



St Michael Catholic Primary School & Nursery

Mental Health & Well Being Policy

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The aims of the policy are to:

- describe St Michael Catholic Primary School & Nursery's approach to mental health
- increase understanding and awareness of mental ill health so as to facilitate early intervention of mental health problems
- alert staff to warning signs and risk factors provide support and guidance to all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors,
- dealing with pupils who suffer from mental ill health
- provide support to pupils who suffer from mental ill health, their peers and parents/carers.

St Michael Catholic Primary School & Nursery's approach to mental health:

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as 'a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community.' This directly links with our school vision in supporting pupils to recognise their unique gifts and apply them in their everyday life, local and wider community successfully with love and tolerance. Our school rules/virtues of; Patience, Friendship, Responsibility, Justice, Respect, Compassion, Honesty, Empathy, Tolerance, Generosity, Forgiveness and Self-Respect contribute to supporting our own and the mental health and well being of others.

Emotional health and wellbeing promotes school improvement and success in a various ways:

- Pupils are happy and engaged with their learning
- Pupils and staff have high esteem and resilience
- Improved standards in every subject
- Effective teaching
- Improved behaviour
- Improved attendance for staff and pupils
- Positive respectful relationships between pupils and staff

Lead members of staff

- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Senior Mental Health Lead
- SENDCo
- Staff wellbeing party

Pupil Identification

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

- All children are valued.
- Children have a sense of belonging and feel safe to socialise in a safe environment.
- 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.
- PSHE is taught regularly and consistently and gives children opportunities to understand emotions, feelings and learn key skills in how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a child should speak to the relevant Designated Safeguarding Leads in the first instance.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues.

These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns to Designated Safeguarding Leads via CPOMS and face to face.

Possible warning signs include: (this is not an exhaustive list)

- 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
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Noticeable changes in appearance/behaviour/attitude
- Not wanting to participate in PE lessons 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

Pupils 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 pupil 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?'.

If there is a fear that the child is in danger of immediate harm then the normal safeguarding procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the safeguarding lead or deputies.

If the child presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to CAMHS is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Designated Safeguarding Leads/SENDCo.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Support

We support the mental health and wellbeing of all pupils through:

- A strong school ethos which empowers tolerance and respect, including respect for difference and diversity
- Establishing clear rules, routines and expectations about behaviour
- Encouraging positive, caring and constructive relationships
- A strong commitment to playtimes that encourage socialisation, friendship and personal expression
- Having active listeners, including assistants and adults other than school staff to whom a child may turn
- Enhancing school and classroom layout with pupils in mind, facilities and resources.
- Recognising the background of individual pupils and their physical, social and emotional needs
- Consistent support for vulnerable children and those with SEND from trained teams of pastoral, learning support, teaching assistants and other agencies where appropriate.
- A balanced curriculum with opportunities for intellectual, physical and expressive development
- Using a range of teaching strategies such as Circle Time appropriate to pupils' age, ability and level of maturity.
- Opportunities for pupil leadership through various positions of responsibility.

- Opportunities for reflection and spiritual development through art, literature and the RE curriculum.
- Having Emotional Literacy Support Assistants for general wellbeing as well as specific mental health, such as interventions dealing with anxiety or emotions
- A carefully planned PSHCE, RHE Curriculum and Mental Health/Healthy Living Week
- Ask/Tell the Teacher boxes are in every class and termly pupil surveys
- Termly Pupil Voice meetings and pupil school council meetings
- Outside agencies to speak to the pupils through workshops and assemblies

Working with All Parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their 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 go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- 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 where appropriate

Zones of Regulation

To champion mental health and well being we use the 'Zones of Regulation' tool, developed by Leah Kuypers, to support children to manage their own thoughts, feelings and actions and to help them to process their behaviour and choices. Children are supported to verbalise and communicate how they are feeling using their classroom 'check in station' relating to 4 main colour coded emotional states. The children are provided with tools for each zone to help regulate emotions alongside vocabulary prompts to support them to express their behaviour and emotions effectively. We believe it is important to use consistent vocabulary at both home and at school and share information about the Zones of Regulation at the beginning of the academic year with parents in every year group during 'Meet the Teacher', for example: Which zone did you feel today? What tool did you choose to regulate yourself?

