



Blessed Robert Sutton
Catholic Voluntary Academy

Mental Health Policy

GDPR & Data Protection

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2 Timothy 1:7

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control

Date of Policy	22.02.2021
Author	Laura O'Leary
Review Date	September 2024

Blessed Robert Sutton is a Catholic school. Our mission is to work in partnership with parents and carers to provide a great Catholic education for all our young people.

Our mission statement is:

'Academic excellence, spiritual development and social awareness through Christ'



**BLESSED ROBERT SUTTON CATHOLIC
VOLUNTARY ACADEMY**

Mental Health Policy
2021-2022

BLESSED ROBERT SUTTON CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Mental Health Policy

Named Mental Health Lead: Laura Wilson (Assistant head teacher/DSL/SENCo)

Principle

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 Organisation).

We aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers), and recognise how important mental health and emotional wellbeing is to our lives in just the same way as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement.

Context

All children go through ups and downs during their school career and some face significant life events. In 2017, about 1 in 10 children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on quality of life, relationships and academic achievement. In many cases it is life-limiting.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that: "in order to help their children succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy".

Schools can be a place for children and young people to experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for overcoming adversity and building resilience. For some, school will be a place of respite from difficult home lives and offer positive role models and relationships, which are critical in promoting children's wellbeing and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that children are able to manage times of change and stress, and that they are supported to reach their potential or access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that children learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and where they can go if they need help and support.

This 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 How we promote positive mental health.
- How we identify and support children with mental health needs.
- Key information about some common mental health problems.
- Where parents, staff and children can get further advice and support.
- 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.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school where:

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Children feel able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.
- Bullying is not tolerated.

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting staff mental health and wellbeing.

Mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health problems. We want all children/young people to:

- feel confident in themselves.
- be able to express a range of emotions appropriately.
- be able to make and maintain positive relationships with others.
- cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- manage times of stress and be able to deal with change.
- learn and achieve.

Lead Members of Staff

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

- Designated Safeguarding Lead – Laura Wilson (also lead in Mental Health)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads – Jake Heath and Laura O'Leary
- Pastoral Support Team
- Year leaders
- Safeguarding case workers

We believe that all staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health.

Some children will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff understand about possible risk factors that might make some children more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships, family breakdown and bullying. They should also understand the factors that protect children from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy).

We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

Any member of staff who have a concern about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should report this on MyConcern. The DSL will then work with the year leader to ensure an individualised plan of support is put together for that pupil.

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 taught within our Personal Development curriculum, embedded within subject schemes of work where relevant and appropriate, and promoted in school assemblies.

Mental health education within school is intended to develop students' understanding of mental health and emotional wellbeing, and provide them with the tools to self-care.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we are 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.

Warning Signs

We will ensure that all members of staff are able to discuss mental health matters and have the confidence to address issues when presented, as outlined on page 4 of the school mental health action plan.

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 via MyConcern.

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 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 advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'. All disclosures should be recorded on MyConcern.

Identifying, referring and supporting children with mental health needs.

All staff have an incredibly important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils and are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

We have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

Our young people are provided with an age-appropriate mental health curriculum as part of the Character Programme and Wellness Wednesday. Our curriculum is designed to help pupils understand their feelings and to develop their knowledge of strategies to improve wellbeing, including the role of physical activities and social connections in staying mentally well. We also have a discrete mental health curriculum that runs through curriculum areas.

Mental health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. We will continue to provide training and support to staff in supporting them to identify signs of mental health problems in our pupils but also give them the tools to support their own positive wellbeing.

We are committed to providing a termly CPD session that looks at personal coaching from an external coach. By giving staff the skills and techniques to develop their own positive wellbeing and mental health, they will be able to support and encourage pupils to develop their own strategies for developing positive wellbeing.

At Blessed Robert Sutton we have a proactive approach to identification of needs. This will include continuing with our universal screening via our termly Wellbeing questionnaire. Our support team have also completed their level 1 mentoring training and will be conducting wellbeing conversation with all students through the term. The aim is to start with once per term moving to once per half term if required.

Our pupils will also be made aware regularly that staff are on hand to contact if they need to talk to someone. We will run a daily drop-in clinic for pupils to access a trained member of staff for a conversation regarding their wellbeing and emotional health.

