

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Statement

Mental health is an individual's cognitive, behavioural and emotional wellbeing (Mind, 2020). It's something we all have - including every child and young person. We use the term "mental health issues" to refer to mental health problems, conditions and mental illnesses. These issues may or may not be medically diagnosed. In our school our Christian vision 'Together, fly high like an eagle' (Isaiah 40:31) is the foundation of all that we do. Our aim is that we help children to be the best possible person they can be in all areas of their lives and to enable children to develop the independence and resilience they need to become active members of society.

In addition, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and pupil body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable pupils. In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing (MHW), we aim to recognise and respond to need as it arises. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for pupils affected both directly, and indirectly by mental health and wellbeing issues.

Scope

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND and Inclusion policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The policy should also be read in conjunction with our Attendance, Anti-bullying and Behaviour Policies.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues and how this can impact learning
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health and wellbeing issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents/carers

Referrals and Responsibility

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance. If there are safeguarding concerns, then normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the pupil 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.

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If any member of staff is concerned with the Mental Health and Wellbeing of a child, but it does not fall into the above category, they must consult their Mental Health Lead. A collaborative decision will be made whether a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental health Services (CAMHS) is appropriate, or a referral to our Emotionally Literate Support Assistant (ELSA) programme. Guidance about referring to CAMHS/ELSA is provided in Appendix 2.

Teaching about Mental Health and Wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our pupils to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental Personal Social Health Economic (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 pupils 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 to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harm.

School Ethos and Approach

School staff are aware that better mental health is linked to good relationships with teachers and peers, the school promotes and facilitates positive interactions through daily interactions, assemblies and PSHE lessons. Staff are aware that their responses may need to be adapted to consider protective characteristics of the individual.

School has strong Online Safety Policy which again supports good mental health.

St. John's has zero tolerance for bullying, which is again linked to mental health. Staff encourage children to report any incidents immediately, staff then follow up incidents thoroughly working in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Hobbies and active lifestyles are linked to better mental health. St John's has a strong PE and music provision, and we encourage extra-curricular activities for our children in areas such as music, sports and crafts. We constantly look for opportunities and have encouraging conversations with children less active/ involved to find something to take part in.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular safeguarding training to enable them to keep pupils safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our appraisal process and additional Continuous Professional Development (CPD) will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more pupils. 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 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)/ Mental Health Lead who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

Due regard was taken by carrying out an EqIA to consider the impact on protected groups. However, the impact of the proposal was positive (or at least neutral) for all.	Tick required: ✓	Date: 19/09/24
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Appendix 1- Procedures

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil 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.

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
- 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 pupil 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 pupil 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. Staff must inform children that their disclosures will not be kept confidential as we may need to pass on information to parents/carers or external services to support them.

Staff should listen, rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the pupil's emotional and physical safety. School staff will NOT diagnose or label conditions, but that they will raise concerns if they feel that the pupil's mental health is impacting their daily lives in school. This information should be shared with the mental health lead, who will provide and store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for pupils causing concern or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. School staff will NOT diagnose or label conditions, but that they will raise concerns if they feel that the pupil's mental health is impacting their daily lives in school. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. The care plan will be reviewed as required. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition

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- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do, and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the school can play

Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents/carers, 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 pupil, and 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 time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents/carers can also be helpful too, such as parent helplines and forums.

We should 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 often have many questions as they process the information. Finish each meeting with agreed next step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

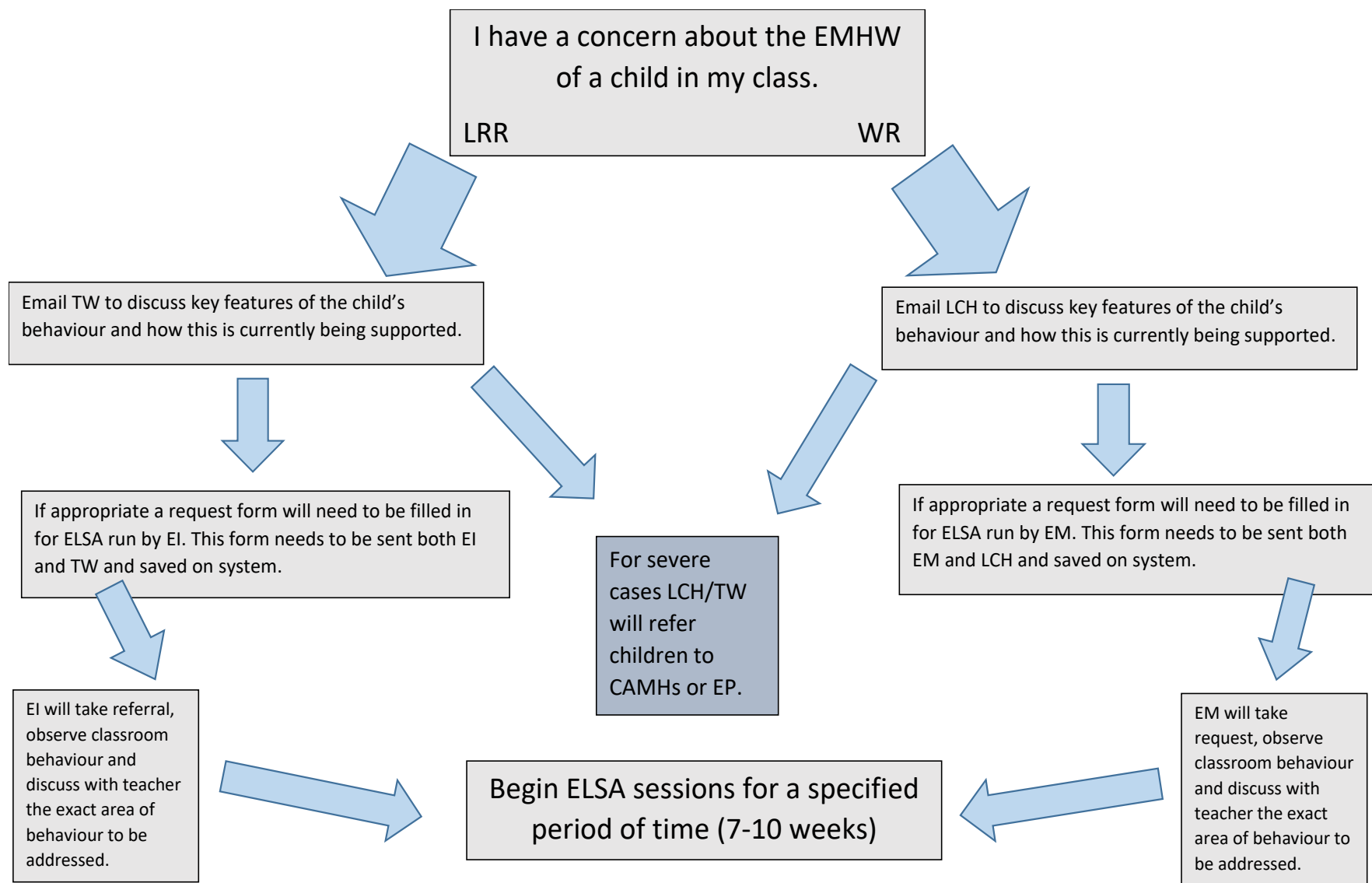
Supporting Peers

When a pupil is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. To keep peers safe, we will consider on a case-by-case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations by the pupil who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend help (e.g. signs of relapse)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour
- Safeguarding
- PSHE
- Online safety



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