St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

July 2023

St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Mission statement

To Love, To Care, To Share

St. Edmund's Catholic Primary is a community of faith where we aim to keep Christ at the center of everything we do. We celebrate the uniqueness of every individual nurturing them to achieve their full potential. Our understanding and experience of the love of God grows through our way of living, behaving, learning and teaching, which is inspired by Jesus.

Our Mission Statement encapsulated in "To Love, Care, Share", along with our Catholic values and the teaching of the Catholic Church, underpin the values of this policy.

Context

We aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being 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 how it can significantly affect their social and emotional development and consequently their learning and achievement.

Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need. All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships and academic achievement.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils 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 pupils well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community. Our role in school is to ensure that they are able to manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils 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 be a school where

- all pupils are valued
- pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe

- pupils 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

We are also committed to promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out

- how we promote positive mental health
- our whole school approach
- how we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- how we train and support staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- key information about some common mental health problems
- where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing: … **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.**

Mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children to

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn and achieve

Links to Other Policies

This policy runs through all other policies as they are all in place for the welfare and wellbeing of the children. However there are particular links with our Children Protection, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and our Behaviour Policies. We believe that all behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need and is a communication from a child.

A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise. (See Appendix 1 for risk and protective factors) This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands

2. Helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to

3. Helping pupils to be resilient learners

4. Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health

5. Early identification of pupils 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 resilience

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

Roles and Responsibilities

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 pupils 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 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), childhood trauma including 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 understand that these experiences can lead to low self-esteem, Speech, Language and Communication Needs including difficulties with focus, attention and problem solving difficulties, social difficulties, behavioural difficulties and more.

The school's Senior Mental Health Lead (who is also the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads):

- leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- keeps staff up-to-date with information about what support is available
- liaises with the PSHE Leader on teaching about mental health
- is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services
- leads on and makes referrals to services
- is part of Enfield's Senior Mental Health Leads' Network and the Educational Psychology Service's 'Enfield Thrives Together' Network
- Liaises with the Governor with responsibility for mental health and wellbeing

The Mental Health link Governor liaises closely with the Senior Mental Health Lead to develop strategy, support with putting plans into action and monitoring the impact of the provision.

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families.

Support in school

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) who runs group and individual interventions to support with developing emotional literacy to enable children to manage difficulties and develop resilience. Our ELSA also checks in regularly with vulnerable children and all children know that they can talk to her
- Play therapy – the therapist works one to one with children and helps them to express their feelings through play, arts and crafts
- Wellbeing stations are available for every year group and children use the stations to emotionally regulate. Each one has resources to support regulation.
- 'Base' is a safe space for children who are finding things overwhelming and who need help from an adult. Our Mental Health Lead/SENCo and Our Early Years SENCO are in 'Base' to support the children in any way necessary
- The Senior Leadership Team has an open door policy for children and adults.
- Key members of staff have had training in Trauma Informed Practice which has been shared with all staff
- Pastoral Support Plans that are reviewed with school, children and parents termly
- Each classroom has a 'worry box'

Working with external agencies

1. My Young Mind Enfield (MYME) – emotional well-being practitioners work with families and run groups and workshops in school to support with wellbeing.
2. Strengthening Wellbeing, Emotional health, Relationships and Readiness for Learning (SWERRL) are the behaviour support service in Enfield. They advise school on how to support individual children and groups and they support teachers. Support staff often join the interventions so that practice can be shared and repeated in school.
3. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) . We make referrals (with parental consent) when we feel that children need more support.
4. Educational Psychology Service (EPS) support school and families with formulating Pastoral Support Plans. They provide workshops, training and support for children, staff and families.
5. School Nursing Service
6. Children's Services

Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health through our Curriculum

Mental Health and Wellbeing is a core part of our curriculum and runs through a number of different areas

- Our school motto 'To Love, To Care, To Share' is fundamental to our teaching and learning and children apply the philosophy in all areas of school life
- Our PSHE curriculum includes explicit teaching about mental health and wellbeing

- Our Religious Education curriculum, including the Catholic life of the school and collective worship enriches children spiritually, emotionally and culturally ensuring that all children feel loved and valued.
- Our curriculum is designed to enrich children's experiences, understanding and knowledge of the world through trips, workshops, interventions, theme days, charity days, diversity days.

Early Identification

We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible so that we can try to provide intervention as early as possible.

- Teacher referral to SENCO/SLT
- Being a Trauma Informed school
- Liaison with our Parent Support Advisor who might be a family's first point of contact
- Home visits when children are starting in Reception and liaison with nurserys
- Induction meetings for children joining the school and discussion with previous schools
- Analysis of behaviour patterns
- Worry boxes
- Pupil surveys
- Parent meetings
- Follow up of absence and/or lateness, including first day calling

All staff have had training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs (see Appendix 2) and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems.

Signs that a child might be experiencing mental health problems

Common warning signs of mental health issues include:

- Mood and behaviour changes
- Self-harming
- Unexplained physical changes, such as weight loss or gain
- Academic behaviour or performance slows
- Sleeping problems
- Changes in social interaction, such as withdrawal or avoidance of friends and family

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as noncompliant, 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. A risk assessment and plan will be made.

Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the one of the safeguarding team and recorded in order to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

Non-Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or message.

