WELLBEING POLICY/MANAGING WORK RELATED STRESS

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FEARNHILL SCHOOL

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1. Introduction & Scope

This policy outlines the School's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of school leaders and others for identifying, promoting and maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of mental health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

This policy sets out how the school fulfils its legal obligations, the responsibilities of different functions and specialists and the range of services available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing. The school recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving employees' ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and organisational performance.

This policy applies to all employees of the school. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2. Responsibilities

2.1. School

The School recognises its legal duty of care to employees to promote health at work. The school will ensure its policies and practices reflect this duty and create a working environment where potential work-related stressors, as far as reasonably practicable, are avoided, minimised or mitigated through good management practices.

2.2. Leaders

Leaders should ensure employees understand their role within the team and receive the appropriate information and support to do their job. Leaders should also familiarise themselves with the School's policies on diversity and tackling inappropriate behaviour in order to support staff. In particular, leaders are expected to ensure they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by

- Ensuring the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications
- Keeping employees in the team up to date with developments at work, including changes to their roles/responsibilities, and how these might affect their job and workload
- Ensuring employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management
- Making sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams
- Ensuring workstations are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose

School leaders in liaison with the governing body will develop school-wide policies and procedures to support the wellbeing of employees. Leaders will assist managers in supporting individuals and liaise with occupational health (OH) as needed, with the objective of helping employees to maintain good psychological and physiological health.

2.3.   Employees

Employees should take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, exercise and smoking) and must raise concerns with their manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress or having a negative impact on their wellbeing. Employees should take responsibility for developing their own coping strategies as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce of the risk of stress.

2.4.   Occupational Health

The School subscribes to Optima Health. OH professionals will work with School leaders to provide a comprehensive service designed to help employees stay in work or to return to work. This will include preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals from the school, liaising with GPs and working with schools to help employees to retain employment.

3.   Health promotion initiatives

From time to time the school may develop and run a range of health promotion initiatives designed to raise awareness of health and lifestyle issues affecting mental health and wellbeing.

Employees will also be encouraged to establish clubs and groups designed to foster wellbeing, for example, lunchtime walking or dancing clubs, which create a sense of community and inclusion for all. Where possible these initiatives should take place out of core school hours and employee working time.

Other measures available to support employees in maintaining health and wellbeing may include:

- An employee assistance programme
- A mental health first-aid programme
- Procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour
- HfL' s Wellbeing Quality Mark (Staff Wellbeing module)
- A lifestyle management programme
- A stress management/handling pressure programme
- Special leave arrangements such as career breaks/sabbaticals
- Opportunities for flexible working
- Support for workers with disabilities

4.   Training and support

Managers and employees should regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to changing job demands, this will usually be focused on internal support, often relatively simple in nature and most commonly developed to cover all staff as new initiatives are introduced.

Managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises, including stress audits and staff surveys. All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the communication tool most appropriate to the message, for example

departmental/team meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications and organisation-wide methods. The School will seek to ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

5. Occupational health support

If employees believe that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their manager. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects they find to be a struggle, this may lead to the identification of training/support needs.

A referral to the occupational health team may be made if this is considered appropriate after an employee's initial discussion with their manager. Discussions between employees and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health team will provide a report on the employee's fitness to work. This report will contain any recommended adaptations to the working environment, for consideration by the referring manager.

6. Relationship with other policies

This employee wellbeing policy should be read in conjunction with the improving wellbeing guidance and other policies, procedures and guidance covering health and attendance, leave of absence, flexible working, bullying and harassment and the management of work-related stress.

7. The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter

The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, which was co-created by the Department for Education, Ofsted and various other interested parties, is a declaration of support for, and set of commitments to, the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in education. All state funded schools and colleges are invited to familiarise themselves with the charter, and to sign up autumn of 2021, as a shared commitment to protect, promote and enhance the wellbeing of their staff. It is voluntary and there is no deadline to sign up.

The aim is for schools to use the charter to:

- Show staff that you take their wellbeing seriously
- Open a conversation with staff about their wellbeing and mental health
- Create a staff wellbeing strategy
- Create a wellbeing-focused culture

More information can be found at the link as outlined in Appendix 1.

8. Appendix 1 – links to external organisations

ACAS booklet on health and wellbeing that sets out the components for a healthy workplace

https://www.acas.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing

MIND gateway Mental Health at Work: your first stop for better mental health at work

https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk

Helping you / education support - Independent support for all working in education

https://www.educationsupport.org.uk

Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families /Schools in mind

https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges

Education staff wellbeing charter Gov.UK

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter

Trade Unions

https://neu.org.uk/

https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/

https://www.ascl.org.uk/

https://community-tu.org/

https://www.naht.org.uk/

https://www.unison.org.uk/