Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy

"Happy together in God's family,
we love, grow and learn."

Approved by:	Jessica Wilkinson	**Date:** July 2022
Last reviewed on:	September 2025	
Next review due by:	September 2027	

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors to share this commitment.

Rationale

It is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood. All staff at St Mary's Horsforth know that good mental health is important for helping children and young people to develop and thrive.

The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in fundamental changes to the lives of children and young people. The Public Health England COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing surveillance report suggests that whilst some evidence shows that children and young people have generally coped well during the pandemic (March to September 2020), other evidence suggests that some children and young people, especially those with certain characteristics, such as those who are disadvantaged economically, females, and those with pre-existing mental health needs, appear to have experienced greater negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing.

St Mary's Horsforth has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils, by developing approaches tailored to the particular needs of our pupils. Taking a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges can also help foster readiness to learn.

Our intent is to provide outstanding education, supported by high-quality pastoral care, to enable all our pupils to develop into resilient adults with good mental health. This includes making sure that pupils know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.

Early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is crucial. The school's role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing can be summarised as:

Prevention: creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping pupils to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos.

Identification: recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible through all staff using Cpoms to record any concerns and liaising with parents and carers.

Early support: helping pupils and students to access evidence informed early support and interventions through our learning mentors and Horsforth Children Services.

Access to specialist support: working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment such as CAMHs and STARs.

- Clear ethos and mission of the school grounded in virtues.
- Links to diversity in all subjects.
- Personal development curriculum.
- World Faiths

- Character Education
- RSHE
- PSHE

- Learning Mentor interventions
- Referrals to HCS
- Referrals to external agencies

- Active School Council
- Pupil Surveys
- Mini Vinnies
- Respectful, positive relationships between all staff and children
- Youth Leadership Team

- Regular sign posting to resources through the website and newsletters.
- Respectful, positive relationships between all staff and parents.
- Clear processes for parents to speak to teachers over any concerns.
- Clear communication.
- Parent surveys

- Regular training for all staff linked to wellbeing and mental health.
- Staff wellbeing prioritised within school.

- Use of Cpoms by all staff.
- Liaison with parents.
- Use of SDQs to monitor impact.

St Mary's Horsforth follows these 8 principles to support pupils and staff mental health and wellbeing.

How does St Mary's Horsforth promote positive mental health?

Prevention:

- ✓ Promote knowledge and understanding of both internal and external support services.
- ✓ Encourage and support the whole school community to be positive in its approach to mental health wellbeing.
- ✓ Provide guidance and support to all those connected with the organisation to help them develop confidence in their ability to manage mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- ✓ Provide appropriate training and information to staff on mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- ✓ Have a named Mental Health Lead (Sarah Hurley) who is the contact point at St Mary's Horsforth and a pastoral team (Cath Rose - learning mentor. Martin Waddington – SENCO) who are responsible for co-ordination and delivery of the school's mental health and emotional wellbeing strategy.
- ✓ Embed mental health and emotional support across the curriculum.
- ✓ Teaching of PSHE, RSHE and Character Education as part of our personal development curriculum.
- ✓ Twice weekly PE lessons to ensure children are mentally and physically well.

How does St Mary's Horsforth support mental health?

Addressing Needs

- ✓ Promote a culture which supports and encourages self-disclosure.
- ✓ Identify children that fall into the 'struggling' and 'unwell' mental health categories using feedback from parents, school staff and other children and seek support from the school's pastoral team using the procedures below.
- ✓ Provide a framework for responding appropriately to mental health wellbeing.
- ✓ Recognise that staff have the responsibility to alert others to potential and actual indicators of mental health needs and to take action whenever necessary. For pupils, through our CPOMS system following our Safeguarding Policy and for staff, via their Key Stage Leader or the Senior Leadership Team.
- ✓ Co-operate with other organisations involved in the delivery of mental health and emotional support services.
- ✓ Observe the principles of confidentiality and general data protection in respect of mental health and emotional wellbeing.

What do we do if we believe a child or member of staff needs support?

- ✓ Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a pupil should speak to the Mental Health Lead in the first instance.
- ✓ Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a member of staff should speak to the Key Stage Leader or Mental Health Lead in the first instance.
- ✓ If there is a fear that the student or staff member is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Designated Assistant Safeguarding Lead.
- ✓ Any other concerns that are non-urgent should be recorded via CPOMS.

Support available in school for children

*****_This is not an exhaustive list as we personalise support to the child's needs as identified and work with agencies such as STARs and SENIT to ensure the best support for all children._

- Learning Mentor
- Friendship intervention
- Nurture intervention
- Lego therapy
- Sand therapy
- Social communication intervention
- Zones of regulation intervention
- Self-esteem intervention

Support available through Horsforth Children Services for children and parents

- Drawing and talking therapy
- Counselling for children and adults
- Parent Gym programme for adults
- Supporting your child's emotional wellbeing for adults
- Silvercloud (anxiety) for adults
- PACs sessions (parent and carer sessions)
- Early Help Plans

Mental health and wellbeing resources

This list provides sources of mental health and wellbeing support for teachers, school staff and parent and carers. This will help all stakeholders to:

- signpost pupils and families to appropriate support, help and advice
- provide pupils and families with a list of resources so they can get support on a range of issues independently
- access advice on prioritising your own wellbeing and mental health

Download the list of mental health and wellbeing resources.

Also:

- these mental health resources for parents and carers have been put together so that children and young people, parents, carers, and school and college staff can get the advice and help they need

Leeds MindMate SPA

MindMate Single Point of Access (SPA) is a service run by the NHS that helps children and young people in Leeds find support with their mental health. If you are unsure how to get the support you need, you can contact the MindMate SPA (Single Point of Access), so they can help you to find the most suitable service in Leeds.

