

ST JAMES' RC PRIMARY SCHOOL'S PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

This policy has the School's Motto at its heart.

Faith in action,
Growing together,
Walking in the footsteps of Christ

At St James', we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff and will do all that we can to promote the health and wellbeing of all who learn and work here. Promoting a healthy lifestyle for all is a priority. We aim to offer a learning environment that promotes positive mental health. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. We are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that we can and do make a difference by providing a place where everyone feels safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and well-being. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play. A consistent whole school approach is essential. We recognise that all children need the foundation of positive mental health to benefit fully from all of the opportunities available to them. We recognise that we have a central role to play in enabling our pupils to be resilient. We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us all feel vulnerable, and at times anyone may need additional emotional support. We strive to be a place where the whole school community is involved in promoting positive mental health, is valued for the role it plays in promoting positive mental health and contributes towards the ethos of the school. We aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupils and pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches.

Objectives

- To promote life skills across the curriculum so that pupils will learn about mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing.
- To ensure that the good health, wellbeing and mental health of all who work in this school is promoted effectively
- To ensure that the school has a wide range of appropriate policies and strategies in place to ensure the good health, well-being and mental health of all and that they underpin everything that we do.
- To increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues and to enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in children.
- To provide the right support to children with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents for specific support.

Strategies

- We will appropriately promote the health, wellbeing and mental health of pupils across the subjects of the curriculum taking into account the children's ages.
- To have a Mental Health Leader and a Mental Health Link Governor for mental health with responsibility for the oversight of this policy.
- All staff will encourage pupils to make informed choices and take appropriate decisions to help ensure that they understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and good mental health.
- We will foster links between school, home and community and appropriate outside agencies so that all are involved in a collective responsibility for promoting good health and good mental health.
- We will ensure that the curriculum, homework, assessment and teaching strategies take account of pupils' well-being and mental health.
- We will provide safe and healthy working conditions for all in school.
- We will provide access to a school Listening Ear for children.
- We will have positive classroom management in line with the school's behaviour policy, using reasonable adjustments for identified children, where relevant.
- We will provide opportunities that promote positive mental health, through the curriculum such as Circle Time, differentiated learning activities, individual timetables and by challenging stereotypes.

- We will raise awareness as to how the whole school community can look after their own mental health and that of others and will try to de-stigmatise mental health.
- We will support individuals and provide opportunities that enable everyone to reach their potential;
- We will provide foundations for life-long learning;
- We will promote and strengthen resilience throughout the whole school community and empower everyone to face life's challenges.
- We will help children to understand their emotions and help them to feel comfortable about sharing any their worries
- We will help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- We will promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- We will encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'

Our mentally healthy environment has:

- A clear and agreed ethos and culture that accords value and respect to all;
- A commitment to being responsive to every individual's needs;
- Clear guidelines for internal and external referrals;
- Strong links with external agencies to provide access to support and information;
- A named lead for Mental Health with an expectation that mental health is everyone's responsibility.

We have a mentally healthy environment where children have opportunities to:

- Participate in activities that encourage belonging
- Participate in decision making
- Celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- Have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- Develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Reflect
- Have access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- Be monitored by staff who report any concerns that they about a pupil's mental health to the DSL or DDSL
- Be surrounded by staff who model positive and appropriate behaviours and interactions at all times
- Have a right to an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for

We have a mentally healthy environment where staff:

- Have their individual needs recognised and responded to in a holistic way
- Have a range of systems in place to support mental well-being
- Have recognition of their work-life balance
- Feel valued and have opportunities in decision-making processes
- Success is recognised and celebrated
- Are provided with opportunities for CPD
- Can access support and guidance at times of emotional need

We have a mentally healthy environment where parents:

- Are recognised for their significant contribution to children's mental health
- Are welcomed, included and work in partnership with the school
- Are provided with opportunities to ask for help and are signposted to appropriate agencies for support
- Are clear about their role, expectations and responsibilities in working in partnership with the school
- Opinions are sought, valued and responded to

Key Staff Members

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

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Weeks
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Mrs Wilson and Mrs Richards

- SENCO: Mrs Richards
- Mental Health Lead: Mrs Weeks
- Place2Be Mental Health Champions: Mrs Weeks and Mrs Richards
- PSHE lead: Mrs Wilson
- Mental Health First Aiders: Mrs Stewart, Mrs Linehan and Mrs Le Cuirot

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our children need to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our curriculum. Additionally, we will provide children who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting children to support any of their peers who are facing challenges.

Mental Health problems in children

We understand that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. School staff cannot act as mental health experts and must not try and diagnose conditions. However, there are processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems. We recognise that short term stress and worry is a normal part of life and many issues can be experienced as mild or transitory challenges for some children and their families. Others will experience more serious and longer lasting effects. The same experience can have different effects on different children depending on other factors in their life. For example, it is normal for children to feel nervous or under stress around exam times, but other factors can make such stress part of an enduring and persistent mental health problem for some children. When a problem is particularly severe or persistent over time, or when a number of these difficulties are experienced at the same time, children are often described as experiencing mental health problems. Where children experience a range of emotional and behavioural problems that are outside the normal range for their age, they might be described as experiencing mental health problems. Staff observe children day to day and can identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. This may include withdrawn pupils whose needs may be otherwise unrecognised. If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child they should speak to the DSL. If there is a concern that the child is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary. The DSL and SENCO will determine the relevant process to help further identify and support needs. This will include screening tools such as the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire as well as the Boxall Profile. The child and family will be supported through the graduated response process:

- An assessment to establish a clear analysis of the pupils' needs;
- A plan to set out how the pupil will be supported;
- Action to provide that support;
- Regular reviews to assess the effectiveness of the provision and lead to changes where necessary.

