

Staff Wellbeing Policy



The “School” as the employer, has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff, as far as reasonably practicable. It is our intention to have in place, steps to manage those factors that could harm staff members’ physical and mental wellbeing, which includes work related stress.

This duty extends only to those factors which are work related and within the School’s control.

This policy is written as a formal record of the measures and procedures and practices that the school and its staff commit to so as to ensure that Staff Wellbeing is central to our work as a staff community.

Staff Wellbeing Policy

This policy accepts a universal definition of work-related stress as “the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.

There is an important distinction between ‘reasonable pressures’ which stimulate and motivate and ‘stress’ where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

A possible set of Management Standards which cover the primary sources of stress at work can be found below. These are not definitive and will be adapted to suit the needs of the school. It is accepted that, if not properly managed, these primary sources of stress are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands.** Workload, work patterns and anything within the work environment that adds to the demands that staff face, including deadlines, student behaviour and parents.
- **Control.** How much say a staff member has in what they do and how they are able to do their work.
- **Support.** Including the sponsorship and resources provided by the school, and encouragement of leaders, line managers and colleagues.
- **Relationships.** Including how positive working behaviours are promoted to avoid conflict and effectively dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role.** Including the extent to which staff understand their role within the school, how this fits with that of their department or function and the aims of the school and whether leaders ensure they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change.** Includes how well organisational change is managed and communicated within the school.

The School’s performance on wellbeing and stress management will be assessed in the context of the environment in which we operate, taking into account the demands and pressures of:

- Private fee paying education in an international context
- National agenda requirements such as external assessment
- External inspection frameworks and reviews
- Changing Government policy and requirements

2. Statement of Intent

School leaders, the owners and the Governing Body acknowledge the potential impact that work can have on an individual’s physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case, as well as a moral and legal duty, for taking steps to promote staff wellbeing as far as reasonably practicable.

We are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with fairness and dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

We also recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on staff wellbeing, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

This Staff Wellbeing Policy expands upon the School's Health and Safety policy, setting out how the School will promote the wellbeing of staff by:

- Creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors are understood and mitigated as far as practically possible through good management practices, effective whole school policies, staff training and development, an agreed school calendar prepared annually in consultation with staff (subject to termly review).
- Increasing managers' and staff members' awareness of the causes and effects of stress.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Developing the competence of managers through introducing them to the competencies proven to prevent and reduce staff stress.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships, both within teams and across the school.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby staff feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.
- Promoting the work of the Staff Social Team and the Staff Wellbeing Committee.

3. Responsibilities for implementing the Staff Wellbeing Policy

3.1 The Principal and the school's senior leaders will:

- Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect within the School.
- Champion good management behaviours as set out in the competencies proven to prevent and reduce staff stress as well as the establishment of a work ethos within the School. This should discourage assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables staff to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting staff on any changes in the School, to management structures and working arrangements at both a school wide and departmental / year group level.
- Promote and enforce, with all reasonableness, an agreed end of day time and expectation for receipt, response and sending of emails, both internally and externally. A best practice ideal is proposed as nothing outside the hours of 5:30 pm and 7:00 am

Monday to Thursday and 1:00pm closure on a Friday through the weekend until 7:00 am Monday morning.

- During holiday periods, communications will occur only in cases of emergency or between senior leaders and key administrative staff who will ensure that the operations of the school can carry on.
- In cases of emergency, the staff Whatsapp group will be used to initially communicate to staff with a follow up email – eg school closure, bereavement, national emergency etc and the Leadership and Administration Team will communicate with parents.
- Staff should try to use delayed send time on emails should they choose to work after the “agreed communication hours” or in the evenings and at weekends.
- The Principal will inform parents of the new policy so that expectations are managed.
- In cases of emergency, parents do have access to the phone numbers of members of the SLT should they need.

