



ST. KATHARINE'S C.E. (V.A.) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Reviewed by	Headteacher
Review Date	July 2026
Date Determined by Governing Body	10.7.26
Next review date	July 2028

Our Vision

We want everyone who is part of St Katharine's to know that they are unique and that they can flourish and make a difference in God's world, through living out the values of Grace, Integrity and Aspiration, now and in the future.

Policy Statement

It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood.

"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)

We aim to promote positive mental health in every member of staff and every pupil. We use both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils and families. In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises.

We recognise, that as education professionals, we are not equipped to deal with certain mental health conditions (for example eating disorders, self harm, suicidal ideation) and that we would refer on, then work under the guidance of an expert agency.

By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for staff and pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

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.

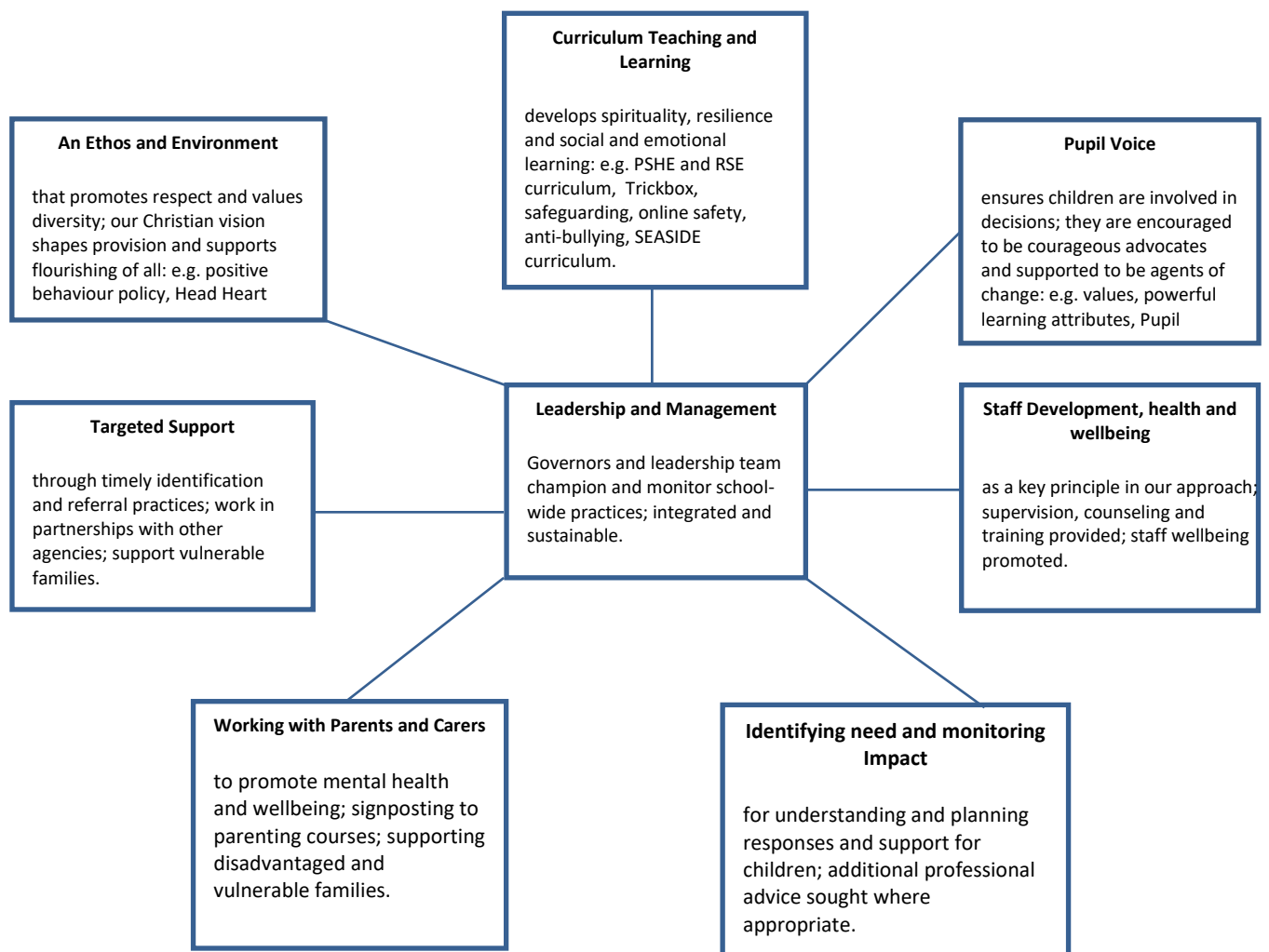
Ethos

Our school Christian ethos and vision promotes the uniqueness and wellbeing of each person through the idea of 'Head, Heart, Hands' – mental health and learning (head), spirituality and relationships (heart), physical health (hands). We are a Youth Sport Trust Beacon Well School with 5 star accreditation.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils through a whole school approach
- 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
- Refer to/liase with expert agencies where necessary, e.g. CAMHS

Eight Principles to promote Emotional Health and Wellbeing from Public Health England: Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing (Public Health England 2015)



