



## **Staff Wellbeing Policy**

Adopted by Governing Body: 05.02.19

Reviewed by Governing Body: 11.05.21

Review Cycle: 1 year

Statutory Policy: No

## **1. Rationale**

At Pitcheroak School we recognise that our staff are our most important resource and are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, purposeful learning community.

We recognise that there is a direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and ethos of a school are determined by the extent to which staff work towards a shared vision.

We believe that it is essential that all staff feel part of a valued team, have the opportunity to express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance.

This purpose of this policy is to ensure that we embrace the many school practices that support staff health and wellbeing, to minimise the harmful effects of stress and ensure that there is cohesion in working towards health and wellbeing for all staff. It outlines some of the ways in which we commit to maintaining staff wellbeing and it recognises that each individual member of staff and their circumstances are different but provides an overview of the basis on which everyone can contribute, and expect to be treated.

## **2. Aims**

We aim to ensure that our school:

- supports staff mental health and wellbeing
- minimises stress
- encourages staff to keep a healthy work-life balance
- encourages staff to manage their family and work responsibilities
- ensures staff feel valued
- recognises and promotes the importance of a happy team
- promotes staff engagement to make decisions at all levels
- takes account of equality implications.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

The senior leadership team (SLT), governing body and school staff will work towards an ethos where everyone is valued, where respect, empathy and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships and where health and wellbeing are held central to school practice. We expect all staff to show respect and empathy for each other, and to treat confidential information sensitively and according to school policy.

**The governing body is responsible for:**

- fulfilling its duty of care as an employer
- monitoring the workload of the headteacher
- receiving any concerns from members of staff
- regularly reviewing the resources and practice in order to support staff to manage their workload
- reviewing this policy in conjunction with the headteacher

- considering how governors are treated and valued
- ensuring that demands are not placed on individual members of staff that interfere unfairly with their work-life balance
- operating a sensitive performance management policy
- ensuring that other school policies and procedures take account of staff wellbeing
- overseeing that change management is operated in a fair and reasonable way.

**The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- providing personal and professional development such as team building, management of change, stress management, assertiveness, effective communication
- providing a non-judgemental and confidential support system such as coaching, immersion, mentoring and pastoral support for staff
- monitoring the workload of members of staff and being alert to signs of stress
- listening to the views of members of staff and providing a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes
- ensuring that the efforts and successes of staff are acknowledged and celebrated
- acting as gatekeeper and prioritising reforms and innovations
- ensuring that staff are equipped with the right training to do the job confidently
- ensuring that staff feel valued and that time is set aside for them
- providing meeting guidelines that are agreed upon and followed
- planning the year's timetable considerably bearing in mind staff commitments
- providing a set budget for staff facilities, environment and welfare
- including in professional development meetings opportunity for staff to discuss their aspirations and career intentions
- making special arrangements, where possible, to enable staff to combine the demands of family life and work life
- recognising that staff may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work, and which may have a temporary influence on their work performance e.g. health issues, bereavement or loss, or personal circumstances
- ensuring accessibility of SLT to members of staff
- ensuring that there are effective methods of communication
- ensuring support services are made available or signposted on behalf of members of staff where additional specialist support is needed
- maintaining contact with staff during long absences
- ensuring that a mentor system operates within the school and especially for each new members of staff and that the staff induction process is put into place
- conducting risk assessments for work-related stress
- relevant time protected for staff such as PPA, staff meeting time for reports etc.

The Headteacher implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate staff such as the school business leader, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and pastoral staff who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice.

**Members of staff are responsible for:**

- treating one another with empathy, respect and kindness
- taking care of their own health and safety at work and communicating with direct line managers where they need support

- being committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and keeping in mind the workload and wellbeing of colleagues
- valuing all members of staff in the school and acknowledging the important role that everyone takes
- encouraging staff to contribute to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to build morale and effective team spirit
- developing and respecting shared areas where possible so that there is space to relax as well as appropriate work spaces.

**Examples of good practice may include:**

- providing refreshments and/ or lunch in INSET training
- carrying out team-building exercises as part of staff CPD
- providing access to activities yoga, fitness and gym facilities for staff
- giving staff the option to plan their own social activities
- holding designated health and wellbeing days
- celebrating staff achievements
- celebrating staff birthdays
- providing pastoral services – drop-ins and confidential sessions
- providing spaces for staff to be able to meet, relax and work quietly
- providing creative opportunities for building morale and promoting wellbeing (e.g. croissant mornings, cake/fruit days, shared lunches)
- regularly reviewing workload and taking action to address issues
- acknowledging staff effort through personal letters
- allowing adequate time within the school day to collaboratively plan
- ensuring that there is no pressure on staff to respond to e-mails outside the 7am-7pm hours
- ensuring that time is allocated during 1:1 line management meetings for wellbeing to be discussed
- providing staff with adequate time for de-brief following pupil incident/management

**4. Support in specific circumstances**

The school will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to specific circumstances. In some cases, it may be necessary to seek external services, such as HR to assist but the school will continue to support even when external services are involved.

