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Saint Thomas More Catholic Primary School
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Consulted with staff	
Agreed by governor committee	Not applicable
Ratified by full governing body	July 23
Date for review	July 26
Signature of Chair of Governors	
Signature of Headteacher	

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Jesus Christ said 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them' (Matthew 19:14). As a Catholic school it is our mission to educate pupils in such a way that no matter what their abilities or background they may reach their full potential as human beings. We thus seek to overcome any hindrance that might prevent any pupil accessing the fullness of the curriculum, opportunities and activities we offer.

Saint Thomas More Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff.

Our culture is underpinned by our Catholic ethos and, therefore, is supportive, caring, and respectful. We encourage students to be open and we want each student to have their voice heard.

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, we know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes. We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support. At our school, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

2. POLICY SCOPE

This policy is a guide to all staff, including teachers, governors, and non-teaching staff. It outlines our approach to promoting student mental health and wellbeing. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant school policies.

3. POLICY AIMS

The aim of our policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health of our students. At our school, we will always:

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure our students feel comfortable sharing any concerns and worries.
- Help children to form and maintain relationships.
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.
- Help children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.

We will always promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all students and staff.
- Celebrating both academic and non-academic achievements.
- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting our students' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making.
- Celebrating each student for who they are and making every student feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole school approach to mental health and providing support to any student that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff and students about mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of mental-ill health in students.
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.

4. KEY STAFF MEMBERS

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process.

These are:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Officer: Sarah Collins (Head Teacher)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
Clare Staines (Deputy Head Teacher)
Pastoral Staff: Pauline Wilson King (Learning Mentor, DDSL)
- Charlotte Turner Care Club DDSL
- SENDCO: Sarah Webster
- Our Senior Mental Health Lead is Clare Staines

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of a student, then in the first instance they should speak to: Sarah Collins, Clare Staines or Pauline Wilson-King.

If a child presents a medical emergency then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services.

5. TEACHING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Our PHSE curriculum is developed to give students the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to keep themselves mentally healthy. This includes resilience techniques and training.

We will regularly review our PHSE curriculum and lesson content to ensure that they are meeting the aims outlined in this policy. We will also implement this into our curriculum at all stages to provide students with strategies to help keep them mentally well.

Strategies to promote positive mental health will be taught and encouraged throughout the wider curriculum and in conjunction with the Positive Behaviour Management Policy and in day-to-day interactions with individual and groups of pupils.

6. SUPPORT AT SCHOOL AND IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

We have a range of support available in school for any students struggling, as listed below:

- **Access to Learning Mentor.** The Learning Mentor is able to offer a range of personalised support to individual or groups of pupils depending on their needs. This can be in the classroom (for example, supporting a child to manage their emotions within a particular lesson) or away from the classroom (for example working with the Learning Mentor in another location). They are also available to offer guidance and support to parents on request and are able to signpost parents to external services, such as Early Help. Pupils can access Learning Mentor support by requesting time to meet with them. Teachers may refer a pupil to the Learning Mentors for additional support when a teacher has identified they may benefit from this and parents can request a conversation/meeting with a Learning Mentor by ringing the school office. Children can complete slips and post them in the box outside learning mentors room if they are needing support. The learning mentor reviews these regularly. The hub is made available at lunch time, when learning mentor is on sight, to support children identified to learning mentor for support.
- **External Counselling Service.** This is available to pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding who have been identified as potentially benefitting from counselling. This can be accessed via referral to Mrs Staines. The content of the counselling sessions remains confidential and is only shared with the school in the

event of Safeguarding concerns. Counselling could in some cases be made available to non-pp children and funded by parents and carers.

There are also a lot of support networks available for children in the local community. This includes places such as:

- **CAMHS** (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). CAMHS supports children who have moderate to severe mental health difficulties. Children can be referred to this via their GP.
- **Coventry Rise**. Coventry Rise is a family of NHS-led services that provide emotional wellbeing and mental health support services for children and young people. Pupils can be referred to this via the SENDCo, GP, Social Care etc.
- **Dimensions Tool**. The Dimensions Tool is a free online tool providing personalised information to support a person's well-being and mental health. It can be used by parents or professionals seeking to support a child and can be accessed by parents <https://dimensions.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/>

With regards to employees of the MAC we have access to support offered by Care First, Online support www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk Username: hol001 Password: cross1234 or phone on 0800 174 319 24/7 confidential support line.

