St. Columbas Catholic Primary School
Church Lane, Walney Island, Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria LA14 3AD
Head Teacher: Mrs C O'Donnell
Tel: 01229-471522 Email: admin@stcolumbas.cumbria.sch.uk
"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10 : 10)

St Columba's Catholic Primary School
&
Little Doves Nursery

Mental Health and Well-Being Policy

2025 /2028

At the time of publishing the following roles were held:	
Mental Health Leads	**Mrs Claire O'Donnell, Mrs Lesley Messenger-Jones**
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	**Mrs Michelle Sharpe & Mrs Carmen Athersmith**

Approved by[1]		
Name:	Mrs Claire O'Donnell	Mr Peter Craig
Position:	Headteacher	Chair of Governors
Signed:		
Date:		
Review date[2]**:**	2025	

1. Why Mental Health and Well-Being is Important?

At St Columba's Catholic Primary school, we aim to promote positive mental health and well-being for our whole school community; pupils, staff, parents, and carers, and recognise how important mental health and emotional well-being 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 well- being and can affect their learning and achievement. Persistent mental health problems may lead to pupils having significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice identifies Social, Emotional and Mental Health as one of the four areas of Special Educational Need.

All children go through ups and downs through their school career and some face significant life events. About 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosable mental health need and these can have an enormous impact on their quality of life, relationships, and academic achievement.

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

Government Green Paper December 2017 Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision,

"There is evidence that appropriately trained and supported staff such as teachers, school nurses, counsellors, and teaching assistants can achieve results comparable to those achieved by trained therapists in delivering a number of interventions addressing mild to moderate mental health problems (such as anxiety, conduct disorder, substance use disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder)".

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 pupils' well-being and can help engender a sense of belonging and community.

Our role in school is to ensure that they can manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that pupils 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.

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

- All pupils are valued
- Pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- Pupils 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 this current time, we are aware of increased mental health issues for children since the COVID pandemic (appendix 3)

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

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out:

- How we promote positive mental health
- How we prevent mental health problems
- How we identify and support pupils with mental health needs
- How we train and support all staff to understand mental health issues and spot early warning signs to help prevent mental health problems getting worse
- Key information about some common mental health problems where parents, staff and pupils can get advice and support

3. Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing:

"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 contribute to her or his community".

Mental health and well-being are 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

4. Links to other Policies

This policy links to our policies on Safeguarding, Inclusion, Looked After Children, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Discipline, Personal Social Health Education (PSHE), and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

Links with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy are especially important because behaviour, whether it is disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise, may be related to an unmet mental health need. We consider behaviour to be a message.

5. A Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health which is incorporated in the school 'Curriculum wheel'.

We take a whole school approach including our nursery, Little Doves in promoting positive mental health, that aims to help pupils become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise.

This encompasses 10 aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience that everyone understands
2. Helping pupils to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need to
3. Helping pupils to be resilient learners
4. Teaching pupils social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health
5. Early identification of pupils who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services and using ELSA questionnaire.
6. E.L.S.A. Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
7. Effectively working with parents and carers
8. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and resilience
9. Curriculum wheel parts 1 and 3
10. School Nurse

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues and aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of mental health issues. We aim to be a 'Talking school' with an 'Open Door Policy'.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

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 pupils 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 a 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 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.

The school's Mental Health Team (School Nurse, Headteacher, ELSA Coordinator, Parent Governor and Parent Volunteer):

- Leads on and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- Provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- Keeps staff up to date with information about what support is available
- Liaises with the PSHE Leader on teaching about mental health

The Head Teacher and School Nurse are first point of contact and communicates with mental health services

- Leads on and makes referrals to services

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental health needs and their families.

Support includes:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Team
- Support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils
- Headteacher/SENCO who helps staff understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils whose mental health problems mean they need special educational provision.
- School Dog Service
- Learning Mentor
- School nurse
- Using 'Theraplay' and Play Therapy
- C.A.M.H.S. core meetings to support staff to manage mental health needs of pupils attended by School Nurse.
- E.L.S.A.
- Planning for Music therapy

7. Supporting Pupils' Positive Mental Health

We recognise that many behaviours and emotional problems can be supported within the school environment, or with advice from external professionals. Some children will need more intensive support at times, and there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that provide support to pupils with mental

We believe we have a key role in promoting pupils' positive mental health and helping to prevent mental health problems. Our school has developed a range of strategies and approaches including.

