



**Saint Benedict**  
A Catholic Voluntary Academy

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### **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

Within Saint Benedict CVA, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community. We will pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

We recognise each person as a unique individual, created in God's image and loved by Him. We are therefore committed to treat every person with equality and the respect and dignity due to a child of God.

#### **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

Aims of this policy;

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues and provide time for pupils and staff to discuss mental health within the school setting.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health and provide them with the tools to ensure appropriate support is implemented.

- Provide ongoing and practical support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers in the forms of support within the academy, meetings with professionals and referrals to specialised establishments.
- Inform parents and guardians whom they can contact should they have concerns surrounding the mental health of themselves, or their child/children.
- Ensuring all parents have access to information on mental health services via a regularly updated area within the school website.
- Provide opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing
- Support staff with dealing with issues around mental health and stress effectively.

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

## **Supporting Pupils with mental health concerns**

## **Lead Members of Staff**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific role of supporting pupils in school with mental health include:

- Mrs Angela King – Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Mental Health Lead
- Miss Amanda Cwynar - Mental Health Lead
- Mrs Helen Cwynar - Deputy Safeguarding Lead and Vulnerable Educational Needs Officer
- Mrs Amanda Shaw - Pastoral and Behaviour lead
- Fr Jonathan Whitby- Smith – Designated Governor for Safeguarding
- Staff trained in Mental Health first Aid.

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.

### **Level of need and support**

<b>Need</b> The level of need is based on discussions with HOYS, DSL & SG Team, SENCO, SLT	<b>Evidence-based Intervention and Support</b> The kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents and pupils	<b>Monitoring</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEN support</li> <li>• Nurture group</li> <li>• Speech and Language</li> <li>• school counsellor</li> <li>• Support for families with disabled children, with consideration of siblings needs</li> <li>• Extra health support for family members via GP, voluntary sector</li> <li>• Behavioural support</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAMHS support</li> <li>• Early Help offer</li> <li>• Housing/ tenancy</li> <li>• Young carers support</li> <li>• Other external agencies</li> </ul>	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/ Education 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 Peers**

When a student 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 the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. 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 with 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need 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

### **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.

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.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the senior leadership team, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

### **Promoting positive mental health for staff**

Promoting and protecting the mental wellbeing of the staff within the academy is important for individuals' physical health, social wellbeing and productivity.

Mental wellbeing in the workplace is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to improved mental wellbeing at work. Addressing workplace mental wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health. It can also help promote the employment of people who have experienced mental health problems, and support them once they are at work.

### **Policy actions for staff mental health**

- Give employees information on and increase their awareness of mental wellbeing.
- Provide opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing, for example through physical activity, stress-buster activities and social events.
- Set employees realistic targets that do not require them to work unreasonable hours.
- Ensure all staff have clearly defined job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities and provide them with good management support, appropriate training and adequate resources to do their job.
- Manage conflict effectively and ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism.
- Establish good two-way communication to ensure staff involvement, particularly during periods of organisational change. As well as ensuring that staff are aware of services that are available to them.

**Developing a culture based on trust, support and mutual respect within the workplace.**

As an academy, we aim to create and promote a culture where employees are able to talk openly about their job and mental health problems and to report difficulties without fear of discrimination or reprisal.

Mental health problems and stress can affect anyone, regardless of their position in the organisation. This policy applies equally to all employees.

## Appendix 1

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

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
In the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genetic influences</li> <li>• Specific development delay</li> <li>• Communication difficulties</li> <li>• Physical illness</li> <li>• Academic failure</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• SEND</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being female (in younger children)</li> <li>• Secure attachment experience</li> <li>• Outgoing temperament as an infant</li> <li>• Good communication skills, sociability</li> <li>• Being a planner and having a belief in control</li> <li>• Humour</li> <li>• Problem solving skills and a positive attitude</li> <li>• Experiences of success and achievement</li> <li>• Faith or spirituality</li> <li>• Capacity to reflect In the Family</li> </ul>
In the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt parental conflict including domestic violence</li> <li>• Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted)</li> <li>• Inconsistent or unclear discipline</li> <li>• Hostile and rejecting relationships</li> <li>• Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs</li> <li>• Physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect</li> <li>• Parental psychiatric illness</li> <li>• Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder</li> <li>• Death and loss – including loss of friendship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult)</li> <li>• Affection</li> <li>• Clear, consistent discipline</li> <li>• Support for education</li> <li>• Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord</li> </ul>
In the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>• Negative peer influences</li> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Poor pupil to teacher relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying</li> <li>• 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems</li> <li>• A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health</li> <li>• Positive classroom management</li> <li>• A sense of belonging</li> <li>• Positive peer influences</li> </ul>
In the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic disadvantage</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Other significant life events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider supportive network</li> <li>• Good housing</li> <li>• High standard of living</li> <li>• High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying</li> <li>• Opportunities for valued social roles</li> <li>• Range of sport/leisure activities</li> </ul>

## 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](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

OCD UK [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)

Depression Alliance [www.depressoinalliance.org](http://www.depressoinalliance.org)

Eating Disorders [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk) and [www.inourhands.com](http://www.inourhands.com)

National Self-Harm Network [www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk)

Self-Harm [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Samaritans [Contact Us | Samaritans](#)

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK – POPYRUS: [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

For general information and support

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) champions young people's mental health and wellbeing

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) advice and support on mental health problems

[www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk) (e-learning)

[www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk) tackles the stigma of mental health

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org) challenges attitudes towards mental health