

St Michael's Pre-school

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Managing behaviour

Providers are responsible for managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way.

5.3 Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Policy statement

At our pre-school, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our children and staff. Our culture is supportive, caring, and respectful. We encourage the children to express themselves and we want each child to have their voice heard. We know that everyone experiences different life challenges, and that each of us may need help to cope with them sometimes.

We understand that anyone and everyone may need additional emotional support.

At our pre-school, positive mental health is everybody's responsibility. We all have a role to play.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.2 Inclusive practice	2.1 Respecting each other	3.2 Supporting every child	4.4 Personal, social and emotional development

This policy is a guide to all staff and committee members. It outlines our approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. It should be read and understood alongside our other relevant pre-school policies.

Policy aims:

The aim of our policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the mental health of our staff and the children in our care. At our pre-school, we will always:

- Help children to understand their emotions and experiences better.
- Ensure the children feel safe and secure and know that the pre-school adults are there to listen to any concerns and worries they may experience.
- Help children to form and maintain relationships.
- Encourage children to be confident and help to promote their self-esteem.
- Help children to develop resilience and ways of coping with setbacks.
- Help foster growth mindset and intrinsic motivation.

We will always promote a healthy environment by:

- Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all children and staff.
- Celebrating the effort and not just the end result.
- Providing resources such as books and our mindfulness basket to help children develop the skills to self-regulate
- Provide mindfulness exercises for all children each session. Within this, developing children's understanding of self.
- Promoting our pre-school values and encouraging a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing opportunities to develop a sense of worth and to reflect.
- Promoting our children's' voices and giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making.
- Celebrating each child and member of staff for who they are and making every individual feel valued and respected.
- Adopting a whole pre-school approach to mental health and providing support to any children or staff member that needs it.
- Raising awareness amongst staff around mental health issues and their signs and symptoms.
- Enabling staff to respond to early warning signs of emotions and a decline in mental health in our children and in themselves.
- Supporting staff who are struggling with their mental health.

All staff members have a responsibility to promote the mental health of the children and each other. However, certain staff members have a specific role in the process.

These are:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Officers
- SENCO

If an individual presents a medical emergency, then relevant procedures will be followed, including involving the emergency services.

Teaching about Mental Health

We have developed our curriculum to allow all children to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to know themselves and to keep themselves mentally healthy.

This includes resilience techniques and training. We will regularly review our curriculum and as a staff team we discuss how we can meet children's needs better and help children to meet their own needs in an age appropriate and sensitive manner.

Listening

Within our pre-school we place high emphasis on the importance of listening to children and members of staff.

To be **listened to** means:

- We recognise individuals' need and right to express and communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas.
- To have an in-depth knowledge of individuals to be able to tune in to their verbal, and body language in order to understand and interpret what is being expressed and communicated.
- To have a discussion with individuals with compassion and without judgment.
- To have an in-depth knowledge of individuals to be able to respond appropriately and, when required, act upon their understanding of what children express and communicate; and
- To respect children's rights and facilitate children's participation and representation in imaginative and child centred ways in all aspects of core services.

Identifying needs and warning signs

All of our senior staff will be trained in how to recognise warning signs of common mental health problems. This means that they will be able to offer help and support to staff and children who need it, when they need it. These warning signs will always be taken seriously and staff who notice any of these signs will communicate their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer as appropriate. Staff will be able to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:

- Physical signs of harm.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in mood.
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer.
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption. Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:
 - Attendance and absenteeism.
 - Punctuality and lateness.
 - Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education.
 - Family and relationship problems.

Finally, senior staff will be well placed to identify any additional needs arising from difficulties that may impact a staff's or child's mental health and wellbeing, such as bereavement and health difficulties.

Managing disclosures

If a member of staff discloses concerns about themselves, a child, or any other member of staff, then all staff will respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgemental manner. All disclosures will be recorded confidentially and only shared with the appropriate authorities if it's necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy. All disclosures will be handled by the designated safeguarding officer named in our **Policy aims**.

The disclosure record will contain:

- The date of the disclosure.
- The name of the staff member to whom the disclosure was made.
- The nature of the disclosure and the main points from the conversation.
- Agreed next steps.

We operate an open-door policy within our setting, which allows staff members to discuss any concerns about themselves, children, or other members of staff as soon as they are able to. All staff members have regular supervision meetings with their mentor and if needed, they may have more frequent meetings. All supervision points are recorded and both parties (mentor and mentee) sign to say they are happy with what has been discussed and the next steps that will be implemented. All members of staff will have regular wellbeing calls with a member of the management committee team, in which they can discuss anything they feel necessary. Members of staff know the route to discuss any concerns they have about themselves or any other matter within pre-school with either senior members staff or management committee.

Confidentiality

If a member of staff thinks it is necessary to pass on concerns about a child or a member of staff, either to a more senior member of staff or to an outside agency, then this will first be discussed with the individual. They will be told:

- Who the staff member is going to tell.
- What the staff member is going to disclose.
- Why it's necessary for somebody else to be told.
- When the contact will be.

However, it may not be possible to gain the individual's consent first, such as in the case of children who are at immediate risk. Protecting the individual's safety is our main priority so we would share disclosures if we judged an individual to be at risk.

We take a whole pre-school approach towards the mental health of the children and members of staff. This means working with parents and carers and with other agencies and partners, where necessary.

Working with parents and Carers

We aim to support parent/carers as much as possible. This means keeping them informed about their child and offering our support at all times.

To support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about mental health and emotional wellbeing that we have in our pre-school.
- Share and allow parents to access further support.
- Ensure that parents are aware of who to talk to if they have any concerns about their child.
- Give parents guidance about how they can support their child's/children's positive mental health.
- Ensure this policy is easily accessible to parents.
- Keep parents informed about the mental health training our pre-school staff receive and how mental health is covered in our school curriculum.

We understand the importance of gathering information on each family and their mental health. We regularly check in with parents to see how we can support them. We provide an open-door policy which allows parents to talk to their key person or a member of the management team if they need support.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

St Michael's Pre-school

Held on

11/03/2021

Date to be reviewed

Signed on behalf of the management committee



Name of signatory

Ellena Lloyd

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)

Chair of Management Committee