

NOTRE DAME PREP STUDENT WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

NOTRE
DAME
SCHOOL



1.0 Introduction

As a school we aim to promote student wellbeing and positive mental health. Each student is a valued member of our community. Wellbeing is important in itself and also has a role to play in academic progress and physical health. Good emotional and social health at school helps young people to have positive long-term wellbeing. We aim to provide learning and support which promotes positive social and emotional wellbeing, gives students skills to enhance this for themselves and provide interventions where more help is needed.

The four aspects of wellbeing and mental health which are relevant to us as a school are:

1. **Prevention:** at Notre Dame this includes a whole school approach, PSHE, assemblies, the student planner, engaging positively, parent updates and newsletter about wellbeing.
2. **Identification:** at Notre Dame this involves all staff and includes our pastoral care teams of class teachers, Pastoral Director, wellbeing team, medical room staff and Chaplain. We use a detailed pastoral tracking system.
3. **Early help:** at Notre Dame this includes the Pastoral Director, Class Teacher, Wellbeing Team, medical room and Chaplaincy.
4. **Access to specialist help:** at Notre Dame this includes the school counsellor and referrals to CYPMHS and other outside agencies as appropriate.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Education Act 2011, and the Equality Act 2010.

In producing this policy regard has been paid to:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) (KCSIE)*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018, December 2020 and December 2023) (WT)*
- *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' (November 2018)*
- *Counselling in Schools: a blueprint for the future (February 2016)*
- *Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)*
- *Education and Training (Welfare of Children) (Act 2021)*
- *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019, updated September 2021)*

Mental health difficulties may indicate a safeguarding issue and so any concerns from staff must be reported immediately in line with our Safeguarding policy.

2.0 Mental Health and SEN

Consideration of SEN (Special Educational Needs) will be given to any situation where a pupil is considered to have a mental health need. The school is aware that some forms of SEN may make pupils more vulnerable to mental health issues. Some forms of SEN may require special mental health or emotional and behavioural support, and the school will consider whether we are reasonably able to provide this support. Some mental health distress may be as a result of unidentified SEN. We follow the SEND code of practice fully.

3.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Brief and accurate written notes will be kept of all incidents and concerns relating to individual pupils. These notes are recorded on the 'CPOMS' platform. This is a secure two-factor authentication platform. This includes written records of concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions and any linked documentation as necessary. This information may be shared with other agencies as appropriate.

4.0 Prevention

4.1 Whole school approach

The protective factors which encourage good mental health need to be integral to the whole school experience of every pupil.

In planning and teaching lessons and in extracurricular activities, staff should provide opportunities for students to:

- Develop communication skills
- Our extracurricular clubs encourage good communication (all students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities each week, and we have a dedicated 'Activity Break' to facilitate this)
Students delivering parts of assemblies encourages good communication
Student leaderships encourage good communication
- Be an effective planner (for example using the student planner and Firefly)
- Have a sense of control (for example in the student logs of targets and using peer marking as well as pupil passports which allow them to share their voice)
- Develop humour
- Develop positivity (for example through our assemblies, and in how staff model positive thinking and provide positive and constructive feedback)
- Experience success (through our positive praise, reward system with stickers, House points, Green Book Certificates, marking system, emails home, Ceremony of Achievement for Year 6, the Friday mailing)
- Explore faith and spirituality (through our assemblies, Pupil led Collective Worship, RE lessons, daily prayers, chaplaincy reps, and the work of our Chaplain)
- Encourage reflection (access to the Chapel and the Prayer Garden for pupils, assemblies and guided reflections)

As a school we encourage good mental health by:

- Effective Safeguarding policy and reporting process using CPOMS
- Clear policies on behaviour and anti-bullying
- A clear staff code of conduct
- Staff training
- Parental pastoral information newsletters
- An open door policy for students to raise worries to any member of staff
- Good pupil-teacher relationships

- Using Girls on Board, PSHE and form time to encourage good friendships
- Open door policy for staff to raise concerns about policies or processes
- Whistleblowing process for staff

Student wellbeing is a whole school issue and so is integral to every lesson, extracurricular event and interaction that occurs in school or on school trips. New staff understand this as part of their induction to the school. This approach includes positive behaviour management, formative and constructive marking, welcoming students into lessons and using their names, always being encouraging and supportive. Students are expected to also encourage and support each other. Our anti-bullying procedures are clear and applied firmly.

