Staff Wellbeing Policy

Date Reviewed	August 2024
Date Ratified by Governing Body	September 2024

Contents

Statement of Intent

The Eastwood Academy is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that there is a direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and ethos of a school are determined by the extent to which staff work towards a shared vision.

The Eastwood Academy wants to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise that staff are our most important resource, and we seek to value our staff through personal and professional support, involvement in school decisions and access to professional development.

As an employer, we have a duty to ensure the health and safety and welfare of our employees as far as reasonably practicable. We are also required to have in place measures to mitigate (as far as practicable) factors that could harm employees' physical and mental wellbeing, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are within the school's control.

We believe that it is essential that all staff feel part of a valued team, have the opportunity to express their views, and are supported to manage their workload within a belonging culture that supports inclusion and a healthy work-life balance.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or the demands placed upon them. This policy recognises that there are many sources of work-related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees or pupils.

We are committed to making sure that this Staff Wellbeing Policy is implemented so that each individual is able to cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of stress within a "no-blame" environment.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we embrace the many school practices that support staff health and wellbeing, to minimise the harmful effects of stress and ensure that there is cohesion in working towards health and wellbeing for all staff. It outlines some of the ways in which we commit to maintaining staff wellbeing and it recognises that each individual member of staff and their circumstances are different but provides an overview of the basis on which everyone can contribute and expect to be treated.

This policy works to maintain a school ethos which supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

This policy applies to all employees working at The Eastwood Academy.

Key People

TEAM	TEAM MEMBERS

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Team	Nicola Lilywhite – DSL Sam Harrison – Assistant DSL Michelle Philp – Assistant DSL Laura Rutter - Assistant DSL Jodie Greenwood – Assistant DSL
Staff Wellbeing Team	Alison Goldsmith-Clark –Assistant Principal Lauren Malliff – English teacher & Literacy Co-ordinator Sam Harrison – Assistant DSL & Music teacher Janine Turner – Science teacher Frances Rhoda – Food Prep teacher
Mental Health Lead	Alison Goldsmith-Clark – Assistant Principal
Mental Wellbeing Coaches	Lauren Malliff – English teacher & Literacy Co-ordinator Sam Harrison – Assistant DSL & Music teacher Janine Turner – Science teacher Frances Rhoda – Food Prep teacher
Wellbeing Link Governor	Joy Joses Mohammed

Scope

 This policy describes the school's approach to promoting staff wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

Policy aims

This policy aims:

- to develop a healthy, motivated workforce who are able to deliver a high standard of education to pupils;

- to help ensure that our school promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health;
- to develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture through regular communication and consultation with staff and their trade union representatives on health and safety matters;
- to recognise that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness and to agree on flexible working practices where possible without damaging opportunities for pupils to succeed;
- to communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly;
- to encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing;
- to comply with all statutory requirements;
- to respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members;
- to provide staff with training to deal positively with stressful incidents and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies via training;
- to improve staff development, co-operation and teamwork by creating effective leaders;
- to make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work-related health and wellbeing issues.

Legislation

Pieces of legislation that will be considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, including, but not exclusively:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Equality Act 2010
- Working Time Regulations
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999

Roles and responsibilities

Trust/LGB:

- Will take overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy while ensuring that staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance;
- Will adopt the appropriate policies in respect of 'family friendly' employment, including consideration of part-time working, flexible working patterns etc., where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the school;
- Will actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental and physical health problems by creating an environment where staff feel comfortable in asking for help;
- Will act early and provide consistent support whilst supporting the Principal on measures to promote wellbeing, including any decisions that need to be made;
- Will encourage stress awareness throughout the school, promoting stress as a serious issue, rather than a weakness;

- Will ensure the Principal puts measures in place to support staff with stress and emotional wellbeing, whilst actively trying to eliminate stressors in school;
- Will ensure that the school operates a sensitive performance management policy;

The Principal:

- Will support the Trust/LGB in ensuring that strategies are implemented to effectively manage and, where necessary, reduce employee stress;
- Will foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner and ensure all new staff are properly inducted with clear explanations of the school's policies and code of conduct;
- Will ensure that there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of school life and ensure all staff have up-to-date, regular training and that they are confident in their ability;
- Will create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns and will enable staff to do so in an environment where stress is not considered a weakness;
- Will follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems, ensuring that a return-to-work policy is established in workplace that is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work;
- Will monitor and review any measures that are planned and assess their effectiveness;
- Will ensure that all staff have access to regular training sessions on health and wellbeing in schools, including practical sessions to deal with mental, physical and emotional wellbeing issues, and that they are given the appropriate time and resources to undertake this;
- In consultation with Trust/LGB, conduct a survey of staff, focussed on health and wellbeing, and share and act upon results;
- Will conduct and implement the recommendation of risk assessments, taking into account the cause of stress;
- Will ensure the efforts and successes of staff are acknowledged and celebrated;
- Will recognise that staff may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work and which may have a temporary influence of their work performance e.g., health issues; bereavement or loss; personal circumstances;
- Will listen to views of members of staff and providing strategies for involvement in the decision-making process;
- Will ensure that all staff read and understand the policy.
- Will ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined;
- Will ensure that all of The Eastwood Academy policies are assessed for workload impact;
- Will ensure resources are in place to keep staff workloads at healthy levels and to provide staff wellbeing support; and
- Will ensure the policy is monitored, evaluated and reviewed.

