



# Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

“What does the Lord ask of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

(Micah 6:8)



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## Statement of Intent

*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. All members of the school community are committed to upholding the St Michael's Church of England Christian values:

- to show love, care and kindness to all in our community
- to value what we have and to share with others
- to enable everyone to achieve their full potential

In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using 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.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Head Teacher

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Governors

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Scope

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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

## 2. Lead Members of Staff

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

**Carolyn Hill/Sarah Beardsmore** - Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer

**Pastoral team** - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead

**Kate Wilcox** - Lead First Aider

**Kerry Whitehouse** - Pastoral Lead

**Christina Handy-Rivett** - CPD Lead

**Peter Stafford** - Head of PSHE

- 2.2 Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should complete a record of concern on My Concern. If there is a fear that the pupil is in danger of immediate harm, the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL, using the red card system. If the pupil presents a medical emergency, the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.
- 2.3 Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the pastoral team. The referral will be completed using the eCAF system.

## 3. Individual Care Plans

- 3.1 It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. The care plan is provided by CAMHS and outlines the necessary strategies and interventions required. 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

## **4. Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching 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.
- 4.3 We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance<sup>1</sup> to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner that helps rather than harms.

## **5. Signposting**

- 5.1 We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. The support that is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined on the school website.
- 5.2 We will display relevant sources of support on the pastoral notice board 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

## **6. Warning Signs**

- 6.1 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 by completing a record of concern on My Concern.
- 6.2 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

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing URL= <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and> (accessed 02.02.2018)

- 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

## **7. Managing disclosures**

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 All staff receive training on an annual basis regarding how to deal with disclosures. This is covered within the whole school safeguarding training, which takes place on an annual basis.
- 7.3 All disclosures should be recorded in writing on My Concern and held on the pupil's confidential 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

## **8. Confidentiality**

- 8.1 We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:
- who we are going to talk to
  - what we are going to tell them
  - why we need to tell them
- 8.2 We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, although there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent, particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.
- 8.3 Parents should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.
- 8.4 If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the DSL's, Carolyn Hill or Sarah Beardsmore, must be informed immediately.

## **9. Working with Parents**

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

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

9.2 It can be shocking and upsetting for parents 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 time to reflect.

9.3 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 are sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

9.4 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 often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

## 10. Working with All Parents

10.1 Parents 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 we will:

- highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- ensure that all parents 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
- share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

## 11. Supporting Peers

11.1 When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support each other but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends will 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 in group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- what is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- how friends can best support each other
- things friends should avoid doing/saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse)

11.2 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

## **12. Training**

- 12.1 As a minimum, all staff will receive safeguarding training, enabling them to report concerns on students with any issues, including mental health.
- 12.2 The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.<sup>2</sup>
- 12.3 Training opportunities for staff that 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 pupils.
- 12.4 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 Carolyn Hill or Sarah Beardsmore, our CPD Coordinators, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

## **13. Policy Review**

- 13.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in December 2022.
- 13.2 Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Carolyn Hill or Sarah Beardsmore.
- 13.3 This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) [accessed 02/02/18].