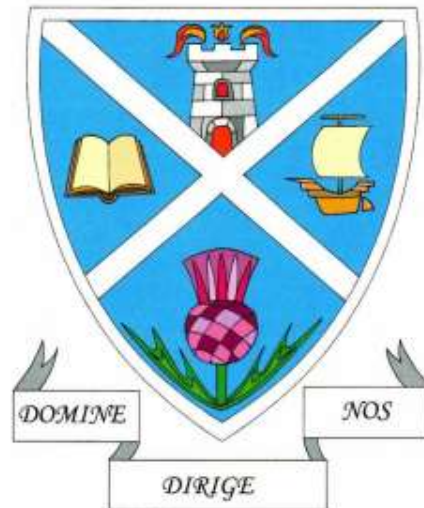


St Andrew's High School



Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy



Last updated: June 2021



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Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

UNICEF define wellbeing as how happy, healthy and satisfied one is in life, and in order to measure this, the five dimensions usually considered are '**material wellbeing, health and safety, education, behaviours and risks, and housing and environment**' (UNICEF 2013). Wellbeing is central to learning and learning is central to wellbeing. Wellbeing, in St Andrew's High School involves a whole school approach, and we strive to develop and implement practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, from prevention through to intervention, with a focus on school improvement and enhanced life choices for all.

"...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

John 10.10

Rationale

At St Andrew's HS, our intention is to promote positive mental health for every member of our school community. We pursue this aim through; universal, additional and intensive approaches and specialised or targeted approaches aimed to support individual pupils at vulnerable times.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to any mental health concerns. In an average classroom, as many as one in seven children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. Therefore, it is our aim to promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health and poor wellbeing.

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

Scope

This document describes our school's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all who work in our school, as well as parents, carers and families. It should be used as a working document to inform and support. We aim to:

- Promote positive mental health in all staff, pupils and the wider school community
- Increase understanding and awareness of mental health concerns
- Identify early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to pupils suffering mental health concerns as well as peers and parents/carers



Lead Members of Staff

Every member of staff has a responsibility to promote positive mental health and wellbeing of our pupils. Staff members who have a specific wellbeing remit include:

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Child Protection Officer & DHT PS | Pauline Morrison |
| Depute Child Protection Officer & PTPS | Marie Doyle |
| PTPS | Marie Veldon |
| PTPS | Karen Gray |
| PTPS | Mhairi Banks |
| PTPS | Stephanie Roy |
| PTPS | Geraldine Trainer |
| Acting PTPS | Lauren Donnelly |
| Acting PTPS | Clare McAveety |
| PT Support for Learning | Graham Cunningham |

| Mental Health First Aiders: | Department |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Pauline Morrison | SMT |
| Paul Elder | SMT |
| Marie Veldon | PTPS/Social Subjects |
| Mhairi Banks | PTPS/PE |
| Nichole Hannah | Modern Languages |
| Gillian Higgins | Maths |
| Lisa-Marie Quinn | English |
| Francis Revell | Art |
| Lorna Farrell | SFL |

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a young person should speak to our Child Protection Officer or PTPS in the first instance. If there is a fear that the young person is in danger of immediate harm, child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the designated Child Protection Officer, or Head Teacher.



Planning

When a child or young person is showing concern with mental health, it is important that a multi-agency meeting is called to support their individual needs. This should be drawn up by Pupil Support staff and will involve the pupil, the parents/carers and relevant health professionals. This can include:

- Who is a partner to the plan?
- Reason for the plan - including details of a pupil's condition, special requirements & precautions, medication and any side effects.
- Desired outcomes.
- Resources.
- Timescales for action and change.
- What needs to be done and by whom - who to contact in an emergency.
- Any contingency arrangements, if necessary.
- Arrangements for reviewing the plan.

