

Our Lady's Catholic College

Positive Mental Health School Policy

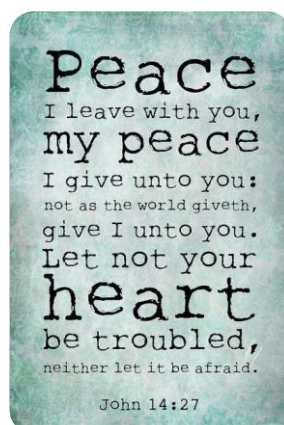


Policy Statement

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 (WHO, 2018).

At Our Lady's Catholic College we want staff and students to be resilient in every area of their school and wider life. We want all members of our community to have faith in themselves and those around them to realise that any of life's obstacles can be challenged by working together; using the faith we have in Jesus and the love he shows to us, to ensure the path we follow is the correct and just direction God has planned for us.

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 the student has an identified special educational need.

The Policy Aims to:

- Promote good 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/carers

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Joanne Loxam DSL / Mental Health Lead
- Juliet Duncan Lead in PSHE
- Ciara Porter Lead in CPD
- Marie Wilkinson PSO / Mental Health year 8/9
- Anne Marie Carruthers PSO / Mental Health year 10/11
- Louise Baldwin PSO / Mental Health year 7
- Stuart Seddon PSO/Mental Health year 12/13
- Luisa Ordonez ARK Manager / Mental Health SEN
- Jayne Nickson ARK / Ready to Learn Lead / ARK
- Rachel Cortes Chaplain / Councillor
- Deidre Trueman Councillor
- Sarah Swindlehurst School Nurse

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or well-being 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 than the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL/ Deputy DSL or the Head Teacher. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedure for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first-aid staff and contacting emergency services if necessary. Where referral to CAMHS is appropriate this will be led and managed by the Pastoral Support Officer.

Individual Care Plans

It is helpful to draw up an individual care plan for people 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 the pupil's condition
- Special requirements and precautions
- Medication and any side-effects
- What to do and who to contact in 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 development PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort with 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 to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional well-being issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. The support available within our school and the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it, can be found within the local offer page reference on our website.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as common rooms and toilets and will regularly highlight the sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student self-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 well-being issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate the concern with the Pastoral Support Officer. 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
- 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

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 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 advise, and our first thought should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than exploring 'why?'

All disclosures should be recorded in writing and held on the student's confidential file.

The 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 Pastoral Support Officer who will provide and store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about the next steps.

Procedures for Highlighting a Concern

Flow chart for the process of raising a concern at Our Lady's Catholic College, to be followed by all staff.

Ask assess act - where a young person is distressed the member of staff should ask them what support they need and want, assess the risk of harm to self or others and try to reduce any risk that this presents

Listen non judgementally - give them time to talk and gain the confidence to take the issue to someone who could help further

Give them assurance and information - tell them how brave they have been gently explaining that you would like to help them, do not promise confidentiality it could be a child protection matter

Enable the young person to get help - work through the avenues of support, explain that you would like to share their problem with someone else so that they can get the best help, encourage them to speak to someone and offer to go with them

Encourage self-help strategies

ALL CONCERNS MUST BE LOGGED ON THE PASTORAL LOGS

Do not speak about your conversation or concern with other pupils or casually to a member of staff. Access support for yourself if you need it via your line manager

High-risk if you consider the young person to be at risk then you should follow child protection procedures and report your concerns directly to the PSO

Low-risk if you feel that the young person needs a period of watchful waiting communicate this to the PSO

The Pastoral Support Officer will decide on the appropriate course of action this may include:

- Contacting Mrs Loxam / Mr Coyle as DSL
- Referral to the specialist ASD TA / Specialist ASD worker (Lucy Ellis)
- Contacting parents carers
- Arranging professional assistance e.g. School Nurse, a Doctor or Mental Health Nurse
- Referral to EHWP /PRU medical / home tuition service.
- Arranging an appointment with a counsellor (specific RAINBOWS)
- Arranging a referral to CAMHS / ACE with parental concerns
- Giving advice to teachers parents and other pupils

The member of staff should pass on the information to the Pastoral Support Officer who will instigate the appropriate time period of watchful waiting (up to 4 weeks). After a period of watchful waiting, if a young person does have continuing symptoms, they should be referred to a medical professional. This might be the schools councillors or maybe a specialist CAMHS or private referral.

The PSO / ARK intervention manager sets up an individual care plan (ICP) and attaches this as a linked document in PARS ensuring all staff, that come into contact with the child, are aware.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with regards to the use of confidentiality. If we think 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 situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and or a parent (students up to the age of 16 who are in danger of harm).

It is always advisable to share disclosures with a colleague usually the Pastoral Support Officer this helps to safeguard our own emotional well-being 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 would be most appropriate and helpful to share this information with. This must be logged in the pupil's confidential record.

Parents must always be informed and the student may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them.

If a child gives reason to believe that there may be any underlying child protection issues parents should not be informed, but Mrs Loxam / Mr Coyle 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, students or 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 and specifically with 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 information. Finish each meeting with an agreed next step 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 the 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 deal with this if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of the child
- Make our mental health school policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health
- 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 healthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep all students 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.

We will discuss:

- What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
- How friends can be best support
- Things friends should avoid doing / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- Warning signs that their friends need help
- 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 updates about recognising and responding to mental health issues. The relevant trained staff in school will ensure that the pupil ICP includes all relevant information. Staff that require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of a performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to 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 Mrs Porter, the CPD coordinator, who can also highlight sources of relevant training and support for individuals as needed.