The Principal implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate staff and senior leaders who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice. The leadership team and school staff will work towards an ethos where everyone is valued, where respect, empathy and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships and where health and wellbeing are held central to school practice. We expect all staff to show respect and empathy for each other, and to treat confidential information sensitively and according to school policy.

Individual members of staff:

- Will treat one another with empathy, respect and kindness;
- Will be committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and belonging, and keeping in mind the workload and wellbeing of colleagues;
- Will report any incidents of stress, e.g., over-working;
- Will be willing/confident to openly discuss stress;
- Will contribute to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to build morale and effective team spirit;
- Will act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves and others whilst in the workplace and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or colleagues;
- Will make themselves aware of all the relevant school policies e.g., capability, attendance, health and safety;
- Will seek support or help if required. This includes understanding that a good relationship requires communication from both parties and therefore is important that issues are raised at the earliest possible moment so that effective strategies can be put in place to manage workloads;
- Will consider attending training on health and wellbeing issues where they feel that this is appropriate; and
- Will share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the school at formal meetings and informal gatherings. This includes responding to school surveys as appropriate.

Support mechanisms

The Senior Leadership Team (Principal, Vice-Principals, Assistant Principals) must encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. The Senior Leadership Team should be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.

Where additional, professional advice is required, then Occupational Health Professionals and other avenues should be utilised. This includes the following:

- Employee Assistance Programme

Where necessary staff should be encouraged to use the free confidential counselling service from Education Support Partnership 0800 562561.

On joining the school and also moving to new roles the following support will also be offered:

- All new staff will be given a school orientation and ensure that they receive the staff induction pack/ staff handbook;
- All new staff will be made to feel welcome and given as much support as possible;

There will be reviews for new staff held throughout the first 11 months of employment (these will be held in line with school policy re. induction/ probation); and

- Discussion of new roles and expectations alongside support for new role and related tasks.

Causes of stress

The school recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and that different people can become stressed 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:

- Over-working or work that doesn't match the employee skills and ability;
- 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;
- No long-term plan in place; and
- Death of a pupil.

The school recognises staff can also experience stress outside of school, home and personal lives can also prove stressful; 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 stressed.

Identifying a stressed colleague

In order to help stressed colleagues, identifying the symptoms of stress is very important. Someone may be suffering from one or more of the negative effects; however, they may not be stressed. When a stressor persists over a longer period of time the indicators become more obvious and acute.

The school:

- Will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy workplace;
- Has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress.

All members of staff will look out for the following symptoms when identifying a colleague with stress:

- Mood swings and consistently bad moods, such as feeling angry or depressed;
- Low self-esteem, loss of confidence, feeling lonely, worthless or overwhelmed;
- Attitude and behaviour, including low morale, feeling unmotivated, poor concentration, lower quality of work, bad timekeeping, difficulty concentrating;
- Noticeable change in behaviours, using drugs, smoking, drinking more alcohol, eating disorders.

All members of staff will also look out for physical indicators of stress, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Low energy, including fatigue and tiredness;
- Upset stomach, including diarrhoea, constipation and nausea;
- High blood pressure, heart disease and ulcers;
- Frequent colds and infections, due to a weakened immune system; and
- Aches, pains and tension in joints and muscles.

School management

In order to positively impact levels of emotional wellbeing in the school, the Principal and the Trust/LGB will ensure any changes to the whole school will be implemented to positively affect all staff.

To help manage wellbeing the Principal will:

- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a life outside of work;
- Provide an employee assistance scheme and work with staff during difficult points in their personal lives e.g. a bereavement;
- Encourage team building; using INSET days to build relationships as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier;
- Ensure that staff wellbeing is a high priority and highlighted through wellbeing sessions and with regular supportive and informative communication
- Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads (one of the main contributors to stress is over-working), helping staff manage their workload will make them feel more relaxed; and
- Provide creative opportunities for building morale and promoting wellbeing.

Self-management

Staff can also make changes to avoid and prevent stress. Stress is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored. Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they're feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.

Staff will take action in order 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, establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life is vital;
- Prioritising work, leaving the least important task until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference;
- Avoiding unhealthy habits, such as excessive drinking and smoking. These may provide temporary relief, however, in the long-term, unhealthy habits will only create more problems.

Arrangements for implementing the Staff Wellbeing Policy

Staff wellbeing and stress prevention can be promoted through good management practices. These include the following:

- Effective recruitment and selection process;
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that the 'right' person with appropriate skills and experience is recruited for the job;
- Agreed knowledge, skills and behaviours for managers, to be cascaded through to all levels of management and supervision;

- CPD programme to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/ duties required of them;
- Managing performance procedures;
- Capability and absence management & return to work procedures to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness;
- Suitable adaptations for disability;
- Anti-harassment and anti-bullying procedures;
- Procedures for communicating with employees on the work of the school and issues affecting their work;
- Flexible working arrangements and contact days with staff on maternity leave; and
- The arrangements will be updated and augmented as required and when deemed necessary by the findings of stress risk assessments.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually. In between the policy will be updated as necessary to reflect any local or national changes. This is the responsibility for the Principal and will be reviewed by the Trust/LGB