St Thomas More Catholic Academy

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing
Commitment Statement

Date of Statement:	September 2021
	Reviewed:
	September 2022
Member of Staff Responsible:	Jamie Stubbs
SLT:	
Headteacher:	Mark Rayner
Chair of the Board of Directors	Anne Middleton-Hill
Chair of the Academy Representatives:	Rob Flello
Nominated Academy Representative:	Clare Goodwin

1. Introduction

At St Thomas More Catholic Academy, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to all students, their families and members of staff and volunteers. Our open culture allows all voices to be heard, and through the use of effective policies and procedures we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all.

We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing are fundamental to ensuring members of STMCA can participate fully in school, be that as a recipient or provider of education. We also recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing of those around us at home contributes to our ability to engage at school.

STMCA recognises that mental health and emotional wellbeing can have a significant impact on a young person's academic performance and self-esteem. STMCA offer a Whole School Approach to Wellbeing encompassing staff, students and their families.

2. Aims

In our school, we aim to:
- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental ill health in students.

- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support when working with young people with mental health issues.
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Remove the stigma associated with mental health illness.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from senior leaders that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing
- Instill a culture of staff and student welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

3. Relevant Policies

The promotion of mental health and emotional wellbeing is embedded in our day-to-day work with our students. Guidance about identifying mental ill health and procedures for supporting students and staff with mental health issues are provided in several of our policies. these include:

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding** – written in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. A key policy outlining risk factors and support.
- **Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing Policy** – guidance on promoting positive mental health in all staff and students.
- **Anti-bullying** – providing guidelines on how staff can support those experiencing bullying and recognising its potential impact on mental health.
- **ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy** – considers how behaviour online can impact on wellbeing and what is in place to protect our students
- **Relationships and Sex Education / Personal, Social Health and Economic Education Policy** – providing detail on training for staff and the curriculum provided to students – including metal and emotional wellbeing
- **Alternative Provision and Adapted Curriculum Policy** – to ensure appropriate safeguarding of young people attending alternative provision when they are not able to access mainstream provision.
- **Harmful Sexual Behaviours and Child on Child Abuse Policy** – to recognise signs of abuse, the impact on mental health and wellbeing and how to respond appropriately.
- **Supporting Children With Medical Needs Policy** – Guidance on how to effectively support young people experiencing physical and mental health difficulties.
- **SEN and Disability (Access) Policy** – Supporting young people with all SEND needs.

4. Individual Safety Plans

Should the need arise a safety plan/ risk assessment is completed with students and circulated to relevant staff.

Any mental health concerns are identified, and key strategies and risk management strategies are put in to place for students. All students have a pastoral support team and all staff are updated on any concerns or issues via inclusion meetings and CPOMS (the school safeguarding recording system).

Safety Plans are reviewed on a regular basis and support packages adapted as relevant. The type of support that can be put in place for our students includes:
- Pastoral support
- Mental Health First Aider support
- input from specialist providers, such as CAMHS workers
- Proactive intervention work such as Wellbeing Workshops, Dove Self-esteem sessions
- Reasonable adjustments such as seating plan changes or early leave passes.

These risk assessments stored securely on a student's electronic file alongside any Individual Health and Care Plan.

5. Supporting our Staff

We recognise that promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing for staff is core to ensuring successful outcomes for our students as well as benefiting staff themselves. We maintain a focus on the wellbeing of our staff on a day-to-day basis through building a culture supporting positive wellbeing, along with supportive line management.

There is an explicit focus on mental health and emotional wellbeing in several of our staff related guides and policies. These include:

- **Staff Wellbeing Charter** – Found on the staff landing page
- **ASCC Stress Policy** – Staff specific stress policy.
- **Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing Policy** – guidance on promoting positive mental health in all staff and students.

In addition there are other initiatives which aim to support staff with their wellbeing, including:

- a well being conversation is an integral part of every line management meeting
- there is a commitment to supporting staff to access external CPD and career progression opportunities
- a range of HR initiatives to support return to work after any period of ill health, e.g. phased return, risk assessments, Occupational Health support
- Employee counselling, support and advice offered via Care First
- Staff forum to ensure that the voice of staff is heard about staff life, spirituality and wellbeing
- Regular reward events and recognition
- CPD opportunities to empower staff to feel able to recognise signs that young people or colleagues may be struggling, plus increase knowledge to increase confidence when delivering sessions to students about mental health and wellbeing.

Directors and the Leadership team are also keen to promote the mutual support for each other whereby acknowledgement and appreciation is integral to the culture within the school.

6. Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding our students need to keep themselves, and others, physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our PSHE curriculum.

We follow the guidance issued by the PSHE Association to prepare us to teach about mental health and emotional health safely and sensitively alongside use of the TenTen Resources to support with Relationships and Sex Education. Incorporating this into our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote students' wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies and an understanding of students' own emotions as well as those of other people.

Additionally, we will use such lessons as a vehicle for providing students who do develop difficulties with strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as supporting students to support any of their friends who are facing challenges.

We work closely with the Mental Health Support Team to facilitate bespoke mental health awareness sessions, workshops, 1-2-1 and small group interventions.

7. Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services. Within the school (noticeboards and staff rooms are utilised), and through the school communication channels (website, social media, emails, newsletters and Teams groups).

Staff will receive training to increase their confidence in signposting students within the school and to increase their awareness of external agency support.

8. The Wellbeing Award

Aligned with the Academy's commitment to the wellbeing of the school community the Governors, Directors and Headteacher are committed to supporting the school to work through the Wellbeing award in order to support the development of a whole school approach to wellbeing across the school.