

St Clare's Catholic Primary School



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Whole School Approach Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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St Clare's vision and mission for mental health

At St Clare's, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. 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 important for everyone and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
 - help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
 - help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
 - encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

Vision for mental health

Our vision is based upon developing each member of our school community so everyone reaches their full potential in the light of Christ's teachings and the values in the Gospels. Together as a school community, we ensure that wellbeing, mental health and wellness are a key priority in reaching our full potential as God intended.

Together as a community we *walk in the light of Christ*.

Core Values

St Clare's Catholic Primary and its community leads by example by treating everyone as if they are Jesus. We follow in Jesus' footsteps by using the gifts that were given to us by God. We believe that all children are entitled to develop to their fullest potential academically, socially and emotionally, enabling each child to grow in confidence and be able to fully participate in our school and the wider community. We recognise that there are many factors affecting achievement, including ability and emotional state, that can affect children's learning. Staff health and wellbeing is also a priority; it is essential that we help protect and promote the emotional health and wellbeing of each and every member of the school community. At St. Clare's we understand the need for a nurturing, calm and safe environment. We use the Fruits of the Holy Spirit to guide us in spreading the gospel message each day and underpin our school ethos.

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining St Clare’s Catholic Primary School’s whole school approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies including work life balance and SEND policy.

3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- 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.

4.0 Key staff members and accountability framework

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific accountability in promoting mental health and wellbeing:

- Whole School Approach Strategic- Mrs Eddies (HT) Miss Callaghan (DHT) Mrs Voyzey (SENDCO) and Mrs Robson.
 - Teaching Assistant mental health lead/ELSA trained-Mrs Durant and Mrs Guy
- Designated Mental Health Lead- Mrs Voyzey
 - Rainbows lead-Mrs Landreth
- Designated Safeguarding Leads-Mrs Eddies, Miss Callaghan, Mrs Voyzey and Mrs Robson.
 - Mr Stephen Brennan (Mental health governor/parent)
 - Mental health pupil voice group-Headstarters
- SENDCO -Mrs Voyzey (referral process)
- PSHE Coordinators-Mrs Voyzey

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of students, in the first instance they should follow the mental health pathway by speaking to the mental health leads in the first instance. Please refer to the school's mental health pathway (Appendix 1)

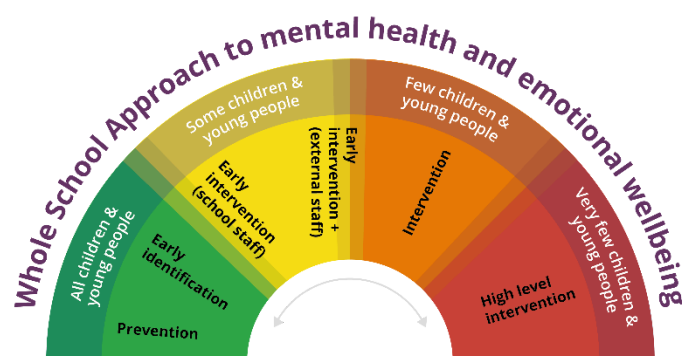
If there is a concern that the student is at high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. (See safeguarding procedures)

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

5.0 Levels of Need

Levels of need are used to help education providers and services to determine the type of support that might be needed for children/young people. There are 4 levels:

(See mental health pathway)



Green = Prevention and early identification. This level is for all children and young people and represents the basic level of mental health awareness and support strategies that all children and young people need for positive emotional wellbeing.

Yellow = Early Intervention. At this level of need children/young people will be showing early signs of distress that may be the start of an emerging mental health issue. Short-term interventions that build coping strategies are given to prevent these issues from developing – small changes to prevent bigger challenges.

Orange = Intervention. At this level children and young people will need more specific support as their mental health problems will be more developed and significantly impact their day-to-day life. There may also be other complexities such as trauma or neurodevelopmental conditions. Interventions are chosen to suit the needs of each child/young person and will vary in modality, and intensity.

Red = High Level Intervention. At this level children and young people will need high-level support for mental health conditions that require support from CAMHS. Children may be at crisis point, require medication, or several different types of specialist support.

5.1 Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation (orange/red level), it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals. Working alongside the mental health leads and the school's SENDCO will determine whether the child needs to receive SEND support.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- For pupils who self-harm or have had suicidal ideation it is helpful to draw up a safety plan with them. An example of this can be found within the Serious suicide awareness training.
- The role of the school and specific staff.

6.0 Mental Health Promotion

Mental Health is everyone's business in our school, and we promote an environment that fosters inclusion, diversity and respect.

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 (Jigsaw) and our peer mentoring programme (Headstarters)

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://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing> Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges. **See Section 14 for Supporting Peers**

7.0 Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (parent notice boards, staffroom mental health display) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites, Twitter), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

- What help is available
- How to access it
- Who it is aimed at
- Why should they access it

- What is likely to happen

8.0 Our School Mental Health Pathway

The school's mental health pathway (Appendix 1) maps the support available to children across all levels of need with a graduated support.