Teaching about Mental Health

The development of staff skills is fundamental to the promotion of Health and Wellbeing. Our staff directly influences the culture in St Andrew's and a whole school approach to health promotion is taken. The skills, knowledge and understanding by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum in S1-S3. In the senior phase, H&WB outcomes are met through the R.E curriculum, as well as through input from external speakers and workshops. Some of our topics include:

- Mental wellbeing
- Body Image
- Beating stress
- Mindfulness
- Growth Mindset

We will always look to deliver mental health, and anything associated with this topic, in a safe and sensitive manner.



Increasing Awareness

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Some of these sources are outlined in the appendices.

We will display relevant sources of support in all classrooms and communal areas, and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will endeavour to ensure students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which may indicate a young person is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously, and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns to the relevant and appropriate staff members.

- Possible warning signs include:
- Evident changes in behaviour
- 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
- Reduced concentration
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking, joking or researching about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- An increase in lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- Spending more time at the bathroom
- Discontinued hobbies or interests
- Failure to take care of personal appearance



Managing disclosures

A young person may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, therefore all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a student 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**.

All disclosures should be recorded in writing **immediately after** you have spoken to the young person, and important points to include are;

- Date
- Name of member of staff to whom disclosure was made
- Facts from conversation
- Any agreed next steps.

This information should then be shared with the relevant member of PTPS, Year Head and Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.

Confidentiality

We should be honest with young people about confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass on our concerns about a student, we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to share this with
- What information we are going to tell them
- Why we need to share this information

As a staff, we should never share information about a student without first telling them. It is vital to share disclosures with PTPS, Year Head or other DHT, as it ensures continuity of care in the absence of a member of staff, and it provides an extra source of support for both the young person and the member of staff. It allows appropriate action to be taken by members of staff in effectively supporting the young person. We should also support the young person to share this information with a significant adult out with the school. This will ensure that their support network does not only function during school hours.

If a child gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection issues, the Child Protection Officer or a DHT **must be informed immediately**.



Working with Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their child's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about Wellbeing on our school website/Twitter
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to.
- Make our Wellbeing Policy easily accessible to parents/carers.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health and wellbeing topics discussed in PSHE.
- Ensure parents/carers have access to specific information about a mental health concern.
- Engaging with our Parents as Partners forum who are very supportive of our efforts.

If parents/carers are receiving support for their child's wellbeing they should always receive further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible, as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that you're sharing. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too e.g. parent helplines and forums.

Supporting Peers

When a young person is suffering from mental health issues, it can also be a difficult time for their friends. Friends will want to help but do not know how. In some cases, friends may unknowingly learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from one another. We endeavour to highlight;

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe and reliable sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling themselves.

Staff CPD

All staff will receive regular training and professional development throughout the year, both in house and externally. We will look to discuss how to recognise and respond to mental health concerns, and ensure that all staff are aware of possible strategies that can be used in both the classroom and wider school environment. Staff currently receive annual child protection training in order to enable them to keep students safe.

We will also encourage staff to embrace CPD opportunities outwith the school, and will look to direct staff to relevant training where possible.



Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in April 2024.

Where immediate updates are necessary, this will be done as a priority.

It will be updated to reflect any personnel changes.



Appendix A: Further information about common mental health concerns.

Why is it so important to be aware of mental health concerns and the impact it is having on our young people?

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that is around three children in every class.
- Around 1 in 15 children and young people deliberately self-harm.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time.
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression.
- 3.3% of children and young people have an anxiety disorder.

Below, we have provided information and guidance about the mental health issues most commonly seen in school-aged children. Further support on these areas can be found on websites shared below.

Self-harm

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning, hitting or taking an overdose in adolescents. Studies have shown a 68% increase in the number of young people who self-harm since 2011.

