



Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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It is recognised at St Paul's Primary School that promoting staff health and emotional wellbeing is an integral part of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. We recognise that anyone can experience mental health issues for various reasons which may be out of their control. There may also be work related factors that could contribute to poor mental health such as work life imbalance, workload pressure and poor working conditions. To every extent possible, we aim to recognize and address cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues.

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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

The school aims to:

- We aim to:
 - • Treat staff mental illness seriously.
 - • Proactively support resolution of issues causing concern.
 - • Support staff members who face mental health problems.
 - • Create pleasant workplaces.
 - • Encourage communication.
 - • Provide training and signpost staff to materials about where to go if they need additional support / advice regarding their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
 - • Create an open-door policy to Senior Leadership will always be made available if a member of staff is in need of speaking to someone about any issues of concern
 - • Have a fully supportive governing board.

- Hold regular Wellbeing Surveys will allow for mutual communication about personal health and emotional wellbeing.

2. Promoting wellbeing at all times

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
- Follow the school's policy on out-of-school hours working, including guidance on when it is and isn't reasonable to respond to communications
- 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 led to their resignation

2.3 Role of senior staff

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 are made
- 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
- Establish a clear policy on out-of-school hours working, including on when it is and isn't reasonable for staff to respond to communications, and provide clear guidance to all stakeholders
- 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, and make sure that there are clear routes in place to escalate a concern in order to access further support
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections

2.4 Role of the governing board

Our Link Governor for Staff Wellbeing is Abi Ratcliffe.

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 with regard 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 or senior staff. This could be through:

- Giving staff time 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

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

4. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or sooner by Jennifer Ferretti (Headteacher). At every review, it will be shared with the Full Governing Body.

5. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Behaviour policy
- Capability procedure
- Disciplinary procedure
- Staff code of conduct

Reducing Workload

Overview

All members of the school community have a role to play in reducing the unnecessary tasks that take teachers and school leaders away from their core task which is improving outcomes for children.

Cutting down on workload without diminishing the quality of education will be a continuous priority for governors, leaders and staff at St Paul's CofE Primary. We will create a school where workload is kept to the minimum necessary to be effective at all levels and for all staff. This will be a school where working efficiently and effectively will cause workload to be reduced to an acceptable minimum and so all staff will be free from the pressure and stress of over-work

Objectives

1. To ensure that nobody intentionally sets out to create unnecessary workload
2. To see that all involved in school have a role to play in reducing unnecessary burdens.
3. To ensure that where government or any other outside bodies introduce new initiatives the school will assess them critically to ensure that they enhance the quality of education we provide and to ensure that they do not increase workload unnecessarily.
4. To ensure that school leaders have the authority and support to reject initiatives that increase burdens for their staff for little dividend.
5. To review the accountability and self-evaluation strategies we use to check that they are promoting and encouraging good practice without adding unnecessary work.

Strategies

1. The impact on workload will always be taken into account when reviewing or developing policies and practices.
2. We will ensure that only data that is necessary will be collected and by doing so we will reduce the workload of leaders, managers and staff.
3. The processes used for collecting data will be efficient and minimal.
4. To reduce workload, leaders will ensure that the data collected will be given its proper place alongside other the other evidence that is used when making professional judgements.
5. Leaders will develop assessment, marking and feedback polices and strategies which are manageable and proportionate so that workload is reduced.
6. The school will implement a curriculum that is the central driving force of teaching, so that time spent planning is kept to a minimum.
7. To reduce teachers' workload, lesson plans will be focused on learning objectives and kept to the minimum necessary to support effective teaching and learning.
8. Where it is appropriate, staff will be encouraged to work together when planning so that their workload is reduced.
9. Staff will be required to evaluate the impact of their planning on pupils' learning and progression that they can reduce planning where it can be cut down.
10. All staff will be expected to look for opportunities where workload can be reduced whilst maintaining the high standards of teaching, learning and progress set out in the schools' policies.
11. Where anyone in school believes that they are suffering from workload pressure or stress resulting from that pressure they are expected to discuss the issue with an appropriate member of the senior leadership team.

The governors, leaders and managers in school will regularly review their own work to cut down on unnecessary workload and to ensure that work is delegated to appropriate levels of the leadership and management structure

Managing Stress Overview

At St Paul's CofE Primary, we are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees.

We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. This policy applies to all staff in school.

Objectives

1. To protect the health, safety and welfare of our employees
2. To identify all probable workplace stressors
3. To take all reasonable actions to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress.
4. To ensure that workload is balanced and reasonable so that it does not contribute to stress

Strategies

1. The school will provide initial support for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors and signpost them to professional help where it is requested or deemed necessary.
2. The SLT will maintain good communications with staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
3. SLT will ensure members of staff are provided with appropriate training to discharge their duties.
4. SLT will monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
5. SLT will monitor working hours to ensure that members of staff are not overworking.
6. To ensure that workplace bullying and harassment is not tolerated.
7. To be vigilant and where possible offer appropriate additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
8. To support individuals who have been off sick with stress on a planned return to work.
9. To monitor and review the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce stress.