School council has a clear voice, and we also carry out regular surveys so that pupils' feedback and opinions are fully listened to and acted on where possible and appropriate. Year 6 take on additional prefect roles and we have a dedicated Wellbeing prefect team who meet regularly with the Pastoral Director.

4.2 Pastoral care teams

Our pastoral care teams are:

- Pastoral Director, with Head of EYFS and Infants
- Head of Year 5/6
- Chaplain
- Head of Wellbeing and Emotional Support and Mentors
- Class Teachers
- Medical Room staff
- School Counsellor

Each student has a Class Teacher. It is part of this role to provide mental health support to pupils and to encourage positive wellbeing. Staff deliver the PSHE programme under the guidance of the Head of PSHE and the Pastoral Director, with some RSE lessons taught by the Pastoral Director. Class Teachers spend time getting to know their students and building positive relationships. They are often the first port of call for parents and students who have worries or need help and they should respond with care, kindness and attention to detail. All worries should be acted on and followed up and recorded. They have training to help them spot signs of poor mental health, which they would report to the Pastoral Director. This includes signs of anxiety, depression, possible eating disorders and suicidal thoughts.

The Head of Year 5 and 6 supervises the Year 5 and 6 class teachers and works in collaboration with the Pastoral Director to monitor the quality of the support given to their students. They provide additional support for students academically and pastorally both pro-actively and responsively. They coordinate the careful programme of induction for new students and their parents.

The Pastoral Director oversees the work of the pastoral teams as well as offering advice and supporting teachers with any mental health or wellbeing concerns their pupils are struggling with. She also takes on the role of strategically planning the whole school pastoral approach, reviewing and evaluating our policies and processes regularly.

The Chaplain is available to students as a listener, and may be asked to come alongside a pupil who is struggling as part of a care package for that pupil.

The Head of Wellbeing and Emotional Support is responsible for coordinating pupils receiving wellbeing support, seeing some pupils themselves and arranging for wellbeing mentors (who will be members of staff) to see other pupils – some pupils will have been referred or the nurse. She also researches and implements tools for pupils so that they can develop their own MH and wellbeing strategies and avoid learned helplessness and shares these tools with the wellbeing team to enable them to use them with pupils. They also oversee provision (from themselves or by other team members) of D&T sessions and other group sessions such as lego friendship club.

The medical team offers mental health support and advice to those who present at the medical room. The Counsellor sees pupils who are referred for more specialist help.

4.3 PSHE

We aim to educate all students on the importance of wellbeing, and what they can do to improve their wellbeing through specific PSHE lessons, as well as in assemblies (both for the whole school and in phase groups). There is a clear PSHE programme and incorporates RSE, PSHE and Mental Health and wellbeing. As part of these students learn about wellbeing and how they can improve their wellbeing.

PSHE lessons in the prep school take place in dedicated lessons each week and every topic covered relates to improving student wellbeing. There are three broad strands to the programme offered. These are:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- The Wider World

Students complete a unit of work per half term and each topic is built upon year on year on a level that is both age and stage appropriate. Necessary focus is also given to the Lestonnac Approach (Love, Learn, Flourish) that underpins our ethos. Full details on what is covered when can be found on our PSHE curriculum planning document.

We aim to encourage resilience through PSHE with lessons on the importance of developing a growth mind-set, facilitating the building of a 'wellbeing toolkit' that can be applied to everyday real life situations and enabling our students to become healthy inside and out by becoming effective self-soothers. Empowering our young women with the tools needed for effective self-care will enable them to become healthy lifelong learners and achievers.

4.4 Charity and volunteering

Working for others can be beneficial for wellbeing. Students are asked to engage in age appropriate charity events each year (e.g. cake sales, non uniform days etc), and visits are arranged for the students to go out into the local community, for example to sing or perform at a local care home.

4.5 Assemblies

At the start of each year there is a series of assemblies on wellbeing for the whole school. The topic is addressed at intervals throughout the year as well. In year group assemblies relevant topics are covered each year.

4.6 The Student Planner

The planner contains pages which encourage the students to help self-soothe and calm themselves before deciding what help they need, as well as a page on perseverance. This approach encourages resilience and enables the children to consider how they can help themselves and to avoid learned helplessness.