Well being Team- A voluntary team meet once a term to discuss pupil and staff well being. This then feeds into the termly MAC meetings of SMHLs. Wellbeing is a standing item on the senior Leadership Team weekly meeting. When additional points are discussed their impact on staff wellbeing is always considered. A support staff member on STM's wellbeing team feedback to the Senior Mental Health Lead on any whole school issues that have been brought to their attention with solution focused approach.

As a school we partake in Child's Mental Health Week and also the Mental Health Awareness week.

At STM we carry out a yearly pupil wellbeing survey which is followed up and as a MAC a staff mental wellbeing survey is carried out.

7. SIGNPOSTING

We will communicate with staff, students, and parents to make them aware of the support that's available in our school for mental health. This includes how to access further support, both inside and outside of school hours.

8. IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND WARNING SIGNS

All of our staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems.

This means that they will be able to offer help and support to students and colleagues who need it, when they need it.

These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer as appropriate. Staff will be able to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:

- Physical signs of harm.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in mood.
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer.
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption.

Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:

- Attendance and absenteeism.
- Punctuality and lateness.
- Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education.
- Family and relationship problems.

Finally, staff will be well placed to identify any additional needs arising from difficulties that may impact a child's or colleagues' mental health and wellbeing, such as bereavement and health difficulties.

9. MANAGING DISCLOSURES

If a student discloses concerns about themselves or a friend, to any member of staff, then staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgemental manner.

All disclosures will be recorded confidentially on CPOMs and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it's necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

The disclosure record will contain:

- The date of the disclosure.
- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made.
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation.
- Agreed next steps.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

If a member of staff thinks it's necessary to pass on concerns about a student, either to somebody inside the school or somebody outside it, then this will first be discussed with the student. They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell.
- What the staff member is going to disclose.
- Why it's necessary for somebody else to be told.
- When the contact will be.

However, it may not be possible to gain the student's consent first, such as in the case of students who are at immediate risk. Protecting a student's safety is our main priority so we would share disclosures if we judged a child to be at risk.

11. WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

We take a whole school approach towards the mental health of our students. This means working with parents and carers and with other agencies and partners, where necessary.

12. WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

We aim to support parents as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times. To support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our school.
- Share and allow parents to access further support.
- Ensure that parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child.
- Give parents guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health.

- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health training our school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum.

13. WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND PARTNERS

As part of our whole school approach, we will also work with other agencies to support our students' emotional health and wellbeing. This might include liaising with:

- Paediatricians.
- CAMHS.
- Counselling services.
- Therapists.
- Family support workers.
- Behavioural support workers.

14. SUPPORTING PEERS

We understand that, when a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their peers. In response to this, we will consider, on a case by case basis, any peers that may need additional support.

We will provide support in one-to-one or group settings. These sessions will be guided by the student, but they will discuss how peers can help, how peers can access support themselves, and healthy ways of coping with any emotions they might be feeling.

15. TRAINING

All staff will receive regular training in child mental health so that they can recognise and respond to mental health issues. This will form part of their regular safeguarding training and is a requirement to keep children safe. Training records will be held in the Safeguarding File.

We will post all relevant information, and additional information, on our school website or staff shared drive so staff can learn more about child mental health. We will consider additional training opportunities for staff and we will support additional CPD throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with pupils.

16. SUPPORTING STAFF

The wellbeing of staff is addressed with risks identified and minimised Staff are encouraged to maintain an open and practical attitude to supporting their own and others' mental health. This includes:

- Demonstrating a supportive and healthy working relationship with other members of staff, visitors and external professionals
- Managing time and workload effectively to ensure a healthy work-life balance.
- Alerting their line manager/the Head Teacher if a situation arises within the workplace that has a negative impact on their mental health.

Staff who are experiencing difficulties in maintaining positive mental health are expected to:

- Act early to address small issues and thus prevent them from growing into larger and more serious concerns.
- Seek help from their appropriate medical practitioner (usually their GP in the first instance)
- Alert the Head Teacher to any work-related concerns.
- Share with the Head Teacher any information that is necessary and appropriate to maintain the safeguarding of the member of staff, other staff members or pupils.

In response to any identified concerns, the Head Teacher may:

- Review the processes, procedures or expectations that are in place to identify any areas for improvement and respond appropriately.
- Review/make temporary amendments to the expectations of the member of staff.
- Signpost the member of staff to another service, such as Occupational Health or counselling (often via HR).

17. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be annually. This is so that it remains up to date, useful, and relevant. We will also regularly review it in accordance with local and national policy changes.

18. USEFUL RESOURCES

MindEd is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults www.minded.org.uk

**MENTALLY
HEALTHY
SCHOOLS**



**Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families**

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/>