



St John's C of E VA First School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



'Together we have roots to grow and the wings to fly.'

This policy should be taken as part of St. John's C. of E. First School's overall strategy and is implemented within the context of our vision of Government aims and our values as a Church of England School.

Review

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
3 yearly	January 2024	Teresa Gilbert	January 2027

Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors	Claire Levene Plumb	CLAIRE LEVENE PLUMB	
Head Teacher	Teresa Gilbert	TERESA GILBERT	
DSL	Teresa Gilbert	TERESA GILBERT	

Details of Policy Updates

Date	Details

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:

'Together, we give our children the roots to grow and wings to fly.'

As John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, here at St John's, we strive to prepare children for life – 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

As a fully inclusive Church school, we are rooted in hope. We aspire to nurture and help our children to be the best versions of themselves.

'For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power, love and self-discipline.'

(Timothy 1:7)

Our school staff, parents and governors work together to help our children flourish as respectful, confident and aspirational citizens who seek to positively contribute to the school community, local community and the world beyond.

Our vision is based around the elements of the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13: 1-23. For seeds to grow, they need firm and strong roots. In this parable, Jesus explains that when seeds are planted in good soil, they grow and thrive. When seeds are planted in bad soil or on unsuitable ground, the roots cannot grow, meaning the plants are weak. Jesus goes on to say, when seeds are planted in good soil they grow and bear fruit.

Like birds who nest in trees, the St John's community aim to nurture their young, who then go on to fly out into the world and flourish.

By sowing the seeds of:

- life to have HOPE
- learning to gain WISDOM
- community to build FRIENDSHIP
- courage to PERSEVERE
- responsibility to gain SELF-CONTROL
- uniqueness to show dignity and RESPECT

together, we will give our children the

'ROOTS TO GROW' and the 'WINGS TO FLY.'

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 wellbeing, 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 wellbeing issues.

Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

This policy aims to:

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

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of pupils. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

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|---|--|
| ❖ Designated Safeguarding Lead: | Teresa Gilbert |
| ❖ Deputy DSLs: | Nicole Simenton, Marcus Bowman |
| ❖ Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead: | Teresa Gilbert |
| ❖ Mental Health First Aiders: | Rosemary Conway, Agnieszka Kolodziej |
| ❖ SENDCO: | Dawn Senior |
| ❖ First Aiders at Work: | Dawn Mead, Kerrie Grant |
| ❖ Paediatric First Aiders: | Agnieszka Kolodziej, Catherine Whitmarsh, Lorraine McCarthy, Mel Tomkins |
| ❖ CPD Lead: | Teresa Gilbert |
| ❖ PSHE Subject Leader: | Nicole Simenton |

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 Leads or the head teacher. 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 the SENDCO or headteacher. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in Appendix 1.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- ❖ Details of a pupil's condition
- ❖ Special requirements and precautions
- ❖ Medication and any side effects
- ❖ What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- ❖ The role the school can play

Teaching about 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 Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) and Relationships Education.

We use the Jigsaw programme to cover many aspects of our PSHE and Relationships Education. This ensures that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner and helps children to understand how to recognise when they may need help and how to ask for it.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. The support available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix 1.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupils seeking help by ensuring pupils understand:

- ❖ What help is available
- ❖ Who it is aimed at
- ❖ How to access it
- ❖ Why to access it
- ❖ What is likely to happen next

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 with the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead and record this on My Concern (our safeguarding portal).

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
- ❖ Abusing drugs or alcohol
- ❖ 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

Managing disclosures

A pupil may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be for the pupil's emotional and physical safety and accessing appropriate support for them.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held electronically on the pupil's Safeguarding File in My Concern and discussed with the mental health lead and DSL to ensure support and advice is gained promptly.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality cannot be promised to anyone making a disclosure. Due to the age of our children, it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a child and we would always be transparent with them regarding this, telling them:

- ❖ Who we are going to talk to
- ❖ What we are going to tell them
- ❖ Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a pupil without first telling them. Ideally we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. Particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm.