4.7 Wellbeing Clubs

This is a space where students can spend time working on their wellbeing. Wellbeing staff are present to offer support. Activities are provided such as mindfulness colouring and picture books and it gives the children a chance to speak to an adult about anything that is on their mind.

4.8 Engaging positively

Engaging positively with other students is beneficial to wellbeing.

Each term the clubs are published on Firefly so students and parents know what they can engage in. Class Teachers encourage students to participate. Clubs will be provided in a range of areas so that all students have something that they are interested in.

The Girls on Board programme is explained to students in years 3-6 each year. This is led by the Pastoral Director and class teachers have also received training on this. This programme aims to encourage better friendships and quicker resolutions when there are problems.

4.9 Communication about wellbeing

Posters are updated as necessary and put up in classrooms to inform students of who they can see regarding their wellbeing. Posters also inform students of the location of the wellbeing clubs and when they are happening. Parents will be able to see this information in the parents' handbook.

A weekly 'Thought of the week' is shared and put up as a poster around the school.

A wellbeing noticeboard shows students tips and ideas about improving their wellbeing.

There are links on Firefly for students to access remote support for wellbeing. We also subscribe to 'Tooled Up' which is also available to parents and staff.

5.0 Identification

Most cases of mental health need will be identified by staff. Sometimes pupils will mask difficulties in school and parents may inform the school of problems which are evident at home.

Signs of distress which staff should report as possible signs of mental health problems are:

- Fearfulness
- Low self-esteem
- A pupil appearing withdrawn
- Aggressive or oppositional behaviour
- Habitual rocking
- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Excessive clinginess
- Coercive controlling behaviour
- Lack of ability to understand or recognise emotions
- Changes in attainment or attendance (this would be shown up by data)

Staff should report any concerns via the CPOMS platform.

Particular attention should be paid at times when there is a loss or separation at home, where a pupil has a new sibling or moves home, or if there is a traumatic experience.

Children in need, looked-after or previously looked-after children are monitored carefully to evaluate their mental health. Social workers are kept informed as necessary.

6.0 Early Help

At Notre Dame this is provided by the pastoral care team. When identification is made the school (usually the Pastoral Director) will assess the pupil's needs and where a need is confirmed, make a plan to support that student. The plan should be reviewed regularly to see if it is working effectively. Parents are usually invited to participate in early help situations. Early help usually takes one of these forms:

- Informing all staff about an issue so that all can keep an eye on the student and interact with the student in the best way.
- Specific advice and suggestions for the student to act on regarding an issue, followed up by the Class Teacher or Phase Leader.
- A recommendation to attend wellbeing clubs on a regular basis.
- One-to-one regular meetings with a Class Teacher, Wellbeing mentor, Pastoral Director or the Chaplain, as appropriate and for a set period of time.
- Group sessions with other students

7.0 Specialist interventions

Sometimes more specialist help is needed where a student is experiencing difficulties in wellbeing or mental health.

One of the medical room staff are trained specifically in Mental Health First Aid as are various members of staff in the Prep School.

The medical room is open to all students from 9.45am to 4.00pm. Students should attend at break or lunch, except in an emergency when their class teacher will provide a note.

For some students, a group session on a topic may be beneficial. These are set up by the Pastoral Director, Head of Year 5 and 6 or the head of Wellbeing as the need arises. Suitable topics would include dealing with anxiety, or exam stress.

For students with more complex needs the Pastoral Director can refer them to the School Counsellor.

The School Counsellor has a separate room which is not be over-looked by other students, although other staff will be nearby. He/she will assess students and then see them for a number of sessions (usually around eight) with a view to providing help to improve their mental health. If at the end of the series of sessions more help is needed the counsellor will discuss that with the Pastoral Director.

The school will refer to CYPMHS as appropriate. Parents will be informed where appropriate before a referral is made, but referrals may sometimes be made without parents' approval if there is a clear need to do so.

Sometimes family therapy will be recommended to parents.

8.0 Evaluation

An annual wellbeing survey is carried out, asking parents and students for their feedback. This is then used to refine the policy and our school practice. The policy is reviewed regularly by the pastoral team. At various points throughout the year, students are also asked their views on their wellbeing in an age appropriate way.

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