



ST ALOYSIUS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Our mission statement

Together with Jesus we love, learn and believe

Having a sense of wellbeing involves a balance between both physical and emotional states. It ensures that each individual feels comfortable and capable in their environment, with opportunities for stimulation as well as relaxation.

Policy statement

At St Aloysius Primary School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all children, their families and members of staff, governors and the community. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected – both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining our approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and children.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in children.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to children with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst children and raise awareness of resilience-building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

Key Staff Members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of children, however key members of staff have specific roles to play: Wellbeing Coordinator, PHSE Co-ordinator, Inclusion Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child, in the first instance they should speak to their phase leader. If there is a concern that the child is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed. If the child presents a high risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Individual Care Plans

When a child has been identified as having cause for concern, has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals. Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the child's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school and specific staff

Teaching about Wellbeing and Mental Health

A child's wellbeing is central to our educational philosophy. In promoting this aspect of every child's development, we ensure each child is well-rounded and fully prepared for life. We provide a breadth, depth and balance within the curriculum and an appreciation of the whole child.

We follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and using Jigsaw.

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote children's wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of children's own emotions as well as those of other people. Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing children who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting children to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

We employ a range of strategies to promote the wellbeing of children:

St Aloysius Child

Here at St Aloysius, we are committed to ensuring that each child meets their full potential, excelling at every opportunity, both inside and outside of the classroom, in a happy and safe environment. We recognize that we are preparing our children for a future that is yet unknown. We allow and encourage them to think outside of the box. We teach them how to dream, cast vision and set goals. We teach our children how to deal with failure so that they learn how to pick themselves up, overcome challenges and ignite their initiatives again. We foster a climate of curiosity and independence and in doing so, develop transferable skills for lifelong learning and intrinsic value of life.

The St Aloysius Child Passport allows children to record their experiences throughout their school life from Reception to Year 6.

The passport will then be split into 5 areas:

1. Outdoor Challenges – Encouraging our children to embrace outdoor life.
2. Our World – Experience the world we live in.
3. Creative Arts – To express yourself in a different way.
4. Life Skills – To develop independence and skills for the wider world.
5. Just for fun – Wellbeing, happiness, laughter, fun.

Use of Music

A wide range of music is used throughout the school. We acknowledge its power to calm or relax, invigorate, cheer, inspire or enhance learning.

Pupil Voice

All children's views are valued. A range of procedures are in place to promote the inclusion of all children. Emotion charts allow children to share their attitudes and worries or concerns.

Pupils are given responsibility e.g. Buddies/sports leaders/school councillors who support play and friendship, thus increasing the wellbeing of both parties.

Learning Mentor

The role of the learning mentor is to support all children in school to reach their full potential. Their social and emotional needs are addressed through a variety of stimulating and supportive activities. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices, both physically and emotionally.

Head Child/Children

In year 6 two children are appointed as head children on a termly basis. They have many responsibilities such as; peer support, sharing pupil ideas, celebration awards in assembly etc

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, children and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (noticeboards, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, website, Parent App, Twitter), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure our school community understands:

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

Sources of support at school and in the local community

School Based Support

Learning mentor – one-to-one sessions to offer support. Available to all children suffering a bereavement or emotional wellbeing need. Can be requested by children or parents or recommended by school staff.

Relax Kids - offered as part of circle times and our wider curriculum offer.

Local Support In Knowsley

There are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the CAMHS partnership, a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a child 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 alert Mrs O' Callaghan (Wellbeing Coordinator) or Mrs Telfer-Clarke (PHSE Coordinator).

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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

Targeted Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. For example, those who are in care, young carers, those who have had previous access to CAMHS, those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating. We ensure timely and effective identification of children who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems
- Working closely with Knowsley Council Children's Services, Knowsley CAMHS and other agencies and services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral
- Identifying and assessing in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and their parents/carers.

Agree an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach

- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs

- Ensure young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including Knowsley CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur
- Provide young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality
- Provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it
- The identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014.

Managing Disclosures

Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy

If a child chooses to disclose concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded confidentially on the child's personal file, including:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps
- This information will be shared with the Headteacher

Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a child to either someone within or outside of the school, then this will be first discussed with the child.

We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the child first, however, there may be instances when information must be shared, such as children up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm. It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the child. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support. Parents must always be informed, but children may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, a timescale of 24 hours is recommended to share this information before the school makes contact with the parents/carers. If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the child protection procedures should be followed.

Whole School Approach

Working with parents/carers

If it is deemed appropriate to inform parents there are questions to consider first:

- Can we meet with the parents/carers face-to-face?
- Where should the meeting take place – some parents are uncomfortable in school

premises so consider a neutral venue if appropriate.

- Who should be present – child, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes? We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation. Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage. Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/agree are added to the child's record and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

Supporting parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

Supporting Peers

When a child is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings (eg Circle of Friends) and will be guided by conversations by the child who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- 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 needs help

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

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

Wellbeing for Staff

We believe that retaining, developing and motivating a school's workforce is the key to providing high quality education. In promoting the wellbeing of staff, we recognise its importance for efficient work, reduced sickness absence, improved attitudes towards work and increased morale.

Good communication and openness within the school environment is vital for driving forward this initiative. The importance of wellbeing and mental health is part of the Induction process at all levels.

We employ a range of strategies to promote the wellbeing of staff:

Meetings/Working Lunches

All meetings are set in advance, with an agenda. Staff take turns to lead meetings. We ensure the content is purposeful and relevant. Agendas are forwarded and time is closely monitored. Prior to Twilight sessions snacks are provided for our staff team.

Communication

A daily briefing is used to communicate to all staff the forthcoming events. It also acknowledges the successes and thanks from senior leaders/members of staff. A weekly newsletter keeps staff, parents and Governors up to date with news and events.

Additional Support

Staff members are kept regularly updated on wellbeing and mental health issues via email links and written communication from the Change Team. Signposting is put in toilets as well as the staffroom. The 5 Ways to Wellbeing are circulated to staff and are posted around the school.

Staff rewards

To enhance and promote staff wellbeing we use a number of strategies which include 'cup of kindness', wellbeing treats, one afternoon of ppa at home per term etc

Wellbeing for Governors, Parents and the Community

The school is committed to being a 'learning community'. Under this remit we endeavour to educate our stakeholders and keep them fully informed.

Parental and Community involvement is an integral part of our school life. We value the part they play in making the school a happy and stimulating place. We extend our work on wellbeing to involve them whenever possible. Parents are encouraged not only to consider the wellbeing of their children but also to think about their own wellbeing and its effect on others.

Parents are updated through the weekly newsletter, Twitter, the school website, Parent App and letters.

The school provides opportunities for feedback including the Parental Questionnaire, Parents' Evenings and Stakeholder Questionnaire.

Training

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 the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is September 2022. In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes.