

Shining as we learn in
Faith, Family and Friendship!



St William of York Catholic Primary school

2025 - 2026

Mental Health and Well Being Policy

At St William's in partnership with BOSCEP (Bolton Schools Catholic Education Partnership), we believe that all members of our community are created in the image and likeness of God, and that they should be valued and loved. With this mission at the forefront of our work, our school seeks to support the mental health and well-being of our pupils and staff, so that they are given respect and dignity and feel a sense of belonging within our community.

1. Why mental health and wellbeing is important

At this school, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that positive mental health is a crucial factor in overall wellbeing and can affect learning, achievement and performance.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: *"in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy"*.

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting positive wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that all members of our school community are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that all know about what they can do to maintain positive mental health; what affects their mental health; how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- all members of our school community are valued.
- all have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- all feel able to talk openly with trusted adults / colleagues about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- bullying is not tolerated.

2. Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out:

- how we promote positive mental health
- how we prevent mental health problems
- how we identify and support those in our community with mental health needs
- how we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent or address mental health problems in either children or work colleagues
- key information about some common mental health problems

3. Definition of mental health and wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

"...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".

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all members of our school community to:

- feel confident in themselves
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others
- cope with the stresses of everyday life
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change
- learn, achieve and flourish

4. A whole school approach to promoting positive mental health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children and staff become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands
2. Promoting positive social relationships, supporting each other and seeking help when needed
3. Promoting resilience in teaching and learning
4. Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
5. Early identification of and planned support for mental health needs within our community, including working with specialist services.
6. Effectively working with parents and carers.
7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

5. Staff roles and responsibilities

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors. Some children and adults will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that those with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff should understand about possible risk factors that might affect mental health, such as: physical long-term illness; having a parent who has a mental health problem; death and loss (including loss of friendships); family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children and adults from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy. This knowledge and understanding will be developed through regular CPD.

Our PSHCE Lead will:

- lead and work with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- lead on PSHCE teaching about mental health.
- provide advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.

Our SENCo will:

- liaise with mental health services, and, where appropriate, make individual referrals

6. Promoting positive mental health

We believe the School has a key role in promoting positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems for both children and staff. Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

Pupil-led activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health
- Peer mediation and Peer mentoring – children working together to solve problems and planned sessions where identified adults mentor a designated child
- Play leaders – a lunchtime group supporting younger children at lunchtime

Transition programmes

- Transition Programme to secondary schools which includes vulnerable pupils having regular visits to support a smooth transition to secondary school

Class activities

- Praise boxes - a mechanism where children can be praised for certain duties, tasks or things they have done and have them celebrated in class
- Worry boxes - a similar mechanism where children can anonymously share worries or concerns in class therapy
- Circle times

Whole school

- Wellbeing week – whole school focus on doing things which make us feel good
- Displays and information around the School about positive mental health and where to go for help and support
- Staff mental health leaflet
- Visits from external agencies who promote positive mental health eg. Fort Alice's healthy relationships projects, Life caravan, Childline, NSPCC

Small group activities

- Nurture groups
- Resilience Training
- Lego Therapy

Staff activities

- Termly questionnaires so that leaders can recognise any stress points
- Staff Angels – supporting each other's well being.

Teaching about mental health and well-being

- Through our PSHCE curriculum, we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help children to be more resilient, understand about mental health and be less affected by the stigma of mental health problems

7. Identifying, referring and supporting children and staff with mental health needs

We are committed to:

- providing a safe environment to enable children and staff to express themselves and be listened to
- ensuring that the welfare and safety of all are paramount
- identifying appropriate support for mental health needs
- involving parents and carers when their child needs support

8. Early Identification

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- questionnaires
- analysing behaviour, exclusions, visits to the medical room/school nurse, attendance and sanctions
- using diagnostic tools such as Leuven scales; Boxall Profile; to identify those who might need support
- clear procedures for reporting concerns about children or staff
- termly Pupil Progress Review meetings
- staff appraisals
- regular meetings for staff to raise concerns.
- gathering information about children from a previous school at transfer.

All staff at will receive regular CPD so that they are well informed and are able to identify and act upon the signs of possible mental health issues in children and adults.

These signs might include:

- isolation from friends, family and work colleagues and becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- falling academic achievement or work performance
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- secretive behaviour
- an increase in lateness or absenteeism
- drugs or alcohol misuse.
- physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

The school is aware that mental health needs, such as anxiety, might appear as non-compliant, disruptive or aggressive behaviour, which may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning or managing workload, or difficulties with relationships.

9. Disclosures

All disclosures will be approached in a calm, supportive and non-judgmental way; the emotional well-being of all members of our community is paramount and so we will always endeavour to support and listen, rather than advise.

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children. For those children identified as needing specialist support, the school will follow its SEND procedures, involving external agencies where appropriate. In the case of disclosures about members of staff, the confidential support of Occupational Health will be sought.

10. Supporting and training staff

We want all staff to:

- be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing
- be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- identify mental health needs early in children and know what to do and where to get help

Therefore, annual CPD will be offered.

We also promote a healthy work life balance through:

- a manageable feedback and marking policy
- access to counselling service
- permission for staff to leave early at least one per week
- the opportunity to have PPA time at home
- additional non-contact time for report writing
- regular social events

St William's is committed to maintaining a school ethos which supports the mental health and well-being of all members of its community.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy will be used in conjunction with other policies, including, but not restricted to:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Behaviour
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Anti-Bullying
- Health and Safety
- Intimate Care
- Whistleblowing
- Values
- PSHCE
- SEND
- Online Safety
- Absence Management
- Staff Handbook

Helen McGrath

Reviewed by Interim Headteacher Autumn 2025

Signed by Headteacher *H McGrath*

Next Review Date Autumn 2026