



Positive Mental Health and Well-Being Policy

Review cycle:	Every two years
Last Review Date:	April 2024
Next Review Date:	April 2026
Staff responsible:	SLT
Governor responsible:	Mr P MacDougall, Mr J.C. Fowler, Board of Governors

THIS POLICY IS APPLICABLE TO ALL PUPILS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE EYFS



1. Policy Statement and Aims

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 Organisation)

At St John's we aim to promote positive mental health for all staff and pupils, including those children in the EYFS. We pursue this aim using both whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable staff and pupils. The SENCo keeps Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC) to support our vulnerable pupils. These plans are kept in the SENCo File.

We run Mindfulness Clubs, and activity/sports/music clubs to provide time for relaxation and time to think/not think at the end of a long school day.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing a practical, relevant and effective mental health policy, we can promote a safe and stable environment for staff and pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental ill health.

1.1 The Policy Aims to Promote Positive Mental Health by:

1. Promoting a strong pupil voice
2. Promoting a positive mental health curriculum in PSHE
3. Promoting extra-curricular focus on supporting positive mental health
4. Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
5. Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health

1.2 The Policy Aims to Support Mental Health and Mental Health Issues by:

1. Providing support to staff working with pupils with mental health issues
2. Providing support to pupils suffering with mental ill health issues, as well as offering support to their peers and parents/carers
3. Providing support in the form of Staff Training; relevant resources; open forums for discussion; quiet spaces; 'buddies' for staff as needed.

2. Responsibilities and Reporting

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

Jessica Savage (Deputy Head - Pastoral) - (DSL)

Katy Morgan (Head of Lower School) - (DDSL)

Roslyn Thompson (SENCo)

Vanessa McSween (Head of PSHE and Head of Years 5-6)

Ruth Arron (Head of Years 7-8)

2.1 Reporting

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or well-being of a pupil should speak to the Deputy Head - Pastoral or Head of Lower School 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 DSL.

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.

All concerns relating to the mental health or well-being of a pupil should be reported on CPOMS and raised at the weekly pastoral and safeguarding briefing.

2.2 Individual Care Plans

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

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

2.3 Teaching about Mental Health

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 PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling pupils to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language, and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. We follow the PSHE Association Guidance to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

2.4 Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils, and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. We display relevant sources of support in communal areas and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we increase the chance of pupil help-seeking 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

2.5 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 to the Head Teacher and the DSL. If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, normal safeguarding protocols will be invoked.

Warning signs can 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
- 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
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

2.6 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. 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 of the pupil's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the pupil's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the Deputy Head - Pastoral or the Head of Lower School who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

2.7 Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a pupil on then we should discuss with the pupil:

- 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 including pupils who are in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing so that 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 it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents must always be informed unless it is a safeguarding issue. Pupils can be encouraged to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupils should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give pupils the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

3. Working with Parents and Peers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, the Headmaster must be informed. Before disclosing to parents we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

It is preferable to meet face to face.

- 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 step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

3.1 Supporting Parents

In order to support parents we will:

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy is easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- 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

3.2 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 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

4. 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 pupils 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.

4.1 For Further Advice

<https://webcontent.ssatuk.co.uk/.../CWMT-Mental-Health-Policy-and-Guidance-for-Schools>

5. Supporting Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

St John's also has a duty of care in terms of supporting staff mental health and encouraging positive wellbeing. As a school, we are committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and will provide suitable support for all members of staff.

5.1 Counselling

Counselling can be provided to staff where appropriate through the school's dedicated counsellor. This is a confidential service and is provided free of charge.

5.2 In-School Support

All staff are allocated an Appraisal Mentor at the beginning of each academic year. Issues or difficulties can be referred to this individual. Staff are also encouraged to seek help and support from their direct line managers and from the Deputy Head Pastoral as needed.

5.3 Activities supporting wellbeing

Staff are able to spend time with one another during break and lunchtimes in designated staff areas. Not only is this a great opportunity for staff to catch up, it also offers some social down time during the busy school day. Yoga classes and weekly badminton sessions are also available to help promote staff wellbeing.

Appendix 1: Covid-19 Protocol

The school recognises that the challenges we faced with lockdown, home-schooling, returning to school and working in a Covid secure environment, in ‘bubbles’, has added an extra layer of possible short and longer term anxiety to our children, staff and parents.

We will work to develop positive, regular and manageable strategies to support our children, staff and parents. This will include accessing support from:

- Regular Pupil Well-Being Surveys
- The PSHE Association
- Heads Together – Mentally Healthy Schools
- Healthy Schools Mark
- Schools Well-Being Association
- We will monitor the impact of our support regularly for individuals and groups.