



St Matthew's CE (Aided)
Primary School and
Nursery Centre

Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

'To provide quality education for our children in a happy and secure Christian environment, encouraging pupils to achieve their full potential academically, spiritually and socially'.



Approved by:	Approved and agreed by the Governing Body Feb 24	Written: revised Feb 24
Next review due by:	Feb 25	

St Matthew's C.E. (Aided) Primary School

Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

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 Organisation)

At St Matthew's CE (Aided) Primary School our Christian vision shapes all that we do. Our intent is to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for every pupil and member of staff in our school. Our school is one based on '**Individuals working to potential together**' and we are fully committed to developing the unique potential of the individual, within a secure and caring environment where mental health and wellbeing is strengthened, developing lifelong values which enables successful contribution to local community and to navigate an increasingly complex national and global community.

We provide our children with an engaging, exciting and creative curriculum, extending beyond the academic, rooted in our Christian values and TEAM spirit. **We will aspire to be an innovative and inspiring learning community, where every individual is provided with the opportunity to flourish spiritually, morally, emotionally, physically and intellectually.**

“I can do all things because Christ (Jesus) gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13.

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.

Aims and Objectives

This policy is a guide to all staff, including non-teaching and governors, outlining St. Matthew's CE (Aided) Primary School's approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies including: *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Anti Bullying, SEND Offer and our Behaviour Policy.*

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive wellbeing and mental health in all pupils and staff.

- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Reduce the stigma surrounding mental health by fostering a culture of openness and acceptance.
- 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 and staff suffering mental ill-health, as well as supporting their peers and parents and know where to signpost to for specific need.
- Develop resilience amongst children and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.

Lead Members of Staff

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health and wellbeing of all, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

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

Mrs D. Mills – Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead. Senior Mental Health Lead

Mrs R. Wilson – Deputy Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Behaviour Lead

Mrs Laura Burns, SENDCo, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs A Cadman-Smith – Pastoral Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil or member of staff should speak to the Mental Health lead, Pastoral Lead or Headteacher in the first instance. If there is a fear that the pupil or member of staff is in danger of immediate harm, then normal child protection procedures should be followed, with an immediate referral to the DSL. If the pupil or member of staff presents with a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed.

The role of the staff (teaching and non-teaching)

All staff keep records of emotional / mental ill-health on the CPOMS system in a specified area named: Pastoral - SEMH. This will ensure there is a consistent record relating to the mental health and wellbeing of pupils. If persistent concerns arise, the parents and child will be offered support through the school and a Wellbeing Panel referral will be considered. Parents/Carers will also be signposted to the support networks available within school and the wider community and a referral to Early Help - Strengthening Families will be discussed.

Staff are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including wellbeing and mental health, in their staff questionnaires.

The Role of the Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to implement the school's Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to identify and deal with incidents of mental ill-health. The headteacher reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the wellbeing and mental health policy on request.

The Role of Governors

The governing body supports the head teacher in all attempts to promote wellbeing and mental health in pupils and staff.

The Role of Parents

Parents who are concerned that their child may be suffering from mental ill-health should contact their child's class teacher immediately, where support will be offered within school and local community support signposted.

What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it, is outlined on the Mental Health and Wellbeing page on the school website.

The Role of Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are suffering from mental ill-health. A designated pupil mental health team, the Mindful Masters, are on-hand to discuss and support their peers with any issue relating to wellbeing and mental health and are aware of what to do if they are approached by a pupil.

Pupils are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including wellbeing and mental health, in their pupil questionnaires.

Teaching about Wellbeing and Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy are a key part of our PSHE curriculum which is taught through the use of the comprehensive Jigsaw scheme. This is a 'progressive and effective scheme of work that aims to prepare children for life, helping them really know and value who they are and understand how they relate to other people in this ever-changing world'. <https://www.jigsawpshe.com/>

Additionally we also make use of identified days and charity events such as: Child Mental Health week, Internet Safety Day, World Diabetes Day, Autism Awareness day,

Children in Need, Sports Relief and Red Nose Day to raise awareness of promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all, providing pupils with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting children to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

Pupil Support Available at school

Pupils in school have access to the 'Worry Monster' a digital version of worries boxes. Pupils can email the Worry Monster in school or at home using the email address: worry.monster@taw.org.uk This is a secure Telford and Wrekin email address that can only be accessed by Mrs Wilson, using a password. Mrs Wilson, reads the children's worries and follows these up. The pupil will receive an email back from the Worry Monster offering them help, guidance and support with the aim of resolving their worry. Pupils are very aware that the Worry Monster does not keep secrets and their worries will be shared and discussed with relevant adults in school and at home. Mrs Wilson will speak to class teachers and will contact parents to discuss worries that pupils have shared and explore ways of supporting them. This new digital approach replaces the previous paper-based system, enabling pupils to continue to share their worries in a safe and secure manner, maintaining Covid rules and regulations.