Sharing disclosures with the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead **and** DSL **also** helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the pupil. It ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the pupil and discuss with them who the information will be shared with.

Information should be shared with parents as soon as possible unless the child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues where telling the parent could put them at greater risk. In cases where there are additional child protection concerns the DSL will follow safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the DSL Consultation Line or Somerset Direct prior to speaking to the parents.

Working with Parents

When informing parents of concerns about their child's mental health and wellbeing, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- ❖ Can the meeting happen face to face? This is preferable.
- ❖ Where should the meeting happen? At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- ❖ Who should be present? Consider parents, the pupil, other members of staff.
- ❖ What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We should always provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow up meeting or phone call right away as parents often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's My Concern record.

Working with All 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 and in newsletter
- ❖ Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to access support, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- ❖ Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- ❖ Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information sessions.
- ❖ Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and Relationships Education and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- ❖ What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- ❖ How friends can best support
- ❖ Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- ❖ Warning signs that their friend needs help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- ❖ Where and how to access support for themselves
- ❖ Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- ❖ Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Training

Staff will receive 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 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more pupils.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host twilight training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with the Headteacher who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in January 2027.

Appendix 1: Useful sources of further support

Locally

Support Available	Available to	How to Access
Care First	St John's Staff	Direct dial – number displayed on staff notice board
ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant	St John's Pupils	Referral by Class teacher to SENDCo or Mental Health & Wellbeing Lead
Family Intervention Service (FIS)	St John's Pupils and their families	Early Help Assessment – referral by school or PFSA
Family Support Worker (FLP PFSA)	St John's Pupils and their families	Referral by school to Frome Learning Partnership
Forest School	St John's Pupils	Referral by SENDCo or Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead to Frome Learning Partnership's Behaviour and Vulnerability Manager
Theraplay	St John's Pupils	Referral by SENDCo or Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead to Frome Learning Partnership's Behaviour and Vulnerability Manager
Thrive	St John's Pupils	Referral by SENDCo or Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead to Frome Learning Partnership's Behaviour and Vulnerability Manager
We Hear You	St John's Pupils and their families	01373 455255

Nationally

Anxiety UK work to relieve and support those living with anxiety and anxiety-based depression by providing information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services, including 1:1 therapy. They can provide support and help if a person has been diagnosed with, or suspect they may have an anxiety condition and can also help them deal with specific phobias such as fear of spiders, blushing, vomiting, being alone, public speaking, heights – in fact, any fear that stops a person from getting on with their life. www.anxietyuk.org.uk/

CAMHS is the name for the NHS services that assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. Making a Referral to CAMHS (Child and Adult Mental health Service) Referrals to the Single Point of Access (SPA) for CAMHS can be made by letter, using the CAMHS referral form, by telephone or through the EHA (Early Assessment Form). Referrals cannot currently be made by parents or the young person themselves. SPA has clinicians available for telephone support on 0300 124 5012 from Monday to Friday between 9am and 4:30pm. The clinicians can advise on how to access the appropriate CAMHS service in a timely manner. The Somerset NHS website, www.sompar.nhs.uk/what-we-do/children-and-youngpeople/professional/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-service-camhs/camhs-single-point-ofaccess contains links to the Eligibility Criteria for Somerset CAMHS as well as the referral form.

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust offers free resources, including guidance and policy templates for use by schools and colleges. www.cwmt.org.uk/

Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement. Every year they train more than 8,000 professionals, helping them to better understand and meet the needs of grieving families. <https://childbereavementuk.org/>

Childline is a free, private and confidential service for children and young people available online, on the phone, anytime facilitated by trained counsellors. The website is easy to navigate and has many interactive resources, advice and sources of support for children and young people. www.childline.org.uk/

Education Support Partnership is the UK's only charity providing mental health and wellbeing support services to all education staff and organisations. www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/

Mental Health Access Pack is a compact, free resource which aims to: equip you with knowledge and advice, from medical, psychological and theological perspectives; help you support those in your community who are struggling with mental health issues; help you to discuss issues and share ideas surrounding mental health and the church. www.mentalhealthaccesspack.org/

