



# St Mary's Catholic Primary Primary School

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy 2021



**Based on The Devon School Mental Health Strategy**

*Supported by Devon's Early Help 4 Mental Health Programme and the  
Schools Development Support Agency 2018*



## **Rationale**

### **National view**

“Evidence tells us that good mental health is essential for children to learn and achieve” *Heads Together ‘Whole School Approach’*

As a nation we are increasingly aware of the numbers of children young people and adults who experience periods of mental ill health, and the fact that this can limit their opportunities to reach their potential and contribute to society.

National NHS and Government policies are now being formed to begin to address this situation through improvements to education.

The National Institute for Health Care Excellence is clear in its advice to schools, that developing a ‘Whole School Approach’ to promoting mental health has shown clear benefits in contributing to the wellbeing of pupils. This approach goes beyond teaching and learning and pervades all aspects of the life of the school (Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing).

### **Definition of Mental Health and wellbeing;**

We use the World Health Organisation’s definition of mental health and wellbeing

*“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”.*

### **The Aims and Intentions of our Mental Health Strategy**

#### **We aim to:**

- Remain informed, inspired and influenced by national policy guidance within the DfE, Public Health England and the Plymouth Diocese.
- Ensure a whole school approach to development and delivery.
- Ensure a whole community contribution to development and delivery, including pupils and their families, stakeholders, partner agencies in statutory and charitable organisations and the local extended community.
- Connect with our partner schools in our Multi Academy Trust and schools in our local community to share good practice.
- To hold the Mental Health Strategy as a standard agenda item on Senior Leadership Team and Governor Meetings.

## **We will:**

- Ensure that this Mental Health Strategy and associated policies complement all other current school strategies and policies.
- Review the Mental Health Strategy annually.
- Ensure there is clear learning on our curriculum regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health across all key stages.

Here at St Mary's Catholic Primary School we embrace our role, alongside our families, the community and with our wider partners, in contributing to the developing emotional wellbeing of our pupils and their learning about being healthy, from a physical and mental health perspective.

"Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school approach" suggest using an Eight Principles Approach.

We have chosen to use this Eight Principle approach to develop our school Mental Health Policy and evidence it in action.

However, in line with the EH4MH added value, our Eight Principles include our links with our community and national contributions to our children's developing mental health and wellbeing.

We have chosen an additional section that aims to highlight our chosen forms of **communication** and information sharing.

**This policy is developed in response to our pledge in the Mental Health Strategy. It is guided by Public Health England's key documents outlined at the end of this document.**

