

## STAFF WELL BEING POLICY

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### Rationale

Working in a school, where there is an expectation to perform at a high level with limited resources, can be stressful. Typically staff in schools will often put the students first, sometimes at the expense of their own health. This can, despite best intentions, lead to an erosion of performance, low staff morale and ill health. While all staff are susceptible to stress related problems, research has shown that the teaching staff are more likely to suffer than non-teaching staff. Stress related problems for teachers are a national problem:

“Three fifths (60%) of teachers stated that the job had adversely affected their mental health in the last 12 months, and over half (55%) said that the job had adversely affected their physical health. Furthermore, teachers reported a range of negative mental/physical problems as a result of work, including: loss of sleep (84%), anxiousness (80%), low energy levels (71%) and irritability/mood swings (61%). One in ten teachers (10%) stated that they had started using antidepressants in the past 12 months. Two per cent of teachers said that they had self-harmed in the past year.

Consequently, where the job had affected their physical and mental health in the last 12 months, almost half (48%) had seen a doctor and a third (33%) had had to take medication. More than one in ten (14%) had undergone counselling and 5% had been admitted to hospital.”

NASUWT ‘The Big Question’ Teacher Survey 2016

In a school it is impossible to remove all sources of pressure and it is undesirable to lower expectations, but it is important to try to minimise the negative impact of these and protect staff wellbeing. Sandwich Technology School Leadership clearly understands that a school can only ever be as good as its staff and recognises the importance of exercising a duty of care towards this vitally important resource.

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### Purpose

Sandwich Technology School Leadership and Governors are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. It is recognised that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors is acknowledged. This policy sets out the School’s approach to accomplishing this.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

The HSE has produced some management standards, which, if fully addressed, help reduce stress in the work place. They are:

- **Demands:** workload, work patterns, and the work environment
- **Control:** How much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- **Support:** Encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships:** Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change:** How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

This policy attempts to address these management standards.

Through the implementation of this policy the School will:

- identify and regularly review workplace stressors with a view to eliminating or controlling the risks from stress;
- consult with the Governors' Resources Team on proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress;
- facilitate training and/or advice for leaders in good leadership practices;
- facilitate confidential support and/or counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors as appropriate;
- provide adequate resources to enable leaders to support staff whose wellbeing is under threat.

## **Implementation (Roles and Responsibilities)**

### Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes;
- wherever possible and appropriate, seek staff opinion on change – the nature of this consultation will vary according to the nature of the change;
- operate a weekly 'Open Door' where staff can drop in to raise any concerns or issues;
- hold a weekly 'thank you and well done' briefing for staff;
- ensure that staff receive training and advice on Performance Management and pay progression;
- publish a staff handbook that outlines key procedures and systems that enable staff to perform efficiently in their jobs;
- publish the Senior Leadership Team's roles and responsibilities in order to help establish clear lines of communication;
- view each staff absence and request for special leave with sensitivity and in line with the school policy, but also monitor these with the purpose of assessing the wellbeing of the staff, both as a whole and as individuals;
- ensure that bullying and harassment are not tolerated within the school;
- endeavour to individually praise and thank staff for good work wherever appropriate;
- support individuals who have been off sick with stress by conducting return to work meetings and subsequently put into action any recommendations that arise from these;
- ensure that all staff know their roles within the school through producing clear job descriptions and publishing a Whole School Development Plan where the vision and priorities of the school are fully communicated to the staff each year;
- organise an annual 'drinks and nibbles for new staff' at the beginning of each year so that established staff and governors can welcome new staff to the school in an informal setting;
- refer to workplace counsellors, occupational health or specialist agencies as required, in consultation with the member of staff concerned, and subsequently put into action any recommendations that may arise from these;
- consider allowing the school counsellor (fully trained) to be used by staff if required;
- encourage staff to take breaks during the working day by providing a staff room and a reasonable lunch break;
- lead by example in aspiring to achieve a work-life balance.

The Headteacher, via delegation to others and close monitoring of their performance, will also:

- monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded;
- monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking;
- ensure that staff receive adequate training to fulfil their roles;
- ensure that adequate resources are available for staff to fulfil their roles;
- ensure that the environment in which staff are required to work is fit for purpose and safe.

