# Staff Wellbeing Policy

The Friars Primary School



| Approved by: | | Date: May 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Last reviewed on: | | |
| Next review due by: May 2023 | | |

# Contents

# 1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Support the wellbeing of all staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health

- Provide a supportive work environment for all staff

- Acknowledge the needs of staff, and how these change over time

- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities

- Help staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience

- Ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims

# 2. Promoting wellbeing at all times

The Friars Primary School will monitor staff wellbeing through the use of staff surveys and regular check-in's. Workload balance will be prioritised. The school's Emotional Health & Wellbeing Team (EHWB) will meet regularly and will strive to improve staff wellbeing throughout the school year.

## 2.1 Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect

- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff

- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance

- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support

- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit

- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices

- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

## 2.2 Role of line managers

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern

- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff

- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies

- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance

- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help

- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures

- Promote information about and access to external support services

- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate

- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods

- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge

- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work

- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation

## 2.3 Role of senior staff & The Friars Emotional Health & Wellbeing Team (EHWB)

Senior staff are expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours

- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff

- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations

- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring

- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible

- Make sure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes

- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives

- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school

- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated

- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload

- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities

- Promote information about and access to external support services

- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections

## 2.4 Role of the governing board

Alison Rowland is the staff governor and also the Mental Health Lead for the school.

The governing board is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment

- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the headteacher

- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing

- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload

- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work

● Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

# 3. Managing specific wellbeing issues

The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives.

Where possible, support will be given by line managers, senior staff or the EHWB Team. This could be through:

● Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis

● Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services

● Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified

● Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise

● Staff are given the opportunity to complete a Wellness Action Plan (WAP) – see appendix

At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

# 4. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

# 5. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

● Appraisal policy

● Behaviour policy

● Capability procedure

● Staff code of conduct

# Appendix – Wellness Action Plan

Wellness Actions Plans (WAPs) are an easy, practical way of helping you to support your own mental health at work. Everyone can complete a Wellness Action Plan, you don't need to have a mental health problem in order to feel the benefits. It just means that you already have practical steps in place to ensure you are supported when you aren't feeling great.

WAP's can be used for:

> managing someone who is experiencing a mental health problem and want to know more about how you can support them

> staff who are currently well, as a proactive tool to promote and maintain their mental health at work

# Helpful Definitions

### Mental Health

We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health, and how we feel can vary from good mental wellbeing to difficult feelings and emotions, to severe mental health problems

### Mental Wellbeing

Mental wellbeing is the ability to cope with the day to day stresses of life, work productively, interact positively with others and realise our own potential.

### Poor Mental Health

Poor mental health is a state of low mental wellbeing where you are unable to realise your own potential, cope with the day-to-day pressures of life, work productively or contribute to a community.

### Mental Health Problems

We all have times when we struggle with our mental health, but when these difficult experiences or feelings go on for a long time and affect our ability to enjoy and live our lives in the way we want to, this is a mental health problem. You might receive a specific diagnosis from your doctor, or just feel more generally that you are experiencing poor mental health.

### Common Mental Health Problems

These include depression, anxiety, phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). These make up the majority of the problems that lead to one in four people experiencing a mental health problem in any given year. Symptoms can range from the comparatively mild to very severe.

### Less Common Mental Health Problems

Less common conditions like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder can have a big impact on people's lives: it may be harder to find appropriate treatment and, as understanding tends to be lower, people may face more stigma. However, many people are able to live with and recover from these diagnoses and manage the impact on their life well.

**Work Related Stress**

Work-related stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work. Stress, including work-related stress, can be a significant cause of illness and is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and other issues such as increased capacity for error. Stress is not a medical diagnosis, but severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of depression or anxiety, or more severe mental health problems.

# Benefits of a WAP

Given the high levels of stress and poor mental health we are seeing in the workplace, there is a growing demand for innovative and proactive ways of managing our mental health at work. The WAP is inspired by Mary Ellen Copeland's Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®): an evidence-based system used worldwide by people to manage their mental health. The WAPs are a personalised, practical tool we can all use – whether we have a mental health problem or not – to help us identify what keeps us well at work, what causes us to become unwell and the support we would like to receive from our manager to boost our wellbeing or support us through a recovery. We all have mental health just as we all have physical health and this WAP has been designed to support us all to manage our mental health, wherever we are on the spectrum.

Employers who choose to introduce new starters to the WAP during the induction process are able to demonstrate their commitment to staff wellbeing from the very beginning, sending out a clear message that proactive management of the wellbeing of their workforce matters. WAPs are also particularly helpful during the return to work process, when someone has been off work due to a mental health problem, as they provide a structure for conversations around what support will help and what reasonable adjustments might be useful to consider.

# Confidentiality

The WAP should be held confidentially between manager and employee, with the employee being made fully aware of how the information will be used, and therefore only providing information that they are happy to share. If the employee is filling out a WAP as a result of being unwell, you may ask whether they would consent for a copy of it to be held with HR along with any other information about their wellbeing, such as an Occupational Health report or a Return to Work plan.

# Wellness Action Plan

A WAP 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 develop an awareness of our working style, stress triggers and responses, and enables us to communicate these to our manager.

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 a legal document but it can 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. Certain circumstances may require confidentiality to be broken - refer to section 8 for more information on this.

## 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)

## 2. What can your manager do to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy at work?

(For example regular feedback and catch-ups, flexible working patterns, explaining wider organisational developments)

## 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, difficulty with concentration, drowsiness, confusion, headaches)

(For example conflict at work, organizational change, tight deadlines, something not going to plan)

**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?**

(For example extra catch-up time with your manager, guidance on prioritising workload, flexible working patterns, consider reasonable adjustments)

## 7. Are there elements of your individual working style or temperament that it is worth your manager being aware of?

(For example, a preference for more face to face or more email contact, a need for a 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 to

**8. If we notice early warning signs that you are experiencing poor mental health – what should we do?**

(For example, talk to you discreetly about it, contact someone that you have asked to be contacted)

**9. What steps can you take if you start to experience poor mental health at work? Is there anything we need to do to facilitate them?**

(For example you might like to take a break, or need some time out, or ask your line manager for support)

## 10. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Employee signature_____

Date_____

Line manager signature_____

Date_____

Date to be reviewed_____