Online support

SelfHarm.co.uk: www.selfharm.co.uk

National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk

Depression

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs are more extreme and tend to be more frequent. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

Online support

Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression

Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, and can be triggered from what may initially seem to be the smallest of problems. It is something that each of us may experience at low levels as part of normal life, but for



a young person with anxiety concerns it can consume their day. When this anxiety or fears repeatedly present over several days, weeks or months, it can impact on their ability to cope with or enjoy different aspects of school life, intervention is needed.

Online support

[Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

Obsessions and compulsions

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds which can be disturbing or upsetting. On the other hand, compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don't turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms, and it is important that we provide our young people with time and appropriate measures to challenge these thoughts and feelings.

Online support

[OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd](http://www.ocduk.org/ocd)

Eating Disorders

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging).

Online support

[Beat – the eating disorders charity: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders](http://www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders)

[Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.inourhands.com/eating-difficulties-in-younger-children](http://www.inourhands.com/eating-difficulties-in-younger-children)

Bereavement

Research suggests that 1 in every 29 school-age children has been bereaved of a parent or sibling. The way that children and young people understand and cope with death varies and, although they may require specialist support, they should be able to access support from their school.

Online support

[Cruse – Bereavement Care Scotland: http://www.crusescotland.org.uk/support/support-for-young-people.html](http://www.crusescotland.org.uk/support/support-for-young-people.html)

Appendix B: GIRFEP – Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Lanarkshire.



Pledge

“We pledge to work together to lift the stigma and discrimination often surrounding mental health, putting it on an equal par with physical health. This means we will ensure the promotion of mental health and wellbeing will underpin all aspects of our supports and services. Our joint approach to developing the support and services required when needed will ensure Lanarkshire becomes a place that champions and promotes good mental health for all.”

Vision

Through a person-centred approach, this framework strives to ensure that Lanarkshire is a place where we:

- all understand that there is no health without mental health
- know how to support and improve our own and others’ mental wellbeing and act on that knowledge
- know it is good to talk about your mental health without fear of stigmatisation
- understand that good mental health contributes to improvements in life circumstances and overall quality of life
- raise efforts around the prevention of mental health problems, mental ill-health, and suicide
- involved in decisions that affect personal care and treatment
- are treated with compassion and hopefulness
- ensure supportive relationships are promoted at all levels
- promote dignity, understanding, respect, inclusivity and fairness in our support and care
- have non-judgemental practice and behaviours.

Further Information

<https://mars.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/egenda/images/att92105.pdf>

Appendix C: Support and Advice

In School

Pupils can access direct support from PTPS and other Mental Health First Aid trained members of staff. During this time, strategies will be discussed and suggested in the hope that it will help pupils manage their concerns. If required, PTPS may make referrals to external agencies such as CAMHS to seek further support for a vulnerable pupil. St Andrew's is also fortunate enough to have in-house councillors four days a week (Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri) and pupils can either refer through PTPS, or self-refer if the situation is urgent. Any referrals made on the young person's behalf should always be discussed with the pupil and consent will be sought from them, with parents/carers also ideally being informed.

Mental health topics will be taught and discussed during PSHE and RE, and there will be times throughout the year when there will be a school-wide focus on a specific area of Mental Health.

Through our Mental Health Ambassadors initiative, 56 pupils are selected through an application process based on their skill-sets and abilities, and are initially trained in-house through an intensive 2-day programme, with additional input throughout the year. These pupils are identifiable by their purple lanyards, and the overall aim is to have them lead by example in highlighting, and reducing the stigma around, mental health issues.

At Home


We would encourage parents/carers to consider the following steps in order to support their young person with any mental health concerns:

- Focus on listening to what the young person has to say
- Listen closely to the words they are using
- Do not judge them
- Offer support
- Acknowledge the difficulty they may be having in discussing their concerns
- If necessary, contact your GP.



