

# Pupil Mental Health and Well Being Policy

Primary person responsible for updates to this policy: Jo Lynch, Raffaella Merolla, Jack Lewis

Job title: Well-Being Lead

Last review date: May 2022

Next review date: September 2022

**Circulation:** This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children.

'Parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

*"St. Anthony's School for Girls aims to provide high quality education in a caring, supportive and Catholic environment, infused by Christ's Gospel, in order that each of our pupils is able to develop fully as an individual, well-adjusted to the wider community."*

Definition of mental health and well-being from the World Health Organisation:

**....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.**

### Statement of intent

At St Anthony's School For Girls, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and wellbeing of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers).

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

We endeavour to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress and aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential or to access help when they need it.

We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

### Staff Wellbeing During Covid

It is recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic is having an ongoing impact on the work and personal lives of all members of the school community, including staff. Due to the pandemic, we are now coping with a wide range of issues and feelings, such as, fear, anxiety, vulnerability and social isolation. Maintaining and promoting wellbeing is especially important during challenging times such as the current pandemic. Relationships are at the heart of St Anthony's School and are facilitated by open communication across all of the staff team. This Wellbeing policy is particularly relevant at this time of additional stress and uncertainty and should be followed by all St Anthony's staff. It is essential that staff and pupils know who they can approach in the event of a wellbeing concern and that these channels are clearly communicated to all so that we can take responsibility for our own wellbeing. Supporting all staff and pupils and encouraging open conversations about how they are feeling and coping will help create a positive culture around mental wellbeing. It is important to recognise that everyone is likely to experience lack of motivation and low mood at times and that this is a very reasonable emotional response to the current situation. Creating a strong sense of support as a school community, can help improve resilience across the school.

At St Anthony's School 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 consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and well-being.
- 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 and their own resilience.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values through whole school assemblies but particularly the Friday Celebration assembly
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making through Student Councillors and Eco Warriors
  - 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 and be grateful with daily *Gratitude Time* in each year group
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
  - PSHEE for all year groups through the mindfulness approach of the *Jigsaw* scheme of work
- Wellbeing week and access to information around the school.

### **Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility**

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health and well-being of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Well-being Lead – Joanne Lynch

(SENDCO) Deputy Wellbeing Lead – Jack Lewis

Named Well being Governor – John Withers & Liz Francis

DSL – Raffaella Merola - Jack Lewis (Acting Deputy)

Deputy DSL -Donal Brennan; Olivia Greene

### **Scope**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Medical policy and our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHEE and SMSC policies. It also sits alongside child protection procedures.

### **Teaching about Mental Health and Well-being**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHEE curriculum. The specific content of lessons are set out in the *Jigsaw* scheme of work.

### **Targeted support**

The school offers support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities.
- Use of Social Stories.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop as leaders: Playground Friends, House Monitors, Reading Buddies, Well-being Champions
- Managing feelings resources e.g. Worry Monsters; Worry Boxes in class; Colour Monster
- Therapeutic activities including art; lego therapy; mindfulness clubs; weekly yoga sessions

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support.

### **Early Identification and Warning Signs**

All staff will be vigilant in identifying a range of possible difficulties that may be contributing to a pupil's poor mental health, including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also 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 communicate their concerns with the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate. Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

### **Assessment, interventions and support**

All concerns are reported to the designated adults within school and needs are assessed through a triage approach with SLT, class teachers and SENDCO 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 or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be cascaded to the DSL and/or SENCO for assessment. To support parents and carers we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support e.g. through parent forums.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

### **Working with other agencies and partners**

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- Early Help
- Educational Psychology services
- Behaviour Support
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling Services
- Therapists

### **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 students safe. 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 pupils.

### **Links to other policies**

This policy links to our Child Protection Policy, Anti Bullying, SEND Offer, Staff Wellbeing Policy and our Behaviour Policy.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be published on the school website - hard copies are available on request. The policy will be reviewed every year.