



St. Peter's School

A Church of England Primary School

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Our Vision:

*'For the children to realise their God-given gifts and talents, and grow following the example of Jesus.' Matthew 19:26-
But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible but with God all things are possible"*

September 2021

Review: September 2023

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)

At St Peter's, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind and one where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school 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 should be a priority for everyone and we all have a role to play.

At St Peter's we:

- Promote self-esteem and ensure children understand their importance in the World.
- Help children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Teach children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
- Train staff to be able to spot the signs of mental health problems
- Identify children who have mental health challenges and plan support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers.
- Support the children to better understand their emotions and feelings.
- Support the children so they can form and maintain relationships.
- Encourage the children to be confident and pursue activities they enjoy.
- Support and train staff to develop their skills and their own resilience, in line with Essex's focus on "professional wellbeing".

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging, aligned with the values of TPP (Trauma Perceptive Practice).

- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for ourselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.
- Access to appropriate support that meets individual needs.
- Having strong links to St Peter's church.
- Supporting staff with their own mental health to model healthy behaviours to our children.

We pursue our aims through:

- Whole school approaches
- Support for pupils and staff going through recent difficulties, including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical Needs policy in cases where a child's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy, where a child has an identified special educational need. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Procedures policy, Anti-bullying policy, the Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) policy and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Iain Gunn - Designated Safeguarding Lead and Child Protection
- Catherine Reynolds - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, PSHE and RSE subject leader
- Charlotte Stapleton - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Lisa Christie - Named governor of emotional wellbeing
- Vikki Coley and Dawn Embery - Mental Health First Aiders

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE and RSE curriculum. The specific content of lessons is determined by the specific needs of each cohort, using the PSHE Association's Guidance to ensure mental health and emotional wellbeing are taught in a safe and sensitive manner.

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Mental health and wellbeing groups, which give pupils regular opportunities to talk about mental health and wellbeing issues.
- Managing feelings resources, e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'.
- Managing emotions resources such as 'the incredible 5 point scale'.
- Therapeutic activities, including art, lego and 'calm club' and mindfulness techniques.
- Circle time approaches.

- Offering a range of lunchtime and after school clubs and activities.
- Ensuring children are aware they can drop in and see a designated adult if they are anxious or worried about a certain situation/issue.
- Encouraging pupils to look after their own mental health and wellbeing, where they are able to, using the NHS' 5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing.

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Pupil Questionnaires
- Staff questionnaires
- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- Assessment of PSHE/RSE topics relating to mental health

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of the support available within our school and how to access further support.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

School 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 communicate their concerns to Iain Gunn, Catherine Reynolds, Charlotte Stapleton or the phase leader.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Withdrawing from friends or peers

- Changes in mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Secretive behaviour
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Frequent reports of physical pain or sickness

Working with Parents

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website, e.g. Young Minds and Childline.
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent groups.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE/RSE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

When a concern has been raised, the class teacher, SENCO or head teacher will:

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment.
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information.
- Identify clear next steps in support.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support pupils's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse*
- The educational psychology services*
- Paediatrician*
- The Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS)*
- Counselling services*
- Family support workers*
- Therapists*

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 children safe.

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

To support their own well being a half-termly well-being workshop will also be run for all staff.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy is on the school website and hard copies are available on request.