Mental Health Matters contains information and resources for parishes, dioceses, chaplaincies and church community groups - and anyone else who's interested - to help improve our work with people experiencing mental illness. The Church is well placed to make a significant difference in the area of mental health. We can be a force to end stigma, and we can also be a place of inclusion, welcome and ministry. Mental Health Matters is working to make mental wellbeing a priority in our churches today. www.mentalhealthmatters-cofe.org/

Mentally Healthy Schools brings together quality-assured information, advice and resources to help primary schools understand and promote children's mental health and wellbeing. Our aim is to increase staff awareness, knowledge and confidence to help you support your pupils. www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/

Mind provides trusted advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. www.mind.org.uk/

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

NHS Live Well Youth Mental Health offers resources and signposting for support from external links www.nhs.uk/Livewell/youth-mental-health/Pages/Youth-mental-health-help.aspx

Reading Well for young people Reading Well promotes the benefits of reading for health and wellbeing. The programme has two strands: Books on Prescription and Mood-boosting Books. <http://reading-well.org.uk/books>

Rethink: living with mental illness provides expert, accredited advice and information to everyone affected by mental health problems. 'When mental illness first hits you or your family, it can be hard to know who or what to trust.' They give people clear, relevant information on everything from treatment and care to benefits and employment rights. We were the first mental health charity to gain the Information Standard for our trusted and relevant information. www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness/young-people/

Samaritans work to ensure that fewer people die by suicide by working to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicide feelings and suicidal behaviour. They offer 24 hours a day emotional support for people who are struggling to cope, including those who have had thoughts of suicide, as well as reaching out to high risk groups and communities to reduce the risk of suicide and working in partnership with other organisations, agencies and experts, influencing public policy and raising awareness of the challenges of reducing suicide. www.samaritans.org/

The Children's Society is a national charity that works with the country's most vulnerable children and young people. We listen. We support. We act. Because no child should feel alone. They work directly with children, develop resources and publications and lobby on behalf of children annually, surveying them as part of their Good Childhood reports. www.childrenssociety.org.uk/

The Mind and Soul Foundation aims to educate – sharing the best of Christian theology and scientific advances; equip – helping people meet with God and recover from emotional distress; encourage – engaging with the local church and mental health services. Of more use to staff and parents, they have a good selection of resources and articles, including the mental health access pack which was developed for churches, offering information on common mental health conditions and pastoral tips for working with those with mental health conditions.

www.mindandsoulfoundation.org/

Winston's Wish provide specialist child bereavement support services across the UK, including in-depth therapeutic help in individual, group and residential settings. www.winstonswish.org/

YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity championing the wellbeing and mental health of young people. They offer resources and bespoke training for schools and support for parents and young people. In addition they have a dedicated section on caring for the wellbeing of teachers and school staff. <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Appendix 2: Recommended School Reference Books

Books for Parents and Adults

ADHD and Hyperactivity

- ***Teenagers with ADD and ADHD: a guide for parents and professionals***, Chris A Dendy (Woodbine House). A guide to understanding and coping with teenagers with attention deficit disorder. The book discusses diagnosis, medical treatment, family and school life, interventions, advocacy, legal rights and options after school.
- ***Put yourself in their shoes: understanding teenagers with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder***, Harvey C Parker (Partners Publishing Group). For parents of teenagers with ADHD. This book contains a wealth of information about understanding the world of teenagers with ADHD.

Anger

- ***Taming the dragon in your child: solutions for breaking the cycle of family anger***, Meg Eastman and Sydney Rozen (John Wiley & Sons Inc.). Gives parents realistic, healthy and positive ways to understand and diffuse situations that trigger children's tantrum, flare-ups, sulks and arguments.
- ***When anger hurts - quieting the storm within***, Matthew McKay, Judith McKay and Peter Rogers (New Harbinger Publications). Clears up misconceptions about anger, explains how to control it and discusses spouse and child abuse.

