



Imagine, Believe, Achieve

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Shared with governors: March 2024

To be reviewed: September 2027

Introduction

In keeping with our school ethos and value of 'Imagine with all your mind, Believe with all your heart, Achieve with all your might', we are committed at St Oswald's to supporting the positive mental health and well-being of our whole school community – children, staff, parents and carers. We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important to our lives as our physical health; the two needs are closely related and one often has an impact on the other.

At St Oswald's we believe that we need to ensure that a human's basic needs are being met before we can fully support a person's mental health. We endeavour to ensure that children and adults are able to manage times of change and stress – physically, mentally and emotionally. We aim to ensure that they are supported to reach their potential, this could be by using a range of coping strategies or having access to help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive physical and mental health and what affects these things. We aim to help both children and adults know how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

Roles and Responsibilities

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote this in and out of their classrooms.

Supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school. At St Oswald's we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance, this is encouraged by management who aim to provide a good example of this. Staff are supported pastorally and have access to enriched opportunities. Staff also have access to external support systems such as Employee Assist Programme, Occupational Health, Promoting Health At Work meetings which support their mental health and wellbeing, should they need it.

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health and to understand the protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children will require additional help; all staff should have the skills to identify warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. Key staff supporting Mental Health at St Oswald's Primary School are:

Executive Headteacher - Michelle Cuskelly

Head of School – Jayne Geran

PSHE Lead – Rachel Greer

Senior Mental Health Lead

Our Senior Mental Health Lead is the Executive Headteacher who:

- Leads and collaborates with all staff to co-ordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates.
- Is the first point of contact with mental health services and makes individual referrals to them.
- Has completed the DFE Senior Mental Health Leader course.

Teaching About Mental Health

At St Oswald's we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help children become more resilient, happy and successful; to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising. We do this by:

- Creating and applying consistent ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.
- Helping children to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.
- Promoting self-esteem and ensuring children understand that they are worthy and that they know their importance in the world.
- Helping children to be resilient learners and to manage setbacks.
- Teaching children social and emotional skills and ensuring that they have an awareness of mental health.
- Identifying children who have mental health challenges and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services, parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience and to help them spot signs when themselves or someone else might need some support for mental health and/or well-being.
- Developing an open culture where it's normal to talk about mental health.
- The teaching of PSHE through the Jigsaw scheme, 'Protective behaviours' for all year groups.
- For the staff and the wider community – there will be signposting for help and support relevant to their needs.

Promoting A Mentally Healthy Environment

- Promoting our whole school values, what that specifically means and how it is and can be implemented in our everyday lives.
- Encouraging a sense of belonging to our school and the wider community.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making – Prefects, House Captains, Worship Team, Science Ambassadors, Language Ambassadors and MAD Council.
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements in our Celebration Worship.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Providing opportunities to reflect through class worship, whole school worship, Church services, RE lessons, PSHE lessons as well as other opportunities arising through-out the day.
- Enabling access to appropriate support.
- The promotion of a healthy mind and good well-being through whole school events – Children’s Mental Health week, Anti-Bullying week, Red Nose Day, Children in Need.
- Linking up with the Church for any community events.
- Lunchtime clubs to support pupils who need bespoke support to focus on mental health, resilience and wellbeing.
- Small group physical activity sessions for vulnerable pupils with our Sports Coach.
- Specialised support given to specific children by our SEND Teaching Assistants.
- After-school clubs to promote and encourage wellbeing hosted by external and internal providers.

Early Identification

We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things from getting worse. Changes in normal behaviour/patterns as listed below, may be warning signs indicating that a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

Possible Warning Signs

- Persistent absence
- Frequent lates
- Relationship issues
- Disengaged in learning
- Physical indicators e.g. cuts, loss of appetite, appearing anxious or withdrawn
- Negative behaviour patterns - changes in activity and mood and/or becoming socially withdrawn

- Change in family circumstance
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Talking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope

Reporting a concern

Teaching and support staff are responsible for reporting concerns about individual children to designated adults within the school.

