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Saint Benedict
A Catholic Voluntary Academy

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Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

What is good mental health?

We all have mental health. Your mental health affects how you feel, think and act. It refers to your emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. Your mental health can change on a daily basis and over time, and can be affected by a range of factors.

Good mental health among children and young people

When children and young people have good levels of wellbeing it helps them to:

- learn and explore the world
- feel, express and manage positive and negative emotions
- form and maintain good relationships with others
- cope with, and manage, change, setbacks and uncertainty
- develop and thrive.

When children and young people look after their mental health and develop their coping skills it can help them to boost their resilience, self-esteem and confidence. It can also help them learn to manage their emotions, feel calm, and engage positively with their education - which can, in turn, improve their academic attainment.

Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important at our school,

We aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall well-being and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need. All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting pupils well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that students are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where;

• all pupils are valued
• pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
• pupils feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
• positive mental health is promoted and valued
• bullying is not tolerated

In addition to children's well-being, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and well-being. This policy sets out;

• how we promote positive mental health
• how we prevent mental health problems
• how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
• how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
• key information about some common mental health problems
• where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing: … 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 is able to make a contribution to our community. Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems.

We want all children/young people to;

• feel confident in themselves
• be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
• be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
• cope with the stresses of everyday life
• manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
• learn and achieve

A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise. This encompasses seven aspects:

1. creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services
6. effectively working with parents and carers
7. supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that pupils with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems; such a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying.

They also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

The Safeguarding Team and Senior Mental Health Lead;

• leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
• provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
• keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
• liaises with the PSHE Leader on teaching about mental health
• is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
• leads on and makes referrals to services

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families.

Support includes:

• Senior Mental Health Lead/ Safeguarding Team
• Pastoral Teams
• Alternative provision Manager
• Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
• SENCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
• CAMHS support

Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems.
Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including;

• Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health issues
• Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT) support specific students
• Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils and relevant staff
• Pupil passports for SEN pupils to give staff a better awareness of how to make learning accessible for them
Training staff on relevant mental health issues and strategies
• Access to school counsellor
• Pupil briefings so all staff are made aware of vulnerable children's needs
• Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school
• Through the personal development curriculum and assemblies, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

• provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
• ensure the welfare and safety of pupils is paramount
• identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
• involve parents and carers when their child needs support
• monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated

Early Identification Our identification system involves a range of processes.

We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. This is done in different ways including:

• Head of year/ safeguarding team work with feeder primaries to identify individuals that might need support with transition.
• Senior Mental Health lead/ Pastoral and safeguarding teams working together with families and external services to assess what help and support is needed.
• analysing behaviour and attendance reports to spot patterns of behaviour
• pupil surveys at the beginning of the school Year and support is put in place.
• staff report concerns about individual pupils to Safeguarding Team via CPOMS
• weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children
• gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
• parental meetings
• enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
• Full time school counsellor for students who offers drop in sessions

Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Safeguarding Team. These signs might include:

• non-verbal behaviour
• isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
• changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
• lowering academic achievement
• talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
• expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
• an increase in lateness or absenteeism
• not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
• drug or alcohol misuse
• physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
• wearing long sleeves in hot weather
• repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm then the school's child protection procedures are followed and a risk assessment plan will be made.

Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Safeguarding Team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

Non-Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours that may be an unmet need or message.

Confidentiality

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Safeguarding Team via CPOMS and recorded. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service.

Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating. We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes, there are no absolutes.

Need The level of need is based on discussions with HOYS, DSL & SG Team, SENCO, SLT	Evidence-based Intervention and Support The kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and pupils	Monitoring
Low	General support from tutor and year team. HOY will assess progress through reports, information from teachers and parents. School counsellor could be involved or family GP	
Medium	• SEN support • Nurture group • Speech and Language • school counsellor • Support for families with disabled children, with consideration of siblings needs • Extra health support for family members via GP, voluntary sector • Behavioural support	HOY will monitor progress through reports, liaison with families, communications with staff. Safeguarding weekly meetings will monitor progress. HOY and SG team will have meetings with external agencies to coordinate responses and evaluate progress.
High	• CAMHS support • Early Help offer • Housing/ tenancy • Young carers support • Oher external agencies	Due to the complexity of needs, especially around behaviour and parenting, a shared multi-agency assessment and coordinated plan is developed with the family and will be continually monitored through regular contact between school and agencies.

Working with Specialist Services to get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs. We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the Safeguarding Team/SENCO/ Educatioa Welfare Officer following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil, parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Involving Parents and Carers Promoting Mental Health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting their children with mental health needs. To support parents and carers:

• we cover topics such as Anxiety, Stress Management and Sleep in the personal development curriculum and assemblies.
• we provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
• have an Open Door Policy.
• supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

• contact parents and carers and meet with them
• in most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
• offer information to take away and places to seek further information
• be available for follow up calls
• make a record of the meeting
• discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
• keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions

Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help (see Appendix 3).

Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and where possible access to supervision from mental health professionals. Staff training to raise awareness of Mental Health and emotional well-being topics have been and continue to be delivered,

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing. Staff have access to Saint Ralph Sherwin Employees Assistance Programme which is free and confidential.

Appendix 1

Protective and Risk factors (adapted from Mental Health and Behaviour DfE March 2016)

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the child	• Genetic influences • Specific development delay • Communication difficulties • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem • SEND	• Being female (in younger children) • Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills, sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • Problem solving skills and a positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect In the Family
In the family	• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship	• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the school	• Bullying • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Negative peer influences • Peer pressure • Poor pupil to teacher relationships	• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Positive classroom management • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences
In the community	• Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Other significant life events	• Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

Appendix 2

For information on specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children go to;

[Mental health needs : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE March 2016
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-inschools--2

The NHS website ([The NHS website - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](#) includes definitions, signs and symptoms and suggested interventions for Anxiety (including panic attacks, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder OCD)

Depression
Eating Disorders
Substance Misuse
Self Harm

The DfE guide does not include specific information on suicidal thought.

Suicidal Thoughts

Young people may experience thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their lives. Some young people never act on these feelings but may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide without any apparent warning signs.

Appendix 3

Where to get information and support

For support on specific mental health needs

Anxiety UK [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](#)
OCD UK [www.ocduk.org](#)
Depression Alliance [www.depressoinalliance.org](#)
Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and [www.inourhands.com](#)
National Self-Harm Network [www.nshn.co.uk](#)
Self-Harm [www.selfharm.co.uk](#)
Samaritans [Contact Us | Samaritans](#)
Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: [www.papyrus-uk.org](#)

For general information and support

www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing
www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems
www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)
www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health
www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health