

# St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School



## Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Policy

Reviewed: February 2022

Next Review Date: February 2023

At St. Patrick's Primary School, we recognise that wellbeing is all about our holistic health, including the physical and emotional. When we have good levels of wellbeing, we feel that life is in balance and that we can generally cope well. We feel motivated and engaged, we are resilient and able to deal effectively with daily troubles, as well as 'bounce back' from life's challenges.

Good Mental Health helps children to:

- Learn and explore the world
- Feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions
- Form and maintain good relationships with others
- Cope with and manage change and uncertainty
- Develop and thrive

Building strong mental health early in life can help children build their self-esteem, learn to settle themselves and engage positively with their education. This, in turn, can lead to improved academic attainment, enhanced future employment opportunities and positive life choices.

At St. Patrick's Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil community. We aim to help pupils to develop essential social and emotional skills. Bespoke teaching sessions, assemblies, curriculum opportunities and enrichment opportunities will cultivate these skills and understand and manage thoughts, feelings and behaviour. We will pursue this aim using both 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. We recognise that in an average UK classroom, three children may be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly, by mental ill health.

This policy 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 pupil has an identified special educational need or medical need.

**This Policy Aims to:**

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

### **Lead Members of Staff**

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

Theresa Ryan – Mental Health and Well Being - promoting Mental Health and Well being Lead

Kate Horsman – PSHE Lead - developing a bespoke PSHE curriculum

James Conwell – Head of School, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mark Ryan – Headteacher, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Kevin O'Donnell – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Susanne Hobson - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Lisa Kennedy - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Rachael Newby - SENDCo

### **What we want our school to offer:**

#### ***a mentally healthy environment where children:***

- take a lead in promoting well-being
- have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging
- have opportunities to participate in decision-making
- have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- have opportunities to reflect
- have access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- have a right to be in an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for

- are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times

***a mentally healthy environment so it is a place where parents and carers:***

- are recognised for their significant contribution to children and young people's mental health
- are welcomed, included and work in partnership with schools and agencies
- are provided with opportunities where they can ask for help when needed
- are signposted to appropriate agencies for support
- are clear about their roles and expectations of their responsibilities in working in partnership with schools
- opinions are sought and valued and responded to
- strengths and difficulties are recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately

***a place where staff:***

- have dedicated wellbeing weeks for staff
- have their individual needs recognised and responded to in a holistic way - staff are given time to discuss any needs they have with their mentors or senior leaders
- have a range of strategies that support their mental health, e.g. a named person to speak to, signposting
- Making staff recognition and praise a part of your school's culture – setting aside regular time slots in meetings to do this
- Creating a sense of belonging to the school
- Encouraging staff to work collaboratively with colleagues to support each other in providing opportunities for reflective practice working across schools
- have recognition of their work-life balance - surveys and appraisals, open culture of support
- have the mental health and well-being of the whole staff reviewed regularly - surveys
- feel valued and have opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes - staff culture is positive and staff treated with dignity
- celebrate and recognise success - shout outs on Social Media
- are able to carry out roles and responsibilities effectively - CPD and support
- are provided with opportunities for CPD and support
- have their unique talents and skills recognised and opportunities are provided for development - staff meetings provide staff opportunities, leaders know their staff, work with staff so they feel they have a say
- Providing treats and provisions so staff feel valued, bringing in treats to thank staff

- can access proactive strategies and systems to support them at times of emotional needs in both the short term and the long term - professional support available and signposted

### **The support we offer:**

#### **Universal Support**

In school, we promote and celebrate the learning to learn values of being resilient, forming good relationships, risk-taking, being reflective, resourceful and respectful. All children take part in PSHE lessons. [Please see our Character Education as this underpins our mental health work.](#)

#### **Targeted Support**

For children that might, at times, need a little extra support, we can offer more specialised provision that might include play therapy and counselling, therapeutic work or working with external agencies such as CAMHS and Mindset.



The Bungalow Project works in partnership with the school if we feel therapy sessions or more bespoke support is needed.

