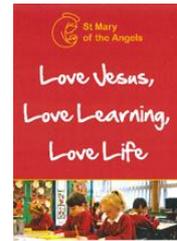


St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Mental Health and Well-being Policy 2025-2026

“Come to me all of you who are tired and weighed down; and I will give you rest” (Matthew, 11)



- Mental Health Leadership Team: Miss K Thwaite (MH), Mrs Thorpe (DSL) & Miss Hennessey (LM)
- Next scheduled review: Autumn 2026

Introduction

We all have mental health and, just like our physical health, it needs looking after. The staff at St Mary's are trained to recognise mental ill health and its warning signs. We know that we walk through life along a continuum of mental health experiences. From time to time, everyone needs support. At St Mary of the Angels, we provide this through our curriculum, our support systems and our environment, via our knowledge and skills.

All staff have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders, with the support of Mental Health England. Miss Thwaite has had advanced training, as our Mental Health Lead. Last academic year our Learning Mentor Miss Hennessey undertook the Advanced MH Training and joined the MH Leadership Team. Below we have set out our approach to support every pupil on their journey.

Physical Environment

At St Mary's, we recognise that there are many pillars that support positive mental health. We pro-actively work to maintain and grow each of these pillars through policy and practice. We also value the role that our physical environment has on our mental health, which is why we have significantly invested in developing our physical environment. This has included, but is not exclusive to: establishing our Sensory Garden, developing our outdoor learning areas such the Forest School site, maintaining our air filtration systems, introducing green plants indoors and outdoors, and developing our learning environments with natural materials where possible.

The Mental Health Continuum

If we think of mental health as a continuum, we can be anywhere from experiencing excellent mental health and no mental illness to being in a very poor mental state, perhaps with one or more diagnosed mental illnesses. Life experiences; societal factors; stresses and vulnerabilities and what we experience, places us at different places on this continuum, at different times. We aim to provide a fully nurturing environment, whilst also building resilience, to assure the best of mental health for every stakeholder in the school.

Our whole school approach; “The 10 keys to happier living”.

Appendix one shows the “Ten keys to happier living”. We use this as a guide to make sure that our approach is all encompassing and developmental, across the whole school.

***Relating** – we develop friendships & make interactions with others to keep us positive and socially enhanced

***Giving** – we hold out a helping hand which makes other people happy - and will make you feel happy too

***Direction** – we set meaningful goals, nurture ambition and celebrate our progress, enabling confidence, motivation and structure

***Resilience** – don’t give up; always talk to friends or write it down; we will develop strategies to persevere and ‘bounce back’ when challenges are around

***Exercising** – a healthy body for a healthy mind, find activities to challenge and suit you

***Emotions** – positive emotions can build a buffer against stress; make time for fun!

***Awareness** – be in the moment, pay attention to your senses; take ‘reflection time’

***Trying out** – learning & doing new things stimulates you and lifts your mood. Go for it!

***Meaning** – try to be like Jesus; experience his peace; *“love Jesus, love learning, love life”*

***Acceptance** – no one is perfect; that’s fine - and be proud of who you are. You are special!

Asking for help and listening

A lot of our time is structured so that children are collaborating, sharing and enabling others to be confident, successful and happy. Ofsted said that ‘pupils’ personal development is outstanding’, whether in curriculum time, in free play or in extra-curricular activities.

Pupils also told Ofsted that they “feel safe in the school and their parents agree” and said that “there are strong policies and procedures so that no one comes to any harm. Staff know how to spot if a pupil is having problems.” Children are told to ask anyone for help - find the person that you feel most comfortable with. Parents can access teachers and staff, at every door, every day. We listen to them and share their thoughts as a staff. Openness & confidence is crucial so pupils can ask for help.

Talking about mental health

Talking is at the heart of every classroom and every interaction. We are a Bronze Accredited My Happy Mind School. We use MHM across the whole school and we offer MHM enrichment clubs, available to all children and specifically offered to children in need. The Lumii-me app provides children with an opportunity to talk about and express their feelings and emotions and every class has ‘zones of regulation’ display posters which encourage and promote this as well.

Staff deal with any issues in class day by day, minute by minute. There is a robust reporting system involving every member of staff and also the senior management team so that whenever a pupil asks for, or requires help, it is addressed immediately, in a warm, sympathetic way.

