



St James CE Academy

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

"Here at St James we believe that 'everyone is loved, this will allow all to flourish and unlock their potential promoting joy in lifelong learning. We will use our faith, Gods words and the light he gives to support this."

Unlocking potential and flourishing

"I can do all things through Christ; who strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13

Joy in Lifelong learning

"Put these abilities to work; throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone may notice your improvement and progress."
1Timothy 4:15

Everyone is Loved
"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you"
John 15:12

Policy adopted: March 2026
Date of Review March 2027

Mental Health and Well-being Policy

This policy was written in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and professionals involved in mental health and wellbeing.

Policy Statement

At St James C of E Academy, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- Help children to understand their emotions and feelings better
- Help children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- Help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- Promote self-esteem and ensure children know that they count
- Encourage children to be confident and be the BEST they can be
- Help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks
- Use jigsaw the mindful approach to PSHE

We promote a mentally healthy environment through:

- Promoting our school values BEST
- Promoting pupil voice and opportunities to participate in decision-making e.g. School Council, ambassadors
- Celebrating academic and non-academic achievements in the classroom and during BEST assemblies
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Providing opportunities to reflect
- Access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- Weekly 'calm me' and reflection time in jigsaw (PSHE)
- Promoting mental health awareness

We pursue our aims through:

- 'Do it the St James Way' and that Everyone is LOVED approach to school life
- Support for pupils going through recent difficulties including bereavement, separation of parents and newly arrived to the country
- Specialised, targeted approaches aimed at pupils with more complex or long-term difficulties

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our SEND policy in cases where pupils mental health needs overlap with these. This policy should also be read in conjunction with policies for Behaviour and Anti-bullying, and PSHE and SRE policies. It should also sit alongside child protection and safeguarding procedures.

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Jane Cook- Designated child protection / safeguarding officer /Looked After Champion/ Mental Health First Aider
- Scott Clark- Deputy Designated child protection / safeguarding officer/ PP Champion and Learning Mentor
- Faye Maher – SENCO
- Ellie Moss - PSHE/SRE Lead
- Nick Slack – Computing Lead

Teaching about Mental Health

- The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our Jigsaw PSHE curriculum.
- The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort however the jigsaw curriculum and protective behaviours are used to deliver the PSHE curriculum to ensure that we teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner.
- Teaching and utilising Zones of Regulation
- Promoting mental health awareness through participation in children's mental health week, mental health awareness week and world mental health week.
- Teaching calming and mindfulness strategies to support positive mental health e.g. tense and release, tapping, exercise.
- Teaching wellbeing: connect, be active, keep learning, give to others and be mindful through our Christian Values
- Mental Health enrichment days
- Teaching the benefit and encouraging the use of positive affirmations

Mental Health Ambassadors

Each year, every class will elect a child to be a mental health ambassador. All children will be given the opportunity to run to be an ambassador. After making a speech to the class, each class member

will vote. Ambassadors will receive training from one goal: mental health champions training and from the senior mental health leads.

What does the role involve?

- Training delivered by the Senco
- Recognise that we are all different and have different mental health at times
- Support the development of Mental Health discussions across the school
- Deliver activities to classes
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Chatter Boxes and/or Worry Monsters

Every class in school will have a feelings box and or Worry Monster. Feeling boxes and /or Worry Monsters are a way for children to share any feelings they have with their class teacher. Boxes will be checked daily by teachers and feelings will be discussed with children. These will be kept in the Reflection spaces.

Reflection Space

Every class in school will have a Reflection Space Children will be consulted with on a yearly basis and items will be added to the corner based on this.

The calm corners will include:

- mindfulness and positive affirmation cards – each half term 2 mindfulness and 2 positive affirmation cards will be added after they have been introduced to children following in class assemblies
- picture books – books will be rotated on a half termly basis
- feeling box
- emotions poster
- calm jars
- worry monster
- stress/fidget balls
- fidget balls
- play dough

Jigsaw PSHE

There are myriad ways in which Jigsaw helps children learn about mental health; and these lessons more than cover the requirements set out in the latest government guidance on teaching about mental health.

Jigsaw is designed to provide structured opportunities in every lesson to practise and enhance the

five skills associated with the emotional literacy (self-awareness, social skills, empathy, motivation and managing feelings).

Confidence in oneself and awareness of self – the backbones of good mental health – are sometimes tricky concepts for children (and adults!) to adopt. However, a tried-and-tested method is used in Jigsaw and is proving to be invaluable when helping children to become more successful in all aspects of their lives, not just as learners.

The Jigsaw Approach is underpinned by mindfulness which aims to empower children to learn now and improve their life-chances later, and to help them develop personal awareness. Mindfulness practice enables them to observe their own thoughts and feelings, regulate them and make conscious decisions about their learning, behaviour and lives. It helps them to remain focused on the present moment and thrive in it.

The practice of mindfulness, where children learn to be in the present moment without judgement, is taught in some lessons in 3 different ways:

The first is through the Calm Me time - through visualisation and through breathing techniques.

The second is through the 'Pause Points' in lessons where children are invited to stop and look inside to practice observing their thoughts and feelings relating to their learning in the lesson.

The third is through the other parts of the taught curriculum where children explore their thoughts and feelings, expand their emotional vocabulary, learn about and reflect on the thoughts/feelings/consequences sequences, build their confidence and express themselves in a safe environment.

