



**St Catherine's
School & College**

*Specialists in Speech, Language and
Communication Needs*

**Student Mental Health and Wellbeing
Procedure
September 2024**

Document Information

Title: **Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Procedure**

Status: **Final**

Revisions:

Review Frequency: Recommended annually

Next Review: September 2025

Please note where the procedure refers to school this also encompasses St Catherine's College.

Statement of intent

At St Catherine's we recognise that good mental health is a state of wellbeing whereby students can meet their learning potential, cope with everyday stresses and connect with their peers and school community. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are statistically more likely to have wellbeing needs.

This document outlines our whole school approach to promoting the wellbeing of all students who attend St Catherine's. In addition to this, it outlines our support mechanisms when responding to times of ill health.

We are committed to being an open, inclusive and non-judgemental setting that prioritises the wellbeing of our students. We always demonstrate respect for those facing emotional difficulties or poor mental health. We foster trust and a sense of belonging.

All staff are committed to embedding a culture of support for mental health and the education, promotion and awareness of such is weaved into all areas of our integrated curriculum and care provisions.

We encourage and support our students to talk about any issues that are worrying them and our staff are both mindful and knowledgeable of children's emotional and mental wellbeing.

We have a strong pastoral culture at St Catherine's which is embedded through our integrated therapeutic approach as well as our strong and proactive links with our own residential provision and outside agencies.

We want all students that attend St Catherine's, to:

- Feel good - by experiencing positive emotions like happiness, contentment and enjoyment. This also includes feelings like curiosity, engagement and safety. We endeavour to support them to identify, navigate through and understand these emotions and to promote self-esteem.
- Function well – this includes understanding and building positive relationships and social connections, as well as feeling in control of your life and having a sense of purpose.

At St Catherine's we apply a whole school approach to supporting positive mental health and wellbeing. We aim to provide a physically, socially and emotionally rich environment where key relationships thrive and students feel secure in their learning. We offer a school wide community of support to ensure students:

- Build emotional resilience
- Develop self-esteem

- **Develop self-advocacy**
- Develop self confidence
- Develop their social skills
- Feel valued and part of our school community
- Understand how to live a healthy lifestyle
- Develop their personal beliefs and aspirations
- Are encouraged to embrace their differences
- Achieve more than they ever thought possible

Policy aims

- Raise the profile to **the** whole school community of the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health in our students and how to support them
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health, their peers and parents or carers

Key staff

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

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Jenn Snaith

Mental Health Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) – Lucy Reed

DDSLs - Sarah Thompson, Danny Bush, Kat Cotton, Lisa Haycox-O'Toole, Jo Elliott

School nurses – Carol Albury and Suzy Grevatt

Head of School – Nes Fradgley

Mental health first aiders: Various trained staff members from across the integrated team

Art psychotherapist - Sarah Kinsey

Dance psychotherapist - Rheanna Berryman

Nominated safeguarding Governor: Danny Carmichael

Independent listener: Caroline Weeks

Teaching about mental health

Our integrated curriculum offers specialist speech, language and communication and occupational therapy. Physical education is both a structured and unstructured part of our curriculum and extra-curricular and enrichment activities are also available. Friday afternoons are dedicated to clubs, which enable all students to access a broad range of enrichment activities across the academic year.

St Catherine's has a robust programme of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and this incorporates statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). In addition to this, we have

an overarching Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) calendar that guides tutor times, assemblies and super learning days. This includes all aspects of wellbeing and includes internet and personal safety and all national days and events linked to mental health awareness.

At St Catherine's we aim to support and teach skills to our students to raise awareness of all aspects of their wellbeing. We also offer life skills sessions and independence programmes to students to develop a variety of essential life skills.

We teach pupils that, like physical health, mental wellbeing is an important part of daily life that is influenced by different factors, including exercise. Our approach to teaching about mental health and wellbeing is broad and detailed and done so via our integrated teams of education, care and both speech, language and occupational therapists.

Key areas of consideration within the teaching and promoting of positive mental health and wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing – developing the resilience, confidence and strategies to cope with everyday life and setbacks

Physical wellbeing – understanding the importance and benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle

Social wellbeing – understanding and developing social skills, positive relationships, self-esteem and personal safety

Spiritual wellbeing - developing independence, personal values, belief and identity

Community wellbeing - understanding tolerance, respect and the values and choices of others.

Open communication - St Catherine's has an effective student council and student voice system that is known and used by our students. They are encouraged at all times to communicate and share their thoughts, feelings and understanding. Our student voice promotes independence, expression, empathy and representation. Our student council promotes communication, representation and choice.

Dedicated safe spaces- Both the school and college site have dedicated wellbeing areas for students to access. These include a range of communication friendly literature, mindfulness, calming and sensory resources. Our school site has a 'Zen Den' - a safe space dedicated to mental health and wellbeing.

