

# Christ Church C.E.(VC) Primary School



## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Last Updated June 2020

### Our School Vision

Our Vision is for our children to experience 'Life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Following the Christian inspiration of Jesus, our children will flourish and enable others to grow. Our school will be a place where aspiration and hope enable the growth of knowledge, wisdom and skills for all.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing 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 Christ Church School we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all pupils, staff and members of our school community. Our Christian vision of 'life in all its fullness (John 10:10) underpins everything that we do. We want to provide opportunities and experiences that help children in their understanding of who they are, why they are here, what they desire and how they should live.

Our curriculum is intended to equip young people with strong foundations that will carry them through into adulthood. PSHE lessons are an important part of this and the topics and skills covered in PSHE, for example the strengths and coping skills that underpin resilience, are also woven throughout the wider curriculum and school life.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing through our whole school ethos, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. This includes providing targeted support for individuals, or in response to events in the wider community.

We recognise that promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in our school is the responsibility of all members of the community. We believe it is important to create an atmosphere where mental health can be talked about openly and without judgement in order to provide a safe and stable environment for pupils and staff affected (both directly, and indirectly) by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Guidance that has informed this policy:

Church of England - [Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach 2018](#)

DfE – [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools 2018](#)

Mentally Healthy School Website - <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>

NYCC Ladder of Intervention - <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/75036-Ladder-of-Intervention-final.pdf>

## Scope

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

This document should be read in conjunction with:

Child Protection Policy

SEND Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy - PSHE Statement

Anti-Bullying Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy

## Aims:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

## Staff Responsibilities:

All staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Mrs D Cooper – Headteacher / Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer
- Mrs K Baines – SENCO / Pastoral and Mental Health Lead
- Mrs K Baines – PSHE Lead
- Mrs D Arbuthnott - Lead First Aider

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection office of staff or the head teacher. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical

emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral for support, including to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by K. Baines, mental health lead.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Curriculum**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by all our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The content of lessons are detailed in the Long Term Plan for PSHE and are adapted for the specific needs of each cohort, or in response to events in the local or wider community. There will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Our PSHE Curriculum follows DfE guidance for PSHE and Mental Health and Wellbeing in schools and the North Yorkshire Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Further opportunities for learning about mental health and wellbeing in the curriculum include: RE, P4C, Science (animals including humans) and PE. Children will have opportunities to practise and apply what they have learned in their wider school life.

## **Identification of need**

We recognise that schools have a unique privilege in that they may be the first line of contact for children, or the place where they show their distress most clearly and so are well placed to identify needs and make a first response to them.

We take part in the Growing up in North Yorkshire Survey which enables us to gain a deeper understanding of current cohorts and emerging mental health and wellbeing needs in our general school population.

Some children may have more individual needs. School staff may become aware of signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing difficulties. These signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with K Baines, our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead or with the headteacher.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood

- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

We recognise there are some pupils who are at greater risk of experiencing mental health and wellbeing difficulties, for example looked after children, young carers, pupils who identify as LGBT, pupils with SEND, pupils from armed forces families (this is not an exhaustive list). Staff are trained to have an understanding and awareness of this and to recognise and respond to potential difficulties

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

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file (CPOMS). This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, who will store the record appropriately (CPOMS) and offer support and advice about next steps.

## Targeted Support

We use the [ladder of intervention](#) as a framework for early assessment and support.

- Assess – this includes using the signs of safety as set out in the Ladder of Intervention and / or assessment tools such as the Academic Resilience Framework or Thrive. Children and parent/carer's views for part of this assessment. With parental consent, we may seek further advice

from other agencies, including specialist teachers, the Early Help team, Compass Buzz, or an educational psychologist.

- Plan – following assessment, a plan for intervention will be agreed using the Early Help action plan. If the child is on the SEND register, this will form part of their SEND support plan.
- Intervention – the agreed plan will be implemented
- Review – the effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

## **Signposting**

We ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Signposts for support can be found in the appendix.

We display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as corridors and toilets and we regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils' ability to recognise when they need support and to understand:

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

## **Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. We must never promise that we will not tell anybody about a disclosure. If we need to pass on any information that the pupil has shared, we should discuss with them:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

Parents will be informed of disclosures or concerns about mental health (in line with the Child Protection Policy). Pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves and this could be facilitated by a member of staff or followed up with parents the following day.

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, D Cooper must be informed immediately.

## **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- Where should the meeting happen?
- Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

## **Working with all 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 will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular 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

## **Supporting Peers**

When a pupil 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 some cases 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. In addition, some children from Year 4, 5 and 6 will be identified and trained as Compass Buzz Pupil Wellbeing Champions. Children will be supported to understand:

- 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 / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help

Additionally, we want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how they can access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information and support (for themselves or for their friend)
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

## **Training**

As a minimum, all staff receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe.

Further whole staff training:  
Compass Buzz Level 1

Individual members of staff have also completed:

- Compass Buzz level 2 and 3
- Mental Health First Aid
- Emotional Literacy Support (ELSA)
- PSHE CPD

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 pupils.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in June 2023

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated in line with local or national guidance.