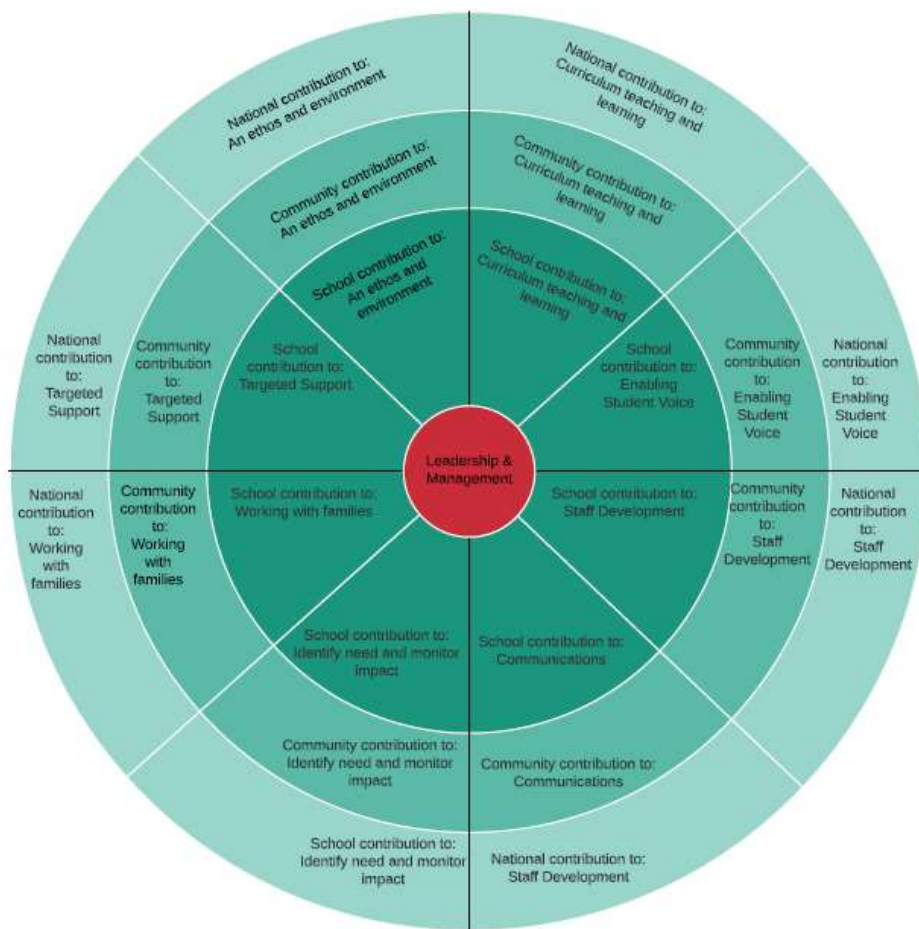
# **Principle 1:**

## **Leadership and Management**

At the core of these Eight Principles is Leadership and Management. Their commitment and drive are key in embedding this policy at the heart of our school.

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, the Headteacher/ SENDCo/ Designated Safeguarding Lead and the School Counsellor are leading the development of our Whole School Mental Health Strategy, which aims to reduce stigma around mental health and wellbeing and to celebrate the differences which exist within any community. The Senior Leadership Team, governors and pupils from the School Council are also working together as part of a Mental Health working group to help to identify and develop the mental health and wellbeing of the school community. We have also appointed a specific role of Mental Health Champion within our local governing body.

Below is the EH4MH's 8 Principle approach including the added value of considering community and national contributions to each principle, and with the additional **Communication** Principle.



## Community and National Support

Senior Management have been working closely with our partners in the specialist NHS & DCC funded **Early Help 4 Mental Health** team and the Schools Development Support Agency programme: *"Building a whole school approach to mental health."*

## Principle 2:

### School Ethos and Environment

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, children and young people come first, and our priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning, within a culture of celebrating individual effort and progress. This is within an environment that celebrates diversity and promotes respect for all. We want every child to be successful, and to reach for success from the first day they join us, leaving the school with a love of learning that lasts throughout life. We aim to recognise and foster strengths, as well as supporting vulnerabilities through creating emotionally aware staff, parents/carers and pupils.

We recognise that in order to embed this ethos, we need to promote an environment that focusses on the whole school's emotional wellbeing. We see mental health as a continuum and acknowledge that we all have mental health needs in the same way that we have physical health needs. We have considered this through both the physical environment of the school and the emotional culture that is promoted throughout the school.

**Our Whole School Approach does this by:**

#### School

The sharing of our school's mission statement, which is:

Our school community seeks to build on Gospel values to:

- Nurture and respect the talents and abilities that God has given to each unique individual.
- Enable everyone to aspire to and realise their potential through perseverance, resilience and integrity.
- To grow in love and to be loved, unconditionally.

Our mission statement is displayed around the school and is regularly considered by our children, by an analysis of the key values from within the mission statement which are: build, nurture, enable, respect and love unconditionally.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

- Opportunities for children to help shape policies e.g. Anti-Bullying, Online Safety.
- Participation in the Achievement for All Project.
- Opportunities to take part in national events which consider pupil well-being e.g. Anti-Bullying Week, Safer Internet Day. These initiatives consider how bullying impacts on mental health.

- We promote resilience through the promotion of Building Learning Power (BLP), to enable pupils to foster resilience and self-efficacy. This is done in a number of ways and pupils' achievements are celebrated in a weekly assembly when certificates are awarded.
- Use of nurture groups to support pupils are required.
- Use of Rainbows Bereavement Programme to support small groups/ individual pupils who are experiencing a sense of loss.
- Therapeutic play techniques used with individual pupils.
- Opportunity to work with the School Counsellor.

## **Community**

These are some examples of how it looks within our school that we are proud of;

- We have forged links with our local parishes, by attending the parish churches for events e.g. Crib Blessings and inviting parishioners to school events.
- Information about the school is submitted for publication into a weekly parish newsletter and monthly local newsletter that is distributed to local people.
- Fostered links with parishioners and local people who volunteer at St Mary's, following completion of DBS checks and Safeguarding training.
- We have also made links with local elderly members of the community, for example through carol singing at residential homes and community centres.
- Support for local charities including the Rotary Club's Purple4Polio Appeal.

St Mary's works to develop an ethos that promotes a positive image of people with diverse identities and abilities. In a recent parental survey (2018) 100% (80% agreed; 20% strongly agreed) of respondents reported that their child felt safe at this school and was happy at this school. 98% of pupils also reported that there was an adult that they could speak to if they had a problem and 100% said that the school encouraged them to look after their emotional and mental health.