Pupil-led Activities

- Campaigns and assemblies to raise awareness of mental health. We completed the Mental Health awareness Week 2022, and this will be yearly.
- Coffee afternoon for the whole community
- Summer fayre community of St Columba's
- Community boxes, prayer cards, bookmarks
- Community are invited to Christmas and Easter Stories in Church.
- Sing at funerals and for the elderly,
- Children serve mass and the community

Transition Support

- Support for vulnerable children, for example, Speech and Language (SALT) support small group work such as E.L.S.A. and smaller Social Communication groups
- Transition meetings with parent/carers, pupils, and relevant staff
- Yearly Transition Pupil page profile for vulnerable children
- Transition Profiles available for all staff to be aware of vulnerable children's needs
- Key Adults may support secondary school visits with vulnerable pupils

Class Activities

- Worry boxes
- Kindness/Compliment Boards and wellbeing corner
- Mindfulness and breathing/meditation in class i.e., Chill Panda
- Classroom scripts and signposting

Whole School

- Wellbeing Focus, established in 2021-22
- Theraplay
- E.L.S.A.
- Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) resources
- Anna Freud Schools in Mind resources
- Assembly themes
- Pray Room open access
- School Nurse drop in for children and parents
- E.L.S.A.
- Provide a safe environment to enable pupils to express themselves and be listened to
- Ensure the welfare and safety of pupils as paramount
- Identify appropriate support for pupils based on their needs
- Involve parents and carers when their child needs support
- Involve pupils in the care and support they have
- Monitor, review and evaluate the support with pupils and keep parents and carers updated
- Older children prayer leaders supporting younger children. In school we have 4 groups of children: Mini Vinnie's, Legion of Mary, Laudato Si and the Justice group. This ensures children's voices are listened to.

8. Early Identification (appendix 2)

- Teacher/pupil individual 5 minutes me time each half term
- Explore themes and learn about emotions, difference, loss, bullying, change, resilience, etc. - the whole school will explore the same PHSE scheme
- Displays and information around the school about positive mental health and where to go for help and support both within the school and outside the school. Yellow footsteps pathway to Pray room and School Nurse room.

Small Group Activities

- Small friendship, social skills groups
- Lunch Club support / Lego club and after school clubs
- Pray Room for those children who are finding the classroom overwhelming

Teaching about Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

Through PSHE we teach the knowledge and social and emotional skills that will help pupils to be more resilient, understand about mental health and help reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

Our approach is to:

Our identification system involves a range of processes. We aim to identify children with mental health needs as early as possible to prevent things getting worse. We do this in different ways including:

- Identify individuals that might need support
- Being an Attachment Aware School using Theraplay and Sunshine Circles
- Working with the school Office staff who are often the first point of contact with families seeking support
- Home visits in Nursery, Reception, and Year 1
- Induction / Transition home meetings for pupils / families joining the Nursery year, Reception, and Year 1
- Using assessments to track children identified as having difficulties
- Pupil surveys at the beginning of the school Year will be E.L.S.A.
- Staff report concerns about individual pupils to the Head teacher
- Worry boxes in each class for pupils to raise concerns which are checked by the class teacher, main one in Library area checked by E.L.S.A. Coordinator and School Nurse
- Weekly staff briefing for staff to raise concerns about individual children
- Gathering information from a previous school at transfer or transition
- Parental meetings
- Enabling pupils to raise concerns to class teacher and support staff
- Enabling parents and carers to raise concerns through the school class teacher or to any member of staff - we have an 'Open Door Policy'
- Drop-ins with School Nurse, termly
- Access to Solihull parenting programme

All staff have had some training on the protective and risk factors (see Appendix 1), types of mental health needs and signs that might mean a pupil is experiencing mental health problems. Any member of staff concerned about a pupil will take this seriously and talk to Head Teacher.

These signs might include:

- Non-verbal behaviour
- Isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity or mood or eating/sleeping habits
- Lowering academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Not wanting to do PE or get changed for PE
- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

Staff are aware that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as non-compliant, disruptive, or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or hyperactivity. This may be related to home problems, difficulties with learning, peer relationships or development.

If there is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the school's child protection procedures are followed. A risk assessment and plan will be made. (Appendix 2)

Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

We recognise how important it is that staff are calm, supportive, and non-judgmental to pupils who verbally disclose a concern about themselves or a friend. The emotional and physical safety of pupils is paramount, and staff listen rather than advise. Staff are clear to pupils that the concern will be shared with the Head Teacher and recorded to provide appropriate support to the pupil.

Non-Verbal Disclosures by Pupils

Staff also recognise persistent and unusual non-verbal disclosures in behaviours in line with the NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) recommendation that behaviour may be an unmet need or message.

Confidentiality

All disclosures are recorded and held on the pupil's confidential file, including date, name of pupil and member of staff to whom they disclosed, summary of the disclosure and next steps.

Assessment, Interventions and Support

All concerns are reported to the Headteacher and recorded. We then implement our assessment system based on levels of need to ensure that pupils get the support they need, either from within the school or from an external specialist service. Our aim is to put in place interventions as early as possible to prevent problems escalating.

We recognise that just like physical health, mental health and emotional well-being can vary at any given time and is fluid and changes, there are no absolutes.