National Support for Young People

| Organisation | Main contact details | Topic addressed |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Samaritans | Call free on 116 123 (UK) Email: jo@samaritans.org | Confidential support service and are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. |
| ChildLine | 0800 1111 https://www.childline.org.uk/  | Get help and advice about a wide range of issues, talk to a counsellor online. |

SAHS Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Breathing Space</p> | <p>0800 83 85 87 https://www.breathingspace.scot/</p>  | <p>Advice and support if you need someone to talk to. Their phone line is open 6pm-2am on Monday to Thursday and 6pm-6am on Friday to Monday.</p> |
| <p>Beat</p> | <p>0345 634 7650 https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/</p>  | <p>The Beat Youthline is open to anyone under 25. UK's leading charity supporting anyone affected by eating disorders, anorexia, bulimia, EDNOS or any other difficulties with food, weight and shape.</p> |
| <p>Aye Mind</p> | <p>www.ayemind.com/</p>  | <p>Making a digital toolkit for all who work with young people too, to boost their ability to promote youth wellbeing</p> |
| <p>Young Scot</p> | <p>0808 801 0338 www.youngscot.org/</p>  | <p>Information on a range of topics including mental health.</p> |
| <p>7 Cups of Tea</p> | <p>www.7cupsoftea.com</p>  | <p>An online emotional health and wellbeing service</p> |
| <p>SAMH</p> | <p>www.samh.org.uk/</p>  | <p>SAMH is the Scottish Association for Mental Health. SAMH believe there is no health without mental health. They provide help, information and support.</p> |
| <p>See Me</p> | <p>https://www.seemescotland.org/</p>  | <p>See Me is Scotland's programme to tackle mental health stigma and Discrimination.</p> |
| <p>TESS: Text and Email Support Services</p> | <p>Text: 0780 047 2908 www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk</p>  | <p>For girls and young women affected by self-injury.</p> |

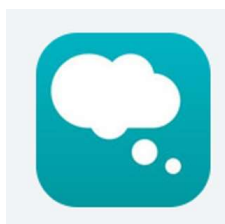
National Support for Parents/Carers

| Organisation | Main contact details | Topic addressed |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| The Samaritans | Call free on 116 123 (UK) Email: jo@samaritans.org | Confidential support service and are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. |
| Young Minds | 0808 802 5544 https://youngminds.org.uk/  | Free, confidential online and telephone support providing information and support. |
| Parent Line Scotland | Call: 08000 28 22 33 Email: parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk  | Scotland's free helpline, email and web-chat service, for anyone caring for or concerned about a child - open 9am- 9pm Mon to Fri. |
| GP | Contact your GP at your local Surgery. | Speak to your GP if you are worried about your child's mental health |

Useful Apps

The following are a selection of free apps recommended by our school councillors, which are displayed in communal areas and corridors throughout the school.

Catch It



Learn how to manage feelings like anxiety and depression. It will teach you how to look at problems in a different way, and turn negative thoughts in to positive ones.

Calm Harm



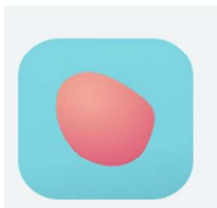
Designed to help people resist or manage the urge to self-harm.

Chill Panda



Learn to relax, manage your worries and improve your wellbeing. The app can measure your heartrate and suggests tasks to suit your state of mind, such as breathing techniques or light exercises to take your mind off your worries.

Cove



Create music to capture your mood and express how you feel. Instead of words, create music to reflect emotions such as joy, sadness, calm and anger.

Mindful Gnats



Helps you do develop mindfulness and relaxation skills.

SuperBetter



Game-based app that helps build personal resilience, strength, motivation and optimism even in the face of difficult challenges. For those who wish to feel happier, healthier and more able to achieve goals.

Appendix D: Guidance on Talking to Pupils

The advice below is from students themselves, in their own words, together with some additional ideas to help you in initial conversations with students when they disclose mental health concerns. This advice should be considered alongside relevant school policies on pastoral care and child protection and discussed with relevant colleagues as appropriate.