In cases where an employee has had to take time off as a result of a mental health problem, a W.A.P can be used as part of the return-to-work process to set out what steps you and your line manager plan to take to support recovery (See Appendix 1).

Staff are encouraged to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, support will be given on an individual basis in line with the LOA policy.

Where possible, staff are supported with their work-life balance and wellbeing outside the school. This could be through providing staff with paid leave for special events and celebrations, or time off to deal with specific family circumstances or crisis.

Following maternity leave a meeting will be arranged with the staff member and the Headteacher one calendar month following a return to work to identify any further support measures that are required.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for Useful References and Contacts

## **5. Related policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies for:

- equal opportunities
- performance management
- health and safety
- absence management and procedure
- whistleblowing
- LOA Policy

## **6. On-going commitment to the prioritisation of wellbeing - Links to the SDIP/ SEF**

Our priorities under this policy are in-line with the school development plan.

Targets and actions are outlined in the school development plan, and the Headteacher is responsible for communicating and implementing the action plan.

## Appendix 1

### Appendix 1 - WELLNESS ACTION PLAN

A Wellness Action Plan (W.A.P) reminds us what we need to do to stay well at work and details what our line managers can do to better support us. It also helps us to develop an awareness of our working style, stress triggers and responses, and enables us to communicate these to our manager.

In cases where someone has had to take time off as a result of a mental health problem, a WAP can be used as part of the return-to-work process to set out what steps you and your manager plan to take to support recovery.

The information in this form will be held confidentially and regularly reviewed by you and your manager together. You only need to provide information that you are comfortable sharing and that relates to your role and workplace. This form is not legally binding, but it will help you and your manager to agree, together, how to practically support you in your role and address any health needs.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that data gathered in this form will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone without the permission of the member of staff.

1. What helps you stay mentally healthy at work? (for example taking an adequate lunch break away from your desk, getting some exercise before or after work or in your lunch break, light and space in the office, opportunities to get to know colleagues)
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2. What can your manager do to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy at work? e.g. regular feedback and catch-ups, working patterns, explaining wider organisational developments).
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3. Are there any situations at work that can trigger poor mental health for you? (for example conflict at work, organisational change, tight deadlines, something not going to plan)
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4. How might experiencing poor mental health impact on your work? (for example you may find it difficult to make decisions, struggle to prioritise work tasks, have difficulty with concentration, drowsiness, confusion or headaches)
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5. Are there any early warning signs that we might notice when you are starting to experience poor mental health? (for example changes in normal working patterns, withdrawing from colleagues).
6. What support could be put in place to minimise triggers or help you to manage the impact? (e.g. extra catch-up time with your manager, guidance on prioritising workloads (consider reasonable adjustments)
7. Are there elements of your individual working style or temperament that it is worth your manager being aware of? (e.g. a preference for more face-to-face or more email contact, a need for quiet reflection time prior to meetings or creative tasks, negotiation on deadlines before they are set, having access to a mentor for questions you might not want to bother your manager about, having a written plan of work in place which can be reviewed and amended regularly, clear deadlines if you have a tendency towards perfectionism or overworking a task)
8. If we notice early warning signs that you are feeling mentally unwell, what should we do? (for e.g. talk to me discreetly about it, contact someone that I have asked to be contacted)
9. What steps can you take if you start to feel mentally unwell at work? Is there anything we need to do to facilitate them? (e.g. ask your line manager for support).

Employee signature: ..... (print name) ..... Date:  
Employer signature: ..... (print name) ..... Date:  
Date to be reviewed: .....

## Appendix 2 – Useful Contacts & References

- **Education Support (previously Teacher Support Network) Website:**  
www.educationsupport.org.uk or by calling the Support Line on 08000 562 561 (provides confidential telephone counselling and coaching)  
*Offers practical and emotional support services to teachers and other staff in education*
- **Mind Website:** www.mind.org.uk with FAQs Infoline on 0300 123 3393 or email info@mind.org.uk  
*Charity providing advice and support to empower anyone with mental health problems - campaign to raise awareness and improve services*
- **Mind Workplace:** www.mind.org.uk/workplace consultancy and training
  
- **The Samaritans Website:** www.samaritans.org call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org
- *Worcester Office: 10 Sansome Place, Worcester, WR1 1UA - someone to talk to who will give you support - open 24 hours a day*
  
- **Saneline Website:** www.sane.org.uk or call 0300 304 7000
  
- **Employee Assistance Helpline:** 0800 328 1437 - 24/7 confidential helpline for employees