

St. Brendan's Catholic Primary School



Mental Health Policy

Presented to Governors: Spring 2026

Adopted by Governors: Spring 2026

Review date: Spring 2027

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)

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.

The Policy Aims to:

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide a clear framework for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for pupils, staff, and the wider school community.
- Ensure that mental health concerns are identified early and appropriate support is provided.
- Create a culture where mental health is openly discussed, and stigma is challenged.
- Offer structured systems of support through school practices, pastoral care, and external partnerships.

Lead Members of Staff

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

Mrs Dixon - designated safeguarding lead and Mental health Lead

Mrs Brydon – Head teacher/ deputy designated safeguarding lead

Miss McAuley – Deputy Head teacher/ deputy designated safeguarding lead

SENCO – Charlotte Thomas

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student 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 procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated safeguarding lead.

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.

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 PSHE curriculum.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific 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 Ten Ten PSHE curriculum to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Whole-School Activities

We incorporate mental health awareness into the fabric of our daily school life through a variety of whole-school initiatives. These activities aim to foster an environment where mental health is openly discussed and supported:

- **Themed Weeks and Days:** We hold special events such as Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day, where the whole school engages in activities that highlight the importance of mental wellbeing. These events may include mindfulness sessions, physical activities, and workshops focused on resilience and emotional regulation.
- **Collective Worship:** Regular Collective Worship opportunities are used to promote positive mental health, covering topics like kindness, friendship, managing emotions, and the importance of asking for help.

These sessions are often led by pupils and staff, encouraging community-wide participation.

- **Wellbeing Ambassadors:** A group of year 6 pupils are trained as Wellbeing Ambassadors, offering peer support during break and lunch times. Their role is to listen

to peers who might need someone to talk to and offer friendship and guidance, promoting emotional wellbeing among pupils.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in school and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. 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

Should adults in school have concerns about a student's mental health they should discuss this with our mental health lead Mrs Dixon who will then work with the student and family to access the right level of support. We offer

Level 1 support

- Daily check ins
- 1:1 emotional literacy
- Nurture sessions
- Group work

Level 2 support

All of the above as well as 1:1 support from Georgia Hibbard at The Happy Child agency who works as a mental health teacher. Parents must consent to this work taking place and is usually a 6 week program.

Level 3 support

We would seek external support from Mental Health in Schools team and follow advice and recommendations.

Referral Pathways and External Support

We are committed to ensuring that pupils with mental health needs receive appropriate and effective support. When a mental health concern is identified, we refer pupils to specialist services that provide tailored mental health support. The referral process is

managed by the Senior Mental Health Lead or SENDCo, who will assess the situation and work closely with parents/carers to ensure the child receives the support they need.

Referral Process:

- **Initial Assessment:** The Senior Mental Health Lead or SENDCo evaluates the child's needs, gathering relevant information to determine the most appropriate support pathway.
- **Consent:** Referrals to external services are made with the consent of parents/carers, unless safeguarding concerns arise.
- **Collaboration:** The school works closely with external professionals, parents, and carers to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to supporting the child's mental health.

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 Mrs Dixon our mental health.

The following list of warning signs is intended as a guideline to help staff, parents, and carers recognise early indicators of potential mental health concerns in children.

These signs are not diagnostic tools but can be useful in identifying when professional advice or intervention may be needed. If a child displays these signs persistently, it is recommended to seek support from a mental health professional or refer through appropriate school channels.

The list is based on advice from leading organisations such as YoungMinds, Place2Be, and the NHS.

Emotional Signs

- Unexplained or frequent crying or emotional outbursts.
- Persistent anxiety or worry, often expressed as fears about going to school or socialising.
- Unexplained or prolonged periods of sadness or withdrawal from usual activities.
- Irritability or mood swings, particularly in children who were previously calm.

Behavioural Signs

- A sudden decline in academic performance or disengagement from schoolwork.
- Frequent temper tantrums or acting out in ways that are out of character.
- Changes in sleep patterns, such as insomnia or excessive sleeping.
- Avoidance of friends or previously enjoyed activities, indicating possible social withdrawal.
- Frequent complaints of physical ailments (such as stomach aches or headaches) without a medical explanation.

Physical Signs

- Changes in eating habits, including loss of appetite or overeating.
- Fatigue or low energy that persists even after rest.
- Noticeable changes in personal hygiene or appearance.
- Physical signs of self-harm, such as unexplained cuts or bruises.

Other Signs

- Excessive clinginess to parents or teachers.
- Difficulty concentrating or a sudden inability to focus on tasks.
- Talks or expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness, or feeling “trapped.”
- Mentioning or showing signs of suicidal thoughts or feelings, which require immediate emergency action.

Supporting Parents and Carers

In order to support parents and carers we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents 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
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through our regular information evenings
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in PSHE and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home
- Signpost to services to support parent and carers own mental health.

We will regularly use communication channels, such as my child at school, newsletters and the school website, to ensure parents are aware of local and national mental health services available for their own or their child’s wellbeing.

