Mental Health Policy

Date ratified	January 2025
Committee Responsible for Policy	CFC
Date to be updated	January 2026
Headteacher Signature	*G. Richards*
Chair of Governors/ Committee Signature	*G. Richards*

Growing together as children of God

At Holy Trinity C of E Primary School:

- we want our pupils to **grow** in confidence, independence, resilience and knowledge, so that all achieve their full potential and develop a life-long love of learning and of the world around us.

- we work **together** with families, community and church to model positive relationships, supporting each other and acknowledging that we are stronger when we work together.

- we are growing together as **children of God,** strengthening our faith, secure in the knowledge we are unique, loved and cherished

Biblical Basis
Philippians 4:6-7
Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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 Holy Trinity 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 students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, 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 to encourage positive mental health and to support 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 safeguarding policy and the medical policy in cases where a pupil's mental health and wellbeing overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue, and the SEND policy where a pupil has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and pupils
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- 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

Holy Trinity's vehicles for emotional health and wellbeing

The school promotes and provides a range of provision:

- Educational Wellbeing Practitioners through the Mental Health in Schools Teams
- Playground buddies and Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- Other Pupil-led leadership groups
- Safeguarding
- Lighthouse (our Nurture Classroom)
- Chameleon Corner (our Lunchtime Nurture Provision)
- ELSA (Emotional Learning Support Assistant)
- Lego therapy
- Play therapy
- Boxall Profile
- Health and Wellbeing workshops
- Staff members trained as Mental Health First Aiders for staff and pupils
- Primary/Secondary Transition workshops
- Children's wellbeing reading corner
- Guest speakers on topics i.e. Growth Mindset & Resilience
- Flowcharts in every classroom to help pupils seek support
- Staff wellbeing board located in the staffroom
- Curriculum-based support
- CAMHS drop-in sessions for staff to discuss pupils
- Emotionally-based School Avoidance drop-in sessions for staff to discuss pupils
- Referral to Off The Record
- RSE (Relationships and Sex Education)

The school promotes an anti-bullying culture through:

- A strong Christian ethos, enhanced by a focus on British values which empowers tolerance and respect, including respect for difference and diversity
- High profile of anti-bullying procedures and policy through posters, assemblies and events such as national anti-bullying week and using our PSHE materials

- Year 6 Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- Active listeners, including assistants and adults other than school staff to whom the victim may turn

The school promotes and strengthens the pupil voice through:

- A democratic process for the election of Junior Leadership Team representatives and other Pupil-led leadership positions
- Timetabled meeting time for members of the school's Junior Leadership Team (JLT) and Growing in Spirit team (Spiritual team)
- Opportunities in assemblies
- Pupil Wellbeing questionnaires

The school promotes the involvement of parents and carers in the life and learning of the school through:

- Annual parent/carer questionnaires and forum
- Regular consultation about change and development through questionnaires and Parent Mail
- Subject Focus evenings, parent workshops, music events, sports and theme Weeks
- Involvement in school trips and extracurricular activities
- Regular communication and involvement over pupil progress, behaviour and pastoral issues
- Regular *Share My Learning* sessions – an opportunity for parents/carers to visit the classroom to celebrate the children's work
- Open Door Policy – the headteacher is happy to meet any parent/carer
- Open communication between parent/carer and teacher (teacher email details are shared)

The school facilitates a context for learning through:

- Enhancing school and classroom layout; facilities and resources
- Recognising the background of individual pupils and their physical, social and emotional needs
- Establishing clear rules, routines and expectations about behaviour for learning and social cohesion.
- Encouraging positive, caring and constructive relationships

The school enhances pupil motivation and learning through:

- Consistent support for vulnerable children and those with SEND from trained teams of pastoral, learning support, teaching assistants and other agencies where appropriate.
- A range of challenging opportunities for gifted and talented pupils
- An exciting and varied range of extra-curricular events and trips
- A balanced curriculum with opportunities for intellectual, physical and expressive development
- Recognising a range of learning styles
- Encouraging independence in learning
- Using a range of teaching styles such as Circle Time appropriate to pupils' age, ability and level of maturity
- Using a range of PSHE materials to raise self-esteem and confidence levels.

