St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School

'Together we learn and grow through worship and celebration'

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Committee responsible for policy	Community Committee
Coordinator	Debbie Bainbridge, Terri Meldon and Hannah Stringer
Statutory/Non-statutory	Non-STATUTORY
Frequency of Review	Free to determine – every 4 years or earlier if required
Date of last review Approved by **Staff/ SLT/**Committee/FGB	September 2026
Date of next review	**September 2030**
Purpose of policy	To outline the practices to promote Mental Health and Wellbeing and wellbeing across the school
Consultation	Staff
Links to other policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Behaviour Policy Equalities, Diversity, Cohesion Policy. Medical Policy SEN Policy Anti-bullying Policy

Introduction

At St. Edmund's we aim to actively promote the mental health and wellbeing of the children and adults in our school community. Our mission statement highlights that we encourage out children to develop their spiritual and academic potential and individual talents by recognising, valuing and celebrating the worth of every individual. As part of our school vision, we want children to be healthy in mind and body with a zest for life.

Aims and Objectives
As a school community we aim to:

- Build a caring and supportive Catholic community where each individual is able to grow in their understanding of the faith and in their commitment to Christ.
- Increase the level of awareness and understanding amongst staff and parents/carers of issues involving the Mental Health and Wellbeing of young people.
- Detect and address problems in the earliest stages where they exist in thinking and attitudes.
- Offer the appropriate level of support available to pupils with Mental Health and Wellbeing issues in partnership with parents/carers, outside professionals or organisations.
- Continue to promote positivity around Mental Well Being to reduce the stigma associated with Mental Health and Wellbeing.

The objectives are that:

- Children and staff will feel safe and supported in respect of their mental health and wellbeing.
- Children will be taught how to be aware of their own and others mental health and wellbeing and will learn strategies in order to support their own mental health and wellbeing.
- All governors, teachers, learning support assistants and non-teaching staff will have an understanding of what good Mental Health and Wellbeing is and why we need to be aware in school.
- All parents and pupils will know that the school has policies in place to keep pupils safe and that the school regularly reviews its systems to ensure they are appropriate and effective.

Teaching and Learning of Mental Health and Wellbeing
St Edmund's adopts a whole school approach to promoting positive Mental Health and Wellbeing through a range of activities including: assemblies, Zones of Regulation lessons, achievement and effort certificates and awards, the thinking curriculum, awareness days such as #HelloYellow and Anti-bullying week.

Through the **curriculum**, emotional wellbeing and resilience are embedded in a number of ways through:

- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education)
- RSE (Relationships and Sex Education)
- Science: Healthy lifestyle – eating and exercise
- Computing: Online Safety

- PE: sportsmanship and resilience

Pupil voice is gauged through an annual Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey to include pupil views on whole the school approach and to shape the work we do with pupils.

Identifying and referring children with possible Mental Health and Wellbeing problems
Children who are mentally healthy have the ability to:

- develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually;
- initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships;
- use and enjoy solitude;
- become aware of others and empathise with them;
- play and learn;
- develop a sense of right and wrong; and resolve (face) problems and setbacks and learn from them.
- Develop a sense of self and identity.

Health and Wellbeing problems in children and young people are varied and can be complex. Many of these problems will be experienced as mild and transitory challenges for the child and their family, whereas others will have serious and longer lasting effects. When a problem is particularly severe or persistent over time, or when a number of these difficulties are experienced at the same time, children are often described as having Mental Health and Wellbeing disorders (see appendix 1).

Positive promotion of Mental Health and Wellbeing
St Edmund's has a number of clear policies and practices in place in order to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. These include:

- A whole school approach to promoting the health and wellbeing of all pupils
- Culture within the school that values all members of the school community and allows them a sense of belonging, making it possible to talk about problems in a non-stigmatising way
- Continuous professional development for all staff in relation to mental health and wellbeing
- Clear policies on behaviour and bullying
- Circle time approaches or 'circle of friends' activities
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes' and 'worry eaters'
- Managing emotions resources such as 'The Zones of Regulation' programme
- A trained Mental Health and Wellbeing First Aider

Supporting children and young people with Mental Health and Wellbeing issues
St Edmund's aims to offer support to pupils and staff, intervening well before Mental Health and Wellbeing problems progress. The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individuals or groups. Interventions that we offer include:

- Access to a number of professional therapists (including art, movement and play therapists)
- A designated EWP (Education Wellbeing Practitioner) who work with specific children and adults who are identified as needing additional support.
- Access to outside agencies to provide interventions for pupils with Mental Health and Wellbeing difficulties
- Nurture Groups
- Social skills groups
- Rainbows Bereavement Support Programme
- Emotional Literacy Support interventions such as nurture and friendship groups.