All concerns are reported to the designated adults and/or safeguarding team within school. A half-termly meeting is held to discuss any concerns raised. This ensures we get a clear indicator of all aspects and possible outside factors which could be contributing to any mental health or wellbeing issues.

Any needs are assessed through a triage approach to ensure the child and/or adult gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible. This is also the case when children and/or families experience particular trauma.

Dealing With Concerns

When a concern is raised about a child, the safeguarding team, senior leaders or the Senior Mental Health Lead will:

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any internal assessments
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies e.g. Front Door, RISE
- Signpost parents to support services or give appropriate advice
- Create a chronology of actions and events
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups
- Develop a bespoke mental health care and protection plan where appropriate with clear actions and intended impact

Working Alongside Parents and Carers

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. Any information will be passed onto the Mental Health Lead/SLT for assessment.

To support parents and carers we will:

- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make aims and objectives of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics taught in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this at home.
- Signpost services which offer help and support.
- Share key information on the school newsletter, with support, advice and words of encouragement.

Specialist Services

As part of our targeted provision the school will work in partnership with external agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing. Your child may be referred to one of the following services for additional support.

- CAMHS/RISE
- School Nursing Service
- Children's Services.
- Family Support Workers.
- Educational Psychology services.
- Counselling services
- Early Help

Whole school systems

All pupils access SEMH quality first teaching provision which includes the following approaches:

Step 1 – Monitor and implement the following strategies.

- Taking care to positively greet pupils each day and say a word or two individually to them.
- Inviting pupil to help with daily tasks.
- Listening without giving advice or opinions; show that you understand how the pupil feels . . . ‘That must have made you very angry/upset.’ Use Emotion Coaching.
- If things go wrong, rejecting the behaviour, not the pupil . . . ‘This is not the behaviour I expect to see from someone as kind and helpful as you.’
- Don’t be afraid to tell the pupil you like them and that what happens to them matters to you. . . ‘You really matter to me and it’s important to me that you do well this year.’
- Organising time – perhaps at the start of the day – for a member of staff to chat with the pupil, giving them a chance to talk about anything that may be troubling them and get themselves ready for learning.
- Making tasks short, with frequent breaks and opportunities to move around.
- Remembering that children (and adults) who are stressed find it hard to take in and remember complex information; make instructions short and clear.
- When a pupil is experiencing emotional distress or anxiety, provide low-key tasks and increased structure and predictability in the classroom environment.
- Displaying classroom rules and routines for pupil to refer to. Illustrate them visually – for example, use a traffic-light system to indicate whether pupils can talk or not, or symbols for different noise levels (partner voices, group voices, classroom voice, playground voices).
- Using the language of choice, reminding pupils of the consequences of the various behavioural choices open to them.
- Making an effort to ‘catch the pupil being good’ and praise them.

Step 2 - If you are concerned about a pupil (Universal).

- Speak with parent or guardian.
- Teacher discussion with SENCo to determine a course of action.
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ's) to be completed to determine strengths and needs.
- Introduce emotional check in procedure monitored by TA/Class Teacher.
- Ensure any concerns are logged on CPOMS.

Step 3 - If difficulties still persist after a period of implementation (Targeted)

- Pupil to be allocated an in-school intervention from our range of programmes on offer in school for example Talkabout series, Social Speaking. This should be chosen based on analysis of the needs identified in the SDQ.
- SENCO can seek advice from Specialist Teaching Service if required.
- Consider if Positive Intervention Plan is required.
- Consider if any additional aids are required in lesson.
- Complete Dimensions Tool.

Step 4 – If difficulties still persist (Targeted and Personalised).

- Referrals to be made to for additional external support for example CAMHS/RISE, Educational Psychologist, Primary Mental health Team, COMPASS, support from Mentally Healthy Schools.
- Consider if risk assessment is required.
- Consider offering Early Help.
- Consider if pupils needs to be added to the SEND register and complete an IEP to enable a rigorous plan, do and review.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy is on the school website and hard copies are available on request.

The policy will be reviewed regularly or at least every three years by the Academy Governor Committee.