

Statement of Intent for Mental Health within Church Vale

Mental Health Principles at Church Vale

At Church Vale Primary School we are passionate about promoting an inclusive and safe environment where children feel comfortable to communicate both their challenges and successes. We maintain open communication amongst staff, parents and children to encourage respectful and valued relationships. Through our whole school values of possibilities, community and self-awareness we promote a strong student voice within our school encouraging children to have the confidence to 'speak up' for themselves and others when needed.

How do we support students?

To achieve our schools vision of happy, healthy, motivated and enthusiastic learners we must promote self-awareness within the children regarding their own mental health. We want the children to feel safe and confident when discussing mental health and hope to provide tools and strategies that will help them to self-regulate in the future as well as recognising when they and those around them may need to seek further support. We view mental health as a lifelong issue and believe that providing our children with tools for the future as well as the here and now is vital.

Which specific areas do we aim to address?

Currently we are tackling attachment and social anxiety issues in particular which staff feel have increased following on from issues and lockdowns surrounding the COVID 19 pandemic. These issues have presented in different ways within different age groups. We have also been supporting families through bereavement and have increased the parental contact recently as parents have expressed more concerns at home and a greater need for advice and support.

Why is this important and what changes are needed/taking place?

In order for the children to be effective learners we must ensure they feel safe within their environment and have good relationships with staff and peers. Therefore, supporting the children and parents with attachment issues is key. Also helping the children to cope with anxiety and stress is essential to encourage resilient learners who are open to and can accept new information and challenges presented within the school day. As a school we are working on our early intervention strategies particularly focused on identifying need. We need to encourage open communication as children can be reluctant to discuss emotions for fear of peer and parental judgment.

What Changes would we hope to see?

We would like to provide better informed interventions targeting specific children and groups of children at an earlier stage. We would also like to encourage more parental involvement with interventions when needed (e.g. MHST). We want to raise awareness with regards to mental health and create an openness and safety regarding mental health discussions.