

St. Anthony's Catholic Primary School
'We Grow and Learn with Jesus'

Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy – Updated March 2023

In line with our Mission Statement which calls us all to follow Jesus' example, we have written this policy to show our concern for the care and wellbeing of the children at St. Anthony's Catholic School.

We are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our school community and we recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important as physical health. We recognise the link between mental and physical health and as a school emphasise the power of both.

Values and Aims

We aim to enable the children to:

- manage times of change and stress
- be supported to access help when they need it
- develop the confidence and responsibility necessary to make the most of their abilities
- build self-esteem
- learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health
- identify what affects their mental health
- identify what they can do to improve their mental health and wellbeing

This policy links to our Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, SEN and Inclusion Policies, PSHEE Policy and PE Policy.

Objectives

Learning

We believe that children will learn best in an environment where they feel valued and secure.

Children are encouraged to:

- learn about themselves as individuals and as members of their communities
- learn the basic rules for keeping themselves healthy and safe and to make informed choices
- learn about their own and others' feelings, becoming aware of the views, needs and rights of others
- share their concerns with members of staff

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

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 a positive ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health wellbeing and resilience, which everyone understands
- focusing on 'Zones of Regulation' with children in classes
- helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it
- promoting positive self esteem
- helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks
- teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
- identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with parents and carers, and specialist services at times
- supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience
- Protective Behaviours lessons taught half termly
- PE lessons taught three times weekly in classes
- regular exercise enabling children to see the impact on mental health
- teaching PSHEE through the Jigsaw scheme of work
- teaching RHE
- taking opportunities for outdoor learning

We promote good mental health in our environment by:

- promoting the Gospel 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
- marking Children's Mental Health Week through activities in class and home
- providing connections to our families through visits to school, coffee mornings, assemblies and productions
- supporting others in need through our charity work

The Five Principles of Wellbeing

We recognise the vital importance of positive mental health and wellbeing in our school community. In order to support our children, parents and staff, we have adopted 'Five ways to Wellbeing'. These are:

1. Connect

Talk and listen with others and with God. Set aside special times to connect with friends and family, and to connect in faith through prayer.

2. Take notice

Remember the simple things which give you joy. Feel the awe and wonder of nature. Notice your thoughts and feelings, your breath, the positives in life. Be still.

3. Give

Give your time, your presence and your words to others. Consider how you can help. Be kind.

4. Be active

Do what you can. Enjoy what you do. Take in fresh air and discover a physical activity that suits your lifestyle.

5. Keep learning

Try something new. Re-discover old interests. Take on new responsibilities. Learn from others. Share your knowledge.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote this in and out of their classrooms. Supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing of staff is an important component of a healthy school. We promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance.

Staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand the protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help; all staff should have the skills to identify warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. The INCo is on hand to support this.

Early identification

We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things from getting worse. Some of the ways in which we do this are:

- using class worry boxes
- discussions with parents
- observations in class and at playtimes
- interventions with groups or individuals

- observations of changes in patterns such as attendance and punctuality, relationships, approach to learning, family circumstance, bereavement and health indicators

Teaching and support staff are responsible for reporting concerns about individual children to designated adults within the school.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

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

Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers can approach their child's class teacher if they have mental health or emotional wellbeing concerns. To support parents and carers we:

- inform parents of relevant courses and workshops which support emotional wellbeing
- share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children
- keep parents informed about mental health topics taught in school and share ideas for extending and exploring these at home
- signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away
- discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies

Working with Specialist Services

As part of our targeted provision, the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. We offer Drawing and Talking Therapy but we may signpost or refer to one of the following services:

- Medical Support via the GP
- Mental Health Support Team
- South West Herts Partnership Family Support Worker
- School Nursing Service
- Educational Psychology Services
- Specialist Advisory Teachers
- CYPMHS
- DSPL9
- NSPCC