The school enhances pupil self-esteem and personal development through:

- The Personal Development Curriculum which includes Citizenship and PSHE
- Inviting motivational guest speakers to the school to promote resilience, positive self-esteem and self-worth
- Information, advice and guidance on sex and relationships and drugs which is done age-appropriately
- Opportunities for pupil leadership through the Junior Leadership Team (school council), Reading Ambassadors, Anti-bullying Ambassadors, Eco-Warriors, PE Ambassadors, House Captains and the Growing in Spirit team (Spiritual team).
- An emphasis on praise and reward
- Opportunities for reflection and spiritual development through art, literature and the RE curriculum
- Opportunities for individual and corporate prayer

The school enhances staff motivation, learning and professional development through:

- Curricular planning time within the school week
- Whole school training events, including Safeguarding
- Access to high-quality continuous professional development
- Involving all staff in decision making and proposed change
- Provision of non-contact time to allow for planning, delivery and evaluation of healthy school activities
- Consultation on training and support needs through regular review

Trailblazer project

The headteacher leads Merton's Trailblazer project which aims to train staff in mental first aid, raise awareness of mental health issues with children, staff and parents, and to offer early interventions. Early interventions are provided by Education Wellbeing Practitioners and focus on working with parents of children who display anxiety and behavioural issues. Workshops are run to support transition to secondary school. The school signposts families to many other avenues of mental health support via the Friday Bulletin.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community for the positive mental health of both staff and pupils. What support is available within our school and local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it is outlined in Appendix B.

Sources of support can be found in the staff room on the Staff well-being board and on the school website. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of pupil and staff help-seeking by ensuring all understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

Mental & Emotional Wellbeing matter to us!

Here is how we are supporting your child at Holy Trinity.

Holy Trinity
C of E Primary School

Zones of Regulation

ELSA

Mental Health Trailblazer

Whole school support

Children's Wellbeing Book Corner

Mental Health First Aider

Ninja Workshops Year 6

The Diana Anti-bullying programme

Additional support

EWP

TAMHS

In-school support

Early support for low level anxiety, self-esteem and relationship management.

Support for families at home

Deals with Mental Health support, parenting skills, anxiety, trauma, bereavement and self-esteem.

Can refer to outside agencies

Can refer for ASD and ADHD

You can contact us on

anne.moran@holytrinity.merton.sch.uk

kerryn.witting@holytrinity.merton.sch.uk

for advice.

Appendix A: What makes a good CAMHS referral?[1]

If the referral is urgent it should be initiated by phone so that CAMHS can advise of best next steps.

Before making the referral, have a clear outcome in mind, what do you want CAMHS to do? Staff/SENCo might be looking for advice, strategies, support or a diagnosis for instance.

Staff/SENCo must also be able to provide evidence to CAMHS about what intervention and support has been offered to the pupil by the school and the impact of this. CAMHS will always ask 'What have you tried?' so be prepared to supply relevant evidence, reports and records.

General considerations
- Have you met with the parent(s)/carer(s) and the referred child/children?
- Has the referral to CAMHS been discussed with a parent / carer and the referred pupil?
- Has the pupil given consent for the referral?
- Has a parent / carer given consent for the referral?
- What are the parent/carer pupil's attitudes to the referral?

Basic information
- Is there a child protection plan in place?
- Is the child looked after?
- Name and date of birth of referred child/children
- Address and telephone number
- Who has parental responsibility?
- Surnames if different to child's
- GP details
- What is the ethnicity of the pupil / family?
- Will an interpreter be needed?
- Are there other agencies involved?

Reason for referral
- What are the specific difficulties that you want CAMHS to address?
- How long has this been a problem and why is the family seeking help now?
- Is the problem situation-specific or more generalised?
- Your understanding of the problem/issues involved.

Further helpful information
- Who else is living at home and details of separated parents if appropriate?
- Name of school

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[1] Adapted from Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, *Mental Health and Well-being Policies for Schools & Colleges* (Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, 2016), available at https://webcontent.ssatuk.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/02092829/CWMT-Mental-Health-Policy-and-Guidance-for-Schools.pdf

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- Who else has been or is professionally involved and in what capacity?
- Has there been any previous contact with CAMHS?