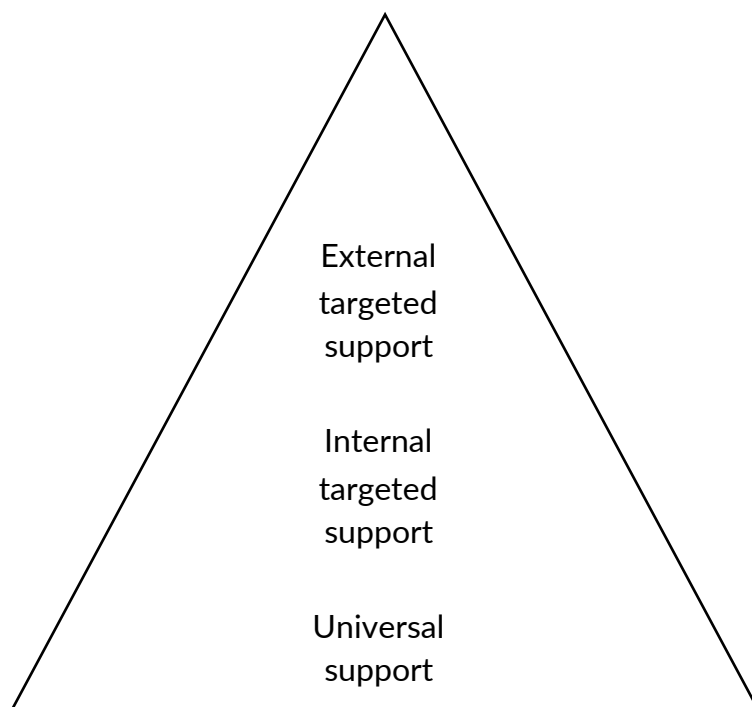
Additionally, we will continue to be vigilant to sudden changes in mood or behaviour of pupils that may indicate that a person has a problem. All staff are encouraged to track any issues on MyConcern to help build a bigger picture of a child.

We are aware that some of our pupils may struggle to approach a named member of staff to discuss their feelings or concerns. Equally pupils can often feel disloyal for reporting any concerns about a friend or peer. The Wellbeing and Support Hub will house a letter box for pupils to write down their thoughts and feelings about either themselves or a peer. The letter box will be checked daily, and concerns acted upon.

Referral meetings will take place regularly to track the progress of pupils who have targeted support sessions but also to pick up any issues flagged from our universal support. Below is a hierarchy of support that we will offer:

- Universal support applies to the termly conversations for all pupils and wellbeing questionnaires. It also applies to the drop-in services available and letter box support.
- Internal targeted support applies to any sessions pupils are referred into that take place in school. These could be either academic or pastoral sessions. See targeted sessions list.
- External targeted support applies to any referral made outside of BRS. This could be to CAMHS, MHST, YNCA etc. These sessions are ran by external providers but

where applicable pupils will received step down services internally when external sessions have been completed.



Developing effective relationships with parents and carers is important. We will continue to seek parental views through regular contact home. Parental/carers views will also be sought during the process of identifying needs and when establishing goals for children and young people.

For 2021/22 we have targeted sessions linked to academic support as well as wellbeing support. There is also a commitment to continue developing support with online training and sharing safeguarding information to help parents support their child when using social media and the internet.

Working with specialist services to get swift access to the right specialist support and treatment

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Guidance and helpful documents: -

- Addressing Trauma and Adversity
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance.
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- PHE Rise Above for Schools programme.
- Every Interaction Matters
- Education recovery
- MIND-Parenting Capacity and Mental Health
- NSPCC-Mental Health and Parenting
- SSCB-Children & Young People who Self Harm or Disclose an Intent to Die by Suicide
- Staffordshire County Council Resource Bank (sent out at least annually)

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy, and by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

11. Involving parents and carers

We recognise the important role parents and carers have in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children, and in particular supporting children who do have mental health needs.

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?
- Where should the meeting happen?
- Who should be present?
- 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 step and always keep a brief record of the meeting on the child's confidential record.

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 by 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 / saying which may inadvertently cause upset
- ☒ Warning signs that their friend 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

Monitoring and Evaluation

The mental health and wellbeing policy is on the school website and hard copies are available to parents and carers from the school office. All mental health professionals are given a copy before they begin working with the school as well as external agencies involved in our mental health work. The policy is monitored at an annual review meeting led by the Mental Health Lead and involves staff with a responsibility for mental health, including specialist services supporting the school and governors.

Links to other policies

This policy links to the following school policies

- Safeguarding,
- Medical Needs,
- Anti-Bullying,
- SEND

Links with the School's Behaviour Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need.