## **Nationally**

We are actively embracing the 'Time to Change' campaign to bring an end to the stigma and discrimination faced by people who experience mental health problems.

## Principle 3:

### Curriculum Teaching and Learning

We know that school-based programmes of social and emotional learning have the potential to help young people acquire the skills they need to make good academic progress as well as benefit pupil health and wellbeing (*Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional health and Wellbeing*). With this in mind we have sought to enhance knowledge and skills around mental health across the curriculum as well as through targeted subjects such as PSHE.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school:**

#### School

- We use an approach across the school that focusses of the social and emotional needs of pupils and Therapeutic play techniques.
- Exercise – There is a strong link between good physical and mental health. In our PE lessons we explore this with our pupils and have begun to trial a running programme based on the principles of a 'mile a day' with some of our pupils.
- Impact weeks/ days which provide pupils with whole day's experiences of mental health awareness. We have previously run a 'Respect Week' and are currently organising an 'Its OK to be Different' Week.
- A whole school approach to social/emotional wellbeing through our PSHE curriculum(including drugs and SRE) and promotional of positive mental health through this work.
- Pupils benefit from visits from the Fire Service, Health Professionals, Dogs' Trust, SWGfL, NSPCC resources to help promote wellbeing including the NSPCC PANTS programme.
- Promotion of Mental Health in classroom sessions across the school. These include the use of mindfulness techniques, relaxation, 'Go Noodle', peer massage.
- Residential trips are also designed to promote resilience through participation in a range of different learning experiences.
- We encourage outdoor learning opportunities through our outdoor education programme for pupils across the school, which we believe all impact positively on mental health. This programme is based on principles seen as essential to outdoor learning, which we have termed OWL (Outdoor Wild Learning) wisdoms. These are: environmental awareness, creativity, wild skills, wider community, advocacy, nature knowledge, curriculum enhancement and reflection and spirituality.

## **Community**

Wherever possible we incorporate the resources of community services to enhance our curriculum's delivery of mental health promotion.

We are proud of our partnership with EH4MH, a local health service, and their support in developing our school's mental health awareness. We promote the Single Point of Access (SPA) for Devon's Children's Integrated Services, to which anyone can make a referral into for physical and mental health needs <http://devon.integratedchildrensservices.co.uk/> .

## **Nationally**

We will continue to develop opportunities for our pupils to develop positive mental and physical health and support parents/ carers with this too. Each week a section of our newsletter relates to wellbeing/ Safeguarding support, promoting organisations such as the NSPCC, CEOP.



## Principle 4:

### Pupil voice

Involving pupils in decisions that impact on them can benefit their emotional health and wellbeing by helping them to feel part of the school and wider community and to have some control over their lives (*Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing*). We are committed to providing structures that allow pupils to play an active role in developing a mentally healthy school.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school:**

#### School

- Regular pupil surveys help to give us a broad over view of children's mental health.
- School Council enables pupils to play an active role in the school, including taking a strategic lead in terms of planning for future development. All pupils have the opportunity to share ideas in the school council boxes in each classroom.
- Prefects also have the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas with school leadership. Those participating in the Torbay and Devon Civic Award also lead fundraising events in school and run clubs at lunchtime for younger pupils.
- Pupils have the opportunity to lead events in school e.g. Enterprise teams run the Summer Fair, sporting events such as athletics at Sports Day, weekly liturgies are led by Key Stage Two pupils and the health tuck shop is run by our upper Key Stage Two pupils.
- Use of Peer Mediators at playtimes to ensure all pupils have a voice.
- Buddies to support younger pupils at lunchtime
- Pupils participate in creating the termly School Newspaper.
- Provide policies for pupils – e.g. write and review the Anti-Bullying policy.
- The school is developing a Mental Health Ambassador Team which will involve training pupils to work together to actively improve and support mental health needs. One of their roles will be to provide a pupil version of this strategy.
- Our school promotes pupils in all clubs and activities to have a voice in how the clubs run and pupils can promote the clubs within the school (e.g. those completing the Civic Award run their own clubs for other pupils).
- We have lots of musical opportunities for pupils to participate in such as a school choir, music clubs, peripatetic music lessons and the chorister programme which is run in collaboration with Buckfast Abbey's musical department.
- Within Circle time, staff create an environment that encourages all pupils to share their views and experiences.
- Pupil voice clearly identified within annual reviews for those with Special Educational Needs, who have an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan)

## **Community**

Where appropriate, we encourage our pupils to participate in general groups relevant to their needs, such as: Balloons, BEAT groups (Beating Eating Disorders charity) and others.