School work with and refer to Daisy Chain to support children with a diagnosis of ASD and the mental health difficulties, which can develop alongside the condition. For further information go to [www.daisychainproject.co.uk](http://www.daisychainproject.co.uk)



We have an 'open door' policy and are keen to hear if you have concerns or worries about mental health and well-being. Where face to face meetings are not possible, we are happy to arrange a virtual meeting instead.

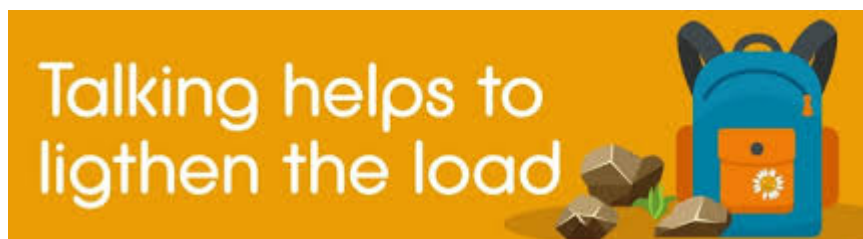
We have trained members of staff who support children who have experienced bereavement and loss. RAINBOWS BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GREAT BRITAIN is a well respected national charity having a proven, positive impact on the lives of children, young people and adults grieving a significant and often devastating loss in their lives.



We believe that healthy, happy children have the greatest potential to become active, engaged citizens who achieve success academically and socially. The school's drive to promote positive wellbeing and mental health for pupils, staff and the wider community is evident in all aspects of school life. Here are other specific ways that we support our pupils in growing healthy minds and resilience:

- All year groups have a curricular focus on PSHE – Personal, Social, Health Education with lessons during which children can talk about social issues at school and in the wider community.
- All staff are trained in supporting mental health and wellbeing of children and young people
- All classes receive weekly PE lessons with a specialist sports coach as physical health also improves mental health
- Well-being Ambassadors are nominated to lead pupil initiatives and raise awareness of well-being
- Wrap-around care for all children
- St Patrick's pupils' opinions and ideas are highly valued and our surveys show that the children are happy and feel secure and safe in school
- The School Council is an active forum through which children discuss issues and put forward ways to improve the school.
- The consistent use of our behaviour policy by all staff ensures that children feel that their thoughts and feelings are valued by staff.
- Mental Health week is used to remove the stigma around mental health and develop a growth mindset in our children

- Children are empowered to take responsibility and to be part of the process in matters of their behaviour. When things go wrong, it is important that children are able to talk about it openly so they are reflective and they feel supported.
- Prefects and Playground Buddies are roles of responsibility that the children take very seriously and give the children valuable life skills.
- Throughout the school day, staff plan for and seek out opportunities to ensure that children are in a positive frame of mind and enjoying their learning and social experiences at school.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities are provided to give all children a chance to share their gifts and talents. Assemblies, as well as a range of music and drama performances, workshops and trips offer opportunities for expression in many different ways.



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

Where a referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Head of School/SENDCo.

### **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Children at St. Patrick's**

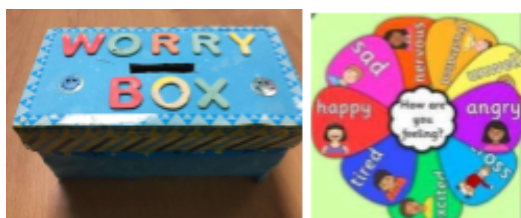


### **Teaching about Mental Health**

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 our developmental PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the curriculum and 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. Mental Health and wellbeing will also feature as part of assemblies. This is our planned curriculum approach. This works in partnership with our responsive curriculum approach where current affairs, world and local issues are explored using Picture News as a resource.

### **Wellbeing in Class**

Wellbeing is a priority in all classes at St. Patrick's. We ensure this is the case by having a Worry Box in every classroom, in which children can post a note if they are upset or worried about something but feel they cannot, or do not want to, approach an adult. In every classroom we also have time for reflections and time for well-being. Classes are safe places where children feel confident to speak about their feelings and thoughts.



### **Wellbeing Week**

In Autumn term and Summer term we hold a Wellbeing week in school. In February we host Children's Mental health Week in school. During this week the children are taught about mental health and Wellbeing, and take part in a range of activities to improve their mental health. The week focusing on promoting the 5 Ways to Wellbeing:





### Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what sources of support within school and in the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas, on the school website and through our social media channels.



