

St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools Trust



‘Aspire not to have more, but to be more’
(St Oscar Romero)

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy 2026

Compliance statement

Every policy is reviewed at regular intervals and where applicable, as directed by law. Each policy is also available in additional formats in additional languages upon request, within reasonable timescales as stated by the school.

Reviewer/s:	Victoria Mitchell & Sarah Kay Fizul
Last Reviewed on:	September 2026
Next Review due by:	September 2027
Approved by:	Governors September 2026

“Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children by developing whole school approaches tailored to their particular needs, as well as considering the needs of individual pupils.”
Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DFE, November 2018).

At St Mary’s Catholic Primary Schools Trust our aim is to care for and develop the whole learning community educationally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and physically.

Aims for our Children

As well as caring for their education we also care for their mental health and wellbeing and feel that it is essential to provide children with information to enable them to make life long, well informed decisions about their diet and health.

We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing of every member of our school community and recognise how important mental health and wellbeing is to our lives, as is physical health. We recognise that children’s mental health and overall wellbeing can affect their learning and achievement.

A key aspect of our role in school is to ensure that children 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 children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what can affect 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.

Positive wellbeing is promoted through the curriculum and all school activities. Through a carefully planned approach to PSHE our pupils are helped to acquire the knowledge and develop the skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives, and to become resilient, informed and responsible citizens.

In addition, whole school approaches such as assemblies and circle time sessions are used to further develop the pupils’ knowledge of strategies. For example, peaceful problem solving is taught in circle time sessions to help children learn to control and manage feelings when there are disputes on the playground.

Looking after our emotional wellbeing and mental health

What do we do at St Mary’s Catholic Primary Schools Trust to support children’s emotional well-being and mental health?

St Mary’s Catholic Primary Schools Trust is committed to creating a happy, caring and supportive environment. As well as a learning environment, the school ensures there is a positive, supportive and inclusive ethos where children can thrive and achieve their personal best.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and ‘dare to be different’
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect

- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs We pursue our aims through:
- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties including attachment disorder

We promote it through our Curriculum:

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)- is a central to the curriculum across the whole school.

PSHE assists pupils to cope with the changes at puberty, introduces them to a wider world, manage transitions and enables them to make an active contribution to their communities. The concepts covered in PSHE include identity, managing feelings and emotions, relationships, change, resilience and being healthy, which includes physical, emotional and social well-being.

This is linked in to our RSE curriculum where we follow ten:ten scheme.

Weekly physical education- Lunchtime sports activities are also available to all children led by a sports coach. We promote healthy eating throughout the school. We have children's garden areas with green house, potting shed and raised growing beds.

Nurture Provision - Children who experience domestic violence, bereavement, anxiety and any other life experiences that may affect their emotional well-being are identified and supported in 1:1 or small group nurture support. The school supports the child in their specific needs, meaning the pupil is at the heart of the school focus and their learning is understood developmentally.

Afterschool Clubs-To support children's social and emotional development, and their well-being all with a view to increasing the range of experiences that children have, enabling them to make informed choices for adult life. Activities are designed to be fun and cater for a wide variety of interests.

Key points and Principles

- At St Mary's Primary Schools Trust we recognise that we have a central role to play in enabling our pupils to be resilient, and to support good mental health and wellbeing.
- Education about relationships, sex and health are important vehicles through which we can teach pupils about mental health and wellbeing.
- A consistent whole school approach is essential to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing.
- School staff cannot act as mental health experts and must not try and diagnose conditions. However, there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems.
- As set out in chapter 6 of the statutory SEND 0-25 years Code of Practice 2015, school needs to be alert to how mental health problems can underpin behaviour issues in order to support pupils effectively. Staff also need to be aware of the duties under the Equality Act 2010, recognising that some mental health issues will meet the definition of disability.
- When staff suspect a pupil may have a mental health problem, they must use the graduated response process (assess-plan-do-review) to put appropriate support in place.
- It is important that staff have an understanding of the local services available, including the School Nurse, as well as national organisations. The school's Senior Designated Lead for Mental / SENCO's will ensure that staff, parents and pupils have access to up to date information regarding local services (see provision map).