## **Nationally**

We access information from Young Minds ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)) for young people's views relating to their mental health, support and what they have found helpful.

## Principle 5:

### Identifying Need and Monitoring Impact

In line with our ethos of celebrating diversity and the successes of the individual we are keen to identify need in order to provide the appropriate supportive environment for pupils to thrive. We aim to identify children and young people with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent them developing.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school:**

#### School

- We use a number of whole school profile surveys, including Section 48 RE surveys and OFSTED style surveys. These help to highlight any particular trends within the school population that may need attention.
- We regularly seek feedback from our families and pupils through questionnaires.
- All staff are given training on how to identify signs that a pupil may be experiencing a mental health difficulty.
- We openly encourage pupils to let staff know when they have concerns, we provide a variety of ways for pupils to seek help e.g. we are developing the use of worry boxes in every classroom, checked daily by the teacher. There is also an opportunity for pupils to approach the school counsellor. Once our Mental Health Ambassador Team are established, we hope to develop further ways to promote pupils reaching out for help.
- The school is beginning to use outcome measures to highlight the needs in terms of mental health and wellbeing and the impact of these over time.
- The school has started to use the Boxhall Profile, which provides a framework for the assessment of children who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD).

#### Community

As a school we work closely in partnership with our community colleagues to ensure we are actively identifying pupil mental health needs and monitoring the effectiveness of our actions and support. As part of our commitment to supporting pupils we employ a school counsellor to be present two days a week.

#### National

The School Counsellor and Head teacher are looking at 'Measuring and Monitoring Children and Young People's Mental Wellbeing: A toolkit for schools and colleges' (Public Health England and Evidence Based Practice Unit) for further information on appropriate tools to measure impact of interventions.

## Principle 6:

### Working With Families

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. We recognise the important role the family plays in influencing the emotional health and wellbeing of pupils in the school.

We also recognise that working in partnership may sometimes mean providing support and resources to those families that are struggling with meeting life's challenges.

**These are some examples of how this looks in our school:**

#### School

- As already mentioned, the school is participating in the Achievement for All Project which focusses on supporting individual families but St Mary's is also using some resources with all families within the school e.g. questionnaires sent to all parents/ carers to find out about out of school activities and interests of all pupils.
- Parent Support sessions e.g. mental health and wellbeing workshops organised in conjunction with EH4MH.
- School Counsellor works with families as part of the work that she carries out with children at the school.
- There are learning afternoons each half term, to which parent/carers are invited to celebrate the learning which has taken place within a particular class.
- Parents/carers are invited to whole school events e.g. Harvest, Masses, Carol Services, Christmas Lunch.
- Friends of St Mary's (FOSMs) provides an opportunity to parents/carers to support the school and work together on a variety of fund-raising activities.

#### Community and National

Having a small school community means that we get to know our families well and are able to use this knowledge and understanding to support them effectively and signpost them to agencies where needed.

There are several online resources and information from national charities and organisations regarding mental health and well-being. Details are provided on the dedicated parent page of our school website, on the Devon Virgin Care website <http://devon.integratedchildrensservices.co.uk/directory/> and EH4MH <http://eh4mh.co.uk/parents/> section for parents.

# Principle 7:

## Staff Development & Well Being

'Well-being in schools starts with the staff; they are the front line of this work...'  
(Framework for promoting well-being and responding to mental health in schools).

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we place the wellbeing and development of staff as a high priority, believing all school staff place a vital role in developing and supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of the pupils.

Principle 7 is split into two sections; the first is how staff are provided with the knowledge and understanding of pupils' wellbeing and the second looks at how the school supports the development of staff wellbeing.

**These are examples of how it looks in our school:**

### Staff training

- By promoting EH4MH training which has helped the school to develop a much deeper understanding of mental health and break down stigma.
- Training has also been offered to staff in the school by the School Counsellor as following: to support pupils who have experienced trauma, attachment theory and practice in school, how to develop a 'therapeutic school', therapeutic play techniques for 1:1 and group intervention and social skills group work.

### Staff wellbeing

- Staff have access to a 24-hour counselling help line provided by Zurich insurance.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team has a specific focus on investigating ways of supporting and developing staff wellbeing.
- Staff appraisal includes an awareness of well-being and stress management.
- Supervision is offered to our staff through the School Counsellor, so they are able to reflect on individual young people's mental health and particular themes, as well as promoting culture change across the whole school.