If you are a parent of someone aged 5-17, you can ask for MindMate SPA to help find support

- **via our online referral system**
- **or by calling the SPA team during office hours on 0300 555 0324.**

There are lots of specialist support services that you might be referred onto, such as school or college based support or counselling at The Market Place or Kooth. Or you might be referred onto CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) if this is the right service for you.

Wellbeing Test

This very simple test has been developed to aid staff in determining if a pupil may be in need of support in addition to concerns raised by staff, parents or other children. A pupil who scores a 7 or higher is considered to have good emotional wellbeing, while a score of 3 or lower may indicate the need for a structured conversation with our pastoral team.

Score Indicator	0	1	2
Smiling	Looks 'glum'	Occasionally smiles	Smiles readily
Talking with peers	Sits alone and talks to no one	Will talk when prompted	Talks readily with peers
Appearance	'Scruffy'	Generally well-kempt	Cares about appearance
Talking with adults	Barely engages with adults	Will talk with adult when prompted	Talks readily with adults
Attendance and effort	A persistent absentee, frequently late. Little or no effort in lessons/activities	Attendance rate of 90% - 94%, sometimes late. Little/below average effort in lessons/activities	Attendance 95% or better, rarely late Good effort in lessons/activities

We also use SDQs (Strengths and difficulties questionnaires) to baseline the children prior to intervention and after the intervention to measure impact. More information regarding SDQs can be found here.

Concern raised by parent, child or member of staff

Supporting staff to positive mental health and wellbeing

The Academy Council have a 'duty of care' towards employees, legislation and case law, require them to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of the school's employees.

We need to have a clear understanding of the causes of absence in order to formulate strategies that address non-attendance (sickness absence).

The main causes of absence can be viewed as four distinct areas:

Health and lifestyle factors	**Workplace factors**
Genuine illness/poor health Smoking Excessive use of alcohol Lack of exercise Body weight	Working patterns Health and safety concerns Travel times Excessive hours Safe place of work
Attitude and stress factors	**Domestic and relationship factors**
Job satisfaction Career satisfaction Organisational commitment Stress Absence Culture	Divorce/separation Number of children under 18 Lack of flexible working arrangements Caring responsibilities Financial worries Bereavement

The Academy Council will continue to promote and work towards performance improvement and efficiency, getting the very best from our staff, retaining and attracting the people who are best skilled and well-motivated.

Wellbeing in the workplace is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to improved wellbeing at work. Addressing workplace wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce the risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health.

To fulfil this commitment the Academy Council and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Make health and wellbeing a core priority. Value the strategic importance and benefits of a healthy workplace. We will encourage a consistent, positive approachto all staff health and wellbeing.
- Make clear the link between employees' health and wellbeing and improved performance.
- Ensure all leaders at St Mary's Horsforth, including senior leaders and Academy Council, are committed to the health and wellbeing of staff and act as good role models.
- Make communication clear to ensure that staff have realistic expectations of what'spossible, practical and affordable.
- Be aware that a return to work from sickness does not necessarily indicate that an employee's health and wellbeing has improved. Return to work interviews take place to ensure any necessary reasonable adjustments are taken into account.
- Recruit staff who have the positive leadership traits associated with improved staffhealth and wellbeing. These traits include being open and approachable and encouraging new ideas.
- Ensure health and wellbeing policies are included in any induction, training anddevelopment programmes for new staff.
- Promote Employee Assistance (individual support and counselling for staff) as valuable mental health resources to staff.
- Have a proactive and visible commitment to health and safety and its role in improving the health and wellbeing of staff, that is, view health and safety as part ofthe culture of a caring and supportive employer – not only a statutory requirement.
- Create a supportive environment that enables employees to be proactive when andif possible, to protect and enhance their own health and wellbeing.
- Seek to identify potential circumstances that may affect the wellbeing of staff andconduct risk assessments.
- Seek feedback from staff as to how we can continue to improve wellbeing and to measure the

impact of strategies that have been in place to reduce workload and improve wellbeing. Increase awareness and understanding of how to promote wellbeing at work and theavoidance of absence.
- Ensure that there is a culture where there is no expectation that staff communicateabout work outside of normal working hours (except in an emergency, e.g. child protection issues).
- Ensure that all staff take part in a supportive performance management process.
- All staff are encouraged to take a responsible approach to health and wellbeing issues,including adopting a robust self-management to their own health.
- The protection and fostering of staff wellbeing is increasingly embedded in our school development plan.

The Senior Leadership Team are implementing:

- Use of staff meeting time to prepare for pupil progress meetings, assessment, planning, liaison with other teachers in BWCAT etc.
- Regular opportunities for TAs and teachers to communicate particularly about SEND and intervention.
- Regular well-being and workload surveys take place throughout the year to identify priorities, monitor effectiveness of measures put in place and to gain feedback from the staff.
- Action planning for wellbeing and workload to ensure all staff feedback is acted upon.
- Regular opportunities for staff to come together.
- Use of National College so staff can watch training at an appropriate time for them.
- Planning of academic calendar in advance to stagger events.
- Clear half termly planner with deadlines.
- Use of enrichment activities in place of lessons rather than in addition to delivering the curriculum.
- Subject leaders having regular release time to monitor their subject each term.
- Meeting room as an area where staff can complete PPA.
- Support available for all staff through Employee Assistance – individual support and counselling for staff.
- Signpost health events and occupational health support.
- Regular teaching assistant meetings to ensure communication.
- Use of training day/time out of class to write reports.
- Identified SLT member responsible for wellbeing