The DSL and SENCO will use evidence to determine if a child can be supported in school. If it is deemed that more help is required from an external agency, then the family will be supported through the Early Help Process and other professionals will be involved as needed. The DSL and SENCO will ensure that they understand the local and national services available.

Negative experiences and distressing life events can affect mental health in a way that can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state. This can be displayed in a range of different ways:

- Emotional state (fearful, withdrawn, low self-esteem)
- Behaviour (aggressive or oppositional; habitual body rocking)
- Interpersonal behaviours (indiscriminate contact or affection seeking, over-friendliness or excessive clinginess; demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent disapproval; failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed; coercive controlling behaviour; or lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions).

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 DSL. 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
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Discussing self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Avoiding PE or getting changed secretly
- Secretive behaviour
- 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 so 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-judgemental. Staff should listen, rather than advise. All disclosures should be referred to the DSL.

Supporting Friends

When a child 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 friends 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 child 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

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

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, children and parents are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school and through our communication channels we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

Support at School

We offer different levels of support:

Universal Support: To meet the needs of all our pupils through our overall ethos and our wider curriculum.

Additional support: For those who may have short term needs and those who may have been made vulnerable by life experiences.

Targeted support: For pupils who need more differentiated support and resources or specific targeted interventions

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

- Identifying children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working with Children's Services, CAMHS and other agencies services to follow protocols including assessment and referral
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents.

- Providing a range of interventions
- Providing children with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns.
- Providing children with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it;

Children at Greater Risk

We recognise that some children are at greater risk of developing mental health problems than others. These risks can relate to the child themselves, to their family or to their community or life events. Those most at risk are those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

It is important that staff understand the protective factors that can enable pupils to be resilient when they encounter problems and challenges. The balance between risk and protective factors is most likely to be disrupted when difficult events happen in pupils' lives, including:

- loss or separation – resulting from death, parental separation, divorce, hospitalisation, loss of friendships (especially in adolescence), family conflict or breakdown that results in the child having to live elsewhere, being taken into care or adopted, deployment of parents in armed forces families;
- life changes – such as the birth of a sibling, moving house or changing schools or during transition from primary to secondary school;
- traumatic experiences such as abuse, neglect, domestic violence, bullying, violence, accidents or injuries;
- other traumatic incidents such as a natural disaster or terrorist attack.

Children in Need, Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children

We understand that where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is therefore key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, and their high prevalence of special educational needs and mental health needs, can impact on their behaviour and education. Where a child is being supported through local authority children's social care, their allocated social worker is a source of appropriately-shared information about wider developmental needs, child protection concerns, and parental, familial and contextual circumstances. Effective multi-agency working between schools and social care will help to inform a school's assessment of child's educational and mental health needs, as well as enabling a prompt response to any safeguarding concerns. This will be co-ordinated by the school's DSL.

SEND

Early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour should include an assessment of whether appropriate provision is in place to support any SEND that a pupil may have. The SENCO will consider the use of a multi-agency assessment for a pupil who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour. Such assessments may pick up unidentified SEN, disability or mental health problems but the scope of the assessment could go further, for example, by seeking to identify housing or family problems. It is important to note that not all children with mental health difficulties will have SEN. But persistent or serious mental health difficulties will often meet the definition of SEN, in that they lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

Supporting Parents

Parents would be informed if concerns are raised about a child's mental health. If a child gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but child protection procedures should be followed. We are mindful that for a parent, hearing concerns about their child 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 process the situation. Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. Lines of communication will be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children's emotional health and wellbeing and we will work in partnership with parents to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels;

- Ensuring parents 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.
- Ensuring that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns about their child.
- Making our Mental Health Policy easily accessible to parents
- Sharing ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- Keeping parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in school and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Working with other agencies

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

- Bromley Y
- Educational Psychology Services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- ISAT
- Complex Needs Team
- IASS

Training

We are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. This policy applies to all staff in school. We wish to create a positive and happy working environment where people feel valued and where they can carry out their professional responsibilities without stress. 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 considered throughout the year where it becomes appropriate. 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.

Staff Mental Health

We recognise that anyone can experience mental health issues for various reasons which may be out of their control. There may also be work related factors that could contribute to poor mental health such as work life imbalance, work load pressure or poor working conditions. To every extent possible, we aim to recognise and address cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues. We aim to:

- Treat staff mental illness seriously and support staff members who face mental health problems
- Proactively support the resolution of issues causing concern
- Create pleasant workplaces
- Encourage communication

Strategies

- Risk Assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- The school will provide initial support for staff affected by stress and signpost them to professional help where it is requested or deemed necessary.
- LMT will maintain good communications with staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- LMT will monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- LMT will ensure that work place bullying and harassment is not tolerated.
- LMT will be vigilant and where possible offer appropriate additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside of work.
- The Head teacher will support individuals who have been off sick with stress on a planned return to work.

Workload

