

# St. James CE Primary School



## St. James CE Primary School

### Mental Health & Well-Being Policy

Flourish  
Respect Courage  
Friendship Develop  
Strong Growth  
Community StJames' Strive  
God Trust Kindness  
Freedom Unique Perseverance  
DeepRoots Positivity  
WholeChild  
Responsibility

## Statement of Vision and Values

In consultation with pupils, parents, governors, community members and staff our vision and values were generated based on our inspiration from the Parable of the Sower and how this links to our children and their journey with us.

### Our School Vision:

Within our community we strive to develop deep **roots**, strong **growth** and freedom to **flourish** as a unique and whole child of God.

**Matthew 13 - The Parable of the Sower – ‘... but the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. ....produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.’**



## Values

We decided at St James CE Primary School that **Kindness and Respect** are values which we feel underpin our vision and are incorporated in all we do and say – so therefore these two values will be taught alongside all the other six values we have chosen.

<b>½ termly focus</b>	<b>Value</b>
Autumn 1	Responsibility
Autumn 2	Friendship
Spring 1	Perseverance
Spring 2	Trust
Summer 1	Courage
Summer 2	Positivity

St James' CE Primary School is committed to the safeguarding of our pupils and staff.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

### **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)***

At St. James' Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

### **Lead Members of Staff**

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Certain members of staff however have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

Mrs L Everard, Miss A Collins- Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officers

Mrs L Everard - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead

Miss A Collins – Play Therapist

Mrs E Tona- Lead First Aider

Mrs L Everard, Miss A Collins- Pastoral Leads

Mrs Sheehan – Mental Health First Aider

### **Intent (what do we hope to achieve in relation to mental health and wellbeing)**

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do and underpins all aspects of school life. Our vision reflects the importance of growth, allowing all to flourish with an emphasis on pupil's mental health and well-being, referencing individuality by ending with the statement: 'as a unique and whole child of God'

Our values also support our vision, with values such as respect & kindness, friendship, responsibility, courage and positivity allowing us to actively reflect, discuss and learn about mental health and well-being alongside formal academic learning.

As shared, our focus as a school is on the whole child, so alongside our academic provision we promote positive mental health and wellbeing for every member of our staff and pupil body. We aim to ensure that all pupils develop resilience, as well as the skills they need to understand their own emotions, the ability to self-regulate, and the understanding to know how and when to seek help in relation to their mental health. We intend to employ strategies which seek to **prevent** children developing mental health issues and maintain a strong sense of wellbeing, and also to **identify and provide effective support which** is acted on when any mental health issues do arise. We are constantly reviewing our practices in relation to mental health and wellbeing, and aim to ensure that this policy always reflects the most relevant and current research, in order that the best possible provision is made for our pupils.

### **Implementation (how we promote good mental health and wellbeing, and address any concerns in relation to mental health)**

#### **Prevention – Prioritising Good Mental Health and Wellbeing of Staff**

St James' CE Primary School is committed to the safeguarding of our pupils and staff.

We understand that creating a culture of wellbeing and good mental health means that every member of the school community must feel well-supported and have access to the tools they need to look after themselves. It is especially important to recognise that staff are only able to be effective in supporting the wellbeing of pupils if they themselves feel that their own wellbeing is prioritised and supported.

Therefore, we use a range of strategies to support staff wellbeing, including, but not limited to:

- Wellbeing weeks – one week each term where there are no staff meetings or after-school commitments. Staff are given additional time out of class to enable them to manage their workload and help them 'get ahead' with upcoming tasks, and are encouraged to leave school by 4pm each day. Activities are organised to develop the staff as a team, encourage positivity, and promote good mental health and a sense of wellbeing.
- Open-door policy – in addition to regular scheduled check-in meetings, staff are always welcome and encouraged to talk to the Executive Head teacher, Head of School and Senior Leadership Team at any time about any issues they may have. A solution-focussed approach is used to support them in moving forward and any problems are always monitored and followed up.
- Regular monitoring of workload, and on-going consideration around how this can be reduced.
- Regular opportunities for staff to meet with the school Therapist to discuss any concerns about the emotional and mental health of pupils with whom they are working. This can provide them with the space to express how they might be feeling about supporting a child with difficulties and give them the opportunity to 'off-load'.
- Signposting to organisations who support the mental health and wellbeing of school staff.
- Frequent activities to ensure that staff know how highly they are valued, such as the recognition of particular achievements, opportunities for development, and forums for enabling staff to feel empowered to bring about and be involved in change within the school.
- A trained mental first aider on site.
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### **Prevention – Prioritising Good Mental Health and Wellbeing of Pupils**

At St. James CE Primary School, we want to promote the mental health and wellbeing of all our pupils, and enable them to develop effective strategies which may prevent them from experiencing mental health problems, in both the present and the future. At the heart of this lies the provision of an environment in which all pupils feel calm, safe and cared for. This is primarily achieved through every member of our school community living out our vision and accompanying values each day, and in every part of school life.

The Zones of Regulation strategy is used every day in every class to encourage children to identify how they are feeling at any given time, express changes to their emotional state, and think about to regulate their emotions, either independently or supported by an adult.

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When adults are dealing with issues or difficulties that a child has had, they will endeavour to use the emotion coaching approach, whereby they will try to help children understand the emotions they are experiencing, why they occur and how to handle them. There are 4 steps to this approach:

Step 1: The adult recognises, empathises with and validates what the child is feeling.

Step 2: The adult empathetically sets limits on the behaviour of the child.

Step 3: The adult problem-solves with the child.