- School based counselling
- Support and liaison through the SEN department.
- Inclusion support – anger management, social skills, restorative justice.
- Referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Wellbeing Services

Designated Spaces
There are a number of designated spaces around the school designed to create a safe space for children to explore their feelings and emotions. The Hub is a group room where children are invited to relax and work on their emotional wellbeing. The ELSA Bus which is a place for children to be listened to, shown empathy and supported

Roles and Responsibilities

Class teacher

- Deliver lessons and activities promoting positive wellbeing
- Observe and assess children's mental health
- Report any issues to the wellbeing/inclusion team
- Deliver interventions where appropriate
- Liaise with parents regarding children's health and wellbeing
- Provide a positive, supportive environment for children to learn

Mental Health and Wellbeing Team

- Assess children's mental health and wellbeing with a view to providing targeted support
- Organise support interventions where necessary
- Liaise with support staff delivering targeted interventions
- Liaise with outside therapists, GPs, the Borough, CAMHS etc
- Lead staff training on mental health and wellbeing
- Provide advice and support to children, staff and parents in relation to mental health and wellbeing
- Monitor the progress of teaching and learning and any interventions

Headteacher
We recognise that the headteacher will work with the mental health and wellbeing governor to determine the strategic development of the policy and provision in the school; have overall responsibility for the teaching and learning of mental health and wellbeing and the provision of support and mental health services.

Governors
The governing body aims to secure the necessary provision for all pupils in relation to their mental health and wellbeing. The governors ensure that all teachers are aware of the importance of providing for pupils' mental health and wellbeing and work closely with the head teacher and wellbeing team to determine the strategic development of the policy and provision.

Partnership with Parents/Carers
In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website.
- Share and allow parents to access sources of further support.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about

their child.
- Make our emotional mental health and wellbeing policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about

Working with other agencies and partners
As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse
- Educational psychology services
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Therapists

Mental Health and Wellbeing Team:

Safeguarding Lead: Fearghal Nash

Inclusion Lead: Terri Meldon

Rainbows Lead: Debbie Bainbridge

Named Governor: Susan Sparkes

Appendix

Mental Health and Wellbeing problems in children and young people

Some children experience a range of emotional and behavioural problems that are outside the normal range for their age or gender. These children and young people could be described as experiencing Mental Health and Wellbeing problems or disorders.

Mental Health and Wellbeing professionals have defined these as:

- emotional disorders, e.g. phobias, anxiety states and depression;
- conduct disorders, e.g. stealing, defiance, fire-setting, aggression and anti- social behaviour;
- hyperkinetic disorders e.g. disturbance of activity and attention;
- developmental disorders e.g. delay in acquiring certain skills such as speech, social ability or bladder control, primarily affecting children with autism and those with pervasive developmental disorders;
- attachment disorders, e.g. children who are markedly distressed or socially impaired as a result of an extremely abnormal pattern of attachment to parents or major care givers; and other Mental Health and Wellbeing problems include eating disorders, habit disorders, post-traumatic stress syndromes; somatic disorders; and psychotic disorders e.g. schizophrenia and manic depressive disorder.

Many of these problems will be experienced as mild and transitory challenges for the child and their family, whereas others will have serious and longer lasting effects. When a problem is particularly severe or persistent over time, or when a number of these difficulties are experienced at the same time, children are often described as having Mental Health and Wellbeing disorders.

Self-Harm

Self-harm describes a wide range of behaviours that people use to cope with difficult feelings and distressing life experiences.

Some people have described self-harm as a way to express suicidal feelings and thoughts without taking their own life.

Examples (not exhaustive):

- Cutting
- Burning
- Severe scratching
- Biting
- Scalding
- Pulling out hair
- Picking at skin or re-opening wounds

It is estimated that 1 in 15 young people in the UK have deliberately self-harmed at some point and the most common age is between 11-25. Young people who have self-harmed have said they do it for a distraction, as self-punishment, as a way to symbolically cleanse themselves and to gain control, as a way to communicate without words, as a release of tension or as a form of comfort, to make themselves unattractive, to make them feel real oralive and because they may see it as a ritual or rite of passage into a group.

Eating disorders

While on the surface disordered eating appears to be all about food and weight it is often the outward expression of emotional problems. Eating disorders include but are not exclusive to Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge -Eating Disorder. Disordered eating affects the physical and emotional well- being of an individual and also leads to changes in behaviour. Very often masked by the eating disorder there is usually an underlying reason this can be a coping mechanism and this is a way of gaining control.

Young people may display the following behaviours:

- Loss of concentration
- Skipping meals
- Disappearing to the toilet after meals
- Pre-occupation with body Image, dieting.
- Excessive exercise
- Secretive behaviour
- Becoming irritable and withdrawing from social activities particularly those involving food.

Anxiety

Some people will experience levels of anxiety from time to time. Most people can relate to feeling tense, uncertain fearful for example before an exam. These in turn can lead to sleep, problems, loss of appetite and ability to concentrate. This kind of anxiety can be useful because it makes you more alert and enhance performance. However, if anxiety overwhelms a child they may not be able to deal with daily activities. If the anxiety stays as a high level the young person may feel powerless, out of control and sometimes this can lead to a panic attack.

Examples: (not exhaustive)

- Phobias
- Obsessive Compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Generalised Anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Post -traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Panic Disorder

Depression

In its mildest form depression can be being in low spirits, it doesn't stop you leading a normal life not makes things harder to do and seem less worthwhile. At its most severe(Clinical Depression) it can be life threatening. Some young people need medication to alleviate their symptoms.

Examples:

- Change in normal pattern of behaviour
- Withdrawal from institutions(school), social activities and friendship groups
- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)
- Bi Polar disorder or Manic Depression