

**“With the help of God, working together
for success”**

St Michael's C of E (C) Primary School



Mental Health and Well Being Policy

Version	Date	Author	Reason For Change	Review Frequency	Next Review Date
2	18.10.24	JL	Review		18.10.27

St Michael's Church of England Primary School Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

1. Introduction

At St Michael's C of E Primary School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils, staff, and community. Our aim is to foster an inclusive, nurturing environment where everyone feels safe, supported, and valued. We believe mental health is as important as physical health and is integral to our ability to flourish, as articulated in our Christian vision and values of Honesty, Forgiveness and Respect. We promote mental health through a whole-school approach, integrating strategies for emotional wellbeing into our curriculum, daily practice, and ethos. Our school seeks to build resilience, develop emotional literacy, and provide early intervention for those experiencing mental health difficulties.

2. Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide a clear framework for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for pupils, staff, and the wider school community.
- Ensure that mental health concerns are identified early and appropriate support is provided.
- Create a culture where mental health is openly discussed, and stigma is challenged.
- Offer structured systems of support through school practices, pastoral care, and external partnerships.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by several legal frameworks, ensuring that the school meets its statutory obligations while promoting mental health and wellbeing:

- Children and Families Act 2014: Supports children with SEND, ensuring that those with mental health needs have equal access to education and appropriate support services.
- Education Act 2002: Places a duty on schools to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare, including their mental health.
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance (DfE, 2018): Informs schools on identifying and managing mental health needs, with emphasis on early intervention.
- SEND Code of Practice 2015: Ensures that children with SEND, including mental health challenges, receive tailored support.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024: Treats mental health concerns as safeguarding issues, mandating appropriate referrals to external agencies.
- Equality Act 2010: Protects pupils from discrimination based on mental health, ensuring inclusivity and equal access to education.
- Public Sector Equality Duty: Requires schools to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity, promoting a supportive environment for mental health.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR: Ensures confidentiality and care in handling sensitive mental health information.

Additionally, the school adheres to the principles outlined in the Government's Framework for Improving the Mental Health of Babies, Children, and Young People. This framework identifies modifiable factors that can influence the mental health of children and young people, such as parenting, education, and community support.

Application of this guidance:

This framework highlights the importance of addressing modifiable factors that contribute to mental health outcomes in children. In practice, this means:

- **School Environment:** Creating a nurturing and inclusive school environment that promotes emotional and social development is crucial. By fostering positive relationships and implementing whole-school wellbeing initiatives, we can reduce the risk of mental health issues.
- **Parental and Community Engagement:** The framework emphasises the role of parents and community support in improving children's mental health. We actively engage parents through workshops and provide signposting to external services, aligning with this principle.
- **Early Intervention:** The framework underlines the need for early identification of mental health concerns. Our use of resources and early interventions ensures that children showing signs of distress receive targeted support promptly.

4. Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing According to the World Health Organization's World Mental Health Report (2022):

"Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. It is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community." (WHO, 2022)

At S Michael's, we recognise that mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. Positive mental health involves feeling confident, managing emotions, and maintaining positive relationships.

5. Lead Members of Staff

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health in pupils. However, specific staff members have a designated role in overseeing mental health provision:

- Amy Lane - Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Paul Martin - Deputy Headteacher, Deputy DSL
- Gemma Ivens - Inclusion Manager, Deputy DSL, SENDCo.
- Justine Leach - Designated Senior Mental Health Lead, PSHE Lead.
- Natalie Dawson- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) and Family Support Officer
- Rachel Orlik—Mental Health First Aider (Adult)
- Jackie Phillips - Mental Health First Aider (Adult)

. Concerns about a pupil's and staff's mental health should be directed to these staff members.

6. Whole-School Awareness

We actively promote mental health awareness across the school community through:

- **Mental Health Displays and Resources:** We create dedicated mental health displays, leaflets, and posters throughout the school to promote positive mental health. These displays highlight key wellbeing themes and provide information on how to access support services.
- **Wellbeing Workshops:** We offer regular wellbeing workshops for families. These workshops focus on essential mental health topics, such as stress management, healthy relationships, and emotional literacy. The workshops aim to build community-wide awareness of mental health and provide practical tools for maintaining wellbeing.

7. Teaching about Mental Health

Promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing is an integral part of our curriculum and school culture. We aim to equip our pupils with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to manage their mental health, support their peers, and seek help when needed.

