



St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy	
Date policy approved:	January 2024
Date due for review:	January 2027

Introduction

At St John's, we work towards positive Emotional Health and Wellbeing in the whole of our school community for adults as well as children.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". There is good evidence to support this assertion and Ofsted has highlighted that children and young people themselves say that they want to learn more about how to keep themselves emotionally healthy. Moreover, schools have a duty to promote the wellbeing of students.

The DfE states:

"It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning, as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood"

"A healthy school ensures that when pupils are unhappy, anxious, disturbed or depressed there are open channels for them to seek or be offered support, without stigma and with appropriate confidentiality. A healthy school actively seeks to promote emotional health and wellbeing and helps pupils to understand their feelings".

The culture, ethos and environment of the school can have a profound influence on both pupil and staff mental wellbeing. Environments that are hostile, aggressive, chaotic or unpredictable can be harmful to mental health, and can lead to stressful teaching and working conditions. Schools are in a unique position, as they are able to help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school approach that is tailored to the needs of their pupils. A whole school approach is one that goes beyond the teaching in the classroom to pervade all aspects of school life, including: culture, ethos and environment: the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff is promoted through the 'hidden' or 'informal' curriculum, including leadership practice, the school's policies, values and attitudes, together with the social and physical environment; teaching: using the curriculum to develop pupils' knowledge about health and wellbeing; and partnerships with families and the community: proactive engagement with families, outside agencies, and the wider community to promote consistent support for children's health and wellbeing. (Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools - Department for Education - 2018)

Ethos and Environment

At St John's, we strive to create a positive, safe and nurturing culture and environment for all members of our school community. We are an attachment aware school and we appreciate the necessity for trusting and mutually respectful relationships amongst all members of our community. With a deep understanding of early childhood trauma and attachment, our staff nurture each child as an individual and show continued acceptance and empathy. Our school values of trust, respect and friendship underpin all we do. Diversity is valued and all achievements are celebrated and respected at St John's.



Our restorative approach ensures that mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning and reflection and a fresh start is always available to all. We encourage all members of our school community to reflect on their actions and the effect they have on others. Emotion coaching is utilised by all members of staff to help children and adults identify and accept their own emotions and we work together to provide strategies for managing emotional wellbeing.

Our REACH learning attributes enable our children to develop a growth mindset and maintain a positive attitude towards their learning and life. We encourage our children to be resilient when faced with challenges, show enthusiasm at all opportunities, face life and learning with ambition, nurture and encourage creativity and we highlight the importance of hands-on, real life learning and life experiences.



Curriculum Teaching and Learning

At St John's we aim to deliver a broad curriculum which encourages children to take risks, come up with ideas and make mistakes. Whole class discussions and circle times enable children to express opinions and ideas and reflect on their own feelings and thoughts as well as those of others. Mindfulness techniques are utilised across the school and encourage children to identify thoughts and regulate emotions as well as aiming to improve attention and focus. Our PSHE programme inspires children to celebrate diversity and address equality and encourages them to value and appreciate themselves and their own unique gifts. A strong emphasis is placed on utilising the outdoor environment as much as possible. Outdoor learning activities support children to be risk takers in a safe way. School trips, outside visitors and residential visits, including physical activities, are planned into the curriculum giving the children a range of opportunities to physically and mentally flourish.

Enabling Student Voice

The variety of pupil voice groups at St John's reflects our belief that all children have the right to express their ideas and opinions and have a say in the things that happen at school.

