



## St. Andrew's CEVA Primary School Policy for Mental Well-being

At St Andrew's CEVA Primary School we provide Christian worship and Christian teaching. Spiritual and moral development is central to the life of our school and this will be reflected in the school's Policy for ensuring the mental well-being of our children, Staff and carers.

### Definition

***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 Organization)***

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils and staff so that all can learn and develop together in a relaxed and secure environment. In addition, we aim to promote positive mental well-being for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils.

In addition to promoting positive mental well-being, we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental well-being policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and well-being issues.

### Scope

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental well-being. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental well-being overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental well-being in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental well-being
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental well-being issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

### Lead Members of Staff

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

Mrs Sue Gentry - Designated Child Protection / Safeguarding Officer  
Mrs Sue Gentry - Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Lead  
Mrs Roberts – Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Deputy & Learning Mentor  
Mrs Debbie Thompson- CPD Lead  
Mrs Natalie Archer - Head of PSHE

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental well-being of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead 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 lead DSL or the head teacher. 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.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by Mrs Sue Gentry (Mental Health Lead). **Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in Appendix 1**

### **Individual Care Plans**

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

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

### **Teaching Pupils about Mental Well-being**

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 developmental PSHE curriculum. (Jigsaw)

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're 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. Where appropriate, pupils should be encouraged to join one of the various after or pre-school 'clubs'.

We will follow the PSHE Association Guidance<sup>1</sup> to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms. School Council members will be encouraged to recognise and report any concerns and a PASS survey may form part of the curriculum to engage the pupils.

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within our school and in the local community. Who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in **Appendix 2**.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and toilets and will regularly highlight sources of support to pupils within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will 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

### **Warning Signs**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Mrs Sue Gentry our Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Lead, or Miss Joanne Deveney, Mental Health and Well-being deputy.

Possible warning signs 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

---

<sup>1</sup> Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional well-being URL= <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-preparing-teach-about-mental-health-and> (accessed 02.02.2018)

- 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
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school or an increase in either
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff should also be aware that cyber bullying and on-line games and involvement may also lead to a deterioration in mental well-being.

### **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.

If a pupil chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental well-being or that of a friend to a member of staff, 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 on Edukey 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 mental health lead, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

### **Confidentiality**

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

- *To whom* we are going to talk
- *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, particularly if a pupil is in danger of harm. It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Lead, this helps to safeguard our own emotional well-being as 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 should be informed if there are concerns about their child's mental well-being and pupils may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the pupil 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.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Lead DSL or deputy DSL must be informed immediately.

### **Working with Parents**

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents, we should consider the following questions (on a case by case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? (*This is preferable.*)
- Where should the meeting happen? (*At school, at their home or somewhere neutral?*)
- Who should be present? (*Consider parents, the pupil, and 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, denial 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 steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

### **Working with All Parents**

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental well-being.

In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental well-being issues on our school website and through our marketing meetings and FOSA links.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get this assistance, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental well-being policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental well-being in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental well-being topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

### **Supporting Pupil Peers**

When a pupil is suffering from mental well-being 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 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

### **Supporting Staff**

As a Christian school we acknowledge that our staff members may also need support towards their mental well-being. Staff are encouraged to recognize when they are experiencing difficulties and require support and to raise this with the Mental Health lead or a friend/colleague.

Appropriate support can then be advised and put in place.

### **Training**

- As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental well-being issues as part of their regular child protection training in order to enable them to keep pupils safe.
- We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental well-being. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)

- 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.
- 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 well-being.
- Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with our CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

#### **Policy Review**

- This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in May 2022
- Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis. If you have a question or suggestion about improving this policy, this should be addressed to our mental health lead via email [s.gentry@standrewsceva.uk](mailto:s.gentry@standrewsceva.uk)
- This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
  - Medicines
  - Social Media
  - Behaviour
  - Child Protection
  - SEND
  - Equality
  - Bullying
  - PSHE

**Review Date: March 2022**

**Appendix 1 – For Guidance on referrals to CAMHS go to:**

<https://www.nhft.nhs.uk/camhs>

**Appendix 2 – Local support for mental health and emotional well-being;**

- **Ask Normen** – For Parents and Professionals – All about Northamptonshire Mental Health
- **Young Northants** – A range of mental health support services for young people in Northamptonshire
- **Talk out loud** - information and self-help for young people about services for better mental health

Other support available:

- **Young Minds** - information on mental health for parents, young people and professionals nationally.
- **Gov.uk** - departmental mental health advice for schools staff