

Staff Wellbeing & Stress Management Policy

Grove Street Primary and Nursery School



Date of Policy	November 2021	Due for Review	November 2022
Headteacher Signature		Chair of Governors Signature	

Contents

1. Aims

2. Promoting wellbeing at all times

3. Identifying warning signs

4. Managing specific wellbeing issues

5. Monitoring arrangements

6. Links with other policies

“Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” (World Health Organisation)

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- The Management of Health and Safety, at Work Regulations 1999
- DfE (2018) ‘Workload reduction toolkit’

At Grove Street, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff.

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

Waddell and Burton/ define wellbeing as: 'The subjective state of being healthy, happy, contented, comfortable and satisfied with one's quality of life. It includes physical, material, social, emotional ("happiness"), and development and activity dimensions.'

Honest and open lines of communication are integral to supporting and monitoring staff wellbeing, a whole school culture of listening has been established and staff raise any concerns via the appropriate channels. Weekly drop-ins provide opportunity for staff to communicate any issues with the Head Teacher and NEU representative.

Staff wellbeing is measured on at least an annual basis through staff questionnaires. The purpose of the questionnaire is made clear to staff and any necessary changes are put in place depending on what the results show. The results of the survey are shared with staff and governors. Anonymity is always maintained, but staff are consulted on the findings and given the chance to suggest improvements to the school culture and environment.

2.1 Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they show signs of stress, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and any incidents of stress, e.g. being overworked. Let other members of staff know when they need support
- Being open to discussing stress.
- 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
- Not acting in a manner which endangers themselves or others.

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 Designated Senior Leader for Mental Health and Wellbeing/Adult Mental Health First Aider is Caroline Stanley)

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
- Providing information that helps staff to manage stress effectively.

- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections
- Alongside supporting staff, it is also important that school leaders look after their own wellbeing and make sure they know where to go for support, both professional and emotional

2.4 Role of the governing body

Our specific link governor responsible for staff wellbeing, is Nicky Cornford.

The governing body 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
- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the school - promoting stress as a serious issue rather than a weakness.
- Consulting the headteacher on managing staff stress and promoting wellbeing, including them in any decisions that need to be made.

3. Identifying warning signs

- The school recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and become stressed by different situations and stimuli throughout their working lives. Because of this, it is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues stress.
- The following sources of stress can often be attributed to work:
 - Overworking or undertaking work that does not match the employee's skills and abilities
 - Fear of change and trying to cope with change, e.g. advancements in technology
 - Insufficient workload or not being able to use skills
 - Lack of job security
 - Poor relationships with colleagues and a lack of involvement
 - Harassment or bullying
 - Crisis management
 - Not having a long-term plan in place
- The school recognises that home and personal lives can also prove stressful for staff; bereavement, separation, financial and family problems make people more vulnerable to stress at work. It is common that a combination of stress at home and work can make people particularly stressed.

- The school will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy workplace.
- The school has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress.
- All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that can indicate that a person may be having trouble managing stress.
- All members of staff will look out for the following indicators when identifying stress in themselves or others:

Behavioural indicators

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in eating habits
- Increased smoking or drinking
- Isolation from friends and family

Physical indicators

- Tiredness
- Indigestion and nausea
- Headaches
- Aching muscles
- Heart palpitations

Mental indicators

- Indecisiveness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory loss
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Low self-esteem

Emotional indicators

- Anger or irritability
- Anxiety
- Hypersensitivity
- Feeling drained and lethargic

4. 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 off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services and / or employee assistance programme relevant to the needs of all staff
- 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 every two years by Caroline Stanley (Designated Senior Leader for Mental Health and Wellbeing). At every review, it will be approved by the full governing body.

5. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

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