The eight identified principles underpin the approaches used to support the development and integration of wellbeing strategies within St Katharine's. The policy and curriculum delivery will be tailored to promote key aspects of improving mental health illness and wellbeing. It will focus on creating a socially, emotionally and physically rich environment where relationships can thrive and children can feel secure in their learning and can flourish. We encourage pupil voice and help children develop the skills to communicate and express their needs and opinions. Staff will have access to training and are signposted to approaches and resources that will support them in taking responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing. Clear identification procedures are in place for children, through teachers or parental referral to the inclusion team, leading to implementation of a suitable intervention with measurable impact.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Head and Deputy
- Designated Safeguarding Officers
- SENCO
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead
- Inclusion Team

- Specialist teacher/Play and Creative Arts Therapist
- PSHE Lead
- SAPP team (Safeguarding, Attendance, Pupils, Parents)

Pupil Identification

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Inclusion Team 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 Lead (DSL). If the pupil presents as 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 SENCO or Inclusion Team. Where appropriate, a learning plan may be written or a TAC (team around the child) meeting will be held with key actions recorded.

Curriculum: teaching and learning

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 that includes the statutory curriculum guidance for Relationships and Health Education. We also use 'Trickbox' to support children's personal development and strategies to develop resilience and confidence that will support mental health and emotional wellbeing as well as Zones of Regulation to help children self or co-regulate. Online safety is part of our computing curriculum and anti-bullying principles are regularly promoted. We follow Anti-Bullying guidance and a Global Neighbours Gold School, and a 5th accredited Beacon Well School. RE, collective worship, prayer and spirituality are a central part of our school, contributing to our school vision and ethos of flourishing and being unique individuals. Our SEASIDE curriculum and wider curriculum both encourage and ensure personal development and growth.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it.

Parents may alert us to situations or mental health and wellbeing concerns around their child and we take these concerns seriously.

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 the DSL, SENCO or Inclusion Team.

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
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- 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

Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, therefore 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-judgmental. Staff should listen, rather than advise and first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and passed to the DSL.

The DSL will decide how the disclosure will be dealt with and will store the record appropriately. This information may be shared with the SENCO or Inclusion Team who will offer support and advice about next steps. In some circumstances, a referral to social care may need to be made.

Confidentiality

We will 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 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

We will never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent; information must always be shared with another member of staff and/or a parent, if a pupil is in danger of harm. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the SENCO, DSL and/or Inclusion Team. This helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil; it also ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We will explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. Parents will be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing 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 will not be informed, but the DSL must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents and Carers

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's mental health 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. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums. We will 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.

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:

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who they can approach in school 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 through our regular information evenings, newsletters and use of Trickbox cards at home
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE or through whole school themes and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

We take the wellbeing of our staff seriously, actively developing a positive working culture where our school Christian vision of flourishing applies to staff as well as children. We take time to consider and talk about how a positive behaviour culture will support staff performance and wellbeing. Wellbeing is one of the key themes on the governing body's strategic plan and has been a consistent main strand of the school development plan for many years. Our approach to wellbeing reflects our Christian ethos and vision, promoting the uniqueness and wellbeing of each person through the idea of 'Head, Heart, Hands' – mental health and learning (head), spirituality and relationships (heart), physical health (hands).

Staff workload is a priority and decisions are always made with workload and wellbeing in mind. For example, our feedback policy is focused on verbal feedback and purposeful written feedback; data recording is minimal; support for individual children with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) is shared among a team of key adults; teacher appraisal is not based on data; additional planning time is regularly given to year teams and staff views are sought and responded to through surveys, training day activities and 1:1 or team meetings.

There are a number of ways in which staff are supported both formally and informally and we encourage staff to take responsibility for their own wellbeing both in and out of school. We recognise that at different times, or because of mental health difficulties or changing circumstances, we need to continue to promote and publicise ways in which staff can seek support if they need it.

Through line management and staff absence procedures, we are able to identify where further support for mental health and wellbeing may be required, for example self-referral to the counselling service we provide via the Employee Assistance Programme, Dorset County Council.

Opportunities for staff supervision occur through planned meetings and sessions that may be 1:1 or in teams with the team leader or a member of the senior leadership team or our trained supervisor. For example:

- The Early Years team supervision, is led by a member of the senior leadership team or Inclusion team on a termly basis.
- All year group teams (teachers and teaching assistants) meet every morning before school; appraisals 1:1
- Admin and site appraisals and team meetings and 1:1
- External support: leadership/positive behaviour/high performing teams training for all staff, SENCO circles supervision, ELSA supervision
- 1:1 with a inclusion team member, following an extreme behaviour incident – see behaviour policy steps, section 8.
- Access to 1:1 supervision session with our qualified supervisor

Our parish church is also a source of support for our school community.

One of the practical resources that is shared with staff is an online one, written to promote strategies to enhance personal well-being: www.whenthetensiongoes.com

Whole school worship is open and inclusive to any member of staff.

Staff Training

All staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our appraisal process and additional CPD will be provided throughout the year where it becomes appropriate. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host CPD sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health. The MindEd learning website provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue: <https://www.minded.org.uk/>