Anxiety

- ***The "Which?" guide to managing stress***, Mark Greener (Which? Books). Looks at the causes and consequences of stress and offers advice on devising an effective strategy for stress management.
- ***The worry cure: seven steps to stop worry from worrying you***, Dr Robert Leahy (Piatkus Books). Worry is a central issue in many people's lives; 38 per cent of people say they worry every day. In this ground-breaking book, Dr Robert Leahy offers new insight, advice and practical techniques for everyone who has ever had a sleepless night.

Behaviour

- ***Understanding children's behaviour***, Dr Dinah Jayson and the British Medical Association (Family Doctor Publications Ltd.). If a child is difficult to manage, if parenting doesn't come easily or if you want to improve your relationship with a child as a parent, teacher or carer, this book offers some strategies that you can try. It will also help you decide whether you need expert help and, if so, where to find it.

Bereavement

- ***The Death of a Child***, Tessa Wilkinson (Jonathan Cape). Aims to help both adults and children to cope with the death of a child.

Childhood Depression

- ***So Young, So Sad, So Listen***, Philip Graham and Carol Hughes (Gaskell). Examines the nature and treatment of childhood depression. Aims to help those involved to recognise the signs of depression in children and to understand the possible causes.

- ***Coping with an anxious or depressed child***, Samantha Cartwright-Hatton (OneWorld Publications). This book provides an up-to-date approach to helping parents of anxious children. Often, both parents and child can learn to cope better with anxiety by learning how to face very simple childhood anxieties.

Depression

- ***Depression - the way out of your prison***, Dorothy Rowe (Brunner-Routledge). Depression is an experience of terrible isolation, of being in a prison. By understanding how we build this prison, we can dismantle it.
- ***Depression and how to survive It***, Spike Milligan and Anthony Clare (Arrow). Spike Milligan reveals the dark side of his life in this book, which is co-written with his psychiatrist, Professor Anthony Clare.

Eating Disorders

- ***Getting Better Bit(e) by Bit(e): survival kit for sufferers of bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorders***, Ulrike Schmidt, Janet Treasure and Tom Tresaure (Psychology Press). A self-help book which empowers sufferers to take control of their own lives and tackle their eating difficulties.
- ***Eating problems in children: Information for parents***, Claudine Fox and Carol Joughin (Gaskell). Tackles issues such as different types of eating disorders children can suffer from, how common they are, what causes them, types of treatment available and long-term outlook for children with eating problems such as selective eating and food refusal.
- ***Eating Disorders: The Facts***, Suzanne Abraham & Derek Llewellyn-Jones (Oxford University Press). Comprehensive guide to anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and obesity.

Parenting

- ***It takes two to talk: a parent's guide to helping children communicate***, Ayala Manolson (The Hanen Centre). Guide for parents to learn how to encourage their child to communicate. It explains different ways to establish a special bond between parent and child. Wonderful book for parents, teachers and caregivers.
- ***Toddler taming: a parent's guide to the first four years***, Dr Christopher Green (Vermillion). Book for parents of children aged between 1 and 4 years with practical advice on how to deal with difficult behaviour.
- ***From birth to five years: children's developmental progress***, Mary Sheridan, Marion Frost and Ajay Sharma (Routledge). Sets out each stage of normal development in young children. Post-divorce Parenting
- ***Parenting Threads***, Erica De'Ath and Dee Slater (National Stepfamily Association). This book provides practical advice for those who are separating or starting again with a new partner. It looks at ways to negotiate visits, the needs of children and when to introduce a new partner, the legal position and how to establish stability for your children.

Sexuality

- ***Keeping safe: a practical guide to talking with children***, Michele Elliott (Hodder and Staughton). A guide on talking with children on a whole range of issues from sexual abuse to bullying and teenage drug-taking. Self-Esteem
- ***The Self-Esteem Workbook***, Lynda Field (Vermillion). This book gives a practical framework of techniques and activities to enable reader to experience high esteem in all aspects of their lives.

Books for Primary Libraries A comprehensive list of library books for Primary schools can be found here:

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/specialties/faculties/childandadolescent/public/booksforyoungerchildren.aspx