



ST. JOSEPH'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL
'LEARNING TO LOVE, LOVING TO LEARN'

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL WELL-BEING POLICY

Mission Statement

St Joseph's vision is that together we are the architects of the future, building lives on the firm foundations of the gospel inspired by Christian values we aim to provide love and security within a curriculum designed to meet the complex needs of all individuals, in order to prepare them to take their place in the ever changing world of today and tomorrow.

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1.0 Policy statement

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining the approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

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

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

Headteacher: Ms. Emma Cashier (DDSL)

Deputy Headteacher (DDSL): Mrs. Doris Yohannes

Assistant Head/ SENCO (DSL): Mrs. Harriet Rees

SEND Governor: Mrs. Johanna Jones



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5.0 School Support Programmes

When a pupil 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 a School Support Programme should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

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
- Patterns of behaviour

The role of the school and specific staff members.

6.0 Teaching about mental health

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.

Additionally, we will use 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.

7.0 Signposting

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

Within the school (noticeboards, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), 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
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next



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8.0 Sources or support at school and in the local community:

Local Community Support:

- *THRIVE Online*
Information and advice for families around parenting support, health, activities and more

School Based Support:

- *Play Therapy*
Trained child counsellors providing school-based support improve the emotional wellbeing of pupils, families, teachers and school staff.
- *Drawing and Talking*
Drawing and Talking is for young people who have suffered trauma or have underlying emotional difficulties affecting their mental health and well-being. The technique used during their drawing and talking sessions is based on Jungian and Attachment (Bowlby) theories.
- *Lego Therapy*
Lego Therapy is a chance for children to work in groups with Lego bricks. It is an open-ended experience, multi-sensory and the building projects can be tailored to any child's unique needs, such as blindness, deafness, mobility impairment, autism or ADHD.
- *ELSA*
Emotional literacy support assistants who can support children and young people in school to understand and regulate their own emotions whilst also respecting the feelings of those around them
- *Rainbows and Sunbeams*
Rainbows and Sunbeams provide a peer-support programme which helps to foster emotional healing among children and young people who have experienced a loss at some point during their life.
- *Mental Health First Aiders*

9.0 Bereavement and Loss

We are aware that family circumstances can change for many reasons. These changes can cause a sense of loss for children. The experience of loss can come in many different forms and may include:

- Loss of a pet
- Loss of family member who moves away from the household
- Unable to see and connect with close family members



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- Loss of a friendship
- A family member or someone close to the child dies

With children returning to school after a long period away due to the Covid 19 pandemic, they may have felt the particular sense of the loss of being away from school and their friends, teachers, weekly routine and structure.

For some children their loss may be more extreme if someone they knew and were close to, has died.

What is in place to support children who have experienced loss?

As a school we already have trained staff members that have provided particular additional emotional healing support for children suffering loss in a range of circumstances. This will continue.

We run targeted 'Sunbeams' and 'Rainbows' groups which provide specific opportunities for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children to talk about their loss experience.

In addition to our usual loss support programme, we take seriously that children returning to school after the Covid 19 'lockdown' are likely to need a lot of extra support, in different ways, so that they can adjust back and into the school environment successfully.

To this end, we have implemented a 'Place to Be' bereavement training programme for all staff to enable them to support children returning to school in these exceptional circumstances.

We would urge parents to contact the school regarding any changes of circumstances in children lives so that we may provide any additional appropriate support needed.

10.0 Warning Signs

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 the Head Teacher, Deputy Head or Assistant Headteacher/ SENCo.

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



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- 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

11.0 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 Wandsworth Children's Services, Wandsworth CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), 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 a School Support Programme as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;



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- 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 Wandsworth 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.

12.0 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-judgmental. All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the student's personal file.

13.0 Confidentiality

Parents must always be informed, 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.

14.0 Whole school approach:

Our whole school approach is as follows:

14.1 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 a School Support Programme created if appropriate.

14.2 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 etc.);
- 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



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(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.

15.0 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

16.0 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 training to enable them to keep students 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 developing situations with one or more students. Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.



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17.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is 1st June, 2025. In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes.

POLICY REVIEW TERM: BIENNIAL

Policy Reviewed: June 2023

Next Review: June 2025