Through the use of this approach, we aim to teach children how to understand their emotions and ultimately, be able to self-regulate.

In order to further highlight the importance of good mental health, wellbeing weeks take place once each term, during which all pupils participate in activities to teach about and promote good mental health and wellbeing, such as mindfulness sessions, additional physical activity and more frequent team-building and practical sessions.

### **Prevention - Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing**

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. All pupils participate in weekly timetabled PSHE lessons; RE lessons, Collective Worship, Science, Focus weeks/days and on-going daily discussions linking to our school vision and values also contribute towards our provision. The content of lessons will be determined by the curriculum, and 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.

We also follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

### **Prevention - Working with Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to / gain support from, if they have concerns about their own or another child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through information evenings
- Keep 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

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### **Identification and Early Support - Managing Issues**

All staff have received basic training on mental health needs, and the signs to be aware of that may indicate a mental health problem. There is also an awareness and understanding that some pupils with particular risk factors may be more likely to experience mental health problems. These pupils are closely monitored by the staff they work with, and there is additional consideration given, on an individual basis, to ensure that we support the development of protective factors for them.

Where any member of the school community has a concern about the wellbeing or mental health of a pupil, they should report it to the Head of School or the Mental Health Lead.

There are a range of approaches that will be employed by the school in order to address a possible mental health issue. In the first instance, an assessment will be carried out by the Mental Health Lead, alongside and in conjunction with the pupil themselves, the parents/carers and any staff involved in working with the pupil. Following the assessment, a plan will be made as to how best to address the issue – this may involve a school-based intervention, such as daily talk time sessions, or participation in a friendship group, a referral to the school counselling (play or music therapy) service (see below for further information), or a referral to a more specialist service, such as CAMHS. A graduated response process (assess, plan, do, review) will be used to put support in place. At each stage, the child and their parents/carers will be consulted and kept informed.

### **Identification and Early Support - School Counselling and Therapy Service**

The school currently funds a counselling and therapy service, which is run by a highly experienced play therapist. Where a member of staff has a concern about the mental health of a pupil, there are opportunities for them to participate in organised consultations with the therapist, where they are able to talk and think about the child's needs together and discuss strategies which may be useful in supporting them.

The Therapist also runs weekly individual and group sessions for identified pupils, and any member of staff can make a formal referral for a pupil to this service at any time. In addition, pupils can also self-refer and can access a lunchtime drop in, Parents/carers may also request a referral. Referrals will be considered and discussed by the Therapist and Mental Health Lead/SENCo.

Where a referral to the school counselling and therapy service is accepted, but there is no space in the Therapist's timetable, the pupil who is the subject of the referral will be added to a waiting list. The pupil and their parents/carers will be kept informed about the waiting time, and will be told as soon as a space becomes available. Wherever possible, we will always try to work through the waiting list in order of date of referral, but there may be some cases where pupils are prioritised due to need.

Counselling and therapy sessions in school will always be kept confidential between the pupil and the therapist, unless there is a child protection issue arising, in which case, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed. However, the Therapist will keep an informal record of the sessions and will be able to share some summary

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information with parents/carers. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) will be used to gather information from the pupil's teacher and parents/carers, and in some cases, the pupil themselves, as the beginning, middle and end of the sessions. This will enable the therapist to gain a clear understanding of the issues raised, and also provide a tool with which to measure impact of the sessions.

### **Identification and Early Support - Signposting**

We ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of sources of support within school and the local community – identifying the support available, who it is aimed at and how to access it. We also display relevant information in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources reflected within our curriculum. In doing this, we aim to increase the chance of pupils seeking help by ensuring they understand:

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

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 officer Mrs Everard must be informed immediately.

### **Identification and Early Support - Access to Specialist Support**

Where the Mental Health Lead is made aware of a mental health concern in relation to a pupil, an assessment will be carried out. As a result of the outcomes of this assessment, it may be decided that more specialist support is required to support the pupil, and a referral will be made to CAMHS (the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service). In this case, parental consent will always be sought prior to the submission of the referral. The Mental Health Lead/SENCo will then work closely with CAMHS to monitor the outcome of the referral, provide any further information needed, and work with the service on any subsequent treatment, including implementing recommendations of professionals in relation to the child's provision in school.

### **Impact**

As a whole school, the impact of our work around mental health and wellbeing can be seen through the children's emotional intelligence and understanding of others, showing tolerance and respect, kindness, helping others and ensuring that we promote an inclusive environment. Our pupils work hard to progress in their learning from their starting points (in all areas of our broad curriculum), showing a determination to not give up on a task, developing the skills to become resilient, successful citizens.

For individuals receiving any kind of intervention in school for their mental health, the impact of this is measured using the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ), as well as other tools which assess their progress towards their own individual targets. While of course we always work towards positive outcomes, we continuously adapt our approach to meet the needs of the child to ensure that the work we do has a definite impact on their mental health.

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## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in November 2024.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to Mrs Everard, our mental health lead, via phone 020 8804 1987 or email for the attention of Mrs Everard: [sbm@st-james.enfield.sch.uk](mailto:sbm@st-james.enfield.sch.uk) This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

## **References**

This policy has been written with reference to the following books, documents and research:

Bethune, A. (2018) *Wellbeing in the Primary Classroom: A Practical Guide to Teaching Happiness* London: Bloomsbury Education

Department for Education: Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (2018)

Howard, D., Burton, M. and Levermore, D. (2020) *Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing in Primary Schools*. London: Sage Books

Weare, K. (2015) *What Works in Promoting Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Responding to Mental Health Problems in School?* London: National Children's Beareau