Need

The level of need is based on discussions at the regular meetings with key members of staff

Evidence-based Intervention and Support - the kinds of intervention and support provided will be decided in consultation with key members of staff, parents, and pupils

For example: Monitoring

Highest need

- CAMHS-assessment, 1:1 or family support or treatment, consultation with school staff and other agencies
- School Nurse-1:1 support
- Educational Psychologist involvement
- External agency support that provides 1:1 support and group work
- If the school, professionals and/or parents conclude that a statutory education, health, and care assessment is required, we refer to the SEND policy and SEN School Information Report.

Some need

- Access to in school Prayer room
- School Nurse 1:1
- All pupils needing targeted individualised support will have an Individual Health Care Plan drawn up setting out –
    - The needs of the pupils
    - How the pupil will be supported
    - Actions to provide that support
    - Any special requirements
    - Pupils and parents/carers will be involved in the plan.
    - The plan and interventions are monitored, reviewed, and evaluated to assess the impact e.g., through a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or ELSA questionnaire if needed.
    - Meetings and regular reviews and feedback with parents/carers
    - Early Help Referral and Children's Services if appropriate.
    - 1:1 intervention, small group, skills for life/wellbeing and circle of friends, E.L.S.A.

Low need General support

- Lunch Club, class teacher/TA, 'Check-in' School Dog.
- E.L.S.A. group

9. Working with Specialist Services

To get swift access to the right Specialist Support and Treatment

In some case a pupil's mental health needs require support from a specialist service. These might include anxiety, depression, school refusal and other complex needs.

We make links with a range of specialist services and have regular contact with the services to review the support and consider next steps, as part of monitoring the pupils' provision.

School referrals to a specialist service will be made by the School Nurse/Head Teacher following the assessment process and in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents and carers. Referrals will only go ahead with the consent of the parent/carer and when it is the most appropriate support for the pupil's specific needs.

Specialist Service

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Tier 3

Additional services	Community paediatrics
Barnardo's Tier 2	SouthCCP@cumbria.police.uk

10. Involving Parents and Carers

Promoting Mental Health

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

To support parents and carers:

- We will direct parents to Mental Health workshops such as https://togetherall.com/en-gb/big-white-wall/. This includes topics such as Anxiety, Stress and Sleep, depression. In school we can offer these topics through the school nurse.
- We provide information and signposting to organisations on our websites on mental health issues and local wellbeing and parenting programmes.
- We can access the Solihull training for parenting courses
- Have an Open-Door Policy.
- Supporting parents and carers with children with mental health needs through sensitive and supportive regular meetings and signposting.

When a concern has been raised the school will:

- Contact parents and carers and meet with them
- In most case parents and carers will be involved in their children's interventions, although there may be circumstances when this may not happen, such as child protection issues.
- Offer information to take away and places to seek further information
- Be available for follow up calls

- Make a record of the meeting
- Agree an Action Plan
- Discuss how the parents and carers can support their child
- Keep parents and carers up to date and fully informed of decisions about the support and interventions. Parents and carers will always be informed if their child is at risk of danger.

We make every effort to support parents and carers to access services where appropriate. Pupils are our primary concern, and in the rare event that parents and carers are not accessing services we will seek advice from the Local Authority. We also provide information for parents and carers to access support for their own mental health needs.

11.Involving Pupils

We seek pupils' views and feedback about our approach and whole school mental health activities through Pupil Voice, surveys, class questions and suggestion boxes. We have a small group of year six pupils on our Justice group. Mini Vinnie's, Legion of Mary, Laudato Si, which all have a variety of children from different year groups. We also involve some Year 5 children to assist with lunchtime groups for children who need a more structured lunchtime. Our year 6 children lead, as prefects the Infant playground and assist them in teaching them to play and have fun. Prayer partners is also a wonderful way for the children to bond and forge relationships in the school.

12.Supporting and Training Staff

We want all staff to be confident in their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to be able to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, identify mental health needs early in pupils and know what to do and where to get help (see Appendix 2).

Supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is an essential component of a healthy school and we promote opportunities to maintain a healthy work life balance and wellbeing with relaxation activities such as yoga, staff meals. We hope to introduce a staff choir from Nov 22, staff walks/swims locally once a term. Staff are can access counselling though the school insurance. A staff mental health survey implemented Apr 2022 completed March 2222. We use this to see what is working well, what needs to change and to allow staff to share their perceptions and experiences.
By developing a clear picture of the mental health of school staff, we will be able to:

- Understand the factors that affect staff mental wellbeing in school
- Identify what we are already doing to support it
- Assess the impact your current approach is having
- Plan further improvements, enhance morale, and increase mental wellbeing awareness

We will access the staff surveys twice a school year more if needed.

13.Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy was made in collaboration with the whole school. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the Head and SLT. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if deemed necessary. This will be reported to the school Governors.

Appendix 1

Mental health and behaviour in schools
Departmental advice for school staff
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069687/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf

Appendix 2

Cumbria Threshold Guidance
https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/eLibrary/Content/Internet/537/6683/6687/6698/17145/42632155941.pdf

Appendix 3

Evidence suggests that some children and young people's mental health and wellbeing has been substantially impacted during the pandemic.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report/7-children-and-young-people