Focus on listening

If a student has come to you, it's because they trust you and feel a need to share their difficulties with someone. Let them talk. Ask occasional open questions if you need to in order to encourage them to keep exploring their feelings and opening up to you. Just letting them pour out what they're thinking will make a huge difference and marks a huge first step in recovery. Up until now they may not have admitted even to themselves that there is a problem.

Don't talk too much

The student should be talking at least three quarters of the time. If that's not the case then you need to redress the balance. You are here to listen, not to talk. Sometimes the conversation may lapse into silence. Try not to give in to the urge to fill the gap, but rather wait until the student does so. This can often lead to them exploring their feelings more deeply. Of course, you should interject occasionally, perhaps with questions to the student to explore certain topics they've touched on more deeply, or to show that you understand and are supportive. Don't feel an urge to over-analyse the situation or try to offer answers. This all comes later. For now your role is simply one of supportive listener. So make sure you're listening!

Don't pretend to understand

The concept of a mental health difficulty such as an eating disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can seem completely alien if you've never experienced these difficulties first hand. You may find yourself wondering why on earth someone would do these things to themselves, but don't explore those feelings with the sufferer. Instead listen hard to what they're saying and encourage them to talk and you'll slowly start to understand what steps they might be ready to take in order to start making some changes.

Don't be afraid to make eye contact

It's important to try to maintain a natural level of eye contact (even if you have to think very hard about doing so and it doesn't feel natural to you at all). If you make too much eye contact, the student may interpret this as you staring at them. They may think that you are horrified about what they are saying or think they are a 'freak'. On the other hand, if you don't make eye contact at all then a student may interpret this as you being disgusted by them – to the extent that you can't bring yourself to look at them. Making an effort to maintain natural eye contact will convey a very positive message to the student.

Offer support

Never leave this kind of conversation without agreeing next steps. These will be informed by your conversations with appropriate colleagues and the schools' policies on such issues. Whatever happens, you should have some form of next steps to carry out after the conversation because this will help the student to realise that you're working with them to move things forward.

Acknowledge how hard it is to discuss these issues

It can take a young person weeks or even months to admit they have a problem to themselves, let alone share that with anyone else. If a student chooses to confide in you, you should feel proud and privileged that they have such a high level of trust in you. Acknowledging both how brave they have been, and how glad you are they chose to speak to you, conveys positive messages of support to the student.

Don't assume that an apparently negative response is actually a negative response

Despite the fact that a student has confided in you, and may even have expressed a desire to get on top of their illness, that doesn't mean they'll readily accept help. The illness may ensure they resist any form of help for as long as they possibly can. Don't be offended or upset if your offers of help are met with anger, indifference or insolence, it's the illness talking, not the student.

Never break your promises

Above all else, a student wants to know they can trust you. That means if they want you to keep their issues confidential and you can't then you must be honest. Explain that, whilst you can't keep it a secret, you can ensure that it is handled within the school's policy of confidentiality and that only those who need to know about it in order to help will know about the situation. You can also be honest about the fact you don't have all the answers or aren't exactly sure what will happen next. Consider yourself the student's ally rather than their saviour and think about which next steps you can take together, always ensuring you follow relevant policies and consult appropriate colleagues.

Appendix E: Staff Wellbeing



Work Well

North Lanarkshire's 'Work Well' platform provides a number of tools aimed at helping staff to support and maintain their own mental health and wellbeing. There are general and sector-specific resources such as webinars, discussion forums, articles and activity packs, and these can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.nllife.co.uk/workwell-nl-mental-wellness-home-page/>

Time for Talking

In addition, there is the 'Time for Talking' service that provides information, advice and counselling services. This includes:

- a helpline for general advice and guidance
- psychological guidance and emotional support
- individual counselling, either over the phone or face-to-face
- post critical incident support.

This service can be accessed by calling their free 24-hour telephone service on 0800 970 3980, or by using the following link:

<https://www.timefortalking.co.uk/making-referrals/>