

# St James CE Primary Academy



*Together through faith we will aspire to grow in our understanding of ourselves, in our abilities and in our knowledge of God's wonderful diverse world.*

## Mental Health and Well-being Policy

Updated March 2025

### Policy Statement

At St James CE Primary Academy we believe mental health is as important as physical health and is integral to our ability to flourish, as articulated in our Christian vision and values of Love, Trust, Respect, Friendship, Honesty and Truthfulness Perseverance.

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

In addition to promoting positive mental health and well-being, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and well-being issues. At St James 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.

### According to the World Health Organisation's World Mental Health Report (2022):

*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.*

### Aims of the Policy

The aims of the policy are to:

- Provide a clear whole school frame work for promoting positive mental health and well-being for pupils, staff and the wider school community.
- Ensure that mental health concerns are identified early and appropriate support is provided.

- Create a culture where mental health is openly discussed and stigma is challenged.
- Offer structured systems of support through school practices, pastoral care, and external partnerships.

## Legal Framework

This policy is guided by several legal frameworks, ensuring that the school meets its statutory obligations while promoting mental health and well-being:

- **Children and Families Act 2014:** Supports children with SEND, ensuring that those with mental health needs have equal access to education and appropriate support services.
- **Education Act 2002:** Places a duty on schools to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare, including their mental health.
- **Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance (DfE, 2018):** Informs schools on identifying and managing mental health needs, with emphasis on early intervention.
- **SEND Code of Practice 2015:** Ensures that children with SEND, including mental health challenges, receive tailored support.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024:** Treats mental health concerns as safeguarding issues, mandating appropriate referrals to external agencies.
- **Equality Act 2010:** Protects pupils from discrimination based on mental health, ensuring inclusivity and equal access to education.
- **Public Sector Equality Duty:** Requires schools to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity, promoting a supportive environment for mental health.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR:** Ensures confidentiality and care in handling sensitive mental health information

This policy is intended as guidance for all staff and describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being.

## Teaching about mental health

At St James we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising.

We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and well-being.
- Adhering to a positive, restorative approach to behaviour management
- Helping children to feel comfortable about sharing any concerns or worries.
- Teaching children emotional skills and an awareness of mental health, so that they understand their emotions and feelings better.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand their importance in the world.
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.

## **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.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Incorporating Mental Health and Well-being within PSHE lessons for all year groups
- Normalising discussions about a range of feelings and how we can manage them

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

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties, including bereavement.
- Nurture groups to focus on mental health, resilience and well-being.

## **Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific role include:

Mental Health Lead – Mrs Hewkin

SENCO – Miss Machin

Mrs Hewkin will work with all staff to co-ordinate a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, her role will also include:

- Providing advice and support to staff and organise training and updates.
- Liaising with mental health services and make individual referrals to them.
- Creating individual care plans, when required, in conjunction with class teachers and parents

## **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught, but we will also take into consideration the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

## Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Zones of Regulation resources
- Managing feelings resources
- Managing emotions resources.
- Mental health and well-being groups
- Therapeutic activities including art, Lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire
- Well-being Measurement Frameworks
- Emotional literacy scales

## Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

## Early Identification and Warning Signs

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also become aware of other warning signs which could indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the mental health lead and safeguarding team.

## Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Changes in clothing
- Talking about self-harm or suicide

- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Sudden decrease in academic achievement
- Secretive behaviour

### **Assessment, interventions and support**

All concerns are reported to the designated adults within school and needs are assessed with SLT, class teachers and SENCO to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

Regular reviews are the completed with relevant staff and parents/carers to assess the impact of support, progress and any further intervention needed.

### **Working with parents and carers.**

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be cascaded to the Mental Health Lead for assessment.

To support parents and carers we will:

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local mental health and well-being support services.
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our mental health and well-being policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home.
- Share information with parents and carers about in school initiatives that support pupils' mental health and well-being.

When a concern has been raised, teachers or the Mental Health Lead and SENDCO will:

- Where possible, contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Create a chronology of actions and events.
- Agree an individual care plan where appropriate, including clear next steps.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

### **Working with specialist services**

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and well-being. Children may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- Educational Psychology Services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)

- School Nursing Service
- Children's and Family Services
- Therapists
- Family support workers
- Counselling Services
- Specialist agencies for pupils' with SEND e.g. The Autism Inclusion Team

We also recognise that when a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. We will consider on a case-by-case basis if a pupil's friends need additional support, and this will be provided either in a one-to-one or group capacity by the Mental Health lead and classroom staff.

## **Training**

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 pupils safe.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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.

## **Links to other policies**

This policy links to our Child Protection Policy, Anti Bullying, SEND Policy, Staff Wellbeing Policy and our Behaviour Policy.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

The Mental Health and Well-being Policy will be published on the school website - hard copies are available on request.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in February 2028.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis where updates need to be made.