Appendix A -

Sources of Support

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk - children and young people's mental health

Mind www.mind.org.uk – children and young people's mental health

MindEd www.minded.org.uk – a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for adults

Time to Change www.time-to-change.org.uk - tackles the stigma of mental health

Rethink Mental Illness www.rethink.org - challenges attitudes towards mental health

Mental Health Foundation <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

Together <https://www.together-uk.org/> - a leading mental health charity

The Centre for Mental Health <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/>

BACP Find a Therapist <https://www.bacp.co.uk/search/Therapists>

Education Support Partnership <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/> - charity specialising in improving the health and wellbeing of teachers, teaching assistants, headteachers and support staff in schools

Anxiety UK <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

Cruse Bereavement Care <https://www.cruse.org.uk/> support to children, young people and adults when someone dies

Appendix B: Talking to someone making a mental health disclosure

The advice below is based on the ALGEE approach to support initial conversations when someone discloses mental health concerns.

A = Approach (Have a conversation and be sensitive)

L = Listen (Don't interrupt, let the other person speak and don't judge)

G = Give Support (Treat with respect and give practical help)

E = Encourage (To speak to a staff member)

E = Encourage (To speak to family/friends and other agencies/helplines)

Focus on listening

If a pupil, parent or staff member has come to you, it's because they trust you and feel a need to share their difficulties with someone. Let them talk. Ask occasional open questions if you need to in order to encourage them to keep exploring their feelings and opening up to you. Just letting them pour out what they're thinking will make a huge difference and marks a huge first step in recovery. Up until now they may not have admitted even to themselves that there is a problem.

Don't talk too much

The discloser should be talking at least three quarters of the time. If that's not the case then you need to redress the balance. You are here to listen, not to talk. Sometimes the conversation may lapse into silence. Try not to give in to the urge to fill the gap, but rather wait until they do so. This can often lead to them exploring their feelings more deeply. Of course, you should interject occasionally, perhaps with questions to explore certain topics they've touched on more deeply, or to show that you understand and are supportive. Don't feel an urge to over-analyse the situation or try to offer answers. This all comes later. For now your role is simply one of supportive listener. So make sure you're listening!

Don't pretend to understand

The concept of a mental health difficulty such as an eating disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can seem completely alien if you've never experienced these difficulties first hand. You may find yourself wondering why on earth someone would do these things to themselves, but don't explore those feelings with the sufferer. Instead listen hard to what they're saying and encourage them to talk and you'll slowly start to understand what steps they might be ready to take in order to start making some changes.

Don't be afraid to make eye contact

It's important to try to maintain a natural level of eye contact (even if you have to think very hard about doing so and it doesn't feel natural to you at all). If you make too much eye contact, the student may interpret this as you staring at them. They may think that you are horrified about what they are saying or think they are a 'freak'. On the other hand, if you don't make eye contact at all then they may interpret this as you being disgusted by them – to the extent that you can't bring yourself to look at them. Making an effort to maintain natural eye contact will convey a very positive message to the pupil.

Offer support

Never leave this kind of conversation without agreeing next steps. These will be informed by your conversations with appropriate colleagues and the schools' policies on such issues.

Whatever happens, you should have some form of next steps to carry out after the conversation because this will help the person to realise that you're working with them to move things forward.

Acknowledge how hard it is to discuss these issues

It can take someone weeks or even months to admit they have a problem to themselves, let alone share that with anyone else. If someone chooses to confide in you, you should feel proud and privileged that they have such a high level of trust in you. Acknowledging both how brave they have been, and how glad you are they chose to speak to you, conveys positive messages of support.

Don't assume that an apparently negative response is actually a negative response

Despite the fact that a person has confided in you, and may even have expressed a desire to get on top of their illness, that doesn't mean they'll readily accept help. The illness may ensure they resist any form of help for as long as they possibly can. Don't be offended or upset if your offers of help are met with anger, indifference or insolence, it's the illness talking, not the person.

Never break your promises

Above all else, a person wants to know they can trust you. That means if they want you to keep their issues confidential and you can't then you must be honest. Explain that, whilst you can't keep it a secret, you can ensure that it is handled within the school's policy of confidentiality and that only those who need to know about it in order to help will know about the situation. You can also be honest about the fact you don't have all the answers or aren't exactly sure what will happen next. Consider yourself the person's ally rather than their saviour and think about which next steps you can take together, always ensuring you follow relevant policies and consult appropriate colleagues