



Our Lady of Good Help

Catholic Primary School

Wellbeing & Mental Health Policy

**This policy was written in September 2023
It will be reviewed in September 2024.**

Like Our Lady, we live wisely, think deeply and love generously in Christ

Policy statement

At Our Lady of Good Help we are committed to promoting a whole school approach to positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for all students, their families and members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows students' voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and indirectly - by mental health issues.

Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Our Lady of Good Help's whole school approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst students and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing; instilling a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of students, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Designated Mental Health Lead (Mrs Foster)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr McQuiston)
- SENCO (Mrs Foster)
- RSHE Coordinator (Miss Roberts)
- External Education Mental Health Team (EMHT and Seedlings therapist)

If a member of staff is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student, in the first instance they should speak to the Headteacher (DSL).

If there is a concern that the student is at high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the school's child protection procedures should be followed.

If the child presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Individual Care Plans

When a pupil has received a diagnosis of a mental health issue, or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation (orange/red level), it is recommended that an Individual Care Plan should be drawn up. The development of the plan should involve the pupil, parents, and relevant professionals.

Suggested elements of this plan include:

- Details of the pupil's situation/condition/diagnosis
- Special requirements or strategies, and necessary precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- Who to contact in an emergency
- The role of the school and specific staff

Teaching about mental health

Mental Health is everyone's business in our school, and we promote an environment that fosters inclusion, diversity and respect.

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves - and others - physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum and our peer mentoring programme.

We will follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively.

Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as encouraging students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites, parent app), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at

- How to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen

Support at school and in the local community

Support at school:

This will include opportunities to speak with staff, working with families and other agencies, interventions, positive assertive programmes etc. Our School will continually develop and expand on opportunities to support children.

School has a Seedlings therapist and an Education Mental Health Practitioner who work with children and their families. The Mental Health Lead and SENDCo work collaboratively with families to ensure that the right support is in place.

Local Community:

In Liverpool, there are a range of organisations and groups offering support, including the CAMHS partnership, a group of providers specialising in children and young people's mental health wellbeing. These partners deliver accessible support to children, young people and their families, whilst working with professionals to reduce the range of mental health issues through prevention, intervention, training and participation. <https://www.liverpoolcamhs.com/>

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student 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 alert the DSL (or DDSL), in the first instance, who may in turn refer these concerns to the Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of 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
- Appearing self-conscious about changing in front of others

- Unwillingness to do PE
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Targeted Support

We recognise some children and young people are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health, for example: those who are in care; young carers; those who have had previous access to CAMHS; those living with parents/carers with a mental illness and those living in households experiencing domestic violence.

We work closely with school nurses and their teams in supporting the emotional and mental health needs of school-aged children and they are equipped to work at community, family and individual levels. Their skills cover identifying issues early, determining potential risks and providing early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

We ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services by:

- Providing specific help for those children most at risk (or already showing signs) of social, emotional, and behavioural problems;
- Working closely with Liverpool City Council Children's Services, Liverpool CAMHS and other agencies services to follow various protocols including assessment and referral;
- Identifying and assessing, in line with the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT), children who are showing early signs of anxiety, emotional distress, or behavioural problems;
- Discussing options for tackling these problems with the child and his/her parents/carers. Agree an Individual Care Plan as the first stage of a 'stepped care' approach;
- Providing a range of interventions that have been proven to be effective, according to the child's needs;
- Ensuring young people have access to pastoral care and support, as well as specialist services, including Liverpool CAMHS, so that emotional, social and behavioural problems can be dealt with as soon as they occur;
- Providing young people with clear and consistent information about the opportunities available for them to discuss personal issues and emotional concerns. Any support offered should take account of local community and education policies and protocols regarding confidentiality;
- Providing young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it;
- Ensuring the identification, assessment, and support of young carers under the statutory duties outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014 are met;
- Ensuring that our school is ACE aware and embraces trauma-informed practice.

Managing Disclosures

If a student chooses to disclose mental health concerns about themselves, or a friend, to any member of staff, the response will be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

All disclosures should be recorded electronically using CPOMs. This will capture:

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Nature of the disclosure & main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps
- This information will automatically be shared with the safeguarding team

Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about a student to the safeguarding team, then the member of staff must follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

If a pupil gives us reason to believe that they are at risk, or there are child protection issues, child protection procedures should be followed. This includes liaising with external agencies and, when appropriate, parents.

Whole School Approach

We recognise that pupil's wellbeing is impacted by the systems that they exist in – the primary one being the family. The school will support staff and external agencies to work with parents/carers so that they can support their child.

We will do this with the following in mind:

- Some parents/carers may prefer a virtual meeting rather than face to face
- Some parents are uncomfortable in school premises so a neutral venue may be appropriate.
- Who should be present – students, staff, parents etc.?
- What are the aims of the meeting and expected outcomes?
- We are mindful that for a parent, hearing about their child's issues can be upsetting and distressing. They may therefore respond in various ways which we should be prepared for and allow time for the parent to reflect and come to terms with the situation.
- Signposting parents to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. At the end of the meeting, lines of communication should be kept open should the parents have further questions or concerns. Booking a follow-up meeting or phone call might be beneficial at this stage.
- Ensure a record of the meeting and points discussed/ agreed are added to CPOMs and an Individual Care Plan created if appropriate.

Supporting Parents

We recognise the family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing; we will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of and have access to materials promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing mental health problems;
- Highlighting sources of information and support about common mental health issues through our communication channels (website, newsletters etc.);
- Offering support to help parents or carers develop their parenting skills. This may involve providing information or offering small, group-based programmes run by children's centres, community nurses (such as school nurses and health visitors) or other appropriately trained health or education practitioners;
- Ensuring parents, carers and other family members living in disadvantaged circumstances are given the support they need to participate fully in activities to promote social and emotional wellbeing. This will include support to participate in any parenting sessions, by offering a range of times for the sessions or providing help with transport and childcare. We recognise this might involve liaison with family support agencies.

Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends who may want to support but do not know how. To keep peers safe we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the student 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

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 to enable them to keep students safe. A nominated member of staff will receive Mental Health First Aid training or equivalent.

Our designated WSA strategic lead and mental health operational lead will attend the WSA termly network meetings.

Regular training can be accessed through <https://www.liverpoolcamhs.com/training/>. The MindEd learning portal also 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 CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more students.

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 two years as a minimum. The next review date is September 2024.

In between updates, the policy will be updated when necessary to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of the Mental Health Lead and, ultimately, the Head Teacher.

Any personnel changes will be implemented immediately.