Positive behaviour management - St Catherine's has a clear and effective approach to positive behaviour management. This addresses behaviour for learning but also behaviour for character, which places emphasis and recognition on social and community values. Our approach to managing behaviour is one that supports the communicative function it reflects. This also enables us to provide targeted and specialised interventions when they are most

needed. Bullying is rare at St Catherine's but if this does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and seriously.

Identification and intervention - Staff at St Catherine's are given regular training and up to date information around all matters relating to wellbeing. Staff are equipped with the knowledge and awareness to understand indicators, which students are most at risk/vulnerable and also to identify this at the earliest point.

We have trained mental health first aiders on our school sites as well as a school nurse team. St Catherine's has strong connections with external providers of mental health and wellbeing support and can signpost students accordingly to the most appropriate service.

Working with families - St Catherine's includes students and families in decision-making and supports families to access the support they need, when they need it. Our Family Liaison Officer has a strong and committed approach to fostering positive relationships with families to ensure we work collaboratively and have a holistic school and/or multi agency approach. Staff have a sound understanding of confidentiality.

An inclusive environment

At St Catherine's we aim to tackle social isolation for pupils with SEND by supporting them to develop and practise the skills to form social connections with their peers. This is done through careful class group planning, after-school clubs and activities as well as whole school activities that enable them to form friendships beyond their immediate class group.

St Catherine's has a strong and robust approach to tackling bullying. We ensure PE and any associated sports activities are accessible for all of our pupils. Our provision of Friday afternoon clubs is broad and balanced ensuring that all children have a choice and can access activities that are of interest to them, in turn supporting their enjoyment and engagement. Through our positive behaviour management policy, we reward and celebrate our students for all of their skills and achievements, on both personal and academic levels.

We aim to get our students talking about mental health by removing barriers and both normalising and supporting being able to talk about how they feel and incorporating it into lessons, our PSHE curriculum and our overarching SMSC calendar. ~~deleted line~~

Supporting positive mental health and wellbeing and recognising warning signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs, which may indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing difficulties. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these signs should communicate their concerns to the DSL and senior mental health lead. Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits

- Increased isolation from their friends or peer group and becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering in academic achievement or engagement
- Talking or joking about self-harm/suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, loss of hope
- Poor attendance and punctuality to school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Loss of interest in hobbies

Staff training

The mental health team will ensure their training remains up to date and relevant and led by the senior mental health lead and DSL will deliver regular training to school staff around student mental health and wellbeing.

Managing disclosures

Staff at St Catherine's have regular safeguarding and child protection training and are confident in managing disclosures and following the correct procedure when this occurs. A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves to a friend or any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

Reporting concerns

Any member of staff that is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should log this as an incident on Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMs) under the category safeguarding>mental health. Once this concern is logged onto CPOMs, the relevant members of key senior staff will be alerted to this concern.

If there is a concern that a student is in danger of immediate harm, then the normal safeguarding and child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL in person and via CPOMs.

If the student presents a medical emergency, then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting our school nurses and/or first aid staff, contacting the emergency services if necessary and contacting the child's next of kin.

Internal referral process

At St Catherine's we have a team of mental health first aiders led by our mental health lead. This includes staff from our education, therapy and care teams as well as the school nurses. When a concern is raised for a student's mental health via CPOMs, it will be triaged by our mental health lead and then directed to the most appropriate person from our internal team to action support. This will be discussed with parents or carers in full. All staff will be aware

of sources of support within the school. A relevant range of resources will be available to students (which are supported by staff) such as need to talk forms and our mental health and wellbeing support signage, which include details of our nominated Governor and independent listener.

Any internal support that is put into place will be undertaken alongside therapy and care teams with full parental support. The level of support will be in line with the needs of the child and may range from a daily check in to more planned interventions such as dual support via the mental health lead and therapy team to being referred to our in house art therapist. This universal offer is available to all students at St Catherine's.