Whole-School Activities

We incorporate mental health awareness into the fabric of our daily school life through a variety of whole-school initiatives. These activities aim to foster an environment where mental health is openly discussed and supported:

- **Themed Weeks and Days:** We hold special events such as Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day, where the whole school engages in activities that highlight the importance of mental wellbeing. These events may include mindfulness sessions, physical activities, and workshops focused on resilience and emotional regulation.
- **Collective Worship:** Regular Collective Worship opportunities are used to promote positive mental health, covering topics like kindness, friendship, managing emotions, and the importance of asking for help. These sessions are often led by pupils and staff, encouraging community-wide participation.
- **Wellbeing Ambassadors:** In Key Stage 2 there is a dedicated Wellbeing Ambassador within each year group. Their role is to listen to peers who might need someone to talk to and offer friendship and guidance, promoting emotional wellbeing among pupils and carrying their voice regarding mental health to School Council.
- **Classroom Activities:** Each class integrates mental health and emotional wellbeing into everyday learning, offering consistent opportunities for pupils to develop self-awareness and emotional resilience.
- **Mental Health Minutes:** A school wide opportunity for pupils to discuss mental health topics.
- **PSHE Lessons:** Our PSHE curriculum, utilising the PSHE Association Curriculum which helps develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding about self-esteem, managing emotions, stress, and healthy relationships, tailored to each cohort.
- **Pupil Support Sessions:** Pupils can access support in our 'Trinity Room' through drop-in sessions with our Pupil Support Officer.
- **Merit Assemblies:** Half Termly Merit Assemblies recognise pupils for their positive contributions, including kindness, teamwork, and resilience. These assemblies celebrate emotional and social achievements alongside academic success, reinforcing the importance of mental health.

Transition Programme

We provide structured transition programmes to support pupils as they move between year groups and to secondary school:

- **Year-to-Year Transitions:** We implement opportunity for pupils moving between year groups. This allows pupils to meet their new teachers, visit their new classrooms, and participate in activities that help alleviate transition-related anxieties. This programme helps pupils feel more comfortable and prepared for the next academic year.
- **Year 6 to Year 7 Transition:** We work alongside local secondary schools to facilitate a two-day programme to help pupils prepare emotionally and socially for the move to secondary school, including visits to secondary schools, workshops on managing change, and opportunities to address concerns.
- **Additional Support for Vulnerable Pupils:** Pupils identified as having SEND or those considered vulnerable will receive additional visits to their new class, one-on-one time with new staff, and meetings with parents/carers to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

8. Possible Warning Signs of Mental Health Concerns

The following list of warning signs is intended as a guideline to help staff, parents, and carers recognise early indicators of potential mental health concerns in children.

These signs are not diagnostic tools but can be useful in identifying when professional advice or intervention may be needed. If a child displays these signs persistently, it is recommended to seek support from a mental health professional or refer through appropriate school channels.

The list is based on advice from leading organisations such as YoungMinds, Place2Be, and the NHS.

Emotional Signs

Unexplained or frequent crying or emotional outbursts.
Persistent anxiety or worry, often expressed as fears about going to school or socialising.
Unexplained or prolonged periods of sadness or withdrawal from usual activities.
Irritability or mood swings, particularly in children who were previously calm.

Behavioural Signs

A sudden decline in academic performance or disengagement from schoolwork.
Frequent temper tantrums or acting out in ways that are out of character.
Changes in sleep patterns, such as insomnia or excessive sleeping.
Avoidance of friends or previously enjoyed activities, indicating possible social withdrawal.
Frequent complaints of physical ailments (such as stomach aches or headaches) without a medical explanation.

Physical Signs

Changes in eating habits, including loss of appetite or overeating.
Fatigue or low energy that persists even after rest.
Noticeable changes in personal hygiene or appearance.
Physical signs of self-harm, such as unexplained cuts or bruises.

Other Signs

Excessive clinginess to parents or teachers.
Difficulty concentrating or a sudden inability to focus on tasks.
Talks or expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness, or feeling "trapped."
Mentioning or showing signs of suicidal thoughts or feelings, which require immediate emergency action.

9. Assessing Children's Wellbeing and Involvement

We use the Leuven Scale for Wellbeing and Involvement as a key tool to assess and monitor the emotional and social health of our pupils. This observational tool allows teachers to gauge both the wellbeing and involvement of children during their day-to-day school activities.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing refers to the emotional state of a child—how content, relaxed, and secure they feel in their environment. When a child experiences a high level of wellbeing, they are more likely to display positive emotional resilience, feel at ease, and be able to engage fully in learning. **The Leuven Scale scores** wellbeing on a scale from 1 to 5:

- 1: Extremely low wellbeing (e.g., child is clearly stressed, unhappy, or uncomfortable).
- 5: High wellbeing (e.g., child is completely relaxed, smiling, and content).

