



Welcome to our new Safeguarding Newsletter

Keeping children safe and well is our number one priority at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School. Every half term we will be producing a newsletter based on a safeguarding theme. This newsletter is designed to help school and parents to work together to safeguard children's wellbeing. This half term's topic is **mental health and wellbeing**. According to the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families, over 50% of mental illnesses start before the age of 14 and 1 in 10 children and young people have a mental health disorder. Read on for information, advice and support.

What is 'mental health and well-being'?

- ◆ Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.
- ◆ It affects how we think, feel, and act.
- ◆ It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.
- ◆ Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through to adulthood.

In child-friendly language:

We all have mental health. Mental health is about our feelings, our thinking, our emotions and our moods. Looking after our mental health is important.

Issues which can affect children and young people include:

- ⇒ **Anxiety:** Children and young people may feel anxious in particular situations, such as speaking in class or socialising with peers, and may want to avoid these scenarios. They may find themselves worrying a lot and not being able to stop. They may also experience physical and visible symptoms, such as panic attacks.
- ⇒ **Low mood:** Low mood can mean an absence of feeling, irritability, lack of pleasure, and/or lack of motivation. Doctors define low mood as feeling this way for over two weeks. It is not always easy to spot low mood. Signs include changes in behaviour and relationships with friends and school staff, becoming more withdrawn and fluctuating attendance. Low mood may be related to challenging home circumstances, bullying or difficult peer relationships.
- ⇒ **Self-harm:** Self-harm usually means cutting or injuring oneself deliberately. It gives a visible sign that something is 'not OK'. A child or young person may self-harm to feel more in control, to help them cope with negative feelings, or to punish themselves.

Why is it important to have good mental health?

Positive mental health allows people to:

- Realise their full potential
- Cope with the stresses of life
- Work productively
- Make meaningful contributions to their communities

1 in 10
children
has a mental
health disorder



That could be
as many as
3 children
in every class



What can we do to promote positive mental health and wellbeing amongst our young people?

- ⇒ Concerns raised by parents—if you have a concern about your child's mental health or wellbeing please contact their class teacher or our lead member of staff for mental health, Miss Crowley.
- ⇒ Concerns raised by school staff—all Holy Cross staff know that should they have a concern about a child, they can refer this to the Senior Leadership Team for support and advice. Outside agencies can be involved should this be necessary.
- In school we have a variety of different ways for children to be heard and listened to (Article 12), for example, peer mentors, buddies, rights respecting steering group, rainbow group, mental health ambassadors, online safety ambassadors, worry box on the class prayer focus and the chaplaincy team. A 'healthy minds' lunchtime club is run every Friday by the Mental Health Ambassadors.
 - The best way to help children and young people dealing with anxiety is to find ways to face feared situations. Help plan ways for them to test out their fears gradually and set specific goals (e.g. speaking in class at least once a week).
 - Praise and reward small (and big) successes when the child or young person faces their fears. It can help them if you remain positive.
 - Trust is very important. It is important not to label children and young people because of their behaviour or previous experiences.
 - Encourage your child to share their thoughts- both good and bad- and let them know that we all have bad and good thoughts but the **most important thing to do is to talk about it**. A problem shared is a problem halved!

For more information and support, please visit these lovely websites:

- ⇒ www.youngminds.org.uk
- ⇒ www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- ⇒ www.mind.org.uk
- ⇒ www.annafreud.org



TALK & LISTEN,
BE THERE,
FEEL CONNECTED



DO WHAT YOU CAN,
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,
MOVE YOUR MOOD



REMEMBER
THE SIMPLE
THINGS THAT
GIVE YOU JOY



EMBRACE NEW
EXPERIENCES,
SEE OPPORTUNITIES,
SURPRISE YOURSELF



Your time,
your words,
your presence