

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

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1. Introduction

Park Street Church of England Primary School is a school with a Christian character and seeks to ensure that all who learn and work within the school are enabled to experience 'life in all its fullness' [Jn 10.10] - to be people 'fully alive' [St Irenaeus].

To this end, all of our work, our policies and our procedures seek to ensure that we honour God, love our neighbour as ourselves, do to others as we would have them do to us, we don't judge others, and we seek to be good stewards of God's creation. These basic tenets of our Christian faith inform our values of "Honesty and Respect, Friendship and Kindness, Learning and Fun."

a) Prevalence of mental health and emotional wellbeing issues

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that is around three children in every class.
- There has been a big increase in the number of young people being admitted to hospital because of self-harm. Over the last ten years this figure has increased by 68%.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time.
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression.
- The number of young people aged 15-16 with depression nearly doubled between the 1980s and the 2000s.
- Over 8,000 children aged under 10 years old suffer from severe depression.
- 3.3% or about 290,000 children and young people have an anxiety disorder.
- 72% of children in care have behavioural or emotional problems - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

b) Defining mental health

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 Organization)

As teachers, we define mental wellbeing as children and young people's happiness, life satisfaction and positive functioning- " Children and young people feeling good, feeling that their life is going well, and feeling able to get on with their daily lives. "

At Park Street CofE Primary School, we aim to influence pupil mental wellbeing through: providing a supportive culture, based on our Christian ethos and environment that can serve as a buffer to difficult circumstances, teaching and learning that help pupils to build important life skills, through PSHE strategies such as learning to learn, habits of mind and the growth mindset; supporting the development of skills and character traits such as self-management, compassion and team work (e.g. as part of mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.)

Mental health affects all aspects of life and behaviour.

c) Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to all pupils who attend, and all staff who work at, Park Street CofE Primary School irrespective of role. This policy encourages the mental health and wellbeing of all staff and children.

d) Context and Rationale

Mental Health and Wellbeing promotes school success and improvements by:

- Promoting positive mental and emotional wellbeing by providing information and support.
- Creating a shared understanding of all aspects of mental health
- Enabling those with mental health related issues to self-disclose and seek support in a safe confidential manner.
- Offering guidance and strategies to support pupils and staff to be mentally healthy.
- Creating a culture to support and maintain positive mental health and wellbeing.

e) Safeguarding

As a church school, Park Street CofE Primary School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school and beyond. We are fully committed to safeguarding our pupils through prevention, protection and Christian support. We are also committed to actively promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils are encouraged to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain. It is our duty to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism and to prevent terrorism. Any concerns should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who have local contact details for PREVENT and Channel referrals.

2. Aims of the Policy

a) General

- To have resilient, happier and more motivated pupils and staff who get more out of life.

b) Teaching and learning

- Pupils who are more engaged in the learning process
- Pupils who can concentrate and learn better
- Improved standards in all subjects, including literacy and numeracy
- Improved attainment
- More effective teaching
- Parents and carers who are more involved in school life and learning.

c) Behaviour and attendance

- Pupils with high self-esteem and confidence
- Pupils who have a say in what happens at school
- More engaged learners
- Good concentration, behaviour and attendance
- Positive peer relationships based on our Christian ethos

d) Staff confidence and development

- High morale
- Staff with high wellbeing leading to lower absenteeism
- Stable, content and consistent workforce
- Positive and effective relationships with pupils.

3. Policy Statement

Park Street CofE Primary School is committed to promoting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff. We need every single member of staff to take responsibility for awareness of pupils' mental health.

People working in schools should have it in the back of their minds at all times that pupils have mental health. We all have mental health as well as physical health, and if we can acknowledge that simple fact this will help our pupils significantly.

a) Promoting mental health and wellbeing

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 our PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance and materials from the Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms. We will:

- Encourage and support the whole school community to be positive in its approach to mental health wellbeing.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of both internal and external support services.
- Provide guidance and support to all those connected with the organisation to help them develop confidence in their ability to manage mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Provide appropriate training and information to staff on mental health and emotional wellbeing (MindEd).
- Have a named Resilience and Wellbeing Champion on staff who is the contact point at Park Street CofE Primary School and who will work with the other members of staff in the coordination and delivery of the school's mental health and emotional wellbeing strategy.
- Seek to integrate mental health and emotional support across the curriculum.
- Keep this policy under review and make changes as legislation and best practice requires.

b) Addressing needs (mechanisms to support children and staff)

