



## **St Bernard's Preparatory School**

### **Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2025**

#### **Context**

Recently it has been well documented that there is a mental health 'crisis' among children and young people with increasing numbers of children experiencing anxiety, depression, oppositional disorders and attention difficulties amongst many others. The Department of Education have identified schools as key sites for intervention, a view that we at St Bernard's Preparatory School share. While most children and young people will not experience mental health problems, a significant number will.

This strategy looks at the areas of wellbeing, and mental health. Our aim is to ensure that all staff, children, and parents are able to maintain positive wellbeing and mental health.

St Bernard's Preparatory School is a Catholic, co-educational school for children aged 2 ½ to 11 years. We pride ourselves on offering pupils a broad, rounded education in a happy, caring and nurturing environment. We consider our children's pastoral needs, happiness and wellbeing to be of paramount importance.

#### **Vision and Aims**

We strive to give our pupils the best start in life. We treat every child as an individual and give them every opportunity to achieve their full potential in academic, creative and sporting pursuits. We are committed to the development of children's social, emotional skills, children's self-esteem, their mental health and wellbeing. We are committed to developing the children's responsibilities towards themselves, others in the school and the local and global community.

Our vision and our aims are to provide a broad and forward-thinking education which cherishes a child's individuality, whilst nurturing their happiness, confidence and passion; preparing them to be independent, collaborative, and resilient learners.

Focusing on the children's personal development alongside their academic and physical development, enables them to develop independence, confidence, leadership and growth mindsets, which results in confident, resilient pupils who can persevere and make decisions.

Learning is an adventure and we are keen to help your children to have curious minds and to explore the world around them.

To achieve this, we aim to:

- Give all pupils, whatever their ability, the opportunity to flourish academically.
- Teach our children to be independent learners with enquiring minds; to create a joyful learning environment where pupils can engage fully in all aspects of discussion and take pride in their work.
- Provide a breadth of opportunity including excellent sports provision, creative, music and performing arts opportunities, and a full programme of fun and challenging activities.
- Have a high emphasis on pastoral care, social skills, and developing good manners. The school's Catholic ethos permeates daily life, and children develop the skills to become positive members of society.
- Create an environment where boys and girls discover their passion and leave St Bernard's filled with the zest for learning.
- Build a supportive, cohesive, and open-minded environment for children, parents and staff.
- Prepare children to move on to the secondary school of their choice.
- Promote and protect the emotional wellbeing and mental health of all.

We commit to making it our mission to promote positive wellbeing, mental health, and resilience for all our pupils and staff.

We will strive to create an environment that has a whole school approach, ensuring that the message that mental health is everyone's business is heard. We will prioritise our school's wellbeing and mental health and commit to our policies to reflect this. We will provide excellent mental health support, understanding and intervention to our whole school community.

The Headteacher and Governors are committed to having a wellbeing lead in school. The wellbeing lead is the Pastoral Assistant Head and she, alongside the Wellbeing Team, is responsible for promoting the wellbeing and positive mental health of pupils, staff, and parents.

## **Positive Culture**

At St Bernard's Preparatory School, we are taking steps to create an awareness across the whole school community that emotional wellbeing and mental health are the responsibility of all. We will continue to highlight the importance of emotional wellbeing and mental health, including its impact on academic performance and invite our whole school community to contribute to our school's vision and strategy for emotional wellbeing and mental health.

As a school, we implement positive ways of talking about, and removing the stigma around, mental health, this happens through: staff mental health training, PSHCE lessons, staff members supporting children to recognise and cope with their feelings, ELSA support, communication and support offered to parents, and within our lessons and the day to day running of school.

## **Partnerships**

As a school we have identified and maintained links with appropriate local health, social care and voluntary and community sector services.

We have identified representatives who attend local Early Help forums to share information on Wellbeing and Mental Health and gain new learning.

We work with other schools to share best practice and new learning.

## **Pupils in need of additional support**

We are aware of risk factors that may indicate a child needs help, and we know our children well enough to recognise changes in their behaviour and personality.

We offer different levels of support:

**Universal support** – To meet the needs of all of our pupils through our overall ethos and our curriculum.

**Additional support** – For those who may have short term needs and those who may have been made vulnerable by life experiences such as bereavement and difficult circumstances outside school

**Targeted support** – For pupils who need more differentiated support and resources or specific targeted interventions such as Drawing and Talking. Referrals to outside agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

We use our Mental Health and Wellbeing Provision Pyramid (see below) to guide our responses. These responses may include for example:

- one-to-one and group work with trained school staff
- supporting and working with families
- individual intervention programmes and support
- ELSA Sessions
- referrals to outside agencies
- communication and recording through My Concern, our software for monitoring and recording wellbeing matters.



