

St Martin's CE (Aided) Primary School
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Wellbeing Policy

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Signed:

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St Martin's CE (Aided) Primary School

Our School Vision

An inclusive, caring, Christian community, which inspires happy, confident and independent children who embrace lifelong learning, with the ambition and determination to achieve their potential. Learners develop the skills, knowledge and self-belief necessary to thrive, today and tomorrow, as global citizens, who strive to make our world a better place.

Our School Values

Respect – valuing each other and celebrating our differences.

Friendship – showing kindness and compassion to everyone.

Courage – being brave enough to try our best and do what we know is right.

Creativity – using our individual talents to make our world a better place.

Wellbeing Policy

Mental health is a state of wellbeing 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)

Rationale

At St Martin's CE (Aided) Primary School our Christian vision and school values shape all we do. As part of this, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community, including all children, staff, governors, parents and carers. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable individuals. We believe that positive mental health is vital to ensuring that every individual reaches their full potential.

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

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all members of our community including staff, governors and parents and carers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

- Child protection policy,
- Safeguarding policy,
- Inclusion and SEND policy,
- First Aid policy,
- Supporting children with medical conditions policy,
- PSHCE policy.

Aims

Through our whole school approach to wellbeing, we aim to:

- ensure all children are happy and safe;
- ensure all children have a trusted adult they can turn to if needed;
- promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all members of the school community including children, staff, governors, parents and carers;
- increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues;
- alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing;
- provide support to staff working with children with mental health and wellbeing issues;

- provide support to children suffering poor mental health and their peers and parents/carers.

Individual care plans

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

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

The curriculum

We believe in the importance of children understanding that their mental health and wellbeing is just as important as their physical health, and we will always talk openly and honestly with children about mental health and wellbeing. The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our children, to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe, form an integral part of our PSHCE programme:

- In Year R, units of work include getting on, falling out and making up and good to be me.
- In Years 1, 2 and 3, units of work include how do I feel?, keeping safe in school, staying healthy, identifying emotions, caring for myself and feeling happy/feeling sad.
- In Years 4, 5 and 6, units of work include keeping safe, healthy lifestyles, staying safe online and respecting all.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort being taught but there will always be an emphasis on enabling children to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

In order to support children's understanding of mental health, we have introduced wellbeing time in all classes. During this time, teachers introduce children to a range of different strategies they can use when feeling anxious, worried, frustrated or even angry, in order to help improve wellbeing. Initially teachers identify when this is needed and model the process for the children. As children mature we encourage them to take more responsibility for their own wellbeing, to identify which strategies are most effective for them and to identify when they would benefit from wellbeing time.

We have also developed a partnership with Pets As Therapy and have a weekly visit from Denzel, a therapy dog. All children in the school are given the opportunity on a rota basis, to visit Denzel and spend time reading to him, and children with additional wellbeing needs may visit him more regularly.

Answering questions

As with all questions from children, we will endeavour to answer questions about mental health and wellbeing factually, sensitively and without bias. Individual members of staff will make a professional judgement as to whether it is relevant to address the question posed immediately or at a later stage, and whether to address the answer to an individual, a group or the whole class. If a member of staff is in doubt, he/she will discuss the matter with the Headteacher and if felt relevant, a child's parents or carers.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, children, parents and carers are aware of sources of support within school, in the local community and further afield. Where appropriate, we will directly refer children, staff, parents and carers to external organisations for support.

The current support that is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it, is outlined in Appendix 2. We are aware that sources of support change regularly and we will be proactive in researching what is available when necessary.

We will display relevant sources of support for staff, including the employee support line in the staff room.

We will regularly highlight sources of support for children, including the use of a trusted adult, within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of the individual asking for help, by ensuring they 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 will be vigilant and proactively look for warning signs which indicate a child is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. All staff observing any of these warning signs will record the concerns on a welfare form and share them with the DSL and Inclusion Manager.

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;
- 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;
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause;
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism.

Managing disclosures

A child 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. Staff will respond to any disclosure regarding mental health in line with the procedure in our child protection and safeguarding policies.

If a child chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health 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 will listen, rather than advise, and our first thoughts should be of the child's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures will be recorded in writing and held on the child'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 DSL and/or Inclusion Manager as appropriate, who will decide on how to proceed.

Confidentiality

All disclosures will be handled in line with our child protection, safeguarding and confidentiality policies.

Staff will be honest with children about the issue of confidentiality and will share with them:

- Who we are going to talk to;
- What we are going to tell them;
- Why we need to tell them.

We will never share information about a child 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 or carer.

All disclosures will be recorded on a welfare form and shared with the DSL and/or Inclusion Manager as appropriate. This will ensure continuity of care for the child in periods of absence of the trusted adult and provide an extra source of ideas and support. Staff will explain this to the child and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. This is not only about providing support for the child, it also helps to safeguard staff emotional wellbeing.

Parents will be informed if there are concerns about their mental health and wellbeing and children may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, we will support the child in sharing the information in an appropriate way with their parents or carers, be this for them or with them.

Working with parents and carers

We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers in all aspects of school life, including wellbeing. We share with parents and carers our approach to wellbeing and will discuss any concerns we have about their child in an open and honest way.

Before talking to parents and carers about their child's wellbeing, we will 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 or, in rare situations, at their home or somewhere neutral;
- Who should be present? Consider parents and carers, the child, 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 be upset during the first conversation. We will be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent or carer support and time to reflect. We will be mindful that any disclosure of poor mental health or wellbeing, could affect the mental health or wellbeing of the parent or carer too.

We will always highlight further sources of information as parents and carers often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that is being shared with them. If appropriate, we will share sources of further support aimed specifically at parents, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

We will 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. We will finish each meeting with agreed next steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

In order to support parents and carers in supporting their children, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website and closed Facebook page;
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to access this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child;
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents;
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHCE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

Supporting peers

When a child 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 child who is suffering and their parents or carers, 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.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their annual child protection training each September in order to enable them to keep children safe.

We will signpost members of staff to further sources of information. The MindEd learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.¹

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 children.

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 health.

The Headteacher will highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Evaluation and monitoring

- The governing body are responsible for developing, reviewing and ratifying this policy every three years.
- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that wellbeing is approached through the school according to this policy.
- Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of children, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Mrs K Bartlett – Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Mrs M Rennison – Inclusion Manager and Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead

Mrs L Griggs – PSHCE Manager

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the Inclusion Manager in the first instance. If there is a concern that the child is in danger of harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed, with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with our Child Protection Policy. If the child 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, in line with our First Aid Policy.

¹ www.minded.org.uk [accessed 02/02/18].