

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy

St Colm's High school

1. Policy Statement

Our school is committed to promoting and supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of all pupils and staff. We recognise that emotional wellbeing is fundamental to learning, development, and overall life satisfaction. This policy outlines our whole-school approach to fostering a mentally healthy environment, in line with the Department of Education's Framework (2021).

Take 5 Pledge

"St Colms High School will continually promote the Take 5 steps to wellbeing approach within our school. Our commitment to take 5 will be clearly visible within our school community"

2. Aims

- To create a nurturing, inclusive environment that supports emotional wellbeing.
- To build resilience and coping skills in pupils and staff.
- To identify and respond early to emotional health needs.
- To work collaboratively with families and external agencies.

3. Guiding Principles

- Whole-school approach: Wellbeing is embedded in all aspects of school life.
- Early intervention: Identifying and addressing issues promptly.
- Pupil voice: Involving pupils in shaping wellbeing initiatives.
- Staff wellbeing: Supporting staff mental health and professional development.
- Partnership working: Engaging with parents, carers, and external services.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- Principal: Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- Designated Wellbeing Lead: Coordinates wellbeing initiatives and staff training.
- Pastoral Team: Provides direct support to pupils and liaises with families.
- All Staff: Promote a positive school climate and refer concerns appropriately.
- Pupil empowerment through pupil voice / mental health champions

5. Pupil Support

- Wellbeing is integrated into the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) curriculum.
- Pupils are taught emotional literacy, resilience, and coping strategies through P.D and Form.Time
- Wellbeing assemblies and themed weeks (Thought for the Week) promote mental health awareness.
- Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing
- Sensory room and calm spaces
- Mentoring Support
- Safer Schools NI APP

6. Support Structures

- Universal Support: Whole-school activities, peer mentoring, and wellbeing clubs.
- Targeted Support: Small group interventions (e.g. Nurture Groups).
- Specialist Support: Referrals to EWTS, Art Therapy, CAMHS, or counselling services.

7. Early Identification and Referral

Staff are trained to recognize, signs of emotional distress. Concerns are recorded and discussed with the Emotional Wellbeing Lead. Referral pathways include:

- Internal support teams
- Family Support Hubs
- Voluntary and community organisations
- CAMHS and health-led services

8. Staff Wellbeing

- Regular anonymous staff wellbeing surveys and feedback opportunities.
- Access to professional development on mental health.
- Access to EA and CCEA wellbeing resources
- Promotion of work-life balance and peer support.
- CPD on Trauma Informed Practice / Mindfulness Activities

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Annual review of the policy by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Pupil and staff surveys to assess impact.
- Use of wellbeing indicators and attendance/behaviour data.

10. Links to Other Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Anti-Bullying
- SEN/Inclusion Policy

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in response to significant changes in guidance or school context.

Appendix: Emotional Health and Wellbeing Resource Pack

Educational Resources

- NI Curriculum Guidance on PDMU and LLW
- SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) materials
- MindEd: Free educational resources on children's mental health for school staff
- EWTS resource materials

Mental Health Support Services

- Childline: 0800 1111 – Free, confidential support for children
- Lifeline: 0808 808 8000 – Crisis response helpline for Northern Ireland
- CAMHS – Referral pathways and contact info
- Family Support NI – Directory of local services for families and young people

Toolkits and Frameworks

- NI Department of Education's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework
- Barnardo's Wellbeing Toolkit for schools
- NSPCC Schools Service: Safeguarding and wellbeing resources
- Public Health Agency (PHA): Mental health promotion materials and campaigns

Templates and Checklists

- Wellbeing Audit Tool (TAKE 5)
- Pupil Wellbeing Survey Template (EWTS)
- Staff Wellbeing Action Plan

Training and CPD Opportunities

- Safeguarding Board NI: Training on trauma-informed practice
- Mental Health First Aid courses for staff
- Papyrus
- TAKE 5