



ST BERNADETTE'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Positive Mental Health Policy

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Approved by BoD: 03/04/2025
Policy Review Date : 30/09/2026

Mission Statement

At St Bernadette's, we follow Jesus by sharing His light through our words and actions, spreading His word in how we live and learn, trusting His plan even when the path is uncertain, loving one another with compassion and respect, and serving others with humility, just as Christ did. Through these daily acts of faith and kindness, we grow together as a community of disciples.

'Mental Health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.' (World Health Organisation.)

Aims

At St. Bernadette's Primary School, we are a recognised Rainbows site, where we demonstrate compassion, and empathy for young people in our care.

We aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and children. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable children.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to any instances of mental ill health within our school community.

- Promote positive mental health in all our staff and children within our school.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues through well-being courses/training.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health.
- Provide support for staff working with young people who have mental health issues.
- Provide support to children suffering mental ill health, their peers, parents and carers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our SEND Policy and our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy in cases where a child's mental health overlaps with, or is linked to a child protection/welfare or SEND issue.

The Head Teacher

- Will ensure that all staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance and lead by example in this regard.
- Will support the Governing Body in ensuring that strategies are implemented to effectively manage and, where necessary, reduce employee stress.

- Will ensure that there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of school life.
- Will create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns in the first instance to the designated Health and Well Being Lead if they choose to do so, and will enable staff to do so in an environment where stress is not considered a weakness.
- Will monitor and review any measures that are planned, and assess their effectiveness.
- Will conduct risk assessment for work-related stress in consultation with staff.
- Will appoint a staff wellbeing lead who is responsible for ensuring that the good health and wellbeing of all staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school.
- Will make individual interventions such as short-term rehabilitation and return to work plans, and longer-term reasonable adjustments to work.

Actions to Support New Staff

Practical actions to support new staff:

- All new staff will be given a school introduction by the Head Teacher.
- All new staff will receive the staff handbook. This will continue to include all important policies, or their location
- All staff will be made to feel welcome and given as much support as required.
- All staff are to be issued with a name badge on arrival on their first day.
- At the end of the first week of employment, new staff will have a review with a senior member of staff.

Procedures for Handling Issues of Wellbeing

The Senior Leadership Team must encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns.

The Senior Leadership Team should be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.

Where additional, professional advice is required, the school has contacts with Occupational Health Professionals and Human Resource experts and these avenues should be utilised.

Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the confidential counselling service listed in the Staff Handbook. This service provides staff with serious concerns to obtain advice and support outside of the workplace.

The school will provide support to any employees facing high-levels of stress in the workplace, as well as other work-related issues, which are having/have the potential to have negative impacts on the staff member's health and wellbeing.

The various options for dealing with such issues should be discussed with staff members where appropriate. In some cases, this may include external support such as the teacher helpline or support from the Local Authority e.g. counselling.

During this time, the school will ensure that at all times the staff member's privacy and dignity is respected. This means maintaining confidentiality, upholding the employee's rights and dealing with the employee with upmost sensitivity.

Procedures to Promote Staff Wellbeing

- Weekly communication via morning staff briefings.
- Continuing professional development for all staff.
- Staff events to socialise
- Performance management.
- Annual job description meetings.
- All staff encouraged to contribute to the School Development Plan.
- All staff invited to INSET days.
- Recognition on staff birthdays and special occasions.
- Work place rooms for relaxing, working and supporting colleague's e. g. Pope John Paul Room
- Administrative staff to support the wider workforce.
- Staff meetings to give the opportunity to voice concerns and to have their views sought.

Training for Staff

All staff will receive training and guidance as appropriate about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep children safe.

Additional training for staff will be provided if it is deemed to be appropriate due to the arising of a specific mental health or well-being issue.

Children's Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, in accordance with the statutory legal guidance within Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2024 document, states that child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare.

This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Mental Health is an aspect relating to the welfare of a child therefore everyone has a responsibility for the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing.

The designated Mental Health Lead at St. Bernadette's Primary School is Mrs S Galloway

The designated Safeguarding Officers are:

Mr A Turner

Miss V Billingsley

Mrs N Hykin

Mrs N Dinsdale

Dealing with Concerns

Any member of staff who has a concern about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the designated Mental Health Lead in the first instance.

If there is a fear that the children is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to one of the designated Safeguarding Officers.

If the children presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies within school should be followed, including alerting trained first aid members of staff or contacting the emergency services if necessary.

In instances where a referral to CAMHS or another external agency is deemed to be necessary then this will be led by the designated Mental Health Lead (Mr A Turner) or the SENDCO (Mrs Wilson-Thickens).

Identifying Warning Signs of Possible Mental Ill Health

Members of staff may become aware of specific warning signs which may indicate that a children is experiencing mental ill health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning

signs should ALWAYS be taken seriously and any staff members who observe any such signs should raise their concerns with the designated Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs which staff should be aware of are:

- 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, character or mood.
- Lowering academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expression of feelings of failure, uselessness, loss of hope or self-worth.
- Changes in clothing e.g. wearing long sleeves in warm weather.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Avoiding participation in P.E. sessions or getting changed secretly.
- Lateness or absence from school.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs.

Disclosures

A child may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, therefore all staff MUST know how to deal with such a disclosure.

If a child chooses to make a disclosure about their own mental health or that of a friend then the staff member should always respond in a calm, supportive and non-judgmental manner. They should listen rather than advise and their first thoughts should always be of the children's immediate emotional and physical safety.

All disclosures should be recorded following the normal child protection documentation and procedures.

Teaching about Mental Health

At St. Bernadette's we provide opportunities within our curriculum and through extended provision that promote and develop the skills, knowledge and understanding needed by children to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and

safe. This is through a structured programme of study that is now a statutory requirement and is taught through Relationship and Health Education in all year groups from Year 1 through to Year 6.

The specific content of such sessions will be determined by the specific needs of the children, but there will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language, resilience and confidence to seek help, as needed for both themselves and others.

When a child is suffering from mental ill-health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers, who often want to support their friend but do not know how.

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 prevent this and to keep peers safe, staff should consider case by case, in consultation with the designated Mental Health Lead, which friends may need additional support. Such support will be provided either in one-to-one or group sessions and will be guided by conversations with the children who is suffering and their parents with whom it will be discussed:

- What is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can support best.
- Things that friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause further upset or anxiety.
- Warning signs that their friend may need help or support e.g. signs of a relapse.

In addition to the above staff should highlight to peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves.
- Safe sources of information about their friend's condition.
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions that they may be feeling.

Prayer Resources

CBCEW - Two prayers to bring to God our intentions for those with mental health needs, their families and carers: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/mental-health/prayers-st-dymphna-pray-for-us/>

Pray as you Go - This is an Ignatian resource designed to support you each day through prayer reflections that help you become more aware of God's presence in your life, listen to God's word and grow in your relationship with God. <https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

Taizé - Taizé chants are well-known for being a way to meditate and find space to be with God. On their website they have a section where you can select any Taizé song and you can read, sing and play the music. https://www.taize.fr/en_rubrique2603.html

Catholic Children's Society - They have resources to use including a series of video resources named 'Meditation with Children and Young People' in collaboration with the World Community for Christian Meditation: <https://www.cathchild.org.uk/meditation-with-children-young-people/>