



*Written: July 2021*

*Review: July 2023*

### **Definition**

*Mental health affects how we think, feel and act. When we have good mental health we feel safe, we can work hard and have fun. We can solve and overcome problems, we are able to ask for help when we need it.*

### **Policy Statement**

At St Aloysius Federation School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff. We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count.
- encourage children to be confident and 'dare to be different'
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values and encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for

themselves and others

- Providing opportunities to reflect.
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs

We pursue our aims through:

- Universal, whole school approaches
- Support for vulnerable pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement.
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long term difficulties.

### **Lead Members of Staff**

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

Carole Godfrey: Deputy Head & Designated Safeguarding Lead

Kathryn Fenwick: Acting Head Teacher

Vicky James: Teacher – Mental Health/Emotional Wellbeing Lead

Deborah Johnson: HLTA – School Counsellor

### **Teaching about Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves 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 we will follow the 'Tenten resources' programme, 'Live Life to the Full', to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.

### **Targeted support**

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Mentoring.
- Counselling (Internal/The Road Centre)
- Healthy Minds Team referral
- Therapeutic activities including art, legotherapy, theraplay and relaxation/ mindfulness techniques.
- Rainbows/Sunbeams groups

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- Pupil Voice forms
- Emotional literacy scales

### **Signposting**

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support through regular Newsletters and updates via the school website.

Staff will track and monitor pupils identifying a range of possible difficulties including:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationships
- Approach to learning
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators

School staff may also 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 the designated child protection and safeguarding lead or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope

- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

### **Assessment, Interventions and Support**

All concerns are reported to the designated adults within school and needs are assessed through a triage approach with SLT, class teachers and SENDCO to ensure the child gets the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service, as quickly as possible.

### **Working with Parents and Carers**

Parents or carers can approach their child/children's class teacher if they have mental health concerns. This will be cascaded to the SLT for assessment. To support parents and carers we will:

- Provide information online on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- Share ideas about how parents and carers can support positive mental health in their children.
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health 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.
- Organise workshops and presentations on mental health, anxiety, resilience and steps to wellbeing.

When a concern has been raised, teachers or the Mental Health Lead and SENDCO will:

- Contact parents to discuss the outcome of any assessment (Although there may be cases, parents and carers cannot be involved due to child protection issues.)
- Discuss any relevant referrals to external agencies.
- Signpost parents to further information or provide resources to take away.
- Create a chronology of actions and events.
- Agree mental health care and protection plan where appropriate including clear next steps.
- Discuss how parents can support their child through strategies or signposts to parenting support groups.

### **Working with Specialist Services**

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- School nurse
- Educational Psychology Services
- Paediatricians

- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- Family support workers
- Early Help

### **Links to other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies for SEND, Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE and RSE policies. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.

### **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 pupils safe.

The MindEd learning portal 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 to developing situations with one or more pupils.