The Healthy Me Puzzle is where most of the 'traditional' health promotion lessons are. From the food on our plates and the importance of physical activity for a healthy body (and mind) in the earlier year groups, to the more sophisticated health messages about choice, lifestyle and mental and emotional health promotion in the older year groups, children gain a fully experiential approach to holistic health in Jigsaw – and how it is their responsibility to care for and also where they can go for help when they need support.

Alongside Jigsaw, the Zones of Regulation curriculum is taught weekly. It is a comprehensive, research-based framework that builds emotional and behavioural regulation skills through a lens of inclusion, accessibility, and science.

Grounded in cognitive behavioural theory and designed with real-world application in mind, The Zones gives learners of all ages — and their support networks — a common language and set of tools for understanding and managing emotions.

Mental Health & The Computing Curriculum

Within our 'Raspberry Pi' computing scheme of work, there are times when we consider the importance of mental health and how to look after ourselves online in relation to this. We also regularly share messages with children at worship time about good mental health in relation to social media, gaming, chat groups and other online forums. We guide children in the choices they make and behaviours they display online to protect other people's (and their own) mental health. We draw attention to charities and organisations that offer support for children's mental health

specifically online during our computing and PSHE lessons but also during events like 'wellbeing day' and 'online safety day'.

Targeted support

The school will offer support through targeted approaches for individual pupils or groups of pupils which may include:

- Nurture group
- Collective time
- Small group or 1:1 Zones of Regulation
- Managing feelings resources e.g. 'worry boxes'
- Therapeutic activities including play and Lego therapy
- Wishes and Feelings
- External Support from Guys Gifts with their bereavement programme
- Referral to central services including CAHMs
- Pupil consultations

The school will make use of resources to assess and track wellbeing as appropriate including:

- The Boxall Profile

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of what support is available within our school and how to access further support. At the end of every half term, parents will be signposted in the school newsletter to this.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

Staff constantly observe children through their everyday role and report any concerns to appropriate staff, i.e. SLT and Learning Mentors. The team then use CPOMS to record these concerns, discuss as appropriate and decide on actions that are best suited to support the child. Concerns that are identified are wide ranging but include:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Relationship issues
- Physical indicators
- Negative behaviour patterns
- Family circumstances
- Recent bereavement
- Health indicators
- General worries

Every category is colour coded to aid identification.

School staff also alert appropriate staff if they become aware of more concerning warning signs which may indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs are taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs communicate their concerns to the designated child protection and safeguarding officer or the emotional wellbeing lead as appropriate, using a yellow form as per the safeguarding policy.

Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Unusual comments through learning / curriculum time

Working with Parents

In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing on our school website
- Share and signpost parents to access sources of further support including weekly 'Tips for Wellbeing' from the Mental Health Support Team
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this, if they have concerns about their child
- Make our emotional wellbeing and mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children
- 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

Working with other agencies and partners

As part of our targeted provision the school will work with other agencies to support children's emotional health and wellbeing including:

- The school nurse team
- Family Hub support worker
- Educational psychology services
- CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health service)
- Counselling services
- RISE team (enhanced project for schools)
- Mental Health Support Team (MHST)

Training

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

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of their additional CPD throughout the year where children's developing needs become more apparent due to developing situations.

Physical health and mental well-being education in Primary schools – DfE Guidance

The focus in primary school should be on teaching the characteristics of good physical health and mental wellbeing. Teachers should be clear that mental well-being is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health.

By the end of primary school:

	Pupils should know	How Jigsaw provides the solution
Mental wellbeing	• that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health. • that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations. • how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings. • how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate. • the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental well-being and happiness. • simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests. • isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support.	All of these aspects are covered in lessons within the Puzzles • Healthy Me • Relationships • Changing Me • Celebrating Difference

	• that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental well-being. • where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental well-being or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online). • it is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough.	
Internet safety and harms	• that for most people the internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits. • about the benefits of rationing time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing. • how to consider the effect of their online actions on others and knowhow to recognise and display respectful behaviour online and the importance of keeping personal information private. • why social media, some computer games and online gaming, for example, are age restricted. • that the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health. • how to be a discerning consumer of information online including understanding that information, including that from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted. • where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online.	All of these aspects are covered in lessons within the Puzzles • Relationships • Healthy Me
Physical health and fitness	• the characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle. • the importance of building regular exercise into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this; for example, walking or cycling to school, a daily	All of these aspects are covered in lessons within the Puzzles • Healthy Me

	active mile or other forms of regular, vigorous exercise. - the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle (including obesity). - how and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health.	
Healthy eating	- what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content). - the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals. - the characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health).	All of these aspects are covered in lessons within the Puzzles Healthy Me
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco	- how to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body. - about safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer. - the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn. - about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including regular check-ups at the dentist. - about personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing. - the facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination	All of these aspects are covered in lessons within the Puzzles Healthy Me
Basic first aid	- how to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary. - concepts of basic first-aid, for example dealing with common injuries, including head injuries.	All of these aspects are covered in lessons within the Puzzles Healthy Me
Changing adolescent body	- key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including physical and emotional changes. - about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle.	All of these aspects are covered in lessons within the Puzzles - Changing Me - Healthy Me