Our pupil voice groups include:

- **Young Citizens** - Young Citizens are responsible for helping our children to take part in community life and grow up as responsible citizens. In school, they ensure that children are aware of how to keep themselves safe online and how to ensure we do not have any bullying occurring in our school.
- **Learning Council** - The Learning Council are on a mission to ensure all children are using their REACH skills every day to get better at learning.
- **Green Team** - The Green Team help to make sure that we are all being as environmentally friendly as we can and monitor this regularly throughout the school.
- **Prefects** - These are Year 6 children who model responsibility to others and regularly give up their lunchtimes to help keep other children in our school community safe.
- **Spirit Team** - This group are responsible for ensuring our Christian ethos is seen in every area of school life and for helping us all to be reflective.
- **Charity Council** - As a school, we have a long history of working to support others, either locally, nationally or internationally, the Charity Council are responsible for deciding which charities to support and then run events for the whole school.
- **House Captains** - These children represent their houses and ensure we have good quality sport at St John's. They also set up games at lunchtimes and make sure children have someone to play with.
- **Junior Road Safety Officers** - Our dedicated J.R.S.O. group highlight road safety issues within and around the school and take an active role in monitoring the area alongside our parent supporters. They also run assemblies and competitions across the year ensuring all children in the school are aware of how to keep themselves and others safe on the roads.
- **Librarians** - Our librarians are responsible for keeping the library organised and tidy and they highlight the importance of reading across the school.
- **Cyber Ambassadors** - This group are responsible for ensuring all children know how to keep themselves safe online.

Targeted Provision

We aim to treat each child in our care as an individual and understand that all children come from different starting places and are therefore unique. We will endeavour to support each child with their own specific needs.

Some of the ways in which we provide targeted support to help children with their individual emotional health and wellbeing needs are shown in the appendix

Staff Support and Development

Our school values of respect, trust and friendship are not just for our children but for all members of the St John's community. We aim to create a culture of teamwork and professional dialogue amongst all staff at our school. We value collaborative working and the feeling of being an appreciated member of a team. We strive to break down any hierarchy and provide equality across all staff, regardless of their role and which year group or team they are aligned to. We have a strong emphasis on incorporating ideas from everyone - creating an environment where ideas are encouraged and acted upon. (Appendix A)

Leadership

The Leadership team at St John's aims to support and champion all efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing. Regular leadership meetings occur, and the workload of staff is a focus at every opportunity. Senior Leaders at St John's encourage an open-door policy allowing members of all teams to feel like their thoughts and opinions are listened to and acted upon. The leadership team endeavour to positively acknowledge every member of staff's value to the school and to the children they look after. There are good communication links between the Senior Leadership team and governors.

The Wellbeing Leader is responsible for ensuring the profile of emotional health and wellbeing at St John's remains high and is valued by the whole school community. The Wellbeing Lead, provides staff and children with resources and practical strategies to improve emotional health and wellbeing. The Wellbeing leader also liaises with other subject leaders in order to promote emotional health and wellbeing opportunities across the curriculum.

The Wellbeing leader monitors the emotional health and wellbeing of the children and staff through:

- Staff and pupil wellbeing audits
- Pupil and staff conferencing
- Focus group sessions

Working with Parents & Carers

At St John's we strive for a culture of trust, respect and friendship as well as openness when in communication with parents and carers. We aim to work together with parents and carers to ensure the emotional health and wellbeing for all of our school community is respected and valued. We actively encourage parents and carers to book 1:1 time in person or by phone with their child's teacher in order to communicate effectively about their child's individual needs. We support the emotional health and wellbeing of parents, carers and their families in various ways. These include:

Please see Appendix for more detailed information regarding the current activities and systems in place at St John's in order to implement/maintain a culture of healthy emotional health and wellbeing for children, staff and parents.