Appendix B: Further resources[2]

Locally

Place2Be **www.place2be.org.uk**

Stem4 **www.stem4.org.uk**

Rethink Mental Illness **www.rethink.org**

Nationally

Anxiety UK work to relieve and support those living with anxiety and anxiety-based depression by providing information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services, including 1:1 therapy. They can provide support and help if a person has been diagnosed with, or suspect they may have an anxiety condition and can also help them deal with specific phobias such as fear of spiders, blushing, vomiting, being alone, public speaking, heights – in fact, any fear that stops a person from getting on with their life. www.anxietyuk.org.uk/

Catholic Mental Health Project supports the Catholic community to further develop spiritual and pastoral care for mental health www.catholicmentalhealthproject.org.uk/

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust offers free resources, including guidance and policy templates for use by schools and colleges. www.cwmt.org.uk/

Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement. Every year they train more than 8,000 professionals, helping them to better understand and meet the needs of grieving families. https://childbereavementuk.org/

Childline is a free, private and confidential service for children and young people available online, on the phone, anytime facilitated by trained counsellors. The website is easy to navigate and has many interactive resources, advice and sources of support for children and young people. www.childline.org.uk/

Education Support Partnership is the UK's only charity providing mental health and wellbeing support services to all education staff and organisations. www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/

Fixers: young people's stories Fixers are young people using their past to fix the future. They are motivated by personal experience to make positive change for themselves and those around them.
Fixers have different backgrounds, interests and life experiences, and come from every corner of the UK. They are motivated by a desire to act on an issue that is important to them or a strong desire to help other people. They also have a voice that they want to be heard, whether that's on eating disorders, drugs, offending, cyberbullying or any other issue that is concerning them. Becoming a Fixer allows that to happen. Fixers are heard, understood and respected by others. Fixers choose the issue they want to fix and, using the skills of a

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[2] Adapted from The Church of England Education Office, *Mental Health and Wellbeing, Advice for schools and SIAMS inspectors* (Church of England Education Office, 2018), available at https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-04/Mental%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Guidance.pdf

team of creative experts, they work out how to make sure their message is heard by the right people, whether that's through a unique film, a leaflet or poster campaign, a website, an event or workshop. Then they use digital, print and broadcast media to make their voice heard as far and wide as possible. www.fixers.org.uk/home/news.php

HeadMeds: about mental health medicines HeadMeds is a website for young people about mental health medication, launched in March 2014 and is owned and managed by the national charity YoungMinds. www.headmeds.org.uk/

MeeTwo a free App that lets users post anonymously and receive support and advice about their worries from other teens. All posts, which cannot be more than 300 characters, are seen by moderators who are trained and have experience in counselling or psychotherapy, so there is no risk of bullying. MeeTwo experts can also post and direct users to help from other organisations. The founders are in discussion with Childline about ways to refer young people to them. In exceptional cases the moderator would contact the emergency services. www.meetwo.co.uk/

Mental Health Access Pack is a compact, free resource which aims to: equip you with knowledge and advice, from medical, psychological and theological perspectives; help you support those in your community who are struggling with mental health issues; help you to discuss issues and share ideas surrounding mental health and the church. www.mentalhealthaccesspack.org/

Mental Health Matters contains information and resources for parishes, dioceses, chaplaincies and church community groups - and anyone else who's interested - to help improve our work with people experiencing mental illness. The Church is well placed to make a significant difference in the area of mental health. We can be a force to end stigma, and we can also be a place of inclusion, welcome and ministry. Mental Health Matters is working to make mental wellbeing a priority in our churches today. www.mentalhealthmatters-cofe.org/

Mentally Healthy Schools brings together quality-assured information, advice and resources to help primary schools understand and promote children's mental health and wellbeing. Our aim is to increase staff awareness, knowledge and confidence to help you support your pupils. www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/

Mind provides trusted advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. www.mind.org.uk/

