

# **ST. JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

## **Policy for Promoting Positive Mental Health in Schools**

Policy for promoting positive mental health in schools.

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Adopted by St. John Fisher Catholic High School

'In our mental health strategy, No Health Without Mental Health, we set ourselves – and society as a whole – some big challenges. We stated that mental health must have equal priority with physical health, that discrimination associated with mental health problems must end and that everyone who needs mental health care should get the right support, at the right time. We made it clear that tackling premature mortality of people with mental health problems is a priority. And we recognised that more must be done to prevent mental ill health and promote mental wellbeing.' "Closing the Gap: Priorities for essential change in mental health" (January, 2014)

The emotional wellbeing and mental health of young people and in particular how to build resilience in young people is at the forefront of current practice for schools and the health service. St. John Fisher Catholic High School is committed to raising the profile of mental health in both staff and students and ensuring that we continue to do the very best for our community as a whole.

Mental health is how we feel, how we think and how we behave. Mental Health Promotion for children and young people is everybody's business.

It is about:

- being able to form and maintain relationships with others
- being adaptable to change and other people's expectations
- being able to have fun
- being open to learning
- being able to develop a sense of right and wrong
- being able to develop the resilience to manage ordinary setbacks.

St. John Fisher Catholic High School recognises that all children and young people need the foundation of positive mental health to benefit fully from all of the opportunities available to them.

All children and young people need to:

- be able to **Connect** with others by participating in groups and teams
- know they are **Capable** and able to achieve
- know they **Count** in their world and can contribute to their community
- know they have **Courage** and can manage risks appropriately.

Everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable. At times, anyone may need additional support to maintain or develop good mental health.

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 1 – 15 years have a clinically recognisable mental disorder in any one year.
- 1 in 4 adults will experience mental health difficulties; at least half of these difficulties can be traced back to childhood.

The mental health of children and young people, adults in school, parents and carers and the wider whole school community will impact on all areas of development, learning, achievement and experiences.

All children and young people have the right to be educated in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody. All adults have the right to work in an environment that supports and promotes positive mental health for everybody.

We recognise these needs and rights. We are committed to raising awareness, increasing understanding and ensuring that all schools can and do make a difference by providing a place where all children and young people feel safe, secure and able to achieve and experience success and well-being.

All schools should offer a learning environment that promotes and enhances positive mental health. A consistent approach means that the school environment and school ethos all promote the mental health of the whole school community.

Healthy relationships underpin positive mental health and have a significant impact.

A mentally healthy environment has:

- a clear and agreed ethos and culture that accords value and respect to all
- a commitment to being responsive to children and young people's needs
- clearly defined mental health links in school policies
- clear guidelines for internal and external referrals
- strong links with external agencies to provide access to support and information
- a named lead (Michelle Feeney) for mental health promotion with the expectation that there is support and involvement and an ethos that 'mental health is everyone's business'.

A mentally healthy environment is a place where children and young people:

- have opportunities to participate in activities that encourage belonging
- have opportunities to participate in decision-making
- have opportunities to celebrate academic and non-academic achievements
- have their unique talents and abilities identified and developed
- have opportunities to develop a sense of worth through taking responsibility for themselves and others
- have opportunities to reflect
- have access to appropriate support that meets their needs
- have a right to be in an environment that is safe, clean, attractive and well cared for

- are surrounded by adults who model positive and appropriate behaviours, interactions and ways of relating at all times.

A mentally healthy environment is a place where staff:

- have their individual needs recognised and responded to in a holistic way
- have a range of strategies that support their mental health, e.g. a named person to speak to, signposting
- have recognition of their work-life balance
- have the mental health and well-being of the whole staff reviewed regularly
- feel valued and have opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes
- celebrate and recognise success
- are able to carry out roles and responsibilities effectively
- are provided with opportunities for CPD both personally and professionally
- have their unique talents and skills recognised and opportunities are provided for development
- have time to reflect
- can access proactive strategies and systems to support them at times of emotional needs in both the short term and the long term.

A mentally healthy environment is a place where parents/carers:

- are recognised for their significant contribution to children and young people's mental health
- are welcomed, included and work in partnership with schools and agencies
- are provided with opportunities where they can ask for help when needed
- are signposted to appropriate agencies for support
- are clear about their roles and expectations of their responsibilities in working in partnership with schools
- opinions are sought and valued and responded to
- strengths and difficulties are recognised, acknowledged and challenged appropriately.

A mentally healthy environment is a place where the whole school community:

- is involved in promoting positive mental health
- is valued for the role it plays in promoting positive mental health
- contributes towards the ethos of the school.

A healthy learning environment provides opportunities that promote positive mental health, through the standard curriculum and extended provision, ie nurture groups, differentiated learning activities, individual timetables, parents/carers groups, challenging stereotypes, etc.

The implementation of the policy for promoting positive mental health in schools:

- will give schools a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to mental health
- should underpin all policies and practices currently used in schools
- will raise awareness as to how the whole school community can look after their own mental health and that of others
- will help to de-stigmatise mental health
- will support people and provide opportunities that enable everyone to reach their potential
- will strengthen relationships and provide opportunities for different ways of working
- will provide foundations for life-long learning
- will promote and strengthen resilience throughout the whole school community and empower everyone to face life's challenges.

This policy promotes positive mental health. It is a working document and should be adapted to suit the needs of your own school in consultation with the whole school community.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Measuring impact:

This policy offers opportunities to measure the impact in a variety of ways:

- school policies,
- the school's ethos,
- Child/Staff/Volunteer well-being,
- Staff/Governor/class and school council meetings
- feedback from the whole school community via questionnaires and verbally, formally and informally,
- the number of external referrals, Gateway. Health Service, Social Care,
- improved relationships, children and young people "feeling well in the head" (Y6 Wigan child),
- Wigan Family Welfare counselling service,
- training and development internally,
- induction and professional development of staff and volunteers.

The promotion of positive mental health for children and young people is everybody's business.

## References:

- Wigan Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 11
- The Mental Health Promotion Strategy for Children and Young People, Wigan 2009
- Children's Health: A Guide Fundamental Health Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) 2007
- Bright Futures: Promoting children and young people's mental health, Mental Health Foundation
- Article 28, 29, 30 and 31 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 4 crucial Cs, North Bristol NHS
- Work/Life Balance National Agreement 2003 - 2005

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