

Staff Wellbeing Policy

Statement of intent

Epinay School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. Preventing stress is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of the school's staff, which remains a key priority. In light of this, the school understands the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause our employees to become stressed.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the school and staff members in supporting wellbeing and promoting mental health, and to advise employees on how to deal with mental health issues and prevent stress.

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'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Attendance Management Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Induction of New Staff Policy
- Data Protection Policy

- Grievance Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the school's ethos reflects its commitment to well being and Mental Health by creating a working environment that is focussed, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing.
- Ensuring staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and monitored.
- Consulting the headteacher on managing staff stress and promoting wellbeing, including them in any decisions that need to be made.
- Ensuring the headteacher puts measures in place to support staff wellbeing.
- Actively trying to eliminate stressors in the school, e.g. by considering the format and quantity of information it requests from the SLT.
- Ensuring QA is focussed and supportive to staff.
- Recognising mental health issues and appointing a mental health and wellbeing governor.
- Establishing a wellbeing group made up from strategic lead Deputy Head, MAKW, Play Therapist and Mental Health Champions to ensure staff are supported in their roles.
- Ensuring all wellbeing meetings are purposeful, focussed, structured and relevant to the school development priorities.

The mental health and wellbeing governor is responsible for:

- Influencing the setting of a school vision which creates a positive wellbeing culture and is underpinned by equality values, a system of accountability, and robust policies and procedures.
- Ensuring the school has appropriate policies in place that include objectives focussed on meeting staff needs.
- Ensuring there is a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing embedded within leadership practice, the curriculum, the school's values and ethos, and the social and physical environment.
- Ensuring Deputy Head and members of staff are identified as part of the wellbeing group to oversee the provision and support of mental health and wellbeing in school, and to ensure effective links exist with local mental health support.
- The wellbeing group meets half termly to monitor and review the impact of provision and interventions.

- Working with the Deputy Head to ensure that appropriate CPD is in place to support staff.
- Reporting to the governing body on the successes and areas of improvement in planned interventions, and the resources that are in place.

The headteacher and Deputy Head are responsible for:

- Creating a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Resourcing CPD which equips staff with the tools needed to effectively manage stress.
- Developing a sensitive appraisal that is linked to clear job specifications.
- Including all staff in the school's decision-making processes, where possible.
- Organising extra support for staff at times of increased stress,
- Encouraging staff to take advantage of any initiatives introduced to promote wellbeing and effective working,
- Ensuring that all policies that affect staff wellbeing are properly adhered to and reviewed.
- Authorising any staff absences, as well as granting extended leave.
- Monitoring employees' workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring they are not overworked, and providing regular updates regarding absence to the governing board whilst maintaining staff confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Policy.
- Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example for staff.
- Regularly communicating with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
- Conducting and implementing the recommendations of risk assessments, considering the causes of stress.
- Ensuring all staff have read and understood this policy.
- Organising thorough inductions for new employees, explaining the school's policies and code of conduct.

The Deputy Head leads the Wellbeing Group and is responsible for:

- Encouraging all staff to attend events and training opportunities that promote wellbeing and health.
- Providing information that helps staff to manage stress effectively.
- Ensuring that regular contact is maintained with members of staff who are absent for long periods of time.
- Creating and maintaining areas of the school to promote wellbeing (staff board, staff toilets)
- Ensuring new members of staff have received all the relevant information they require, including the procedures for raising concerns about wellbeing (current staff identified to act as a mentor / go to for new staff)

- Encouraging staff to take breaks and support staff to work to their specified hours
- Encouraging two way discussions on issues to allow them to be resolved.
- Gathering information in any cases that allow monitoring of this policy, such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - Sickness and absence data
 - Staff turnover
 - Referrals to the counselling service
 - Referrals to other mental health services

All staff members are responsible for:

- Being able to recognise the early signs of stress or mental health issues in themselves and their colleagues.
- Supporting co-workers if they become stressed, which may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
- Maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
- Promoting a positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Being open to discussing stress.
- Reporting honestly about their wellbeing and any incidents of stress.
- Where possible, asking for help when they feel under pressure or stressed.
- Attending events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health.
- Not acting in a manner which endangers themselves or others.
- Undertaking additional training and personal development opportunities.

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

Actions to support staff

To positively impact levels of stress in the school, the governing body and the SLT will make changes to the whole school. To help manage stress, the SLT will:

- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a full life outside of work.
- Make the most of team bonding; using INSET days to build relationships.
- Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads.
- Reach out to staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. bereavement, allowing sufficient time off and supporting them when they return to work..

To effectively support staff wellbeing, the headteacher, working with the SLT and well being group will take the following actions:

- Measure staff wellbeing by:
 - Staff surveys and structured conversations.
 - Arranging workshops and drawing together a summary of outcomes from staff surveys and questionnaires.
 - Address the wellbeing issues that have been identified.
 - Evaluate the impact of any actions taken on a termly basis, measuring staff wellbeing and identifying issues to address.

The headteacher will ensure that all changes proposed as a result of the actions above are communicated to all members of staff.

A mental health and wellbeing governor will be appointed by the governing body .

A wellbeing group will be created to ensure all staff are supported in their roles and that actions are implemented to mitigate stress in the workplace.

All new members of staff will be provided with a comprehensive induction and their duties will be made clear.

The school has a clear sickness procedure which promotes a positive, caring strategy for staff who are returning to work following sick leave.

The school will ensure wellbeing is promoted and stress is prevented through good management practices, including the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure the right candidates are recruited
- CPD procedures to ensure all members of staff have the necessary skills and abilities to undertake the duties required
- Performance management procedures
- Capability and absence management – return to work procedures will ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness
- Suitable adaptations for disability
- Harassment and anti-bullying resources
- Annual surveys to better understand the areas of work that have a negative effect on staff wellbeing

Self-management

- Staff can also make changes to avoid and prevent stress, as it is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored.
- Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they are feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.
- Staff are encouraged to take action to manage their own stress, these actions will include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity and any negative feelings, exercise will also help to clear thoughts and deal with problems more calmly.

- Managing their workload and establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life,
- Prioritising work, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference.
- Avoiding unhealthy habits, such as drinking and smoking.
- Taking advantage of the wellbeing initiatives and support offered by the school.

Reporting procedures

The following 2 senior members of staff will be designated as wellbeing leads, this is in the event that one of the well being lead is the subject of the complaint:

- **Lynne Murphy**
- **Chris Rue**

If any member of staff wishes to raise a concern about wellbeing, one of the 2 leads will be notified.

The wellbeing leads will provide the member of staff with information about the support that is available to them; this includes both within the school and outside sources. These resources include:

- Occupational Health(South Tyneside Council 0191 4271717)
- Schools Advisory Service for staff insurance and with this additional support is available, see link <https://schooladvice.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019WellbeingBrochureSmall.pdf>

The wellbeing leads will treat all cases confidentially under the safeguarding protocol, information shared will be treated on a need to know basis, staff will be aware of this situation.

The wellbeing lead in receipt of the complaint will investigate and report this to the headteacher

The headteacher will decide whether any further action will be taken.

Response actions

Where problems with wellbeing arise, the necessary support and appropriate actions will be considered. This may include support from HR advisers and/or external services, e.g. occupational health.

The school will continue to support staff when external services are involved.

Support will be provided to staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances outside of the workplace. The school will direct staff to support, both internal and external, and consider a plan of work and duties that can be managed differently during challenging periods.

Support for staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances within the school will be provided following the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme

Policy approved by Governors:	May 2026
Date of next review by Governors:	May 2027