Pastoral support is available for children identified as being vulnerable to wellbeing or mental health issues. Children who are going through difficulties such as family illness, separation, bereavement, or other stressful situations are supported with small group work or on a 1:1 basis dependent upon individual situation and need.

Where more specialist support is required, school can seek guidance and advice from the Educational Psychology Team, Family Connect, The BeeU service, BEAM, KOOTH, Mind Telford and Young Minds.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils, and parents are aware of sources of support within our school and the local community.

We display relevant sources of support in communal areas, and continually ensure that pupils and staff understand:

- What help is available.
- Who it is aimed at.
- How to access it.
- Why to access it.
- What is likely to happen next.

Targeted Support

We recognise some 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 Children and Adult Mental Health services (CAMHS), those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

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

- Identifying pupils who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems.
- Providing specific help for those pupils most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems.
- Working with the local authority Wellbeing Panel and other agencies services to follow protocols including assessment and referral.
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the pupil and their parents/carers.
- Agreeing an Individual Care Plan
- Providing a range of interventions and support systems
- Provide pupils with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns.
- Provide pupils with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil or member of staff is experiencing wellbeing or mental health issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and anyone observing these signs should communicate their concerns with the Mental Health lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Noticeable changes in individual behaviour.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation, 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 P.E or getting changed secretly.

- An increase in lateness or absence.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.

Managing Disclosures

A pupil or member of staff may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend / colleague to any member of staff. For this reason, all staff members know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a pupil or member of staff chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend / colleague, then the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgmental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and first thoughts should focus on the emotional and physical safety of the pupil or member of staff, rather than the pursuit of exploring 'why?'

Disclosures should be recorded on CPOMS and the Mental Health Lead/Headteacher should be notified so that support and advice on next steps can be as beneficial as possible.

Confidentiality

If it is necessary to pass on concerns about a pupil or member of staff, then this would first be discussed with the individual in question.

Information is never shared without first communicating this with the individual, although if the individual is a pupil, then an age-appropriate approach is required. Ideally, consent would be obtained initially; however, there are certain situations when information must be shared with another member of staff and/or parent.

We advise for disclosures to be shared with the Mental Health Lead/Headteacher, as this helps to safeguard staff's own wellbeing as they are no longer solely responsible for the pupil or member of staff in question. This also ensures continuity of care in absence and provides an extra source of ideas and support. We would explain this to the pupil / staff member and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed but 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 the parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or supporting them in informing their parents themselves.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying safeguarding issues, parents may not be informed. This depends on the individual case and a DSL must be informed immediately.

Working with Parents and Carers

Where it is appropriate to inform parents/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach.

We understand that it can be shocking and often upsetting for parents to learn that their child has a wellbeing or mental health concern, and some may respond with fear, anger or upset during the initial conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent/carer time to reflect.

We will always highlight further sources of support that parents can access within school and the wider community.

Our 'open door' policy should be emphasised here as a clear means of contact when parents have further questions. A follow-up meeting or phone call is offered to parents/carers as there will often be many questions as they begin to process the information. Agreed next steps are recorded after the initial meeting.

Parents are often very welcoming of support with raising the awareness of wellbeing and mental health and supporting their child in this area. In order to support our parents in the very best way, we shall:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues available.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to seek help if they are concerned about their own child or a friend of their own child.
- Make our Wellbeing and Mental Health policy accessible to parents.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive wellbeing and mental health in their children through information sharing and events held in school.
- Keep parents informed about the wellbeing and mental health topics that their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting Peers and Colleagues

When a pupil or staff member is suffering from mental ill-health, it can be a difficult time for those around them, who often want to support but do not know how. Therefore, support will be offered to any pupil or member of staff where appropriate.

Individual Care Plans

When a child has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, 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.

This plan should include:

- Details of the child's situation/condition/diagnosis.
- Special requirements or strategies and necessary precautions.
- Medication and any side effects.
- Who to contact in an emergency.
- The role of the school and specific staff.

Training and Continued Professional Development

The Mental Health Lead attends termly Future in Mind updates and training delivered through the Severn Teaching Alliance.

Staff receive training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their CPD and regular, more specific training will be sought by the Mental Health Lead in order to keep practices up-to-date and staff refreshed and knowledge and skills maintained.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of their performance management.

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

Monitoring and Review

Whole school wellbeing and mental health approaches adopted in school are reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Review due Feb 2025