Recording

Disclosures, concerns, incidents and actions are recorded securely on our Child Protection Management System – CPOMS.   Information may be shared with key members of staff for the safeguarding of the child, but remains confidential.

Records such as PSPs, professional reports, risk assessments are kept in the children's confidential files.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Mental Health Lead/SENCO/Designated Safeguarding Team and recorded as above. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service.

Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating. We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid, there are no absolutes.

In some cases a pupil's mental health needs require support from specialist services. School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the SENCO following the assessment process and in consultation with parents/carers and the child if appropriate.

Need The level of need is based on discussions at regular DSL/SLT meetings and with other key staff as appropriate. We also use an Emotional Literacy Assessment	Evidence Based Support This will be agreed in consultation with staff, parents and pupils as appropriate	Access and Monitoring
Highest need	CAMHS EPS MYME SWERRL Request for a Statutory Needs Assessment through the SEN Service ELSA one to one support Access to 'Base' PSP	Early Help accessed by the DSL Team (which includes SENCO/Mental Health Lead) Other external services accessed via referral by SENCO. ELSA accessed by class teacher referral to SENCO/SLT and impact measured by ELSA PSP cycle monitored by SENCO, class teacher, parent and child. Monitoring is in collaboration with agencies, SENCO and other key staff, parents and children. Impact analysed in regular SLT meetings and next steps agreed
Some need	ELSA intervention Play Therapy Access to 'Base' EP involvement in Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle Early Help, e.g. parent support	
Low need	Wellness Stations General support ELSA check-ins	

Involving Parents and Carers

We recognise the vital role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children. We also understand that parents, carers and other adults are in a better position to support children if they themselves are mentally healthy, so we endeavour to be supportive to children and their families in any way we can.

- Advertise workshops provided by external agencies for parents that are related to mental health and wellbeing
- Invite speakers from supporting agencies to come in to talk to parents about their own mental health and that of their children
- Coffee mornings to develop a sense of community within the school
- Including parents and carers in days promoting mental health
- Information is provided to parents about who to talk to if they have concerns about their child's wellbeing or mental health

- Where concerns are raised in school, we will contact parents and arrange to meet to discuss
- Close liaison with parents regarding any support or interventions that may be offered by school
- School is sensitive to parents particular circumstances when planning for support

Involving pupils

- We will be introducing peer support where older children will be trained and supervised in supporting children with their emotional wellbeing
- Pupil surveys about their mental health and wellbeing
- Worry boxes in the classroom
- Seeking pupil views regarding interventions in which they participate

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 pupils and know what to do and where to get help (see Appendix 3). Those staff with a specific responsibility have more specialised training and where possible access to supervision from mental health professionals.

We aim to provide staff with opportunities for their mental health and wellbeing and to support them to manage their workload so that they can achieve a healthy work/life balance.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy was made in collaboration with the whole school. It's effectiveness will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team, including the Senior Mental Health Lead and reported to governors. This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if deemed necessary.

July 2023

To be reviewed November 2026

Appendix 1

Risk and protective factors that are believed to be associated with mental health outcomes (adapted from 'Mental health and Behaviour in schools' DfE 2018)

	Risk Factors	Protective factors
In the child	- Genetic influences - Low IQ and learning disabilities - Specific development delay or neurodiversity - Communication difficulties - Difficult temperament - Physical illness - Academic failure - Low self-esteem	- Secure attachment experience - Outgoing temperament as an infant - Good communication skills, sociability - Being a planner and having a belief in control - Humour - A positive attitude - Experiences of success and achievement - Faith or spirituality - Capacity to reflect
In the family	- Overt parental conflict including domestic violence - Family breakdown - Inconsistent or unclear discipline - Hostile and rejecting relationships - Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs - Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect - Parents psychiatric illness - Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder - Death and loss, including loss of a friendship	- At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) - Affection - Clear, consistent discipline - Support for education - Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In school	- Bullying including online (cyber) - Discrimination - Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships - Deviant peer influences - Peer pressure - Child on child abuse - Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships	- Clear policies on behaviour and bullying - Code of Conduct - Open door policy - A whole school approach to promoting good mental health - Good pupil to teacher/school staff relationships - Positive classroom management - A sense of belonging

		• Positive peer influences • Positive friendships • Effective safeguarding and child protection procedures • An effective early help process • Effective multi-agency working • Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively
In the community	• Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation • Other significant life events	• Wider support network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

Appendix 2

Specific mental health needs most commonly seen in school-aged children

When children experience a range of emotional and behavioural problems that are outside the normal range for their age, the might be described as experiencing mental health problems or disorders. (Mental health and behaviour in schools – DfE 2018)

Please click on the following link for the difficulties that school age children might experience.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069687/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf (Section 3.2)

Appendix 3

Where to get information and support

https://www.youngminds.org.uk/ Advice and support for parents and children

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/mental-health-parenting/ Help and advice for children and families dealing with mental health difficulties

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/information-for-parents/

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/parenting-with-a-mental-health-problem/parenting-and-mental-health/

https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/ tackles the stigma of mental health

www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health

Local offer

https://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/local-offer/social-emotional-and-mental-health/social-emotional-and-mental-health#:~:text=Mind%20in%20Enfield%20offers%20a,counselling%2C%20advocacy%2C%20and%20housing .

Enfield's local offer page includes where to get support along with other national agencies. It also includes links to websites dealing with particular conditions.