# Principle 8:

## Targeted Support

The school recognises that many behavioural and emotional problems can be supported within the school, with advice from external professionals, and that some pupils may need more intensive support at times. St Mary's Catholic Primary School has a range of potential interventions to support individual's needs, as well as links with external agencies.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school:**

### School

- Nurture groups
- Outdoor Education Sessions
- 1:1 session for pupils who have been identified by the class teacher as requiring additional support (including social/emotional support or low self-esteem).
- School Counsellor offers parental support as required.
- Space available for nurture groups.
- Strategies from Occupational therapy (when an individual child has had a sensory assessment), such as balance ball, weighted cushions, headphones, wobble cushions.
- We are developing a therapeutic garden, in consultation with our school counsellor, school council and gardeners, to provide a calming safe space for staff and pupils.

### Community

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we work closely with our Community Colleagues in Health and Social Care. We regularly access consultation with EH4MH to think about individual children's emotional health/ wellbeing needs (<http://eh4mh.co.uk/>).

Social, Emotional, Mental Health, Wellbeing and Behaviour Team (Previously the Behaviour Support Team) provide consultation and advice to all school staff around identified individual pupil's needs.

Linking with EMTAS - Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service.

Proud2Be - supporting LGBTQIA+ people and their families, in South Devon and beyond, campaigning, delivering training and facilitating a youth project, a volunteer programme and groups and events throughout the year ([www.proud2be.co.uk](http://www.proud2be.co.uk)). A number of pupils have been actively involved with the charity.

# Principle 9:

## Communication

In St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we identify that clear and robust systems of communication both within the school and reaching out into the school community, are key components to providing a mentally healthy school.

**These are examples of how it looks within our school;**

### School

- In line with our school ethos, we are always thinking of diverse ways of promoting good communication, in enabling and encouraging pupils and staff to feel more comfortable to communicate feelings and seek help when they need it. We use a wide variety of approaches including; non-verbal systems such as suggestion boxes, internet communication via emails our website.
- We also have a weekly newsletter to ensure that parents/carers are aware of things happening in school and these are sent in paper form and via email.
- We communicate within the staff group through staff meetings and emails. We have Safeguarding/ Health and safety as standing items and also include having mental health as a standing agenda item at staff meetings so that staff are aware of what support is available within school. This includes refreshers of key themes / training topics.
- Staff also communicate through the use of CPOMS which records concerns about pupils, including their social and emotional needs and well-being.
- We are trialling the use of Worry Boxes and we use School Council boxes as already mentioned, so that children can share ideas.
- Questionnaires are sent to parents/carers, staff and pupils annually.
- Pupil progress meetings for parents/carers are offered each term, along with a written report at the end of the year.
- The school also operates an 'open door policy' for parents/carers.

### Community

- The school website has staff listed for parents/ carers and a number of ways in which they can communicate with the school.
- The school has a pupil led newspaper (online and paper), and staff encourage pupils to become involved in this.
- We communicate to our parents/ carers through our website, newsletters, emails and pupil progress meetings for parents/ carers.
- All staff have accessed EH4MH training and have the opportunity to access supervision. This encourages ways to talk about mental health and how young

people are feeling, which can be used over the breadth of young people's experiences.

## National

- We use resources from national organisations visually in the school, via display boards, website and newsletters.
- We promote 'Take 10 Together at School' – tips for staff on how to start the conversation, by Mental Health First Aid ([www.mhfaengland.org/img/Take\\_10\\_Together\\_at\\_School](http://www.mhfaengland.org/img/Take_10_Together_at_School)).
- We promote Childline – help line and online resources ([www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)) and posters are displayed around the school e.g. toilets.
- We promote the NSPCC campaign Pantasauras/ Let's Talk Pants ([www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/)).
- Heads Together - promoting the benefits for mental health of talking about difficult things ([www.headstogether.org.uk](http://www.headstogether.org.uk)).
- Time to Change – movement to end mental health discrimination ([www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)).



**The Devon School's Mental Health policy was guided by Public Health England's key documents:**

***"Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper" (2017)***

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

***"Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school approach" (2015)***

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/414908/Final\\_EHWP\\_draft\\_20\\_03\\_15.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWP_draft_20_03_15.pdf)

***"Future in Mind" (2015)***

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/martin-mcshane-14/>

**In Addition, the Policy has been informed by;**

***National Children's Bureau "A Whole School Framework for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. School Leaders Resource"***

<https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20School%20Well%20Being%20Framework%20Leaders%20Resources%20FINAL.pdf>

**Heads Together, Mentally Healthy Schools; A Whole-School Approach**

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/>

**IPPR The Progressive Policy Think Tank, Craig Thorley, 2016**

<https://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/further-proof-of-the-crisis-in-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health>