



The Rigby Way: Positive Wellbeing, Every Day

Why Is Emotional Wellbeing & Positive Mental Health Important?

Evidence shows us that wellbeing is of central importance to children's learning and attainment, with high levels of wellbeing associated with improved academic outcomes. Research shows that 50% of mental health problems start before age 14 and pupils who experience this are more likely to have academic difficulties at school and experience social disadvantage later in adult life. We also know from recent research (CYPMHC, 2023) that there is a link between pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health needs, and classroom behaviour.

However, pupil wellbeing begins with staff wellbeing. Positive staff wellbeing is essential for cultivating a mentally healthy school, for self-motivation and for promoting pupil wellbeing and attainment. Protecting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is crucial for the realisation of a school's mission and to the building of cohesive school community. In addition to having a positive impact on colleagues and pupils, staff who are motivated, well and happy in role are vital to the quality of teaching and learning that pupils will receive, as well as ensuring they gain fulfilment in purpose and job satisfaction.

Emotional wellbeing and positive mental health in schools contribute to a holistic approach to education for all (socially, emotionally, mentally & physically), supporting not only academic success but also the development of resilient and creative individuals who can navigate life's challenges successfully through six dimensions of wellness:

- **Physical Wellness (Body) – Being Active:** allowing the physical body to feel fit and well, embracing a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise, proper nutrition, adequate sleep
- **Intellectual Wellness (Mind) – Keep Learning:** the ongoing pursuit of knowledge, critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning and the ability to approach challenges with a problem-solving mindset. Being able to express ideas articulately and understand others' perspectives fosters meaningful intellectual exchange and collaboration.
- **Spiritual Wellness (Spirit) – Giving:** encompassing a sense of purpose, meaning, connection, and inner peace, showing service to others and strengthening our relationship with God.
- **Social Wellness (People) – Connect:** building and maintaining positive relationships with others, fostering a sense of belonging, and contributing to a supportive community through the elements of empathy and compassion, cultural competence and social responsibility.
- **Emotional Wellness (Place) – Take Notice:** being present in the moment and appreciating what is around you. Heightened awareness enhances self-understanding and allows for positive choices based on values and motivations, building resilience and coping skills to navigate challenges and the ability to understand, express, and regulate emotions.
- **Environmental Wellness (Planet) – Care:** creating and maintaining a harmonious relationship with the external environment and surroundings, building a connection to the natural world, protecting the planet, and fostering a sense of collective responsibility and commitment to promoting equity and justice in environmental issues.



What Are The Key Principles Of Our Whole School Approach to Positive Wellbeing?

At St John Rigby, emotional wellbeing and mental health is everybody's business. We believe a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing goes beyond teaching and learning and brings the entire school community together to create a supportive and nurturing environment. Our guiding principles for our whole school approach are:

- Emotional wellbeing and mental health is a continuum. Related issues can range from positive attitudes and behaviour, through to experiences of emotional distress and mental disorder.
- As a school, we already experience and manage emotional issues on a daily basis; the objective is to minimise the impact of such issues and maximise the effectiveness of any responses.
- Emotional wellbeing covers a range of dimensions, such as resilience, character building, relationships and self-esteem, etc. Understanding both developmental and mental health awareness is critical.
- Creating a positive school culture requires a whole-school approach that is led from the top while involving all in the school community.

The whole-school community

Wellbeing is experienced at a personal level but is associated with and connected to a broad range of risk and protective factors that exist at the individual, relational, community, cultural and societal levels. Our personal wellbeing is, therefore connected to that of our local community and wider world, and we acknowledge the importance of the individual and their immediate relationships in a social context and in their wider community. (*Urie Bronfenbrenner c1979*)

One principle that is central to St John Rigby's approach is the need for our school to draw the wider community and relevant stakeholders into the centre of the change process.

Parents/carers are one such group. Evidence shows that, for parents, the emotional and mental health needs of their children is of increasing concern, and often parents look to school to support and inform them. Pupils also need to be given the opportunity to express their own voice and this can be an influential source of good ideas for any school looking for innovative and appropriate solutions.

As another critical group of the whole school community, the wellbeing of staff is as significant as that of pupils. Staff wellbeing is increasingly recognised as 'under challenge'. Expecting staff to respond to the emotional needs of their pupils while feeling exhausted and overwhelmed themselves is a barrier to the wellbeing of all involved. Equipping teachers and others with the know-how and skills needed to be better informed on the issues surrounding mental health is essential. All staff have the capacity to share and promote the messages of positive mental health, modelling the behaviours themselves and making emotional wellbeing a matter of importance and at the centre of our school's mission and aims.

How Do Our Principles Guide A Whole School Approach to Positive Wellbeing At SJR?

In line with the OLICAT Trust approach to Staff Wellbeing, the school recognises that the fostering of a supportive, loving community is key to our mission. Using two key guidance documents from the National Children's Bureau: NCB 'What Works' Guidance (Mar 2015) and 'A whole school framework for emotional wellbeing and mental health', the emphasis on our approach is on developing a whole school climate which builds a sense of connectedness and purpose so that all pupil, staff and members of our school community can thrive.

Our whole school approach focuses on seven key areas:



What Will Our Principles Look Like In Practice?

"Rest is so necessary for the health of our minds and bodies, and often so difficult to achieve due to the many demands placed on us.

But rest is also essential for our spiritual health, so that we can hear God's voice and understand what he asks of us". (Pope Francis 2015).



St John Rigby is a community based upon the strong Catholic virtues of Faith, Hope, Forgiveness, Love and Trust and the ethos of our school is that it promotes inclusion and the valuing of each individual, encouraging self-esteem, self-discipline, and mutual respect.