Appendix

Staff

- Culture of teamwork and professional dialogue - people support each other with notes, cards etc.
- Wellbeing leader in place as a point of contact for all staff for wellbeing information.
- Saying thank you and demonstrating values is embedded in the culture.
- Leadership meetings - focus on workload of the staff at every opportunity.
- Autonomy around training and development. Staff come up with a plan of what they are interested in.
- Positive acknowledgement of every teacher's value to the school and their children.
- Staff social board displayed in staffroom.
- Staff survey showed most people felt they had somebody to talk to and were part of making decisions.
- Staff are encouraged to try new things, expand their own skills and build confidence.
- Weekly briefing - contains a 'Wellbeing Window' which includes a thought for the day, positive actions and positive thoughts.
- Opportunity for self-development - e.g. staff research projects being undertaken last year.
- SAS Wellbeing app - providing access to counselling and other services
- Occupational health - staff are encouraged to use it for support.
- Return to work interviews if staff been off for more than 2 days - genuine opportunity to provide support and have an honest, non-judgemental conversation.
- Formal and informal social activities.
- Teachers encouraged to take time off to go to their own children's school events and be able to support their own families.
- School accommodates staff children (who are of school age) on site if there's an essential family need.
- Open door policy for staff to talk to their line management.
- Good communications between Head teacher and Chair of Governors.
- Compassionate leave for personal situations - buddying from leadership team providing support.
- Charity days - involve fun, interaction with staff and children.
- Collaborative working - being part of a team. Breaking down the hierarchy and providing equality across all staff, regardless of their role and which year group they are aligned to.
- Encouraging ideas from everyone - creating an environment where ideas are encouraged and acted upon.
- Culture of 'You are a human first and a teacher second.'
- Providing a supportive environment where everyone helps each other.
- Being aware of environmental stressors (e.g. resources) and taking every opportunity to minimise them.
- Appreciating staff in front of the children - fosters a sense of pride and gratitude and staff become role models for the children.
- Apprenticeship programme - bringing vitality and new ideas into the school.
- Goal based working targets rather than time based.
- Flexibility - leadership positions can be part time. Job shares and flexible working patterns are encouraged.

Children

Mainstream provision (Curriculum)

- Reach and school values - Values led behaviour policy.
- Reach learning attitudes.
- Delivering a broad curriculum.
- Pupil Voice groups - A sense of being agents of change and of being able to have choices and a say in what happens at school.
- Values led text drivers e.g. using specific texts to teach anti-prejudice and understanding of racism through texts - Allow for genuine and meaningful conversations about life issues.
- Emotion coaching - All the staff have a simple understanding of how to help children cope with over-whelming emotions and how to handle them.
- Being an Attachment-Aware school - All staff have received one day INSET training from PBS based around Attachment Theory.
- Having a focus on music and the arts - Allows children to find something in themselves they might not have realised they had - Gives children the confidence to find and voice themselves.
- Singing focused school - Has a positive physical and mental effect on wellbeing.
- Outdoor learning - Teaching and supporting children to be risk takers in a safe way.
- Collective worship to provide a sense of community and spiritual experience.
- Bullying policies and procedures -Behaviour training for all staff.
- Children across the school are all encouraged to think of 5 trusted adults they can talk to if they are feeling upset/worried.
- Staff recruitment - Consciously recruiting staff who nurture and value all children.
- Strong requirement on teachers to build a relationship with the children - Both academically and as an individual.
- Restorative practice underpins everything. Children can make mistakes and there is always a way to get back into being part of the class again and have a fresh start.
- Starting school in Year R - Having Stay and Play sessions and 'Lunch with Me' sessions to help reduce separation anxiety in both parties (children and parents).
- Home visits and pre-school visits - Teachers finding out about children's interests before they start.
- Valuing and celebrating the uniqueness of every child.
- Clubs - Enable children to pursue personal interests and be part of a community with shared interests. Some clubs are child initiated.
- Little John's - shared ethos and values with the school has improved conduct in After School club. Also gives children a voice and opportunity to choose activities they are interested in.
- Community visitors. Links with the parish churches and other local organisations.
- Physical and timetabled 'space' for emotional reflection and prayer. Class circle time, Godly Play room time, Spirit Team's efforts and Remembrance events.
- Global Neighbours link to Christian Aid.
- Collective worship themes are linked to the values in the school - children are always encouraged to reflect on similarities in their own lives.
- School trips and residential - including physical activities. Allows children to physically and mentally flourish (provides challenge).
- A culture of opportunity - In ideas as well as physical opportunities.