Lead Members of Staff

Lead Members of Staff Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Miss V Mitchell and Miss S Fizul (Headteachers), Mrs J Charlesworth and Mrs D O'Donnell- Designated safeguarding Leads

- Mr A François Williams, Mrs Z Fernandes, Miss S Garner, Mrs C D'Souza and Mrs S Ifil, Mrs S Davies, Miss E Goodman, Mr G Chapell – Deputy designated safeguarding leads
- Mrs J Charlesworth and Mrs D O'Donnell Lead for Mental Health / SENCO
- Mrs S Ifil, Mrs S Loughlin- Pastrol Lead –Nuture
- Mrs S Ifil – Mental Health First Aide

“All schools are under a statutory duty to promote the welfare of their pupils” P6 Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DFE, November 2018).

We monitor the wellbeing of our disadvantaged and vulnerable children. The SENCO's are members of the Senior Leadership Team and meets with children and their parents regularly.

The school is committed to gaining a fuller understanding of mental health and supporting the needs of identified children. We are part of a trail blazing mental health hub.

As a school, we have and continue to access outside help and support for pupils when required.

Training

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

Aims for our Staff

Good staff wellbeing is essential for cultivating a mentally healthy school, for retaining and motivating staff and for promoting pupil wellbeing and attainment. As school staff juggle a multitude of different tasks and demands, it is important that everyone is given the right emotional and practical support so that they can, in turn, support their pupils.

In addition to having a positive impact on colleagues and children, staff wellbeing can improve performance and job satisfaction, which can lead to reduced staff turnover.

What we do to support staff emotional wellbeing and mental health?

- Appraisal that is encouraging and that concentrates on the 'praise' aspect. Targets should be realistic and concentrate on raising standards of children.
- We encourage staff to work and plan with colleagues to support each other in providing opportunities for reflective practice and problem-solving school-based challenges.
- We create a sense of belonging to the school through team work.
- We make staff recognition and praise a part of the school's culture – setting aside regular time slots in meetings to do this.
- We develop an open-door policy where staff feel they can discuss their worries comfortably and without fear.
- We reduce unnecessary workload by ensuring that release time is given to any additional workload and paperwork is regularly audited and reduced where appropriate.
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- The school will provide initial support for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors and signpost them to professional help where it is requested or deemed necessary.
- The SLT will maintain good communications with staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- The SLT will monitor working hours to ensure that members of staff are not overworking.
- Staff will be provided with appropriate opportunities for training in good management practice and health and safety.

- Work place bullying and harassment is not tolerated.
- The SLT will be vigilant and where possible offer appropriate additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
- The SLT will support individuals who have been off sick with stress on a planned return to work.
- The SLT will monitor and review the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce stress.
- The impact on workload will always be taken into account when reviewing or developing policies and practices.
- SLT will ensure that only data that is necessary will be collected and by doing so we will reduce the workload of leaders, managers and staff.
- The processes used for collecting data will be efficient and minimal.
- To reduce workload, leaders will ensure that the data collected will be given its proper place alongside other evidence that is used when making professional judgements.
- Leaders will develop assessment, marking and feedback policies and strategies which are manageable and proportionate so that workload is reduced.
- The school will implement a curriculum that is the central driving force of teaching, so that time spent planning is kept to a minimum.
- Staff will be required to evaluate the impact of their planning on pupils' learning and progress so that they can reduce planning where it can be cut down.
- All staff will be expected to look for opportunities where workload can be reduced whilst maintaining the high standards of teaching, learning and progress set out in the schools' policies.
- Where anyone in school believes that they are suffering from workload pressure or stress resulting from that pressure they are expected to discuss the issue with an appropriate member of the senior leadership team.
- The governors, leaders and managers in school will regularly review their own work to cut down on unnecessary workload and to ensure that work is delegated to appropriate levels of the leadership and management structure.

Outcomes

Stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". It however, makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health. At St Mary's we wish to create a positive and happy working environment where people feel valued and where they can carry out their professional responsibilities without stress. Cutting down on workload without diminishing the quality of education will be a continuous priority for governors, leaders, managers and staff. We will create a school where workload is kept to the minimum necessary to be effective at all levels and for all staff. This will be a school where working efficiently and effectively will cause workload to be reduced to an acceptable minimum and so all staff will be free from the pressure and stress of over-work.

Further Support

Further sources of support If any member of the school community requires specialist support, they should refer to services provided by the NHS as well as voluntary sector and others. It includes local and national resources. It is also advisable to seek support and advice from a member of lead school staff listed earlier in this policy. The Trust provides access to SMART clinic – where each member of staff can assess various support on mental health, stress, and therapy sessions.