



Reviewed: December 2024

Review Date: December 2027

Our School Vision

As a school community, we aspire to develop life-long learners who have the confidence to explore the world around them and grow as unique individuals. We provide a safe family environment, inspired by Christian values, in which the flourishing of each enables the flourishing of all.

'This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine!'

'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.' Matthew 5:15

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.

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 student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

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 or carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Mr Stuart Bevan - Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Kay Fawkes – Designated Mental Health & Wellbeing Lead
- Mrs Kay Fawkes - Head of PSHE and RSE

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 child protection officer, the head teacher or the designated governor. 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 Mrs Kay Fawkes, mental health lead. Guidance about referring to CAMHS is provided in Appendix F.

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. This should be drawn up involving the pupil, the parents and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Details of a pupil's condition
- 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

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 [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.

TALK

As part of our Mental Health Education, the school has developed a mental health strategy called TALK. This encourages and teaches children to Tell, Ask, Listen and Know. We aim to teach and support children, through assemblies, mental health days and class discussions and lessons, that talking about their mental health issues and state of mind is important. We aim to give them an abundance of words, skills, and resources to do this. Many of our staff members are Designated Listeners, who have been selected to listen to children who have any worries or concerns. We want the children at St Michael's to know that we want to know about their worries and concerns.

¹ [Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing](#)

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents 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 display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets 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

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 Kay Fawkes, our mental health and emotional wellbeing lead and Mr Stuart Bevan, designated safe guarding lead.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or 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

ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)

Staff who have concerns about a child's social, mental and emotional health can make a referral to the Senior Mental Health Lead who will then arrange 1-1 sessions with the ELSA where appropriate. Appendix 1. Appendix 2 sets out the flow diagram for the referral and ELSA work.

Mental Health and Wellbeing for children.

The Mental Health Lead holds half termly pupil drop ins for children to access support with their mental health and/or mindfulness activities. There is also an assembly programme that runs through the year and discusses with the children, mindfulness, expressing emotions and the TALK programme.

Mental Health and Wellbeing for staff.

The Mental Health Lead holds half termly staff drop ins for staff to access support with their mental health and wellbeing, which includes providing resources and wellbeing activities to promote good mental health. Those with poor mental health or returning to work after being off with their Mental Health can also have a care plan written with them to support their return to work.

Mental Health and Wellbeing for parents.

The Mental Health Lead holds a workshop for parents to access support with their mental health and wellbeing, which includes providing resources and wellbeing activities to promote good mental health. There also a range of resources available on the school website.

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.

Staff should listen rather than advice and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?' For more information about how to handle mental health disclosures sensitively see appendix E.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file. This written record should include:

- Date
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
- Main points from the conversation
- Agreed next steps

This information should be shared with the mental health lead, Mrs Fawkes Mr Stuart Bevan, designated safe guarding lead, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps. See appendix F for guidance about making a referral to CAMHS.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If 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.

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague, usually the mental health lead, Mrs Kay Fawkes. 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.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, parents should not be informed, but the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately.

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, the student, other members of staff.
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and upsetting for parents 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 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 you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. 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 steps and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

Working with All Parents

Parents 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, 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 go 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

Supporting Peers

When a student 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. In order 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 with the student 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 or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

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 to enable them to keep students safe.

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health. The [MindEd learning portal](#)² provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue.

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 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 the Headteacher, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.

The [Charlie Waller Memorial Trust](#) provides funded training to schools on a variety of topics related to mental health including twilight, half day and full day INSET sessions.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in December 2027.

Additionally, this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate on an ad hoc basis.

² www.minded.org.uk

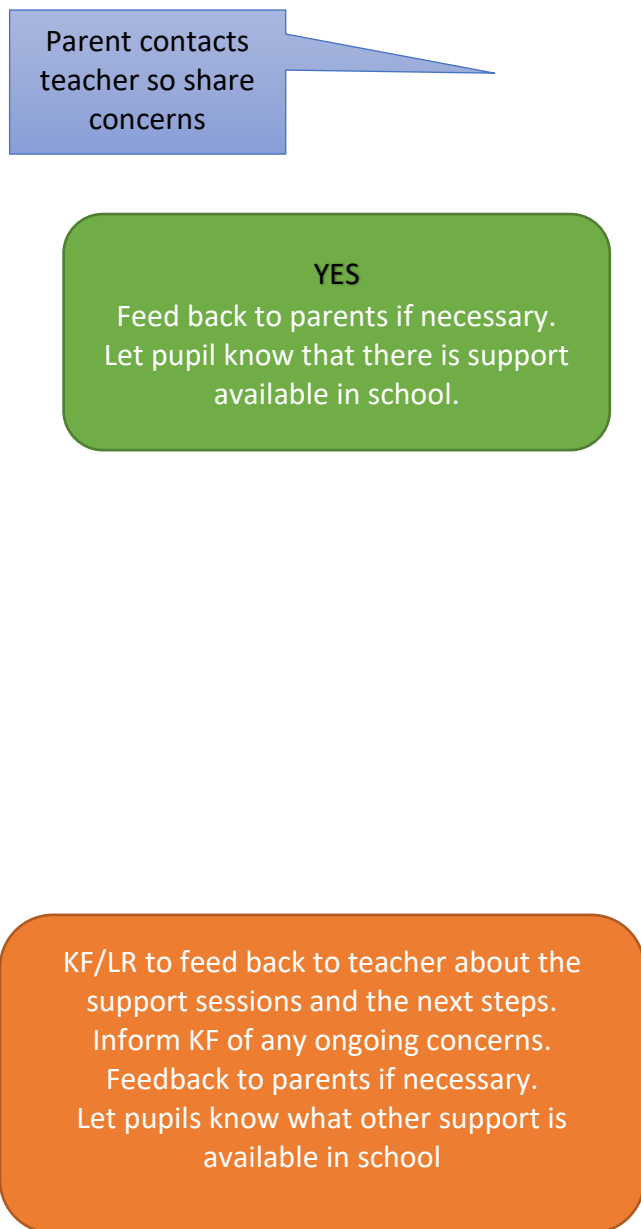
Appendix 1

In School SEMH referral form

Pupil name	
Class	
Member of staff raising concern	
Have parents been informed?	
<p><u>Concerns:</u> Please provide an outline of the concerns you have. Include as much detail as possible, this may include: Changes in behaviour, Changes in the way the child deals with their emotions, Their reactions to events have changed, They are having difficult relationships with friends,</p> <p>When did the changes start? Has the child gone through any life changes/ stressful situations? How does it affect them in school?</p>	
<p><u>What have you tried so far?</u> Please include details of things you have tried to help the child: opportunities to talk, buddying them up with friends etc.</p>	
EAL	YES / NO
On SEN register	YES / NO
EHCP	YES / NO
Pupil Premium	YES / NO
Signature of referrer:	
Referral completed on:	
Please email to designated Mental Health Lead: k.fawkes@st-michaels-school.org	

Appendix 2

Parent has a concern about child's SEMH



Teacher has a concern about child's SEMH