MindEd MindEd is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults. www.minded.org.uk/

NHS Live Well Youth Mental Health offers resources and signposting for support from external links www.nhs.uk/Livewell/youth-mental-health/Pages/Youth-mental-health-help.aspx

PAPYRUS is the national charity for the prevention of young suicide. The website draws from the experience of many who have been touched personally by young suicide across the UK and speak on their behalf in PAPYRUS campaigns and in their endeavour to save young lives. PAPYRUS believe that with appropriate support and education, many young suicides can be prevented. They deliver awareness and prevention training, provide confidential support and suicide intervention through the HOPELineUK, campaign and influence national policy, and empower young people to lead suicide prevention activities in their own communities. www.papyrus-uk.org/

Reading Well for young people Reading Well promotes the benefits of reading for health and wellbeing. The programme has two strands: Books on Prescription and Mood-boosting Books. http://reading-well.org.uk/books

Rethink: living with mental illness provides expert, accredited advice and information to everyone affected by mental health problems. 'When mental illness first hits you or your family, it can be hard to know who or what to trust.' They give people clear, relevant information on everything from treatment and care to benefits and employment rights. We were the first mental health charity to gain the Information Standard for our trusted and relevant information. www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness/young-people/

Samaritans work to ensure that fewer people die by suicide by working to alleviate emotional distress and reduce the incidence of suicide feelings and suicidal behaviour. They offer 24 hours a day emotional support for people who are struggling to cope, including those who have had thoughts of suicide, as well as reaching out to high risk groups and communities to reduce the risk of suicide and working in partnership with other organisations, agencies and experts, influencing public policy and raising awareness of the challenges of reducing suicide. www.samaritans.org/

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. www.cwmt.org.uk/

The Children's Society is a national charity that works with the country's most vulnerable children and young people. We listen. We support. We act. Because no child should feel alone. They work directly with children, develop resources and publications and lobby on behalf of children annually, surveying them as part of their Good Childhood reports. www.childrenssociety.org.uk/

The Mind and Soul Foundation aims to educate – sharing the best of Christian theology and scientific advances; equip – helping people meet with God and recover from emotional distress; encourage – engaging with the local church and mental health services. Of more use to staff and parents, they have a good selection of resources and articles, including the mental health access pack which was developed for churches, offering information on common mental health conditions and pastoral tips for working with those with mental health conditions. www.mindandsoulfoundation.org/

Winston's Wish provide specialist child bereavement support services across the UK, including in-depth therapeutic help in individual, group and residential settings. www.winstonswish.org/

Young Minds is the UK's leading charity championing the wellbeing and mental health of young people. They offer resources and bespoke training for schools and support for parents and young people. In addition they have a dedicated section on caring for the wellbeing of teachers and school staff. https://youngminds.org.uk/

Appendix C: Talking to pupils when they make mental health disclosures[3]

The advice below is from pupils themselves, in their own words, together with some additional ideas to help you in initial conversations with pupils when they disclose mental health concerns. This advice should be considered alongside relevant school policies on pastoral care and child protection and discussed with Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lead (Mrs K. Witting) and relevant colleagues as appropriate.

Focus on listening

> *"She listened, and I mean REALLY listened. She didn't interrupt me or ask me to explain myself or anything, she just let me talk and talk and talk. I had been unsure about talking to anyone but I knew quite quickly that I'd chosen the right person to talk to and that it would be a turning point."*

If a pupil has come to you, it's because they trust you and feel a need to share their difficulties with someone. Let them talk. Ask occasional open questions if you need to in order to encourage them to keep exploring their feelings and opening up to you. Just letting them pour out what they're thinking will make a huge difference and marks a huge first step in recovery. Up until now they may not have admitted even to themselves that there is a problem.