This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

## **Appendix - Useful sources of further support:**

**Nationally Anxiety UK** work to relieve and support those living with anxiety and anxiety-based depression by providing information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services, including 1:1 therapy. They can provide support and help if a person has been diagnosed with, or suspect they may have an anxiety condition and can also help them deal with specific phobias such as fear of spiders, blushing, vomiting, being alone, public speaking, heights – in fact, any fear that stops a person from getting on with their life. [www.anxietyuk.org.uk/](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/)

**Catholic Mental Health Project** supports the Catholic community to further develop spiritual and pastoral care for mental health [www.catholicmentalhealthproject.org.uk/](http://www.catholicmentalhealthproject.org.uk/) Charlie Waller Memorial Trust offers free resources, including guidance and policy templates for use by schools and colleges. [www.cwmt.org.uk/](http://www.cwmt.org.uk/)

**Child Bereavement UK** supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement. Every year they train more than 8,000 professionals, helping them to better understand and meet the needs of grieving families. <https://childbereavementuk.org/>

**Childline** is a free, private and confidential service for children and young people available online, on the phone, anytime facilitated by trained counsellors. The website is easy to navigate and has many interactive resources, advice and sources of support for children and young people. [www.childline.org.uk/](http://www.childline.org.uk/)

**Compass Buzz** aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people aged 5-18 (25 with SEND) in schools across North Yorkshire. Compass BUZZ works with North Yorkshire schools to increase the skills, confidence and competence of staff dealing with children's emotional and mental health concerns through delivery of tiered training sessions and professional consultations, expert advice and guidance. <https://www.compass-uk.org/services/north-yorkshire-compass-buzz/>

**Education Support Partnership** is the UK's only charity providing mental health and wellbeing support services to all education staff and organisations. [www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/](http://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/)

**Mental Health Access Pack** is a compact, free resource which aims to: equip you with knowledge and advice, from medical, psychological and theological perspectives; help you support those in your



community who are struggling with mental health issues; help you to discuss issues and share ideas surrounding mental health and the church. [www.mentalhealthaccesspack.org/](http://www.mentalhealthaccesspack.org/)

**Mental Health Matters** contains information and resources for parishes, dioceses, chaplaincies and church community groups - and anyone else who's interested - to help improve our work with people experiencing mental illness. The Church is well placed to make a significant difference in the area of mental health. We can be a force to end stigma, and we can also be a place of inclusion, welcome and ministry. Mental Health Matters is working to make mental wellbeing a priority in our churches today. [www.mentalhealthmatters-cofe.org/](http://www.mentalhealthmatters-cofe.org/)

**Mentally Healthy Schools** brings together quality-assured information, advice and resources to help primary schools understand and promote children's mental health and wellbeing. Our aim is to increase staff awareness, knowledge and confidence to help you support your pupils. [www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/](http://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/)

**Mind** provides trusted advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. [www.mind.org.uk/](http://www.mind.org.uk/)

**MindEd** is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults. [www.minded.org.uk/](http://www.minded.org.uk/)

**North Yorkshire County Council Ladder of Intervention** aims to support schools in adopting early intervention for children with Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH), including children with a range of vulnerabilities. <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/75036-Ladder-of-Intervention-final.pdf>

**North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP)** undertakes the work of formerly of North Yorkshire Children's Trust and North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board with the aim to ensure all children in North Yorkshire are safe, happy, healthy and achieving. Signposts to further support in relation to mental health and wellbeing are available for school staff, parents and young people. <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/>

**The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust** provides funded training to schools on a variety of topics related to mental health including twilight, half day and full day INSET sessions. [www.cwmt.org.uk/](http://www.cwmt.org.uk/)

**The Children's Society** is a national charity that works with the country's most vulnerable children and young people. We listen. We support. We act. Because no child should feel alone. They work directly with children, develop resources and publications and lobby on behalf of children annually, surveying them as part of their Good Childhood reports. [www.childrenssociety.org.uk/](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/)

**The Mind and Soul Foundation** aims to educate – sharing the best of Christian theology and scientific advances; equip – helping people meet with God and recover from emotional distress; encourage – engaging with the local church and mental health services. Of more use to staff and parents, they have a good selection of resources and articles, including the mental health access pack which was developed for churches, offering information on common mental health conditions and pastoral tips for working with those with mental health conditions. [www.mindandsoulfoundation.org/](http://www.mindandsoulfoundation.org/)

**Winston's Wish** provide specialist child bereavement support services across the UK, including in-depth therapeutic help in individual, group and residential settings. [www.winstonswish.org/](http://www.winstonswish.org/)

**YoungMinds** is the UK's leading charity championing the wellbeing and mental health of young people. They offer resources and bespoke training for schools and support for parents and young people. In addition they have a dedicated section on caring for the wellbeing of teachers and school staff. <https://youngminds.org.uk/>