Our mission statement lies at the heart of all we do and underpins our overarching core aims:



- To ensure **God's will** is achieved by empowering our children to develop as happy, safe, confident and successful learners who are able to make informed choices that are in their own and others best interests.
- To enable children to **work** with a joy and love for learning, acquiring the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to make a positive contribution to society.
- To enable children to **play** with an inquisitive and exploratory mind as they imagine, collaborate and create. They will take ownership of their learning journey and know that limitations are also opportunities for growth, showing courage to sometimes be wrong.
- To inspire children to **grow**, **day by day**, in their knowledge and understanding of the virtues to live by, reflecting our Gospel values of Faith, Hope, Forgiveness, Love, and Trust, whilst continuing to flourish and discover their unique God given potential.

In line with our mission statement and whole school approach to Positive Wellbeing, we have a shared ambition to ensure that emotional wellbeing and positive mental health sit at the heart of our school life; owned and practiced by all within our school community. As part of the implementation process, school practice includes, but is not limited to:

1. Leadership & Management supporting and championing efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing by:

- raising the profile of Wellness through a whole school approach incorporating the key principles
- a collective and individual responsibility across the school to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing that involves all staff and pupils
- having a Senior Mental Health Lead and Mental Health First Aider, working alongside a skilled safeguarding and inclusion team.
- working alongside the Trust-wide Approach to Staff Wellbeing

2. The Ethos and Environment of the school, underpinned by the school mission statement and Rigby Way, ensures that:

- positive relationships between staff, staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, supports a sense of belonging, where everyone feels safe, connected and supported.
- collegiality and a shared vision underpin a collaborative approach to policy and process
- there are high expectations for behaviour and conduct within the school. Staff are positive role models and adopt restorative practice where issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency.
- the FLAME drivers are instrumental to the inclusive Catholic ethos and shared understanding of how to embrace and value our unique qualities, celebrating diversity and making a positive contribution.
- the school building, classrooms, and work spaces are well maintained and appropriately furnished, creating a welcoming, safe and warm environment.

3. Early Identification and Targeted Support to ensure intervention is provided for those who are at greater risk. The school identifies and monitors this by:

- careful analysis of assessment data for pupils e.g. PASS Surveys
- a holistic approach to inclusion, with regular team meetings focusing on behaviour, safeguarding, SEND and attendance, as well as staff wellbeing as a running item at SLT meetings
- working with multi-agency provision and the local offer of mental health practitioners.
- promoting counselling and wellbeing support for staff through the 'Health Assured' & DFE provision

4. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning being carefully designed to promote resilience, support health education and provide opportunities to develop and promote social and emotional skills through:

- Ten:Ten - a dedicated Personal Social Health and Economic education (PSHE) curriculum (including statutory content regarding Relationships and Sex Education) with content which is delivered through Catholic virtues to live by and a carefully sequenced programme of lessons.
- emotional literacy development (KIPSY), ensuring pupils are able to recognise, understand, verbalise and manage their emotions, as well as specialist workshops developing pupil resilience and anxiety management.
- the Health Me Curriculum, which develops pupil's awareness of supporting wellness and mental health difficulties, and information is shared about when to seek help and who to go to when distressed.
- a dedicated Inclusion team supports teaching staff to implement appropriate strategies for pupils with additional and/or complex needs, including those recommended in professional reports.
- The Rigby Way: a consistent approach to routines and expectations, providing pupils with stability and security in what is expected of them.

5. Promoting and Supporting Staff Wellbeing which is a priority for the school: staff are the most valued resource and systems and process in relation to supporting staff are essential for improving morale and productivity. Staff Development to support health and wellbeing considers:

- leadership commitment to a workplace wellbeing charter that also considers workload demands and supports staff to gain work-life harmony, as well as regular measurement of staff wellbeing to monitor and respond to changes as required.
- supporting staff to champion their own wellbeing, offering professional development around managing wellbeing and mental health, as well as signposting to resources such as '[The Better Health Every Mind Matters](#)' website, the [UK Charity Education Support](#) and [Health Assured Wellbeing Portal](#), all of which include self-care tools to help staff to take simple steps to look after their mental health and wellbeing
- empowering staff through ongoing training to increase their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing, enable them to recognise mental health difficulties in the school community, as well as consider appropriate actions to take if they are concerned about one of their pupils.

6. Enabling Pupil Voice to influence decisions in order to create meaningful change and implement better support systems that allow our pupils to develop emotionally and achieve academically. Pupils voice is promoted as part of:

- The Wellbeing Focus Group with pupil ambassadors being instrumental in supporting change for all pupil wellbeing across the school
- Pupil Conferences through which pupil voice will address key issues and school policy, helping them to feel part of the school and wider community; at an individual level, benefits include helping pupils to gain belief in their own capabilities, including building their knowledge and skills to make positive choices and independence; collectively, students benefit through having opportunities to be part of decision-making, to express their views and to develop strong social networks.

7. Parent and Community Partnership which recognises how family plays a key role in influencing children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, and the importance of both universal and targeted interventions to support parenting and family life, through a combination of emotional, parenting and practical life situations. As a school, we embrace the importance of parent partnership in achieving a positive impact on educational outcomes for pupils and pupil wellbeing by:

- fostering open communication channels and encouraging parental involvement in school activities
- providing resources and support for parents to actively engage in their child's education
- engaging parents in the whole school approach to wellbeing, clearly communicating the school and local offer available to support positive mental health and emotional wellbeing – this includes provision mapping and signposting parents internal and external resources available.
- empowering parents to support their children's mental health and wellbeing, as well as learn about mental wellbeing for themselves, through school-led workshops and collaboration with the MHST.