

## St Mary's Wellbeing Statement

**At St Mary's, emotional health and wellbeing is important to us. We believe it is the single biggest factor in a child's development, a crucial foundation for:**

- **educational attainment**
- **mental and physical health**
- **social and relationship skills**

**Positive emotional health underpins a growth mindset. It helps children build the independence and confidence to take on challenges and adapt to change, as well as the resilience to bounce back from setbacks.**

**1 in 6 children aged 5-16 are likely to have a mental health problem<sup>1</sup>. Developing mentally and emotionally healthy habits helps to protect against this.**

**Positive mental and emotional health is important for the whole school. Teachers play an important role in modelling it. All staff deserve to enjoy their job and feel supported.**

**We want all children, parents/carers and staff from our diverse community to flourish and reach their unique full potential. Together, we can support one another in caring for ourselves and for the wider community.**

### **Aims:**

To promote awareness and understanding of emotional health and wellbeing throughout the school community by:

- Enabling the children to develop the skills to:
  - recognise, name and reflect on their own thoughts and feelings.
  - feel confident in expressing their own feelings, and how to do so appropriately.
  - develop emotionally healthy and resilient habits and mindsets, to support personal, social and educational growth.
  - respect the feelings of others, including the need to ask, not assume, how someone else is feeling.
  - recognise emotional diversity; there is no 'right' way to feel or process our emotions.
- Increasing awareness and understanding of the school community around the issues and stigma that surround emotional and mental health.
- Ensuring staff, parents/carers are aware of how to spot the signs of mental health problems, the importance of early intervention, how to access support and how to raise concerns.
- Tackling stigma by promoting the understanding that *everyone* has fluctuating mental and emotional health (just as we all have fluctuating physical health).
- Embedding an understanding of the intersection between issues of equality and diversity and mental health.

This statement links into school policies in the areas of promoting positive mental health, including identifying and responding to mental health problems. These policies are: Positive Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Safeguarding, Child Protection and our Equality and Diversity Scheme. They can be found on our website @ <https://stmarys916.herts.sch.uk/school-information/policies/>

### **Promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing:**

The culture at St Mary's Northchurch promotes children's positive emotional health and wellbeing and avoids stigma by:

- Having a whole school culture that encourages open and inclusive discussion of emotional health and wellbeing, and promotes positive emotional and mental health within an ethos of high expectations and framework of effective, accessible support.
- Whole school philosophies and strategies for focussing on emotional health and wellbeing that can be applied across the curriculum ('marvellous mistakes', JIGSAW PSHE Scheme, growth mind-set).
- Emotion of the week introduced in Collective Worship.
- A formal structure of mental health support overseen by the Mental Health Lead and Deputy, with links to Governor support and outside specialist agencies.
- Ensuring adults in school are aware of mental health issues and can offer support or signpost to external agencies as appropriate.
- Working with parents/carers by promoting wellbeing strategies, emotional and mental health awareness, and by offering opportunities to engage with staff and the school.

### **Supporting children:**

Emotional health and wellbeing is a complex area and may look different for each child. St Mary's offers a range of services to nurture children's positive mental health. They encompass promoting an integrated culture of positive health, helpful daily routines and individual support for times when children may experience problems. These are:

- Whole school focus on building resilience and tenacity, with a focus on 'marvellous mistakes'.
- Growth mind-set terminology discussed and developed across the school.
- 'Emotion of the week' introduced in Collective Worship and then revisited in class throughout the week. Focus on developing children's emotional literacy.
- JIGSAW PHSE Scheme to develop an awareness of good mental health, positive body image and self-affirmation.
- Positive Behaviour Policy which focuses on supporting/recognising children who make the 'right' choices, and rewards pro-social behaviour. The policy supports those children struggling to make the 'right' choices and provides strategies to support them.