3.2 Leaders, managers and supervisors will:

- Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and will promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams they manage. They will quickly and effectively deal with unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- Ensure that there is good communication within their team and there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work, seeking advice from any member of the SLT, their line manager, the HR Manager, a member of the Wellbeing Committee or one of the two staff governors at an early stage where concerns are raised.
- Adhere to the management principles set out in school policies and procedures, and the competencies proven to prevent or reduce staff stress.
- Ensure workload is distributed equitably and fairly among their team and that when work is delegated, team members have the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver it.
- Regularly check in with team members, thank and encourage them and offer praise when it is due.
- Take action in the interests of all team members, other colleagues and students to manage the underperformance of any individual staff member.
- Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- Encourage their staff to participate in activities undertaken by the School to promote wellbeing and more effective working.

3.3 Staff will:

- Treat colleagues and others they interact with during the course of their work with fairness, consideration and respect.
- Co-operate with the school's efforts to implement the *Staff Wellbeing Policy*, attending briefings and raising their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress and poor wellbeing.
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their wellbeing.
- Be liable for their own health and wellbeing as far as is practically possible.
- Take ownership of setting out their own development plan and discussing this as appropriate with their line manager, as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and reduce the risk of stress.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, supporting others as appropriate and helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

3.4 The Principal, working with HR, the cover manager and other members of the SLT will:

- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, for example referring them to the external and internal medical practitioners and / or the school counsellor.
- Ensure there are effective line management systems and arrangements in place to support managers experiencing problems with employee performance, including managing capability.
- Collate management information which will enable the school to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee wellbeing, such as:
 - Sickness absence data.
 - Staff turnover and exit interviews.
 - Cover periods provided.
 - Number of self-referrals to a counsellor / staff assistance scheme.
 - Numbers of grievance and harassment cases.
- Seek the views of staff on the effectiveness of the School's *Staff Wellbeing Policy* and stress management arrangements using evidence-backed staff surveys and other appropriate tools.

4. Staff Wellbeing Committee will:

- Determine the *Staff Wellbeing Policy* and recommend its adoption.
- Monitor the implementation of the *Staff Wellbeing Policy* and the operation of associated arrangements such as the staff counselling service.
- Ensure that the *Staff Wellbeing Policy* is kept under review and updated as appropriate.
- Co-ordinate and deliver appropriate training and briefings to increase awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress among managers and other staff.
- Assist and support managers to undertake local stress risk assessment where required.
- Organise appropriate activities to promote health and wellbeing.
- Act as the main focus group for consulting on the effectiveness of the Staff Wellbeing Policy and the measures taken to implement it, including organising staff questionnaires in relation to wellbeing and work-related stress and validating findings of school-level risk assessments.
- Review the policy every two years following feedback from staff surveys, reviewing management information and the findings of stress risk assessments, and in consultation with the senior management team.

5.2 Arrangements for wellbeing and stress prevention through good management practices will include:

- Having clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure staff members are clear on what is expected in their role and the right person is recruited where vacancies exist.
- Ensuring training and development procedures are in place so individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks and duties required of them.
- Ensuring managers are aware of those behaviours proven to prevent and reduce staff stress and providing opportunities for them to self-assess against them and undertake training where appropriate.
- Having effective processes and procedures for:
 - Promoting staff appropriately.
 - Reward and recognition.
 - Managing performance and capability.
 - Absence management and return to work to ensure that individuals are supported following illness.
 - Harassment and anti-bullying.
 - Communicating with staff on the work of the School and issues affecting their work.
 - Seeking staff feedback, including use of anonymous staff surveys.

Suitable adaptations will be made for disability and accessibility and the schools commitment to EDI will be assured.

These arrangements will be updated and augmented as required and when deemed necessary by the findings of stress risk assessments.

6. Consultation and Communication

- The School will consult with staff on the Staff Wellbeing Policy and measures taken to implement the policy through the operation of the Health and Safety Committee, Staff Wellbeing, Staff and School Governors, owners and SLT.
- Staff surveys and other tools will be used to gather feedback on staff wellbeing.
- The Staff Wellbeing Policy and measures taken by the School to manage work-related stress will be communicated and promoted in school.
- The Staff Wellbeing Policy will be published on the school website and in the staff handbook.

7. Monitoring and reviewing the Wellbeing Policy

The Staff Wellbeing Policy will be reviewed every two years and will take into account all relevant collected data and risk assessments as outlined in this policy.

Adopted (insert date)

Review of Policy

Date for review

August 2024

Signed.....Date.....

School Principal