Involvement

Involvement refers to the level of a child's engagement in an activity. Children with high involvement are deeply engaged in what they are doing, showing concentration, motivation, and persistence. Involvement is key to learning, as it shows that a child is actively and energetically participating in their learning environment. This is also rated on a scale from 1 to 5:

- 1: Low involvement (e.g., child is disengaged, easily distracted, or passive).
- 5: High involvement (e.g., child is fully immersed in the task, showing focus and determination).

Using the Leuven Scale to Identify Targeted Support

By regularly observing and assessing children using the Leuven Scale, we are able to:

Identify individual needs: When a child consistently shows low scores in wellbeing or involvement, it can indicate the need for targeted support or intervention, whether emotional, behavioural, or academic.

Monitor groups of pupils: The Leuven Scale also allows us to spot patterns or trends across groups, enabling us to address the wellbeing and engagement of classes or specific cohorts that may be struggling.

Target interventions: Once children or groups have been identified as needing additional support, the school can provide targeted interventions such as mentoring, social skills groups, or emotional literacy support (ELSA). For instance, a child with low wellbeing may benefit from peer support, counselling, or adjustments in their classroom environment, while a child with low involvement might need more differentiated learning tasks or additional resources to increase engagement.

10. Managing Disclosures and Confidentiality

When a pupil discloses concerns about their mental health, staff must listen attentively and ensure confidentiality. Pupils are informed that while staff will support them, they may need to share the information with the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) if there are concerns about the pupil's safety or wellbeing. This ensures that the child is appropriately protected while maintaining trust in the disclosure process.

Where appropriate and in the best interest of the pupil, parents or carers will be informed of the pupil's mental health concerns. The school will collaborate with parents/carers to develop a comprehensive support plan that addresses the pupil's mental health needs both at school and at home.

11. Supporting Parents and Carers

We recognise that supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our community includes addressing the needs of parents and carers. We offer:

Workshops and Resources: Workshops are available to provide parents with guidance on key mental health topics.

Signposting to Services: For parents or carers experiencing their own mental health challenges, the school signposts local services.

We will regularly use communication channels, such as our Weduc, newsletters and the school website, to ensure parents are aware of local and national mental health services available for their wellbeing.

12. Supporting Peers

When a pupil experiences mental health challenges, their peers may need support as well. The school will provide guidance and intervention where necessary, including group or 1:1 sessions.

13. Referral Pathways and External Support

We are committed to ensuring that pupils with mental health needs receive appropriate and effective support. When a mental health concern is identified, we work with our pupils using our internal waves of support before engaging specialist services that provide tailored mental health support. The referral process is managed by the Senior Mental Health Lead or SENDCo, who will assess the situation and work closely with parents/carers to ensure the child receives the support they need.

Referral Process:

Initial Assessment: The Senior Mental Health Lead or SENDCo evaluates the child's needs, gathering relevant information to determine the most appropriate support pathway.

Consent: Referrals to external services are made with the consent of parents/carers, unless safeguarding concerns arise.

Collaboration: The school works closely with external professionals, parents, and carers to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to supporting the child's mental health.

We collaborate with a range of trusted external agencies that provide mental health support specifically for primary-aged children. We may work with parents and carers to seek referrals for pupils to specialist services, such as School Health, CAMHS, and Reflexions, to ensure pupils receive appropriate mental health support tailored to their individual needs.

When a concern is raised—whether by staff, parents, or the pupil themselves—the school may refer the child through one of our pathways which allows us to access a range of services, ensuring the child receives appropriate support based on their individual needs.

By collaborating with professionals from health, education, and social care sectors, these pathways enable us to:

Assess a child's needs quickly and efficiently.

Coordinate support for the child across different services, ensuring a holistic approach.

Provide early intervention which helps to address issues before they escalate.

Ensure specialist support is available for more complex needs, such as clinical mental health assessments and long-term care.

We use a range of in-school services designed to provide both preventative and responsive care. These services include:

Reflexions: Provides early intervention and support for children experiencing mental health difficulties within school settings.

Educational Psychology Service (Walsall-specific): Offers assessments and support for children with emotional, behavioural, or developmental concerns that may affect their mental health.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS): Offers specialist mental health assessment and treatment for young people with complex mental health needs.

14. Staff Training and Development

We ensure our staff are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to support pupils' mental health effectively.

