

St Charles Catholic Primary School



Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

Designated Teacher: Paula Byrne

Date policy adopted: Summer 2022

Date policy to be reviewed: Summer 2024

Our Mission Statement

✠ **Love God, Love your Neighbour** ✠



(Design by Claudia 5A - 2020)

Through God's love, and with guidance from the Holy Spirit, we, the Community of St Charles, share our Catholic faith together. We seek to nurture in our children an understanding of the importance of Christian values and a deep love and lifelong commitment to God.

We value the unique strengths and gifts of the children entrusted to us and strive to provide an excellent education, so that through our teaching the children may realise their full potential.

In partnership with our families, Governors and Parish, and inspired by our faith, we support the children of St Charles. We encourage them to shine, to have pride in their achievements, to show concern for others and contribute to society as responsible citizens.

Our Aims

- To appreciate that we are all uniquely created and loved by God.
- To deepen each child's understanding of the Catholic faith.
- To nurture in the children an understanding of Christian values and how these help shape our lives and the lives of others.
- To understand the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- To work in partnership with parents and Parish to create a Christian atmosphere enriched through prayer.
- To provide an excellent education so children learn and achieve their potential.
- To respect and care for one another in a happy, welcoming and nurturing community.
- To ensure children care and respect others, develop an understanding of the world and contribute to society as responsible citizens

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 Organisation).

At St Charles Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and our pupils. We pursue this aim using workplace practices, 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 ill health.

By developing and implementing a practical, relevant and effective mental health policy and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for staff and pupils affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

It should be read in conjunction with our:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (where the mental health of a pupil overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue)
- Special Educational Needs Policy (where a pupil has an identified special educational need)

Aim of the Policy

At St Charles Primary School we aim to create an environment that promotes positive mental health in all staff and pupils by:

- Increasing understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Providing opportunities for staff to look after their mental wellbeing
- Alerting staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in pupils
- Providing support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Providing support to pupils suffering from mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

Responsibility

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or the Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL) in the first instance. 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 the head teacher. If the pupil presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the School Nurse and contacting the emergency services if necessary. This procedure would be the same with any mental health emergency which could include; serious self - harm, suicidal ideation, plan and intent of suicidal activity.

Where a referral to an external agency or professional is appropriate, this will be led and managed by DSL and/ or DMHL(s)

All school staff are encouraged to:

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where required
- Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing St Charles Primary School
- Support fellow staff in their awareness of this policy
- Support and contribute to St Charles Primary School's aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all staff.

All school staff have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health
- Take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being

The Senior Leadership Team have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that all school staff are made aware of this policy
- Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals
- Manage the implementation and review of this policy
- Champion good management practices and the establishment of a work ethos within St Charles Primary School which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables staff to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".

- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements at a school-wide level.
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to the school's Occupational Health advisers where appropriate.
- Collate management information which will enable the school to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as:
 - Sickness absence data
 - Staff turnover, exit interviews
 - Number of self-referrals to the counsellor service
 - Number of referrals to Occupational Health support
 - Numbers of grievance and harassment cases
- Seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of the School's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.

Managing Pupil 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, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety, rather than of exploring 'Why?', staff should avoid asking any leading questions.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on CPOMS. This should include:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom it was disclosed
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the DSL and/or DMHL, who will store the record appropriately and offer advice about the next step.

Warning Signs and Recommended Management

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 communicated to Tony Lynch, our Designated Safeguarding Lead and/ or Paula Bryne, our Designated Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs to look out for in pupils/students or their immediate family.

Important Note

The first two points below present a higher degree of risk and will therefore need a separate risk assessment:

- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide, this is a risk and will need a separate risk assessment and action plan to manage the risk accordingly.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope. This is a risk and will need a separate risk assessment and action plan to manage the risk safely

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Abusing drugs or alcohol in the family
- Changes in clothing e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE/Games or getting changed secretly
- Lateness or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Increase in lateness or absenteeism

Realistic Expectations

Mental health issues can be ongoing for a long time. They can be highly impactful on a pupil's ability to access school. We need to ensure that all members of staff are realistic in their expectations of affected pupils, to ensure those pupils are not placed under undue stress which may exacerbate their mental health issues.

Expectations should always be led by what is appropriate for a specific pupil at a specific point in their recovery journey rather than by what has worked well for others, so some degree of flexibility is essential.

Expectations to consider addressing include:

- Academic achievement
- Absence and lateness
- Access to extra-curricular activities including sport
- Duration and pace of recovery
- Ability to interact and engage within lessons

Confidentiality

We should be honest with pupils about confidentiality. We should let them know this and discuss with them that it might be necessary to pass the information on:

- 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 letting them know. Ideally, we should receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another staff member and/or a parent/carer. This would always include pupils up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

If acting to safeguard a pupil against harm or look out for their welfare it is imperative to share any information you deem important.

In many cases, the parent/carers should be informed, and pupils may choose to tell their parent/carers themselves. If this is the case, depending upon severity and immediacy of risk, 24 hours should be given to share this information before the school contacts the parent/carers. We should always give pupils the option of the school informing the parent/carers for them or with them.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parent/carers should not be informed, but the DSL must be notified immediately.

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parent/carers, we need to be sensitive in our approach. It can be shocking and upsetting for parent/carers to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset. We should therefore give the parent/carers time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information as parents/carers will often find it hard to take in much of the news that we are sharing. We should always provide clear means of how contact can be made with the school regarding further questions and the school should consider booking in a follow up meeting right away as parents/carers may have many questions as they process the information. We should keep a record on each meeting in the child's confidential record. We will provide local emergency mental health crisis service contact telephone numbers for parents as required.

In order to support all parent/carers of children St Charles Primary School, we will:

- Update our school resources to provide information about common mental health issues
- Ensure all parent/carers know who to talk to if they have any concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parent/carers
- Keep parent/carers informed about the topics their children are learning about in PSHE

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. 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 might need additional support. It is important to consider:

- What friends should and should not be told
- How friends can support
- Things friends should avoid doing or saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- How friends can access further support for themselves from the school
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be facing

Training

All staff will receive regular training or guidance about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of the regular child protection training.

Allocated school staff will attend the Mental Health First Aid Training within each school. In order to work closely with the young people to identify and signpost appropriate support and intervention.

For those staff members who require more in depth knowledge additional CPD will be suggested and provided. Where the need to provide some becomes apparent, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning and understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Resilience training can be arranged and provided to the staff by the Clinical Nurse Specialist in Mental Health attached to the school nurse team / CAMHs service or the Education Mental Health Team.

Suggestions for individual, group, or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parent/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as staff rooms, library and notice boards and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils seeking help by ensuring pupils understand:

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

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 the PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught 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 will follow the PSHE Association's Guidance¹ to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum.

Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:

- feedback from staff, pupils and parents
- review of the policy by SLT and governors to determine if objectives have been met and to identify barriers and enablers to ongoing policy implementation.

¹ [Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#)