### Warning Signs











School staff will be trained on recognising 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 to senior staff

#### 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

## Warning Signs

 Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks (e.g., crying regularly, feeling fatigued, feeling unmotivated).	 Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships.
 Trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so.	 Repeated use of drugs or alcohol.
 Out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors that can cause harm to self or others.	 Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits (e.g., waking up early and acting agitated).
 Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or fast breathing.	 Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still that can lead to failure in school.
 Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or gain.	 Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities like hanging out with friends or going to classes.

All disclosures and concerns will be recorded on CPOMS and should include:

- Date
- Full name of the pupil
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Actions to be taken

This information should be shared with a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will inform the Mental Health Lead, decide on the appropriate next steps and store the record. A triage meeting between DSLs will take place at least half termly to discuss active and new cases.

### Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we feel it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we would normally, if age-appropriate, discuss this with the pupil:

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

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the DSL, as 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 must always be informed and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents may not be informed depending on the individual case, but the DSL must be informed immediately.

### **Working with Parents**

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.
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's difficulties, 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. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them further information to read (e.g. helplines, forums etc.) as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. We should always provide a 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 record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

### **Working with All Parents**

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 help about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.

Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through information sessions.

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.

Provide workshops for discussion around themes suggested by parents.

## **Training**

As a minimum, 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 website for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host 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 Lead.

## **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Staff at St. Patrick's**

As school staff juggle a multitude of different tasks and demands, it is important that everyone is given the right emotional and practical support so that they can, in turn, support their pupils.

In addition to having a positive impact on colleagues and children, staff wellbeing can improve performance and job satisfaction, which can lead to reduced staff turnover. It can also help to reduce absence (both short and long term), increase productivity and promote staff engagement.

We hope that St. Patrick's Primary school's caring ethos and environment will have a major impact on the wellbeing of its staff and pupils. The leaders define that culture and vision of the school and make it clear what behaviours, values and beliefs underpin it. The leaders of the school work hard to build a culture of trust where staff feels valued, can be open about their health and wellbeing and know how to access support if they need it. Staff are signposted to external support available to them. Regular 'check in' meetings ensure there is a specified time for staff to discuss their responsibilities and well-being with members of the SLT and to share any issues they are having and their plans for the future which the school endeavours to support.

## **Role of all staff**

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

## **Role of Mental Health and Well Being Lead**

Lead pupil voice

Respond to pupil voice

Audit the provision in place - including reviewing roles

Review policies

Establish mechanisms to promote well being and good mental health

Establish meetings with Well-being Ambassadors

Organise and collate worry boxes/worry monsters to support pupils in raising concerns

Lead and organise well-being weeks

Devise an Action Plan to improve well being and monitor its impact

## **Role of Senior Staff**

Line managers are expected to:

Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern

Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff

Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies

Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance

Hold regular 'Check In' meetings with each staff member they line manage

Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help

Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures

Promote information about and access to external support services

Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate

Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods

Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge

Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work

Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation

### **Role of Head of School and Headteacher**

Are expected to:

Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff

Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff

Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations

Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring

Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible

Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives

Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school

Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated

Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload

Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities

Promote information about and access to external support services

Ensure referrals are timely and effective

### **Role of the governing body:**

The governing board is expected to:

Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment

Monitor and support the wellbeing of the Head of School

Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing

Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload

Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work

Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

### **Managing specific wellbeing issues**

The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raises wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives. Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:

Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis in line with the managing staff attendance policy

Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services  
Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified  
Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise  
At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

### **Policy Review and Action Planning**

The school will commit to writing an action plan each year to audit and improve the school's wellbeing responsibilities.. We will talk to children and our stakeholders to collect meaningful information. This policy will be reviewed annually. It is next due for review in February 2023.

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 our Mental Health Lead.

Further useful reading

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728892/government-response-to-consultation-on-transforming-children-andyoung-peoples-mental-health.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728892/government-response-to-consultation-on-transforming-children-andyoung-peoples-mental-health.pdf)

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf> (toolkit)