Ongoing Training for All Staff

Whole-School Training: All staff receive annual mental health awareness training, delivered by external professionals. This training covers identifying early signs of mental health issues, strategies for supporting pupils, and the procedures for raising concerns.

Mental Health First Aid: Our ELSA trained Family Support Officer is also trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), enabling them to spot early signs of mental health issues and provide initial support.

Safeguarding and Mental Health: Mental health is a key focus within our safeguarding training, which all staff undertake annually. This ensures staff understand the connection between safeguarding and mental health, particularly when it comes to recognising signs of neglect, abuse, or trauma that may affect a child's emotional wellbeing.

Targeted Training for Key Staff

Senior Mental Health Lead Training: Our Senior Mental Health Lead receives specialised training to oversee mental health strategy and manage complex cases.

SENDCo and ELSA Training: Our SENDCo and Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) receive targeted training on supporting children with special educational needs and mental health challenges.

15. Monitoring and Review

We are committed to ensuring that our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy remains current, effective, and responsive to the needs of our pupils, staff, and wider community. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with key stakeholders, including the Governing Body, staff, parents, and pupils.

The review process will consider:

Feedback from staff, parents, and pupils on the effectiveness of the policy.

Data on pupil wellbeing, including incidents of mental health concerns and support provided.

Changes in statutory guidance, best practices, and available external support services.

Training needs for staff and any gaps in provision identified during the year.

Any necessary updates or amendments will be made to reflect new legislation, local authority guidance, and the evolving needs of the school community.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support at St Michael's

What happens in school to promote mental health?

All of children access an ambitious curriculum which promotes mental health. Our PHSE curriculum and Mental Health Minutes sessions are designed to nurture the children to be confident and happy, thus increasing their capacity to learn alongside preparing them for the challenges of the modern world.

Our children are provided with opportunities to develop their emotional intelligence and their life skills.

We acknowledge here at St Michael's that it is not 'one size fits all' and that some of our children need a little extra support along the way. For this we have a designated team of staff who work in school to assist in a variety of ways:

- * Learning Support Assistants
- * Pupil Support Officer
- * SENDCo
- * Designated Mental Health Lead



Occasionally, some of our children may have more complex mental health needs. In this instance we can signpost to and support referrals to specialist agencies such as School Health, Reflexions and CAHMS.

What happens in school to promote mental health?

School

Speak to your child's class teacher, Designated Mental Health Lead or SENDCo. We can then either put direct support in place at school or signpost you to appropriate agencies and services.

Walsall Council

Visit their website

This website includes a link to CAHMS factsheet.

Visit your GP to discuss your concerns.

Charities

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/mental-health>

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/supporting-your-child-s-mental-health/>



Wave One Universal Provision	Wave 2 Specific, additional and time-limited intervention	Wave 3 Targeted, specialist provision highly tailored to need.
At St Michael's we ensure that our curriculum provides all of our children with the knowledge and skills to help keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe. ◇ Embedded PSHE Curriculum in all year groups. ◇ Termly pupil voice on Wellbeing and involvement. ◇ Regular Collective Worship with Mental Health and Wellbeing focus led by staff and pupils. ◇ Displays in school and classroom environment ◇ Communication boxes in every classroom, checked and actioned regularly ◇ Playground Buddies-KS2 pupils there to support others throughout play-time and lunchtime ◇ Themed days linked to mental health awareness. Transition Focus Year to Year transition day to help support transitioning to their next year group, new classroom and new adults. Two day Year 6-7 Transition We work alongside local secondary schools to facilitate a two-day programme to help pupils prepare emotionally and socially for the move to secondary school, including visits to secondary schools, workshops on managing change, and opportunities to address concerns. Vulnerable Pupils Pupils identified as having SEND or those considered vulnerable will receive additional visits to their new class, one-on-one time with new staff, and meetings with parents/carers to ensure a smooth	Occasionally some of our children require a little extra support. We have a team of staff who work within the school setting to provide early help: Pupil Support Officer provides targeted, individualistic support: ◆ Daily/Weekly Check-ins ◆ Friendship Groups ◆ Emotional Support ◆ Building confidence and self-esteem ◆ Coping with change ◆ Emotional Literacy Support	Occasionally, a child may have more complex mental health needs. We can signpost and support referrals to specialist agencies such as behaviour and emotional needs. Reflexions (Black Country Healthcare NHS Trust) We have a named Specialist Educational Mental Health Practitioner ◆ Small group interventions based around a shared need ◆ 1:1 interventions following a referral Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Individual support for emotional and mental health needs