

St Gabriel's

Roman Catholic High School



Learn
Love
Believe

Positive Mental Health.

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Positive Mental Health.

Rationale

This policy covers St Gabriel's R.C. High School's approach to Positive Mental Health and was produced through consultation with students, staff, Senior Leaders, PLT, governors and parent/carers.

Policy Statement;

Mental health is 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. (World Health Organization)

In our mission Statement we state that each person should be known, loved and valued at our school, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

This document describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including support staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'Supporting students with Medical Conditions' policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, the 'SEND' policy where a student has an identified special educational need and the 'Safeguarding' Policy where there is a specific requirement for this.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit includes:

- Designated child protection / safeguarding officer
- AHT
- HOY
- AHOY
- SENDCO
- Learning Mentor
- School nurse
- Caritas worker
- First aider
- Any member of staff

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student or adult member of staff in school should speak to the mental health lead in the first instance.

If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection/safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated child protection office of staff or the head teacher.

If the student 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. Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the DSL, head of year.

Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental PSHCE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the relevant needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

We will follow the [PSHE Association Guidance 1](#) to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community, what support is available within our school and local community; who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix D.

We will highlight relevant sources of support in assembly and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within specific parts of the curriculum including PSHCE. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students 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 may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead, and the relevant progress leader.

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 student 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.

If a student 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. Never promise confidentiality.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be recorded on my concerns and relayed to the appropriate member of staff.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality. If we decide it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on then we should discuss with the student:

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

We should never share information about a student 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/carer, such as students up to the age of 16 who we believe to be in danger of harm.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the safeguarding lead as this helps to safeguard our own emotional wellbeing as we are no longer solely responsible for the student, it ensures continuity of care in our absence and it provides an extra source of ideas and support. We should explain this to the student and discuss with them who it would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with.

Parents/carers must always be informed if it is deemed necessary / appropriate by the Head Teacher / Safeguarding Team and students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents we should 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, at their home or somewhere neutral?
- Who should be present? Consider parents/carers, the student, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents/carers to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent/carer time to reflect.

We will always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that we are sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents/carers can also be helpful too e.g. helplines and forums as **listed in Appendix A**.

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/carers often have many questions as they process the information.

Each meeting will be finished with agreed next steps and a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record will always be kept.

Working with All Parents / Carers

Parents/Carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents/carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents/carers are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents/carers
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

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 students.

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

Suggestions for individual, group or whole school CPD should be discussed with our CPD Coordinator who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in **February 2020**. This policy will always be immediately updated to reflect personnel changes.

Appendix A: Bury Helplines

<https://www.samaritans.org>

<https://www.penninecare.nhs.uk>

Appendix B: Guidance and advice documents

PSHE Association : Preparing to Teach about Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing – PSHE Association teacher guidance funded by the Department for Education (March 2015)

Mental health and behaviour in schools - departmental advice for school staff. Department for Education (2014)

Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future - departmental advice for school staff and counsellors. Department for Education (2015)

Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing (2015).

PSHE Association. Funded by the Department for Education (2015)

Keeping children safe in education - statutory guidance for schools and colleges. Department for Education (2018)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England. Department for Education (2014)

Healthy child programme from 5 to 19 years old is a recommended framework of universal and progressive services for children and young people to promote optimal health and wellbeing. Department of Health (2009)

Future in mind – promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing - a report produced by the Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce to examine how to improve mental health services for children and young people. Department of Health (2015)

NICE guidance on social and emotional wellbeing in secondary education what works in promoting social and emotional wellbeing and responding to Mental health problems in schools? Advice for schools and framework document written by Professor Katherine Weare. National Children’s Bureau (2015)

CAMHS - Self-harm in children and young people handbook (National Workforce Programme) - designed to provide basic knowledge and awareness of the facts and issues behind selfharm in children and young people, with advice about ways staff in children’s services can respond