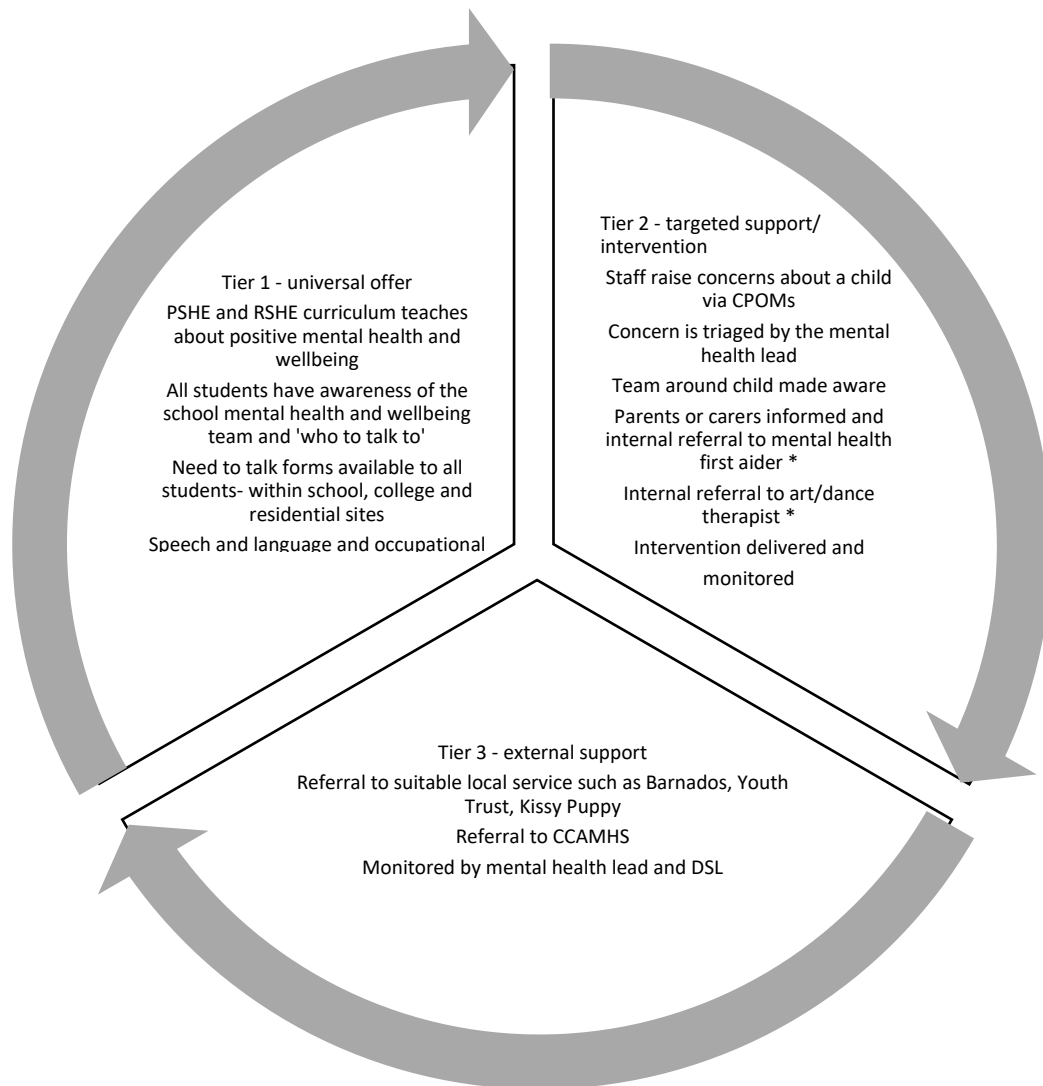
Any member of staff can refer students to our internal art and dance movement psychotherapists, who will, in conjunction with our mental health, lead action if deemed appropriate and necessary.

If we feel a student requires more targeted mental health support, we will support referrals to local services such as Youth Trust. For our residential students, we will privately commission this provision if it is required. We may also make a referral to the Community, Child and Adolescent mental health services (CCAMHS) if we feel this is the level of support required and support referrals that parents themselves make. For students attending St Catherine's that already access external mental health services, our mental health lead will liaise regularly with them and the school will support any agreed support strategies or interventions.

If necessary, we will create a positive mental health and wellbeing management plan and/or risk assessment if we feel a student requires one to support their mental health and wellbeing during the school day. This plan will always involve the parents or carers, senior mental health lead and Head of School and will enable all staff to consistently support the student via a managed plan that is reviewed regularly.

Support stages and protocol

Whole school approach: This is about taking responsibility. All staff at St Catherine's are responsible for identifying students who may be experiencing challenging times emotionally, feel confident in having difficult conversations with students and be clear about the protocol to follow where there is cause for concern.



**If a concern is raised around a student already accessing any of the tiers of support; this information will be shared with the relevant professionals working with that child.*

**Referrals to our internal art psychotherapist and dance movement psychotherapist are not appropriate for students already accessing external therapy or those open to social care at the child protection threshold.*

Monitoring

Our nominated safeguarding governor meets with the DSL and Senior mental health lead every half term. Our independent listener visits both school and college sites once a month and also visits our residential houses.

Annually, the senior mental health lead will undertake a whole school mental health survey to help us identify any students who need targeted support or interventions and capture our pupils' perspective and understanding of the support that is available to them on both an individual and whole school level.

Parent specific support and relevant resources:

Young Minds parents' helpline: 0808 802 5544 or www.youngminds.org.uk

Kooth.com (online confidential counselling for young people)

www.stonewall.org.uk

www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/parents

Isle of Wight Youth Trust

Isle of Wight Community Child and Adolescent mental health (CCAMHS)

<https://www.parents.parentzone.org.uk/>

This document is written in line with the SEND code of practice and both links to and should be considered alongside the following school policies:

Positive behaviour management policy

Child Protection policy

Child and adult safeguarding policy

Anti-bullying policy

RSHE policy

Zen Den statement of purpose