- Inclusive of all cultures, especially Gypsy Romany as they are our most prevalent ethnic minority.
- Curriculum - Encourages children to take risks, come up with ideas and make mistakes.
- Mindfulness practised regularly across the school. 'Mindful Moments' timetabled into every day for all children.
- Mindfulness and emotional health and wellbeing resources/ideas for children shared in jottings and with staff regularly.
- All children in school have participated in PSHE workshops.
- Charity days - Planned and organised by the Charity Council.
- Caring for the environment - Outdoor time for the children is encouraged as it reduces stress, opportunity for grounding.
- Walking to school initiative - Proven to reduce anxiety and aid physical health.
- One INSET day to cover transition discussions with the teachers your current children are moving to for the next academic year - Ensures a smoother transition.
- All achievement is celebrated, regardless of whether it's within or outside of school.
- Consistent PPA time for class teachers to maintain the consistency for children.
- Reduced number of supply teachers and having own internal cover to reduce children's anxiety with the change in teachers.
- Designated Teacher (for looked-after children) has additional training and support which is then shared with all other teachers, what works for looked after children, are of value to all other children.
- Staff model behaviours to children - e.g. humility, apologising to children, thanking them
- Safeguarding culture enables children to talk about their problems and access confidential support where required.

Targeted provision

- Thrive work to give children a better understanding of their feelings and emotions.
- Lunch club for children requiring extra support or need a different down time.
- Workstations for some children who have a need to order themselves or have some controls around their environment.
- Personalisation of the learning environment. Dens - Providing places for children to feel safe.
- Personalised curriculum for outdoor learning.
- Opportunities for 1-1 support from an adult if required.
- Self-soothing interventions are encouraged if they help the individual child (i.e. headphones, toys)
- Do not insist children move to a new teacher every year. On a case by case basis will keep children with the same teachers. Valuable for children who find it difficult to build trusting relationships.
- A trusted key adult or a 'team around the child' for children who require support in developing trusting relationships with adults.
- Lunch clubs for children who require extra support or need a different 'down time'.
- Opportunities for 1-1 support from a trusted adult if required.
- We do not insist all children move to a new teacher every year. On a case by case basis, we will keep children with the same teachers if we can and we believe this will help the child emotionally and academically. This is valuable for children who find it difficult to build trusting relationships.
- Personalised transition programmes, including social stories

- Mental health support team referrals. Referrals to other agencies if necessary , eg SDA regarding domestic abuse

Parents

- Church have provided bereavement counselling for a family and provided pastoral support.
- Send Spotlight in the jottings and 'Children Flourish When ...'
- Transition workshops with children.
- Having lunch with me - Social occasion with children.
- Regular coffee mornings led by parents.
- Being an open school supports parent and teacher communication and allows for trusting relationships to develop. Parent led activities and parent volunteers are actively encouraged.
- Parents actively encouraged to speak to their children's teacher in the first instance, even about difficult issues. Teacher becomes a key part of the children's network.
- Service agreement with Hampshire - Able to provide support to parents (includes Early Help hub).
- Culture - Being an open school and working with people.
- PAFS - Social activities in order to raise funds and have fun as a whole school community.
- Parents encouraged to book 1:1 time with either their class teacher or another member of staff.
- Trust funds to provide financial support for school trips where employees unable to pay (i.e. church, Lions Club).
- Informal parent support.
- Value repetition with parents (Culture).
- MIND parent workshops offered to Y5/6 parents and carers.
- Mental health and wellbeing advice and resources communicated through Jottings and website.
- Donations to families from the community to provide Christmas presents.
- Transition workshops for parents and children.
- 'Lunch with Me' gives parents an insight into the school day and an opportunity to socialise with their children and school staff.
- A variety of parent workshops, like workshops offering information on restorative practice.
- Referrals to outside agencies and support networks where appropriate, like foodbanks.