Through applying the Zones of Regulation throughout the school we aim to encourage the children to:

- Identify their own feelings using Zones language e.g. "I'm frustrated, I am in the yellow zone"
- We provide positive reinforcement when a child is in the green zone and if they make efforts to stay in the green zone. Eg. "I can see you are working really hard to stay in the green zone by..."
- We talk about what tool to use to be in the appropriate zone e.g. "I'm going to go for a walk in the fresh air, I need to get to the green zone"
- We label what zones a child is in throughout the day e.g. "You look sleepy, are you in the blue zone?"

- We teach the children which zones tools they can use e.g. “It’s time for some quiet time, let’s read a book together to get to the blue zone.”

Parents and staff

If a pupil, parent or staff member requires mental health first aid we follow the action plan below (ALGEE):

Approach, assess and assist with any crisis

Listen non-judgmentally

Give support and information

Encourage appropriate professional help

Encourage other supports

Staff Support

We support the mental health and wellbeing of all staff through:

- Curricular planning time within the school week
- Whole school training events, including Safeguarding
- Staff surveys carried out annually to inform decisions e.g. introduction of weekly briefings, frequency of reporting to parents and so on.
- Work life balance regularly reviewed and acted upon i.e. reduction of unnecessary paperwork, streamlined written reports.
- Staff wellbeing party and mental health first aiders
- Encouragement of social events

Curricular planning time within the school week

- Access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which offers practical support, information and resources on stress management, work-life balance, relationship and family issues, financial worries, bereavement and other life changes.
- Fast access to telephone or face-to-face counselling support through the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Access to occupational health support through our provider, offering independent, impartial advice on the effects of work on an employee’s health and vice versa.
- Staff wellbeing party and mental health first aiders
- Encouragement of social events

The School has also appointed a Senior Mental Health & Wellbeing Lead who will be:

- Signposting relevant health and wellbeing services to line managers and employees;
- Reporting to the Headteacher & Governing Body on wellbeing issues and initiatives;
- Providing Mental Health First Aid to someone experiencing a mental health issue or crisis.

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental ill health as part of their regular child protection safeguarding training to enable them to keep students safe.

The Mind Ed learning portal provides free online training suitable for staff wishing to know more about a specific issue. www.minded.org.uk

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will host training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Helpful Websites

Young Minds: http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_parents

Childline: <http://www.childline.org.uk> Mind: <http://www.mind.org.uk/>

NHS: <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/Mentalhealthhome.aspx>

Mental Health Foundation: <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

Anna Freud website : <https://www.annafreud.org/>

Heads together : <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/>

Menopause

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Make sure that our school can support staff affected by the menopause and help them to feel comfortable at work, both when experiencing symptoms and when asking for support and adjustments
- Set out how our school will make reasonable adjustments to minimise the risk of the working environment making menopausal symptoms worse for those experiencing them
- Minimise menopause-related stigma in our school by educating staff on what it is and the symptoms that staff affected by it might suffer
- Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them

2. Definitions

The **menopause** is a stage of life when a woman* stops having periods. It typically affects those aged between 45 and 55, when oestrogen (female sex hormones) levels begin to fall. In the UK, the average age to reach the menopause is 51.

Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms. **Post-menopause** is the time beyond menopause.

Early menopause is when a woman's periods stop before the age of 45. It can happen naturally, or as a side effect of some treatments.

For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause shall include perimenopause and early menopause.

*We acknowledge that while the majority of people affected by the menopause will be women, those who are trans or non-binary may also experience the menopause or menopause-type symptoms. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

2.1 Symptoms

Individuals suffering from the menopause may experience symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact them at work.

Menopausal symptoms might include:

- Hot flushes, night sweats and palpitations
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia and fatigue
- Low mood, anxiety and depression
- Headaches and joint and muscle pain
- Weakened bladder function and urinary tract infections
- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive
- Problems with memory, confidence and concentration

For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse. For example, if the temperature is too high, this may cause symptoms such as hot flushes, dizziness, discomfort, sweating and heart palpitations.

