St James' Lanehead Church of England Primary School

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Date of Policy:	October 2021
Person Responsible:	Mrs Dugdale
To be reviewed:	3 yearly
Review Date:	September 2024

St James` Lanehead C of E (VA) Primary School

Mission Statement

Our church school seeks to inspire each individual to flourish, grow and learn with Jesus at the heart of all we do.

Planted in the house of the Lord, they shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Psalm 92:13
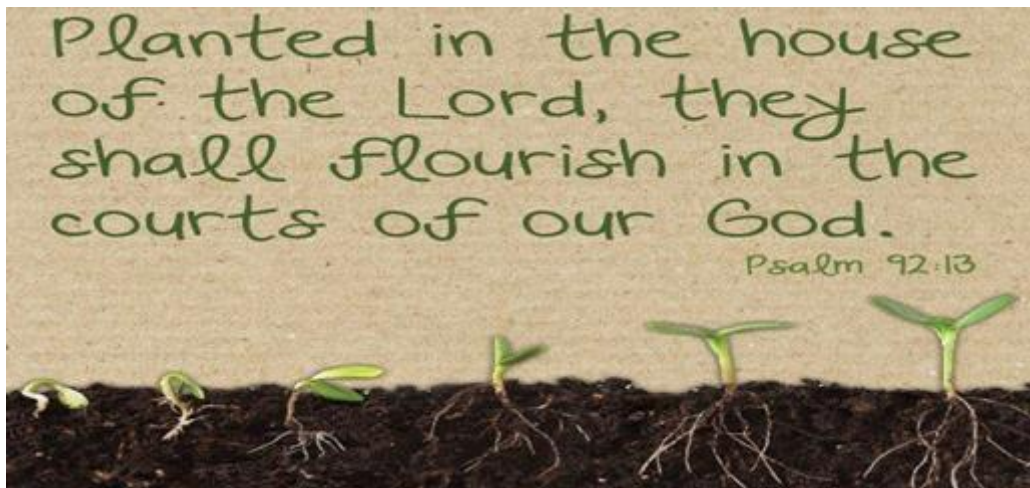
School Policy Statement

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 make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization).

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do our Mission/Vision Statement.

Our Church school seeks to inspire each individual to flourish, grow and learn with Jesus at the heart of all we do.

In addition we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

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 Medical Policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND Policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- **Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils'**
- **Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;**
- **Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing;**
- **Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues;**
- **Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers.**

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Designated Senior Leader
- Online Safety Lead
- Deputy Senior Leaders
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead
- Lead First Aider
- Pastoral Lead
- PSHE Leader

- Safeguarding Governor
- Wellbeing and Spirituality Governor

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Designated Senior Leaders 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.

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 an outside agency is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the school SENDCO and Pastoral Leader.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives 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 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 & Wellbeing

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 our developmental PSHE curriculum.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it will be discussed with the Lead Professional.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil help-seeking 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?

Warning Signs

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 staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with DSLs, SENDCO and Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Leads.

Possible warning signs 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;
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretively;
- Lateness to or absence from school;
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause;
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

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

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded using the CPOMS system and kept on the pupil data file. This written record should include:

- Date;
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made;
- Main points from the conversation;
- Agreed next steps.

This information should be shared with the Mental Health Lead, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the DSL/Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead/Supervisor this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should

explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents/carers should be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents/carers themselves. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents/carers for them or with them.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/carers we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face or virtual? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents/carers, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/carers to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent/carer time to reflect. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents/carers can also be helpful too e.g. parent/carers helplines and forums. We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents/carers often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with an agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record. Parents/carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents/carers we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website. Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.
- Make our Mental Health Policy easily accessible to parents/carers.
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings.
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, 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 may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents/carers 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 (e.g. signs of relapse).

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 in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd 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.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the DSL and CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.