- Incredible 10 Point Scale introduced in KS2. This is a tool which enables children to recognise their emotional state and teaches them strategies to deal with heightened emotions.
- Celebration Assembly recognises achievements both in and out of school and encourages community recognition (i.e. the whole school celebrates together).
- *Identified adults* for those children that need additional emotional support (school staff that the child knows well and has a particularly positive relationship with).
- Ensuring adults in school are well positioned to identify any changes in behaviour/physical appearance, to monitor via CPOMS (online monitoring and reporting system) and to offer support as appropriate.
- Staff feeling confident and clear on how to take action on behalf of children about whom they have mental health or wellbeing concerns. This includes:
  - how to respond to children who disclose concerns about themselves or friends.
  - the importance of listening openly.
  - how to raise concerns about a pupil (see Raising Concerns section below).
  - being clear with children about the potential need to record conversations and share concerns with appropriate members of staff.
- Learning Mentor available to support children struggling with social, emotional, behavioural and mental health problems.
- SENDCo identifies suitable interventions and signposts children and adults e.g. Whale Therapy (Drama Therapy), DESC (Dacorum Educational Support Centre) support etc.
- Constructive links with outside support and specialist agencies (e.g. school nurse, DESC, As One Counselling services, CAMHS (Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services)) to provide interventions for those with additional mental health needs.
- Well-being questionnaire to identify areas where additional individual/group support is needed.
- Soft start to enable children to come into school in a calm, unpressured manner.
- Monday music to chase away the Monday blues.
- Adult presence on the playground every morning to support where needed, role model morning greetings.
- Monday club offered for those who want some additional lunchtime support.
- Extra resources provided to support Reception during lunchtime.
- 'Worry-boxes' and 'Ask-It' baskets in all classes.
- Health and fitness activities to support the link between exercise and mental wellbeing (e.g Daily Mile, Class Yoga, Skipping School, Go Noodle).
- Extended transition programme ( 3 separate events) to support children as they move between stages/schools and to reduce anxiety.
- Connection with nature – Forest School, Allotment and Quiet Garden.
- Calming restorative spaces identified for children who need them.
- In non-Covid times, Year 5 to act as 'buddies' to new Reception children.

### Supporting staff:

The wellbeing and emotional health of our staff is important in its own right. We want all staff to feel valued and supported in their jobs, so that they can enjoy long and enjoyable careers working in school. Their sense of wellbeing is also of paramount importance in the effective running of the school. It is the foundation and model for the wellbeing and positive mental health of our children within school.

- Link Governor to support .
- Mental Health lead and deputy.
- A supportive SLT (Senior Leadership Team) who regularly checks in with staff informally and through performance management.
- Any member of staff concerned about their own mental health and wellbeing to speak to SLT in the first instance.
- A bi- annual staff wellbeing survey to monitor how our staff are doing, and then agreeing actions.
- Termly mental health and wellbeing staff meeting time.
- Extensive targeted CPD to develop in areas staff themselves identify.
- Support offered through both OT and Education Mutual counselling teams where required.
- Realistic and manageable planning and marking policies that do not place too much pressure on staff or increase workload unnecessarily.
- Time allowed to attend their own parents/partner's/children's events/appointments wherever possible.
- Wellbeing days for staff.
- Staff suggestion box to encourage communication and new ideas.
- Wellbeing tree and wellbeing treats.
- Staff What's App for school and a separate 'fun' group –all invited/included.

### Supporting Parents/Carers

The St Mary's ethos of mutual respect and support extends to the wider community, with a particular focus on the families of our children. The wellbeing and emotional health of families can positively or negatively impact on the mental health of children. We aim to work with families to support themselves and their children by:

- Creating positive relationships with parents built through:
  - staff presence at start/end of the day
  - agreed strategies (e.g. able to contact school staff through class email/brief chat at the end of the day/open door policy)
  - phone calls home (to share examples of good work/ behaviour)
  - feedback and examples of work
- Volunteering opportunities within school including:
  - working with children (e.g. reading, school clubs and trips)

- on projects to enhance the school (e.g. creating a reading hut and garden in EYFS)
- helping with school governance and initiatives (e.g. school marketing strategy)
- parent group/staff liaison (Parent Forum and Class Rep)
- Targeted support programmes and events offered (e.g. Whale therapy Drama Therapy Group/ Raising Resilience PHSE programme delivered by Watford Football Club)
- Requests for Learning Mentor support can be made via class teacher/SENDCO.
- Meetings offered to address parental concerns and agree possible solutions.
- Termly Parent Forum Meetings to share parents' comments and suggestions with the Head.
- Parent surveys and suggestions (e.g. curriculum survey/marketing survey).
- Parental concerns addressed and acted upon (e.g. sugar in school meals/treats).
- Events provided to support and upskill parents e.g. Drugs and Alcohol Awareness, Sex and Relationship Education, Positive Parenting Courses, Curriculum Events.
- Parent technology training sessions.
- Supportive programmes and events signposted via school email/newsletter and school social media platforms.
- Wellbeing email for advice and support, including signposts to support services, reading, school staff who can help.
- Consistent adult support from Breakfast Club/MSA/ASC and Wellbeing email lead.
- Home visit from Nursery staff prior to starting school.
- Coffee mornings and open classrooms, where children's work is celebrated.
- Active School Association open to all parents who wish to be involved. Its focus is on enhancing the life of the school community as well as fund-raising.

### Raising Concerns:

**Any member of staff, child, parent/carer concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the class teacher in the first instance. The class teacher will monitor and support them, and refer to SENDCO and HT to discuss and consider further intervention.**

<sup>1</sup>The Children's Society <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/well-being/mental-health-statistics>