Highfield St. Matthew's Church of England Primary School

As Jesus tells us, 'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:13).

Mentally Healthy School Policy

September 2026

Our Christian Vision

'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:13). Our vision inspires and challenges the community we serve to achieve excellence in all they do, and to learn about life in all its fullness, within a welcoming Christian family.

School Aims – How we will Let Our Light Shine

- Every child feels valued, safe and cared for, and makes a positive contribution to their own development and the life of the school, with Christ at its centre
- Our bespoke SHINE curriculum, based on excellence and high expectations, provides rich experiences which motivates, challenges, develops resilience and meets the needs of all children
- Every child achieves their potential and develops their talents and creativity, preparing them for a role in a global society with a lifelong love for learning
- Children & families develop understanding of a faith and Christian values that can guide their lives; knowing Jesus, and putting into action what they are coming to believe and value
- The whole school family flourishes and serves the local Church and community

"Every child has the right to the best possible health"

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 24

Highfield St Matthew's CE Primary School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement.

We aim to promote positive mental health for every child, parent, carer and staff using whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at identified vulnerable pupils and families.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: *"in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".*

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. We believe that our school

offers positive role models and relationships which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- All families are valued.
- All staff members and Governors are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing. We place an emphasis on promoting staff wellbeing to ensure that the adults within our school feel supported, feel valued, feel cared for and are therefore have a healthier positive wellbeing.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy describes the school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and is intended as guidance for parents, whole community and all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. It should be read in conjunction with our medical 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 in relation to prompt action and wider concerns of vulnerability. This policy sets out:

- How we define mental health and wellbeing
- How we promote positive mental health.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- How we involve parents and carers
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.

In developing this policy, we have taken account of:

- Children and Young People's Mental Health: State of the Nation 2016.
- Education, Education, Education, Mental Health 2016 (secondary).
- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, Public Health England 2015.
- Preparing to teach about mental health, PSHE Association 2015.
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, DfE 2018.
- Supporting children with medical conditions, DfE 2014.

Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

" 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".

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all members of our school community to:

- Feel confident in themselves.
- Be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- Be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- Manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- Learn and achieve.

Promoting Positive Mental Health

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help children become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise.
This encompasses seven aspects:

- Creating an 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.
- Helping children to be resilient learners.
- Teaching children social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.
- Early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.
- Effectively working with parents and carers.
- Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

Pupil Identification

We believe in identifying any needs as early as possible. We aim to do this through staff observations focusing on any changes in behaviour, attention and presentation, any communication from the pupils regarding their emotions and feelings and concerns raised by parents and carers, and also speaking regularly with children. Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the Inclusion Lead, the Pastoral and Safeguarding Manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in the first instance. If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Safeguarding Team. If the child presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed.
Concerns are raised through the following means:

- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Enabling children to raise concerns to any member of staff.
- Worry boxes in each class for children to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher and discussed with the Pastoral and Safeguarding Manager. There is also a worry box in this room.
- Indoor lunchtime clubs for quiet conversations with staff
- Pupil Progress meetings.
- Regular opportunities for staff to raise concerns.
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer.

When a concern has been raised, the school will:

- Contact parents and carers (In almost all cases, parents and carers will be involved in

their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as where child protection issues are identified.)

- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information.
- Be available for follow up calls.
- Make a plan of support and actions.
- Make records of discussions and actions.
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child.
- Make joint decisions between school and parents about the support and interventions.

Support

We believe that Highfield St Matthew's CE Primary has a key role in promoting children's positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our School has developed a range of strategies and approaches including:

- Assemblies to raise awareness of mental health, as well as mental health and wellbeing focus weeks
- Family Help support which can focus on mental health and wellbeing
- Transition from previous schools
- Transition Programme to secondary schools for Year 6 children, including extra sessions when needed
- Dojo reward scheme where children can be praised for certain duties, work, tasks or things they have done, as well as class recognition points with incentives and rewards
- Worry monsters
- Reflection time (During Collective Worship, etc.)
- Circle times
- Displays and information around school and on the school website about positive mental health and where to go for help and support, for children, parents, carers and staff
- Trauma-Informed trained staff, trained in therapeutic interventions who are available for group and 1:1 work
- Access to supportive services for vulnerable children eg Young Carers

In some cases a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include:

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- Child & Family Wellbeing Service
- Barnados
- Child Action North West
- Early Help Assessment tool.
- Educational Psychology Service.

Involving Parents and Carers in Promoting Mental Health

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs.

On first entry to the School we ask parents to inform us of any mental health needs their child has and any issues that they think might have an impact on their child's mental health and wellbeing. It is very helpful if parents and carers can share information with school so that

we can better support their child from the outset. All information will be treated in confidence.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Our primary concern is the children, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not

accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

Further information

For general information and support:

www.youngminds.org.uk champions young people's mental health and wellbeing www.mind.org.uk advice and support on mental health problems www.minded.org.uk (e-learning)

www.time-to-change.org.uk tackles the stigma of mental health

www.rethink.org challenges attitudes towards mental health

Mental Health and Behaviour in School DfE November 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools_.pdf

Specific information and support:

Anxiety UK
ww.anxietyuk.org.uk
OCD UK
www.ocduk.org
Depression Alliance www.depressoinalliance.org

Eating Disorders www.b-eat.co.uk and
www.inourhands.com National Self-Harm Network
www.nshn.co.uk www.selfharm.co.uk

Suicidal thoughts Prevention of young suicide UK– PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org