

# St. Luke's CE Primary School



## Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

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## **Why mental health and wellbeing is important at St. Luke's CE Primary School?**

We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing 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 wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. According to a recent study 1 in 8 children aged 5 to 19 have diagnosable mental health disorders and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it is life-limiting.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: **"in order to help their children 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 children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community. Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it.

We also have a role to ensure that children 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 to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children 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 wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

### **A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health**

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

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children 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 their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

### **Supporting children' positive mental Health**

We believe the School has a key role in promoting children positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems.

Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

#### **Pupil-led activities**

- Assemblies to raise awareness of mental health.
- Mentoring – children working together to solve problems.
- Infant duty – a lunchtime group supporting younger children.

#### **Transition programmes**

- Transition Programme to secondary schools which includes all Year 6 children having support to ensure a smooth transition to secondary school.

#### **Small group activities**

- Pastoral 1:1 and group sessions
- Social Skills – a small group intervention to improve children's communication skills around turn taking, dealing with issues, resolving conflict.

## Whole school

- Wellbeing days and activities are planned into the curriculum in addition to focused enrichment days on feeling good and having a healthy mind-set.
  - The school has a strong pastoral offer with an increasing number of trauma-informed members of staff who can be an emotionally available adult. We also have a growing number of mental health first aiders for both pupils and adults.
  - In addition to the academic aspect of the curriculum we place a huge importance on developing behaviours for life using our BEEhaviour system: BEE **resilient, respectful, reflective, ready and responsible**. We focus on **character education** as we believe that it nurtures and promotes the ethical, intellectual, social and emotional development of individuals. It is a continuous learning process that enables our pupils to become moral, caring, critical, responsible individuals. At St. Luke's we encourage **5 winning ways to wellbeing: connect, give, take notice, keep learning and be active**.
- ☒ Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support.

## Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems. We also work closely with the local authority's mental health in education (MHIE) team.

## Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility

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 children 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 as:

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 should 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.

## **Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs**

### **Our approach:**

- Provide a safe environment to enable children to express themselves and be listened to.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of children are paramount.
- Identify appropriate support for children based on their needs.
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support.
- Involve children in the care and support they have.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with children and keep parents and carers updated.

### **6. 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. We do this in different ways including:

- Analysing behaviour, exclusions, attendance and sanctions.
- Staff report concerns about individual children to the relevant lead persons.
- Worry boxes and worry monsters for children to raise concerns which are reviewed regularly.
- Pupil Progress Review meetings termly.
- Regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Recording on CPOMs to help 'build a picture' for a child who may require support.

### **Key staff at St. Luke's Primary have had training on supporting Mental health issues and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems.**

Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to the Mental Health Lead: Joe Barnes-Moran (deputy headteacher) or the Pastoral Lead: Linda O'Hara.

These signs might include:

- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits.
- Falling academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE.
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Drugs or alcohol misuse.
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- 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.

### **Disclosures by children and confidentiality**

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgemental to children who disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of our children is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff make it clear to children that the concern will be shared with the Mental Health Lead or the Safeguarding Lead and recorded, in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil. All disclosures are recorded and held CPOMS.

### **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 children who do have mental health needs. On first entry to the School, our parent's meeting includes a discussion on the importance of positive mental health for learning. We ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with the School so that we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

### **Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs**

We are aware that parents and carers react in different ways to knowing their child has a mental health problem and we will be sensitive and supportive. We also aim to reassure by explaining that mental health problems are common, that the school has experience of working with similar issues and that help and advice are available.

### **When a concern has been raised, the School will:**

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them (In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.)
- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls.
- Make a record of the meeting.
- Agree a pastoral plan-do-review including clear next steps.
- 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 provided.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, 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.

### **Involving children**

We seek pupil's views about our approach, curriculum and in promoting whole school mental health activities.

We always seek feedback from children who have had support to help improve that support and the services they received.

### **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 children and know what to do and where to get help.

Our Mental Health Lead is a qualified 'mental health first aider' and the school actively promotes staff to access this training.

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.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. The policy is reviewed every two years by the Mental Health Lead and involves staff with a responsibility for mental health, including specialist services supporting the school and governors.