School Based Support:

- Weekly PSHE lessons using Jigsaw.
- Worry boxes in each class.
- Opportunities in class to openly share worries.
- Daily opportunities for collective worship to pray.
- Chill out and relaxing spaces (chapel, library, sensory rooms and bean bags)
- ELSA-trained teaching Assistants in emotional literacy support
- Headstarters (Peer on peer support for worries in school)
- Bungalow Project (one on one counselling service with play/art therapist)
- Rainbows-programme lead by fully trained staff to support children with grief and loss.
- Access to staff that are trained in a variety of mental health issues.

Outside Agency Local Support:

St Clare's staff access support from CAMHS, Adoption Tees Valley, Bungalow Project, Headstart and MIND in order to give our staff and families the best offer to specialist support

9.0 Recognising signs and symptoms of mental distress

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 observing any of these warning signs should alert any member of SLT. Each staff meeting is an opportunity to discuss any concerns in a shared space. Any mental health concerns relating to SEND children should be discussed directly with Mrs Voyzey who is the SENDCO. Teaching Assistants and lunchtime supervisors should always discuss their concerns firstly with their class teacher or team leader.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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 secretly
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

10.0 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 school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with CAMHS, SEND services and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;

- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool, children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers. Agree an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, According to the child's needs;
- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it; and
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

Our school is ACE aware and embraces trauma-informed practice.

Our SENDCO is highly trained in trauma -informed practice.

11.0 Managing disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on CPOMS inline with the school's safeguarding policies and discussed with the school's designated safeguarding leads including:

- Nature of the disclosure & main points of the concern/s
- Agreed next steps will be supported by the class teacher/key stage leader or DSL's.

This information will be shared with all relevant staff through CPOMS or in suitable confidential staff meetings or SLT meetings.

12.0 Confidentiality

When a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to a class teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead or CPOMS then they might choose to tell the child that they are going to seek further support for them.

- Who we are going to tell
- Why we need to tell them
- What we are going to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the student first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a DSL this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

Parents must always be informed unless the DSL deems it could put the child in danger and social services advise against this action, but students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

13.0 Parents/carers

13.1 Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?

We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.

Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.

Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the pupil's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate and logged on CPOMS.

13.2 Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters and Twitter);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners; and
- 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 for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

14.0 Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student who is suffering and their parents 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

15.0 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 and safeguarding training to enable them to keep students safe. Across the year, all staff will be involved in mental health training for their own mental health needs and to help support staff in identifying the signs and symbols of mental health concerns.

Our designated Wellbeing Award strategic leads and mental health operational leads will attend termly mental health network meetings.

The MindEd learning portal, Anna Freud website, National College and SEND training also 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 developing situations with one or more students. (For example training an extra teaching Assistant with ELSA)

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host extra 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 mental health leads who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

16.0 Staff wellbeing

At St Clare's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that our staff are our most important resource and, as such, they are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, purposeful learning community.

We recognise that there is a direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and ethos of a school are determined by the extent to which staff work towards a shared vision. We believe that it is essential that all staff feel part of a valued team, have the opportunity to express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance.

In light of this, we will provide staff with:

- Dedicated PPA time within the school week – where possible, most PPA to be taken on a Friday afternoon so that staff can be together and work across phases if needed.
- Built in leadership every other week alongside Key Stage meetings.
- Additional non-contact time for staff with other additional responsibilities e.g. SENDCO/DHT.
- A leadership and development timetable which details the planned programme of CPD dedicated staff meetings – this will include dedicated staff meetings linked to emotional wellbeing and mental health
- A commitment to a feedback policy that replaces traditional marking and moves towards live marking.

- Extra opportunities out of class at the end of each term to complete end of term assessments.
- A staff room environment that is relaxing and a comfortable space to work
- An open door policy meaning that the Senior Leadership Team are available when staff are in need of speaking to someone about an issue of concern
- A fully committed and supportive governing body
- A commitment to not sending emails after 5pm each day and closing the school at 5pm so no staff members are able to work late.
- A commitment to keeping staff meetings short and only to every other week as a maximum.
- All staff have a Guardian Angel that supports and looks after you.
- Staff can confidentially access Quell, a mental health website for school staff. This will give them direct access to trained mental health support workers.

Our performance management process will allow for mutual communication about personal wellbeing and mental health. During every stage of performance management, staff are asked mental health questions.