- Promote a culture which supports and encourages self-disclosure – open & supportive team in a Christian environment.
- Provide a framework for responding appropriately to mental health wellbeing
- Recognise that staff have the responsibility to alert others to potential and actual indicators of mental health needs and to take this action whenever necessary.
- Co-operate with other organisations involved in the delivery of mental health and emotional support services – ‘CAMHS’, ‘Younger Minds’, NSPCC Childline, GPs, and a number of voluntary organisations such as ‘Education Support Partnership (08000 562561)’. The Local Authority Employee Assistance Programme can be contacted free on 0800 030 5182, and there is access to a wellbeing portal at www.healthassuredeap.com
- Observe the principles of confidentiality and data protection in respect of mental health and emotional wellbeing.

c) 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 staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns.

Possible warning signs 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
- 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.

Furthermore, children who exhibit challenging behaviour may also frequently be showing the signs of poor mental health. As stated in our Behaviour Policy, we will use the Steps approach to sympathetically guide children's behaviour, analysing underlying problems using 'Roots and Fruits' and investigating triggers for children's raised anxiety in school. Please see our Behaviour Policy for more details.

d) 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.

e) Supporting staff to positive mental health and wellbeing

The Governing Body's 'duty of care' towards employees, legislation and case law, require them to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of the school's employees.

To help meet these objectives, the School has adopted:

- the Management of Sickness Absence Policy and procedure which provides a framework with clear milestones enabling managers effectively to manage attendance;
- the Health and Safety Policy which provides a framework for, and measurement of, safe places of work; and
- this Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy which focuses on the School's obligations to supporting staff's health and wellbeing.

It is vital that all staff are aware of these policies and the role all employees undertake to ensure we all work in healthy workplaces.

We need to have a clear understanding of the causes of absence in order to formulate strategies that address non-attendance (sickness absence). The main causes of absence can be viewed as four distinct areas:

- Health and lifestyle factors
- Workplace factors
- Attitudinal and stress factors
- Domestic and relationship factors

The Governing Body will continue to promote and work towards performance improvement and efficiency, getting the very best from our staff, retaining and attracting the people who are best skilled and well-motivated.

Wellbeing in the workplace is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to improved wellbeing at work. Addressing workplace wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce the risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health.

To fulfil this commitment the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Make health and wellbeing a core priority. Value the strategic importance and benefits of a healthy workplace. We will encourage a consistent, positive approach to all staff health and wellbeing.
- Make clear the link between employees' health and wellbeing and improved performance.

- Ensure all leaders, including Senior Leaders and Governors, are committed to the health and wellbeing of staff and act as good role models.
- Make communication clear to ensure that staff have realistic expectations of what's possible, practical and affordable.
- Be aware that a return to work from sickness does not necessarily indicate that an employee's health and wellbeing has improved. Return to work interview takes into account that aggressive return to work procedures can encourage presenteeism to the detriment of our school.
- Recruit staff who have the positive leadership traits associated with improved staff health and wellbeing. These traits include being open and approachable and encouraging new ideas.
- Ensure health and wellbeing policies are included in any induction, training and development programmes for new staff.
- Have a proactive and visible commitment to health and safety and its role in improving the health and wellbeing of staff, that is, view health and safety as part of the culture of a caring and supportive employer – not only a statutory requirement.
- Create a supportive environment that enables employees to be proactive when and if possible to protect and enhance their own health and wellbeing
- Seek to identify potential circumstances that may affect the wellbeing of staff and conduct risk assessments;
- Increase awareness and understanding of how to promote wellbeing at work and the avoidance of absence;
- Ensure advice and guidance is available to leaders in dealing with wellbeing concerns of staff;
- Ensure that there is a culture where there is no expectation that staff communicate about work outside of normal working hours (except in an emergency, e.g. child protection issues);
- Ensure that all staff take part in a supportive performance management process;
- Conduct an annual (anonymous) staff survey in order to collate information from all staff groups, which will inform future strategies to support the health and wellbeing of staff.

Where possible, staff are supported with their work/life balance and wellbeing outside the school. Examples of this could include providing staff with paid leave for both special events and celebrations, and time off to deal with family problems

All staff are encouraged to take a responsible approach to health and wellbeing issues, including adopting a robust self-management to their own health.

f) Wellbeing audit

The protection and fostering of staff wellbeing is increasingly embedded in our management methods and systems.

The well-being champion will collect and share suggestions with Senior Leadership Team for improving staff wellbeing. A staff well-being audit will be carried out; findings to be used in an action plan.