### School Business Manager (with responsibility for Personnel, Finance, Premises and Health and Safety)

The School Business Manager will:

- ensure that staff absence is monitored and raise any concerns about individual health with the Headteacher as appropriate;
- manage the collection and quality assurance of risk assessments across the school;
- report all safety concerns to the Governors' Resources Team and action them as soon as possible;
- continue to budget for end-of-term treats for all staff, or treats for staff at the end of significant events, such as Ofsted;
- monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress;
- inform the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors' Resources Team of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work;
- ensure that adequate resources are available for staff to fulfil their roles;
- ensure that the environment in which staff are required to work is fit for purpose and safe.

#### Assistant Headteacher (Supporting Teaching)

The Assistant Headteacher, via the management of CPD and the associated budget, should:

- ensure that all staff have access to adequate training to enable them to perform their jobs with confidence;
- provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress and wellbeing where appropriate;
- provide appropriate and adequate training to staff with leadership roles to enable them to support their teams;
- provide appropriate and adequate training to support leaders in implementing risk assessments;
- provide opportunities for staff to engage in meaningful and appropriate professional development;
- consult with staff about staff needs for training when planning the CPD programme;
- advise managers and individuals on training requirements.

#### Assistant Headteacher (Supporting Succession)

The Assistant Headteacher will:

- organise a comprehensive induction programme for new staff;
- provide a peer mentor to all new staff to help them through the first few weeks;
- ensure the smooth running of the Staff Benevolent Fund (SBF).

#### All Middle and Senior Leaders

All staff who have responsibility for the performance of other staff should:

- conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction;
- monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded;
- monitor working hours and overtime (where appropriate) to ensure that staff are not overworking;
- attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety;
- ensure that bullying and harassment are not tolerated within their jurisdiction;
- be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work (e.g. bereavement or separation);
- report concerns about overwork, stress or potential ill-health of staff within their team to the appropriate next level of line management where further action is required;
- monitor the work of their team closely with a view to praising wherever appropriate;
- inform the Headteacher if someone in their team has done something particularly praiseworthy;
- regularly meet with members of their team to discuss progress, innovation and workload;
- be aware of their own wellbeing also – they have a responsibility to protect their own work-life balance as well as that of those they are responsible for – and, if struggling, they should speak to their own line manager;
- lead by example in aspiring to achieve a work-life balance.

#### All Staff

All staff members should:

- treat colleagues and all other persons with whom they interact during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity;
- co-operate with the school's efforts to implement the Wellbeing Policy, by attending all relevant meetings and raising their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress on health;

- raise concerns with their own line-manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative effect on their wellbeing;
- take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing by adopting healthy lifestyles and thus aspire to achieve a work-life balance;
- take responsibility for their own development of skills as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce the risk of stress;
- take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, thus helping to avoid causing stress to colleagues;
- raise concerns about health, safety or wellbeing, be it their own or somebody else's, through their line manager or any member of SLT;
- if suffering from stress, be positive about offers of help;
- seek external sources of support when needed, such as:
  - medical support
  - the Education Support Partnership on their 24-hour helpline: 08000 562 561 (this is available to all staff, not just teachers)
  - Trade Union support
- be aware of the potential effects of stress and look out for these, including:
  - anxiety
  - panic attacks
  - fatigue
  - sleeplessness
  - becoming withdrawn
  - depression
  - mood swings
  - irritability
  - neglect of personal appearance
  - frequent absences
  - aggression
  - unwillingness to accept advice or co-operate with others
  - increased use of cigarettes, alcohol or other drugs
  - loss or increase in appetite
  - overworking
  - difficulty in maintaining concentration
  - tensions within personal relationships

### Governors

The Governors receive regular updates on staff health and safety issues and significant staff absences via the Governors' Resources Team and the thrice yearly Headteacher's Report. Through this Governors are able to help to monitor and review this policy. The governors will also monitor and review all new and statutory policies with consideration of staff work/life balance.

### **Links to other policies/documents**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- CPD Policy
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Pay Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Staff Absence and Special/Additional Leave Policy
- Staff Bonus Policy