

Mental Health Policy

Church Vale Primary School



February 2022

Mental Health Policy

Introduction

At Church Vale Primary school, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

We promote the three core values of self-awareness, community and possibilities. We strive to create a learning environment that promotes these values, and we understand that mental health is key to this. We want our pupils to feel safe and secure so they can achieve the most from their time here. To achieve this we create a positive and open environment centring around valuing the needs of each individual child.

We understand that everyone may experience challenges and difficult life experiences and may require additional emotional or mental health support. Through our whole school approach we aim to promote positive mental health strategies and create healthy behaviours and attitudes towards mental health. We also value an ethos of openness and communication with regards to emotional and mental health and have various targeted intervention pathways available for pupils and parents to access when needed.

At Church Vale we:

- Support children to identify and name their emotions
- Create opportunities and a safe environment for children to discuss worries and concerns.
- Help children to develop positive relationships among staff and peers alike.
- Encourage confidence and an acceptance of differences.
- Support children when experiencing life challenges.
- Promote emotional resilience.
- Develop children's' self-esteem and allow them to realise their individual value.
- Provide good role models for them in terms of helping them articulate feelings and emotions in a positive way
- Model positive interactions between adults

Staff Roles

At Church Vale we have a collaborative approach to Mental Health with every staff member taking responsibility for promoting positive mental health and identifying when extra support may be needed.

- Victoria Goncalves - Senior Mental Health Lead and responsible for supporting staff with referrals, the identification of need and monitoring of progress
- Harriet Gibbison - SENCO working closely with SMHL to identify need
- Jane Berney - Parent Support Worker and ELSA

Mental Health in the Classroom

Throughout school mental health is woven throughout our day but directly taught through our weekly PSHE sessions where we follow the One Decision scheme. These sessions allow children the opportunity to relate materials to their own experiences and discuss real life issues in a safe and sensitive manner. We encourage an environment of openness and non-judgement within these sessions and staff are always available to discuss any issues raised within these sessions if pupils would like further information or support.

Within Early Years PSED is a Prime area of learning and is therefore a core consideration when planning both child and adult led activities. Positive mental health and an understanding of emotions and relationships is promoted within provision, carpet time discussions and games as well as stories and songs.

In addition to this we have a variety of whole school initiatives to promote mental wellbeing such as our wellbeing afternoons and Take Five Breathing scheme, yoga and forest schools. We also have targeted interventions such as ELSA, Think Children, Art Therapy and our school counsellor which are both internally and externally led when pupils need further support.

Identifying Need

Staff work collaboratively across the school to monitor warning signs to identify a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance

- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

Staff will communicate any of the above via CPOMS and take any appropriate action required. Staff are also aware of warning signs that may indicate a negative impact upon a student's mental health including:

- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Social withdrawal
- Activity and mood changes
- References to self-harm or suicide
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Recurrent negative emotional state
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Involving Parents

At Church Vale we work alongside parents and keep communication open. We support parents with regards to mental health in the following ways:

- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child.
- Signpost to relevant sources of information as appropriate.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents via our website.
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Provide extra contact and support where needed via a Parent Liaison Officer.
- Regularly ask parents for feedback on their children

- Talk openly about mental health with them
- Support through financial, food and providing uniform
- Mental health and parents workshops
- Access to SAP support

We work in collaboration with a range of external providers and services to support the mental health and emotional needs of our children as can be seen on our progression to referral document.

Staff Mental Health

At Church Vale we are aware that staff will face poor mental health in the same way they may face poor physical health and aim to support all staff with this.

SLT operate an open-door policy where staff are encouraged to voice any concerns or difficulties they are having. Staff are given both group and one to one opportunity to voice any issues with regards to mental health and work life balance and are supported to find solutions here. Staff are encouraged to prioritise their personal responsibilities and wellbeing whenever necessary and will not be judged negatively by SLT for doing so.

We currently have two Mental Health First Aiders directed towards monitoring staff wellness and all staff are aware that they can approach these colleagues for support whenever needed. In addition to this we are currently piloting a 'Peer Coaching' initiative following which we will collect staff voice and review.

Staff are given regular training opportunities with regards to developing their understanding and knowledge of both positive mental health and also how to cope and understand negative mental health. Resources that have developed by Nottscs have been shared and the school buys into the counselling service provided through occupational health.

Governors are supportive of the mental health work school is doing and are always sympathetic towards requests that come in or training that needs funding.

STL strive to develop ways of promoting mental health for staff through questionnaires, developing an ethos of trust, walks in the countryside, groups activities, treats and giving positive feedback.

This policy will be reviewed annually following monitoring and evaluation informed by a combination of staff, pupil and parent voice.

Victoria Goncalves February 2022