CPD

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health difficulties as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Staff are also expected to complete the introductory 'Team Mental Health' module online www.teammentalhealth.co.uk This is CPD UK accredited learning which provides a basic introduction to the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

We will also utilise the following training services:

- CAMHS workforce – Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust
- Teeswide Safeguarding (online) <https://tsab.virtual-college.co.uk/>
- LSCB Face to Face training
- Online education provided by Mind Ed – www.minded.org.uk
- [Bungalow Project training](#)

The Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Change team will share relevant information with all staff – including updates, news and training. They will keep abreast of training opportunities and ensure that staff access the training that is most pertinent to their role. Information on the staff mental health board will be updated regularly.

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 appropriate.

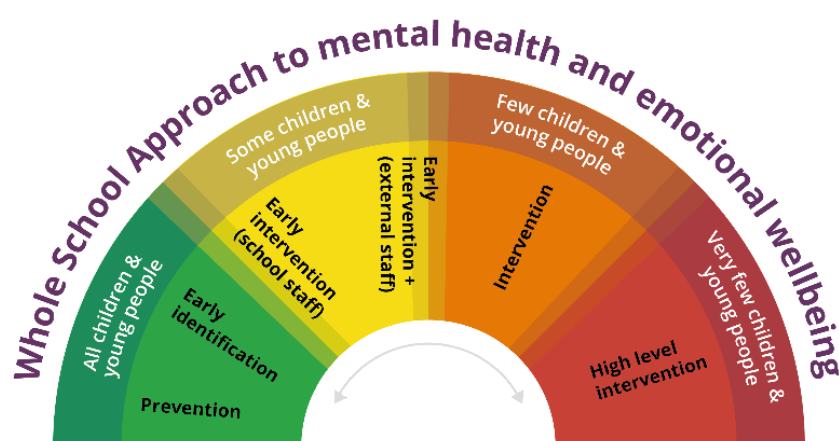
If staff have any questions about teaching a lesson about emotional wellbeing and mental health, they are first encouraged to discuss this with their colleagues, member of the Senior Leadership Tea or the PSHE lead.. They can also contact the PSHE Association www.pshe-association.org.uk

17.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is **September 2025**. In between reviews, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the mental health lead.

Any personnel changes will be edited accordingly.

Appendix 1-Pathway of support for children with mental health concerns



Early Intervention and Prevention (class based) Log concerns on CPOMS to build a picture. Class based support by TA/Teacher.

- Weekly Jigsaw sessions
- Open discussions in class with shared issues/worries
- One to one's with class teacher or TA
- Working closely with parents on a weekly basis
- Worry boxes
- Chill out areas
- Changes in lunchtimes/palytimes where needed
- Collective worship

- Regular discussions with parents

Early Intervention (School specialist support)

Class teacher to discuss concerns with Mrs Voyzey or our mental health team if early intervention in class is not impacting. Mrs Voyzey will decide alongside the class teacher, the next course of action. The mental health leads might feel that the concerns could be dealt with in class or place them on a waiting list for mental health support then is separate to what they are receiving in class. The class teacher will need to ensure that the concerns are also shared with the parents.

- Rainbows (Grief and loss) Sunbeams/Rainbows/Beyond the Rainbows
- ELSA

Intervention:(external)

For a child to get to this point, a class teacher would have liaised with the mental health leads or SENDCO and built up evidence in CPOMS. A referral will be filled in by the class teacher if approved for external support.

- Bungalow Project
- MIND

High level intervention:(external) All CAMHS referrals will need to go through Mrs Voyzey

- CAMHS

Appendix 2

Risk and protective factors that are believed to be associated with mental health outcomes - from the DfE document *'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools'* November 2018

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic influences • Learning disabilities • Specific developmental delay • Communication difficulties • Difficult temperament • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy/outgoing temperament as an infant • Good social/emotional skills • Positive coping style • Optimistic outlook on life • Good attachment to parents/carers • Humour • Experiences of success/achievement • Faith/spirituality • Capacity to reflect

<p>In the family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt parental conflict (including domestic violence) • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile/rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's needs • Physical, sexual or emotional abuse • Neglect • Parental psychiatric illness (including personality disorder) • Parental criminality or alcoholism • Death and loss – including loss of friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family harmony and stability • Supportive parenting • Strong family values • Consistency (firm boundaries and limits) • Affection • Support for education
<p>In the school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying including cyber bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in, or lack of, positive friendships • Deviant peer influences • Peer pressure • Peer on peer abuse • Poor pupil:teacher/staff relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies for behaviour, bullying and safeguarding School mission statement Prayer life of the school • 'Open door' policy for children to raise worries or concerns • Whole-school approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health • Positive school climate • Sense of belonging and connectedness between family and school • Opportunity for participation in a range of activities • Academic achievement • Positive relationships with peers • Positive peer influences
<p>In the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Exploitation incl. by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation • Other significant life events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in community networks • Access to support services • Good housing • Economic security • Strong cultural identity and pride

Last updated :	September 2025
Written by Approved by:	Mrs Eddies Mrs Voyzey
Review Date:	September 2027