Symptoms affecting sleep can make it difficult for staff experiencing them to concentrate and stay focused, while low confidence, low mood and anxiety may impact on decision-making and relationships with colleagues.

We acknowledge that the menopause will affect everybody differently – some individuals may experience no symptoms at all, and some may experience a variety. We will adapt our response to staff affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

3. Legislation and guidance

Under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), employers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) require that employers make an assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees. This requires undertaking general risk assessments, which should include specific risks to the health of staff affected by the menopause.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics, which include age, sex and disability. Employers are under a statutory duty to consider whether any 'reasonable adjustments' are required to alleviate any disadvantages staff encounter based on these characteristics.

[Section 6](#) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment, **and**
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Relating specifically to menopause symptoms:

- Many of the aforementioned symptoms would be likely to be classified as a physical and/or mental impairment
- 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'Long-term' means an impairment if it has lasted for at least 12 months, is likely to last for at least 12 months, or is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected
- 'Day to day activities' are those carried out by most people on a regular basis, and includes but is not limited to: walking, driving, carrying or moving things, being able to concentrate, writing, reading, typing, speaking

Ongoing symptoms linked to the menopause may meet the definition of a disability and where they do, employers will be required to consider whether any reasonable adjustments are required to alleviate any disadvantage.

Any such adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis and, where appropriate, staff affected by the menopause will be offered a variety of approaches to support them.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The local authority and governing board

Surrey has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but delegates responsibility for the strategic management of such matters to the school's governing board.

The governing board delegates operational matters and day-to-day tasks to the headteacher and staff members.

4.2 Role of senior staff

Senior staff will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support staff experiencing the menopause, and to make sure the workplace doesn't make their symptoms worse, by:

- Carrying out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of staff affected by the menopause

- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Providing resources and training opportunities to make sure that all line managers are aware of the menopause, its potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary
- Promoting information about and access to external support services
- Ensuring good ventilation and air quality throughout the school, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be safely opened
- Ensuring regular access to cold drinking water for all staff
- Regulating and monitoring the temperature of the school
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff
- Providing small desk fans to help staff cool down
- Fitting blinds to windows
- Designating a member of staff such as a wellbeing champion that staff affected by the menopause can speak to about their symptoms in confidence, if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager

Senior staff will work to create a culture in the school where staff can talk openly about the menopause by:

- Providing information on the menopause
- Referring to the menopause in the school's staff wellbeing policy
- Referring to the employee assistance programme (EAP)

4.3 Role of line managers

Line managers who work with staff who may be affected by the menopause will:

- Provide a non-judgemental, empathetic and confidential support system to staff
- Appreciate the personal nature of any conversations about the menopause and treat them confidentially and sensitively
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge
- Have regular, informal conversations with staff that they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed
- Consider flexible working requests in order to accommodate acute symptoms
- Allow staff affected by the menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms
- Give swift permission for absence to attend medical appointments
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Record menopause-related absences as an 'ongoing health issue' instead of as an individual short-term absence to avoid triggering sickness absence procedures
- Be sensitive to health issues such as the menopause during the performance management/appraisal process
- If necessary, seek advice from HR or occupational health colleagues, or discuss a referral with the staff member to occupational health for further support

4.4 Role of staff members affected by the menopause

We encourage staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager, or with our designated Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL).
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted member of staff, know if the menopause is having an impact on this
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services
- Access our employee assistance programme (EAP) for further support

4.5 Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Promote health and wellbeing for themselves and others at all times
- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Support other members of staff, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Accept and support any adjustments that staff affected by the menopause may be receiving as a result of their symptoms
- Report honestly about their wellbeing to their line manager or to another trusted member of staff, such as the Senior Mental Health Lead.

5. Further resources

- [Menopause](#) (NHS)
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- [Menopause: diagnosis and management](#) (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)
- The [Daisy Network](#) charity
- [Menopause in the Workplace](#)
- [Menopause resources](#) from the CIPD