As well as every staff member being trained in mental health first aid, Miss Hennessey is our ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant). She is able to provide support with a spectrum of mental health issues, arising from issues like bereavement, anger management, self-esteem etc. We are trained in a trauma-based approach, for children whose experiences of trauma are presenting as a barrier to their learning; and we support whole families through the TAF process if needed.

Regular visitors to school support our provision in promoting strong mental health. Childline, Young Carers and NSPCC are an example of our regular programme of experienced, wellbeing visitors. Any disclosures at these visits are dealt with sensitively, for the benefit of pupils involved.

Modelling good habits

Staff use the My Happy Mind approach in daily practice. Classrooms are stimulating; well ordered; calming; and welcoming. There are classroom expectations set, so that all classes receive a core, similar experience, tapered to age groups.

The whole school rewards system means that every child can be praised and celebrated in a fair, understood way. Politeness and manners from every stakeholder is taught; and it sets a respectful standard that everyone enjoys. Expectations are understood and this gives both security and challenge, to promote good mental health in each pupil.

Staff have an agreed Code of Conduct, set with the school governors, which enables a very professional attitude to permeate the school, which gives each child the confidence and security to know that they will be treated fairly, in every class.

Evidence can be found on our website, our Ofsted reports and our outstanding Diocesan inspection. Positive promotion of mental health is embedded in all areas of our everyday practice. Recent developmental areas such as our Forest Schools programme, our investment in a Learning Mentor role and our nurturing Sensory Room and Sensory Garden show our direction of travel.

‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ places mental health alongside physical health, as our top priority. Our holistic approach to mental health will continue to demonstrate this; and we will continue to keep it under review.

To compliment our school policy, we also have our Mental Health and Well Being Provision record which documents our wider provision in more specific detail. This is also reviewed annually by the staff team.

APPENDIX 1

Relating

The people around you offer a valuable pool of support so it's important to put time into strengthening those connections.

Give it a go:

- Meet up with someone you haven't seen in a while
- Turn off distractions to chat with friends or family about your day



Exercising

Regular activity will provide an endorphin boost and increase confidence.

Give it a go:

- Find an activity that suits you and your schedule
- Swap the car on short journeys and cycle or walk to work



Awareness

Taking time to switch off autopilot and 'be in the moment' is a great tool to combat stress.

Give it a go:

- Pay attention to your senses – what can you see, hear or feel around you?
- Choose a regular point in the day to reflect



Giving

Holding out a helping hand makes other people happy and will make you feel happier too.

Give it a go:

- Share your skills or offer support
- Ask friends, family or colleagues how they are and listen without judgement



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KEYS TO

HAPPIER LIVING

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

You'll find more about the 10 Keys to Happier Living and lots of ideas to increase psychological wellbeing at actionforhappiness.org



MHFA England

Visit mhfaengland.org to learn about Mental Health First Aid and how you can support a friend, family member, colleague or student with their mental health

Trying out

Learning new things is stimulating and can help to lift your mood.

Give it a go:

- Take on a new role at work or school
- Try out a new hobby, club or activity that interests you



Direction

Working towards positive, realistic goals can provide motivation and structure.

Give it a go:

- Choose a goal that is meaningful to you, not what someone else expects of you
- Remember to celebrate progress along the way



Meaning

People who have meaning in their lives experience less stress, anxiety and depression.

Give it a go:

- Prioritise the activities, people and beliefs that bring you the strongest sense of purpose
- Volunteer for a cause, be part of a team, notice how your actions make a difference for others



Resilience

Although we can't always choose what happens to us, we can often choose our own response to what happens.

Give it a go:

- Find an outlet such as talking to friends or writing it down
- Take action to improve your resilience skills



Emotions

Positive emotions can build up a buffer against stress and even lead to lasting changes in the brain to help maintain wellbeing.

Give it a go:

- Take time to notice what you're grateful for and focus on the good aspects of any situation
- Set aside time to have fun



Acceptance

No one is perfect. Longing to be someone different gets in the way of making the most of our own happiness.

Give it a go:

- Be kind to yourself when things go wrong
- Shift the focus away from what you don't have and can't do, to what you have and can do

