

Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Policy

St George's Junior School



Approved by: [Name]

Date: [Date]

Last reviewed on: [Date]

Next review due by: [Date]

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, 2014)

At St. George's, we are committed to promoting positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental health issues. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected -both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

The Department for Education recognises that, in order to help their pupils' succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy. To promote mental wellbeing, St. George's aims to:

- Develop a whole school approach to address the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff
- Create an approach using information provided in Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE, 2018)
- Work together with families
- Provide a holistic and multi-agency approach

From September 2020, the Health Education elements of PSHE education is compulsory in all schools. The statutory guidance for Health Education covers physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing. It recognises that physical health and mental health are interlinked, that good physical health contributes to good mental health, and vice versa. Irrespective of statutory requirements, at St. George's Juniors, we believe that teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing as part of a comprehensive PSHE education curriculum is vital. It promotes pupils' wellbeing through an understanding of their own and others' emotions and the development of healthy coping strategies. It also contributes to safeguarding, providing pupils with knowledge, understanding and strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as equipping them to support others who are facing challenges. Finally, talking openly about mental health issues is an effective means of breaking down any associated stigma.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need, as well as any other relevant policies including Anti-Bullying, Safeguarding, Behaviour and Equality.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- 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 suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Sharon Munro – Executive Head Teacher/ Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Kelly Lee – Head of School/ Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Charlotte Worley – SENCO/ Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Olivia Bengtson-Gear – Citizenship and Wellbeing Team Lead
- Lucy Wagner – Lead First Aider
- Sally Clarke - Learning Mentor

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the SENCO in the first instance. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the SENCO.

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 one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

If the pupil presents 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.

Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has been identified as having a cause for concern, has received a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Support Plan should be drawn up. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. The plan will take the same format as a SEND support plan and pupils may be moved onto the SEND support list for Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMHD) after a period of monitoring and assessment. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Teaching about Mental Health

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.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. In order to provide relevant information and support to pupils, it is important to understand the pressures that they are under such as fear of failure, bullying, body image or the online environment.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner. <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-teaching-about-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing>

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote pupils' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of pupils' own emotions as well as those of other people. We have units dedicated to: growth mindset, metacognition, identity and equality and expectations at St. George's Juniors.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of sources of support and services available to them within school and in the local community, and how to access these services.

What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in **Appendix 1 (needs to be compiled locally)**.

Within the school (displays, classrooms, offices etc.) and through our communication channels (website, newsletters, Seesaw, assemblies), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events. We will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, the aim of this is to ensure all school stakeholders understand:

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

Warning Signs

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 a Designated Safeguarding Lead or the SENCO.

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
- 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 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 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 and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' Reassure the pupil that talking about their feelings are never wrong.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the schools CPOMS digital system including:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information will be shared with a Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENCO.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we 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 should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as pupils up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

It is important to safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague, this ensures one single member of staff is no longer solely responsible for the pupil. This also ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil 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 parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures must be followed immediately.

Working with Parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's mental health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensuring that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Making our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Sharing ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keeping parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

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

Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's 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. We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that is being shared.

Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g., parent helplines and forums. We should 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. Each meeting should be finished with agreed next steps and this should be recorded confidentially on the schools CPOMS digital system.

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends.

Friends often want to support but do not know how. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil 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 help (e.g., signs of relapse) Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

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- 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

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 pupils safe.

We will promote relevant information for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The MindEd learning portal² provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health. Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the SENCO, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Staff Wellbeing

It is recognised at St. George's Juniors that promoting staff health and emotional wellbeing should be an integral part of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, training and signposting to materials about mental health and emotional wellbeing is available for all staff. An open door policy to the Senior Leadership Team is always made available if staff are in need of speaking to someone about any issues of concern and a fully committed, supportive governing body. All staff members have access to health and wellbeing support through the Schools Advisory Service (SAS).

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in May 2024.

<http://www.inourhands.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Mental-Health-Policy-and-guidance-for-schools-CWMT-FINAL-1.pdf>