



# St Francis Catholic Primary School

## Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

**Date:** September 2021

**Review date:** September 2022

**Chair of Governors:** P. Gough

**Head Teacher:** D. Richards

## School Mission Statement

### 'I am a sign of God's love'

At St. Francis we love, learn and grow in the footsteps of Jesus and are active signs of God's love through praying, respecting and serving others.

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## Statement of Intent

At St Francis Catholic Primary School we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks. We promote a mentally healthy environment through:
  - Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
  - Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
  - Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
  - Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
  - Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties including attachment disorder.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Child Protection and safeguarding, Behaviour and Anti-bullying.

## **Legal Documents**

The DfE document: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 states that staff should be well placed to observe children day to day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

## **Lead Members of Staff**

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

- Allison Wright – DSL, SENCo, Mental Health Lead, PSHE Lead, Computing/ Online Safety Lead – Mental Health First Aid Trained
- Rebecca Shovlin – RE Lead, KS1 Phase Leader, Mental Health First Aid Trained
- Elaine Walker – Mental Health First Aid Trained
- Helen Haywood – Mental Health First Aid Trained
- Jane Keeling – Mental Health First Aid Trained
- Elizabeth Rudd – Mental Health First Aid Trained

During Autumn term all teaching assistants will complete a awareness to mental health course.

## **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum. St Francis follow the Ten:Ten RSE/ PSHE curriculum alongside other relevant resources that support our pupils mental health and wellbeing.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but we will also use the PSHE Association and Ten:Ten Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

## **Targeted Support**

We will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Social Skills/ friendship groups
- Circle time
- Worry box
- School Dogs

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

- The school nurse team
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Occupational Therapists

## **Sign posting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

We will discuss with parents/ carers if we feel a referral to an external agency is necessary.

## **Identifying Needs and Warning Signs**

All staff are to be observant and report (vis CPOMs) any difficulties they feel a pupil may be experiencing, possible difficulties include:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement

School staff may also become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate. Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

## **Working with parents**

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website;
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. School Nurse Team;
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child;
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents;
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children;
- 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.

## **Conclusion**

At St Francis, we believe mental health and emotional wellbeing have a direct impact on a child's ability to learn.

Working together with parents/ carers and pupils we aim to provide a safe working environment for all.