger children who need extra support with their emotional and social needs have access to 'The Hive' which is situated in the library and provides a safe space for children to explore and be creative. Each lunchtime, Wellbeing Ambassadors set up activities such as drawing, board games and lego to play with. Their role is to support the children in working cooperatively with others and building relationships with the children. By the end of the session, children should be in a calmer space ready to work in the afternoon.

## **Buddies**

At the end of Year 5, all children are given a 'buddy' from the incoming new Reception class. They write a letter to their buddy to tell them all about themselves and life at St Bernadette's. When the children start Year 6, they have a Teddy Bear's Picnic with their new buddies and will take part in different activities throughout the year.

## **Therapy Dog**

Every week, Vincent Hamer visits the school with Bailey the therapy dog to listen to children read in Key Stage One and Key Stage 2. This helps support children with their mental health and also helps to build relationships with different adults within the school. Mr Hamer will also engage with the children during playtimes and join in with the children alongside Bailey.

## **Working with Parents**

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on the Wellbeing Page on our school website.
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support such as Early Help e.g. through the Family Support Worker
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- 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 through termly curriculum letters.

## **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:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Behaviour support
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Early Help

## **Staff**

Ensuring the wellbeing of all staff within the school is of paramount importance to the Governors and Senior Leaders. Staff have access to a Wellbeing board that displays services provided by through the school scheme and outside of school. There is access to medical services and wellbeing services including GPs should they be needed through Schools Advisory Service 'Staff Wellbeing Services' this can be accessed via an app or a telephone call.

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

- A staffroom where staff can unwind and eat lunch
- All teachers are able to take their PPA at home
- Provision of lunch on all INSETs and cake and biscuits on Parent Evenings

- SMT have an open door policy for all staff
- Reasonable adjustments for staff with recognised mental health difficulties
- SMT ongoing support for younger teachers at the start of their careers (ECTs)
- No expectation to be at work outside of contracted/directed hours.
- Governor's Day – an extra day for all staff to be taken when they require it (through discussion with the Headteacher).

### **Wellbeing Page**

The school website has a Wellbeing Page that provides further information as well as links to different sites to support parents and children.