

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School



Mental Health and Well Being Policy 2023-24

Due to be reviewed September 2024

Mental Health and Wellbeing policy

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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 Holy Cross Catholic Primary School we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and 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 Needs Policy (where a pupil has an identified special educational need)

Aim of the Policy

At Holy Cross Catholic 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

Dissemination

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School will share the policy with staff, governors, pupils and parents/carers via the following methods:

- Introduce the policy as part of meetings, with time for questions and review
- A copy or direct link to the policy will be emailed to all staff
- New staff will receive a copy of this policy during the induction process
- A copy of the policy will be available on display in the staff room
- Salient points from the policy will be shared with pupils via PSHE or tutor periods
- School website
- Via newsletter to parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

Staff with a specific remit include:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: (DSL) **Clare Higgins**
- Mental Health Lead Name: **Paula Brás (Gained qualification in July 2023)**
- Head Teacher: Clare Higgins
- Deputy Head: Paula Brás

Responsibility

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil/student should speak to the DSL 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/student 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.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by DSL.

All school staff are encouraged to:

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required
- Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing Holy Cross Catholic Primary School.
- Support fellow staff in their awareness of this policy
- Support and contribute to Holy Cross Catholic 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

Managers and Senior Leadership 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 the establishment of a work ethos within Holy Cross Catholic 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 both a school-wide and departmental 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 o
- 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 in the pupil's confidential file. 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, who will store the record appropriately and offer advice about the next step.

Warning Signs

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 the DSL or DDSs.

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

- 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, mood or behaviour
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol in the family

- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- 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

Staff concerns are reported using a record of concern form and handed to the DSL immediately. All concerns are then be discussed at the weekly inclusion meeting.

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

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents/carers and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- Special requirements or precautions
Medication and any side effects
- Emergency procedures
- The role the school can play

Procedures for identified pupils

- Step 1 soft touch interventions e.g playground support
- Step 2 Teacher consultation around behaviour in class advised by P. Brás or Chris. Hall or any other professional involved
- Step 3 Thrive – assessment and care plan
- Step 4 therapy
- Step 5 referral to CAMMS or other external agencies.

Confidentiality

See school's Safeguarding Policy

We should be honest with pupils/students 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/students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm.

If acting to safeguard a pupil/student 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.

In order to support all parent/carers of children Holy Cross Catholic 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 Healthily 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.

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.

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 in Appendix B.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as staff rooms, library, notice boards and lavatories 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 mental well-being and resilience curriculum. (PSHE)

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

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.

The policy is next due for review in Sept 2024.