



Social, Emotional and Mental Health Strategy September 2024

“Learn with Love, Flourish in Faith”

Our School Vision

Do everything in love (1 Corinthians 16:14)

As an inclusive Christian school, Church of the Ascension C.E Primary School aims to create a loving, caring and respectful community, where individuals can flourish spiritually, socially and academically as children of God in a rich learning environment. Our vision is to inspire lifelong learning, whilst encouraging resilience, independence, aspiration and an appreciation of God’s wonderful world.

We believe the six key values which characterise our school are:

- Thankfulness
- Generosity
- Respect
- Forgiveness
- Honesty
- Perseverance

We believe that these core Christian values are fundamental in helping to develop our children into responsible citizens of the future and will allow them to achieve their God-given potential.

Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on: 1st November 2024

Next review due by: 1st September 2027

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Strategy

Policy Statement

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)

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do. We believe that every person in all their unique difference should be able to flourish, fulfilling their God-given potential in all aspects of their personhood. Our shared Christian values of respect, honesty, forgiveness, generosity, perseverance and thankfulness are at the heart of our nurturing school community. In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable members of our school community. Furthermore, 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 those affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of a change in mental health.
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/ carers.

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, relevant remit include:

Mrs Lindsay Mason – Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (Adult mental health first aider/ Child mental health first aider)

Mr Chris Bradley – Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Natalie Slater - Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Helen Moore - Senior Mental Health Lead / Mental Health First Aider

Mrs Fiona Walley – Pastoral Mentor / Mental Health First Aider

Miss Abigail Jones – SENDCO

Mrs Emma Birad – PSHE Curriculum Lead

Mrs Deb Brown – Named governor responsible for wellbeing

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the mental health lead 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 designated safeguarding lead. If the pupil presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by A Jones – SENCO in conjunction with GP and/ or school nurse. Church of the Ascension are now also supported by the Reflexions team and referrals to this service are managed by H Moore.

A Universal Approach - Teaching about Mental Health

At Church of the Ascension, we take a whole school graduated approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help all children become more resilient, independent and aspirational and to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising.

We do this for all our children by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and wellbeing.
- Adhering to a positive, restorative approach to behaviour management.
- Helping children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- 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.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school Christian values and vision and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making.
 - Wellbeing Buddies, whose role it is to spread kindness, take notice of their peers and promote ways to wellbeing

- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others. For example, 'Pink Play Buddies' in Year 5 and 'Yellow Bibs' in Year 6, help our younger to play and interact positively at lunchtimes.
- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- Good Health Week promoting positive mental and physical health for all
- 'Nurture-type' groups
- Normalising discussions about a range of feelings and how we can manage them
 - Mental Health and wellbeing support and PSHE for all year groups

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children 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 use the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

Signposting

At times, some of our children may require more targeted support in small groups or as individuals. For this, we will ensure that staff, children and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

Early Identification and Warning Signs

Staff members will be aware of the signs that may indicate if a pupil is struggling with their SEMH. The signs of SEMH difficulties may include, but are not limited to, the following list:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| • Anxiety | • Absconding | • Failure to engage |
| • Low mood | • Unable to make choices | • Poor personal presentation |
| • Being withdrawn | • Low self-worth | • Lethargy/apathy |
| • Avoiding risks | • Isolating themselves | • Daydreaming |
| • Unable to make and maintain friendships | • Refusing to accept praise | • Physical aggression |
| • Speech anxiety/reluctance to speak | • Restlessness/over-activity | • Verbal aggression |
| • Task avoidance | • Non-compliance | • Perceived injustices |
| • Challenging behaviour | • Mood swings | • Disproportionate reactions to situations |
| • Difficulties with change/transitions | • Impulsivity | • Lack of personal boundaries |
| | • Eating issues | |
| | • Lack of empathy | |

- Poor awareness of personal space

School staff may also 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 with the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate, following safeguarding protocols with the child.

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.
- Managing feelings and emotions resources e.g. 'worry boxes'
- Reflexions targeted support for mental health and wellbeing
- Therapeutic activities including art, lego and relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

Working with other agencies

As part of our targeted provision, Church of the Ascension Primary School works with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing, including:

- School Nurse
- Educational Psychology Services
- Behaviour Support – Sycamore Centre
- Reflexions
- Counselling services
- Early Help and Support
- Social Care

Working with Parents

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, 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 to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child.
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents on our website.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through regular information evenings, parenting workshops and regular dialogue with the school and other professionals where appropriate.

- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics that their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

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 them to keep students safe. Further professional development can be provided by Dudley Educational Psychology Service or by the Reflexions team.

The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. The school's website will be used to share information and contact details with parents under the 'Wellbeing' tab. 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. The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, Anna Freud Association and Happier Minds provides information about a range of issues as well as the National College.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have any questions or suggestions about improving this policy, this should be addressed to our mental health lead, H Moore. This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.