Don't talk too much

> *"Sometimes it's hard to explain what's going on in my head – it doesn't make a lot of sense and I've kind of gotten used to keeping myself to myself. But just 'cos I'm struggling to find the right words doesn't mean you should help me. Just keep quiet, I'll get there in the end."*

The pupil should be talking at least three quarters of the time. If that's not the case then you need to redress the balance. You are here to listen, not to talk. Sometimes the conversation may lapse into silence. Try not to give in to the urge to fill the gap, but rather wait until the pupil does so. This can often lead to them exploring their feelings more deeply. Of course, you should interject occasionally, perhaps with questions to the pupil to explore certain topics they've touched on more deeply, or to show that you understand and are supportive. Don't feel an urge to over-analyse the situation or try to offer answers. This all comes later. For now your role is simply one of supportive listener. So make sure you're listening!

Don't pretend to understand

> *"I think that all teachers got taught on some course somewhere to say 'I understand how that must feel' the moment you open up. YOU DON'T – don't even pretend to, it's not helpful, it's insulting."*

The concept of a mental health difficulty such as an eating disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can seem completely alien if you've never experienced these difficulties first hand. You may find yourself wondering why on earth someone would do these things to themselves, but don't explore those feelings with

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[3] Adapted from Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, *Mental Health and Well-being Policies for Schools & Colleges* (Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, 2016), available at https://webcontent.ssatuk.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/02092829/CWMT-Mental-Health-Policy-and-Guidance-for-Schools.pdf

the sufferer. Instead listen hard to what they're saying and encourage them to talk and you'll slowly start to understand what steps they might be ready to take in order to start making some changes.

Don't be afraid to make eye contact

"She was so disgusted by what I told her that she couldn't bear to look at me."

It's important to try to maintain a natural level of eye contact (even if you have to think very hard about doing so and it doesn't feel natural to you at all). If you make too much eye contact, the pupil may interpret this as you staring at them. They may think that you are horrified about what they are saying or think they are a 'freak'. On the other hand, if you don't make eye contact at all then a pupil may interpret this as you being disgusted by them – to the extent that you can't bring yourself to look at them. Making an effort to maintain natural eye contact will convey a very positive message to the pupil.

Offer support

"I was worried how she'd react, but my Mum just listened then said 'How can I support you?' – no one had asked me that before and it made me realise that she cared. Between us we thought of some really practical things she could do to help me stop self-harming."

Never leave this kind of conversation without agreeing next steps. These will be informed by your conversations with appropriate colleagues and the schools' policies on such issues. Whatever happens, you should have some form of next steps to carry out after the conversation because this will help the pupil to realise that you're working with them to move things forward.

Acknowledge how hard it is to discuss these issues

"Talking about my bingeing for the first time was the hardest thing I ever did. When I was done talking, my teacher looked me in the eye and said 'That must have been really tough' – he was right, it was, but it meant so much that he realised what a big deal it was for me."

It can take a young person weeks or even months to admit they have a problem to themselves, let alone share that with anyone else. If a pupil chooses to confide in you, you should feel proud and privileged that they have such a high level of trust in you. Acknowledging both how brave they have been, and how glad you are they chose to speak to you, conveys positive messages of support to the pupil.

Don't assume that an apparently negative response is actually a negative response

"The anorexic voice in my head was telling me to push help away so I was saying no. But there was a tiny part of me that wanted to get better. I just couldn't say it out loud or else I'd have to punish myself."

Despite the fact that a pupil has confided in you, and may even have expressed a desire to get on top of their illness, that doesn't mean they'll readily accept help. The illness may ensure they resist any form of help for as long as they possibly can. Don't be offended or upset if your offers of help are met with anger, indifference or insolence, it's the illness talking, not the pupil.

Never break your promises

"Whatever you say you'll do you have to do or else the trust we've built in you will be smashed to smithereens. And never lie. Just be honest. If you're going to tell someone just be upfront about it, we can handle that, what we can't handle is having our trust broken."

Above all else, a pupil wants to know they can trust you. That means if they want you to keep their issues confidential and you can't then you must be honest. Explain that, whilst you can't keep it a secret, you can ensure that it is handled within the school's policy of confidentiality and that only those who need to know about it in order to help will know about the situation. You can also be honest about the fact you don't have all the answers or aren't exactly sure what will happen next. Consider yourself the pupil's ally rather than their saviour and think about which next steps you can take together, always ensuring you follow relevant policies and consult appropriate colleagues.