

## **Mental Health and Emotional Well Being Policy**

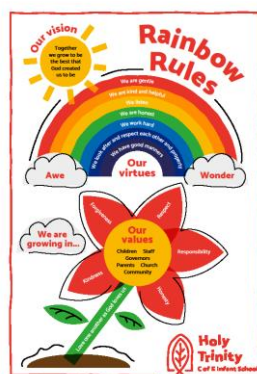
### **Introduction**

At Holy Trinity C of E Infant School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. Children have a wide range of opportunities to experience 'life within all its fullness' (John 10:10).

**Our Vision:** Together we grow to be the best that God created us to be.  
(Rooted in John 13:34 Love one another as God loves us)

**Our Values:** Respect, Kindness, Honesty, Forgiveness, Responsibility



**Our Virtues:** Lived through our Rainbow Rules - We are gentle, we are kind & helpful, we listen, we are honest, we work hard, we look after and respect each other and property, we have good manners

**Our Mission:** At Holy Trinity Infant School all children come first and all children succeed. We are on an adventure of learning, loving and laughing together, in a nurturing environment which holds Christian values at its heart.

In the review of this policy, we have taken into consideration, as a church school, the following Church of England documents: Church of England Vision for Education (2016), Valuing All God's Children (2017), and Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach (2018).

***"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 2014)

### **At our school we:**

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

## **We promote a mentally healthy environment through:**

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

## **We pursue our aims through:**

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder.

## **Scope**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Health and Safety Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (where the mental health of a pupil overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue) and our SEND policy in cases where pupil's mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE/RSE and SMSC policies.

## **Lead Members of Staff**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Marie Thompson- Headteacher/Designated child protection / safeguarding officer/ /Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead
- Jemma Hughes – Senior Teacher/Designated child protection / safeguarding officer

## **Responsibility**

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil 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 Headteacher. If the pupil/student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed.

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

### **A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health**

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, vision, values, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
2. Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
3. Helping children to be resilient learners.
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of children 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 their own resilience.

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

We use Growth Mindset statements (such as I can't do it ... yet), mindfulness and breathing techniques such as 'belly breathing' as strategies to help pupils and staff 'grow to be the best' that they can be. Since 2019, we started celebrating Children's Mental Health Week, which promoted staying healthy inside and out. One of our virtues is that our school is a safe place to make mistakes.

Pupils are becoming more aware of what strategies personally help them to self-regulate their emotions, believe that they can achieve and help them prepare for learning. Pupils know how to keep their bodies healthy and are aware that different strategies help different people to feel healthy mentally and to help them be the best they can be both inside and out.

Pupils grow in confidence in making mistakes and learning from them. This also encourages them to push boundaries in their learning.

Pupils have space and time to talk if they wish, feel listened to, supported and their self-esteem is raised through spending 1:1 time with a member of staff. Our staff member is supported by working collaboratively with staff from local schools.

Pupils receive specialised support for their individual needs. Staff also have access to specialised advice to support them in helping them meet the needs of their pupils.

### **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 Trinity C of E Infant School
- Support fellow staff in their awareness of this policy
- Support and contribute to Holy Trinity C of E Infant 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 the Headteacher or Senior Teacher if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being

**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 within the establishment, of a work ethos at Holy Trinity C of E Infant 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 “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.
- 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
  - 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.

**Supporting children’s positive mental health**

We believe the School has a key role in promoting children positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

**Pupil-led activities**

- Peer mediation and Peer mentoring – children working together to solve problems and planned sessions where identified adults mentor a designated child.

**Transition programmes**

- Transition Programme to junior schools

## Class activities

- Class Dojos
- Worry boxes/Monster - a mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class
- Circle times
- Heart Smart session as part of PHES/RSE
- Looking at the website <https://www.healthforkids.co.uk/> with the children and sharing this with parents.



## Whole school

- Wellbeing week – whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good
- Displays and information around the School about positive mental health and where to go for help and support

## Small group activities

- Nurture groups
- Therapeutic conversation sessions
- Elsa sessions

## Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing

Through PSHE/RSE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems.

### EYFS & Key Stage 1 children learn:

- To recognise, name and describe feelings including good and not so good feelings.
- Simple strategies for managing feelings.
- How their behaviour affects other people.
- About empathy and understanding other people's feelings.
- To cooperate and problem solve.
- To motivate themselves and persevere.
- How to calm down.
- About change and loss and the associated feelings (including moving home, losing toys, pets or friends).
- Who to go to if they are worried.

- About different types of teasing and bullying, that these are wrong and unacceptable.
- How to resist teasing or bullying, if they experience or witness it, whom to go to and how to get help.

## **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.

## **Confidentiality**

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we think it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the child:

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

## **Working with All Parents and Carers**

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/carers 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 they can talk to, and how to get the support they need 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 review meetings.
- 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.

## **Working with other agencies and partners**

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

The school nurse (including a half termly drop-in session)  
Educational psychology services  
Behaviour support  
Paediatricians  
CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)  
Counselling services  
Family support workers  
Therapists

## **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.

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
- Secretive behaviour
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

## **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

## **Staff Training and CPD**

As a minimum, all staff will 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.

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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Headteacher or Senior teacher, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

## **Covid-19**

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, there have been additional stresses on everyone in the school and wider community as we have navigated, and continue to navigate, through lockdowns, changes to work/home/school routines, illness, isolation periods, and for some people, the loss of loved ones. School aim to use this policy to provide a framework to support our staff, pupils and parents as we continue to work through this period.

Reviewed: January 2022

Next Review: January 2025

