



Staff Wellbeing Policy

This policy has been adopted by all schools
within The Golden Thread Alliance

Date Approved	September 2022
Date of Next Review	September 2023

1. Introduction

The school as employer has a duty to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its staff, as far as reasonably practical. It must also have in place steps to manage those factors that could harm staff members' physical and mental wellbeing, which includes work related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work related and within the Trust's control. 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 demands placed upon them.

This policy is a working document that will be reviewed regularly to reflect the changes to local or national circumstances which may contribute to the changes in staff duties, responsibilities, and the strain that any of these changes may place on senior leaders, individual staff, or the entire staff team collectively.

Workplace wellbeing relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and work organisation. Staff who feel valued and listened to are more likely to be engaged in the goals of the organisation, work together positively, and perform to their optimal level. A workplace culture that fosters staff loyalty and high morale is likely to keep staff for longer and reduce recruitment costs. The Health and Safety Executive have developed a set of management standards which cover the primary sources of reducing positive wellbeing. These, if not effectively managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity, and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands:** Including workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control:** How much say a staff member has in what they do and how they do their work?
- **Support:** Including the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the school, line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships:** Including how positive working behaviours are promoted to avoid conflict and effectively dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role:** Includes the extent to which staff understand their role within the school and whether leaders ensure that they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change:** Includes how well organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the school.

The school's performance on wellbeing and stress management will be assessed in the context of the HSE Management Standards.

2. Statement of Intent

The Trust Board, Local Governing Bodies and senior managers acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case, as well as a moral and legal duty, in taking steps to promote staff wellbeing as far as reasonably practical.

We are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust, and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with fairness and dignity, and can, consequently, work at their optimum level. We also recognise that work related stress has a negative impact on staff wellbeing, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level. This Staff Wellbeing Policy expands upon the Trust's Health and Safety policy, setting out how schools will promote the wellbeing of staff by:

- Creating a working environment where there are good management practices, effective human resources policies and staff development.
- Increasing managers' and staff members' awareness of the causes and effects of individuals mental and emotional wellbeing.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing forms of mental ill-health.
- Developing managers through introducing them to the competencies proven to improve individual and collective experience at work.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships, both within teams and across the school through focus groups and working parties.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby staff feel they can maintain an appropriate work life balance through regular reviews and anonymous staff surveys.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.
- The development and monitoring of individual wellbeing risk assessments and plans which include care pathways of support both internally and externally.
- Plans are monitored and reviewed termly to measure effectiveness and identify further required areas of support. Ensuring that Safeguarding is at the forefront of any support action for staff and children.

3. Responsibilities for implementing the Staff Wellbeing policy

3.1 The Headteacher/Head of School and the school's senior managers will:

Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust, empowerment, and mutual respect within the school.

- Champion good management behaviours as set out in the competencies proven to prevent and reduce staff stress and the establishment of a work ethos within the school. This should discourage assumptions about a long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and consequently will enable staff to maintain a reasonable "work life balance."
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting staff on any changes in the school to management structures and working arrangements at both a school wide and departmental/year group level.
- Encourage activities that promote health and wellbeing such as physical exercise, practising mindfulness, avenues for communication, celebrations, and recognition of achievements etc.
- Challenge any conduct that may lead to staff feeling unsafe or emotionally distressed.

3.2 Managers and supervisors will:

- Ensure that individuals who wish to discuss their concerns are met with a consistently reassuring, considerate and encouraging approach and the promotion of a culture of mutual respect in the teams that they manage. They will quickly and effectively challenge unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- Ensure that there is good communication within their team and encourage individuals to raise, at an early stage, concerns about their work, seeking advice from Human Resources, the school Wellbeing Team or Health & Safety Team.
- Adhere to the management principles set out in Trust and school policies and procedures and the competencies proven to prevent or reduce staff stress.
- Ensure workload is distributed equitably and fairly among their team and that when work is delegated, team members have the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver required outcomes.
- Regularly monitor the wellbeing of team members and offer appropriate positive and appreciative affirmation, constructive feedback, and encouragement. Proactively manage

and support any underperformance of any individual staff member to support the greater interest of team members.

- Attend appropriate training to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress and how to create a culture of wellbeing with preventive approaches.
- Engage in the creation and monitoring of risk assessments that are undertaken for the betterment of working practices in relation to work related stress and poor wellbeing.
- Encourage staff to participate in activities undertaken by the school to promote wellbeing and more effective working.

3.3 Staff will:

- Treat everyone with fairness, consideration, and respect.
- Ensure that they understand and promote the principles of the Staff Wellbeing Policy by attending briefings and raising their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress and poor wellbeing.
- Raise concerns with their line manager or Wellbeing Team when work related triggers, which are impacting on their wellbeing are identified.
- Take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing as far as is practically possible by seeking support within the organisation or outside agencies.
- Display a sense of responsibility and ownership in their own development plan and co-operatively reviewing these with their line manager, as a support for them to work effectively within their team and reduce the risk of stress.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, supporting others as appropriate and working in a complimentary way to ensure the wellbeing of team members.

3.4 Human Resources:

- Provide advice to managers and staff members on best practice in relation to human resource management, developing policies and procedures as required.
- Ensure that there are arrangements in place for communicating the content of the Trust's human resource management policies, procedures and toolkits to managers and staff.
- Develop arrangements to enable managers and staff to achieve the necessary competencies needed in relation to managing work related stress and improving wellbeing including the encouragement of engaging with trade unions and outside mental health provision.
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, for example referring them to the school's Occupational Health Advisers or counsellors where appropriate.
- Ensure there are clear processes in place to support incidents of poor performance, conduct and safeguarding.
- Collate management information that will enable the school to measure its performance and the impact of any support plans in relation to stress management and employee wellbeing, such as:
 - Sickness absence data,
 - Staff turnover and exit interviews,
 - Cover periods provided,
 - Number of self-referrals to a counsellor/staff assistance scheme,
 - Number of referrals to the Occupational Health Adviser,
 - Numbers of grievance and harassment cases,
 - Wellbeing plan reviews,
- Seek the views of staff on the effectiveness of the school's Staff Wellbeing Policy and stress management arrangements using evidence backed staff surveys and other appropriate tools.

4. Staff, Health and Safety, Wellbeing Team or other (as appropriate) will:

- Determine the Staff Wellbeing Policy and recommend its adoption.
- Monitor the implementation of the Staff Wellbeing Policy and the operation of associated arrangements such as the staff counselling service.
- Ensure that the Staff Wellbeing Policy is kept under review and updated as appropriate.
- Develop a school level risk assessment based on the Health and Safety Executive's "Management Standards for Work Related Stress."
- Co-ordinate and deliver appropriate training and briefings to increase awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress among managers and other staff.
- Assist and support managers to undertake local stress risk assessment where required.
- Organise appropriate activities to promote health and wellbeing.
- Consult with staff voice/union representatives on the development and implementation of the Staff Wellbeing Policy.
- Act as the focus group for consulting on the effectiveness of the Staff Wellbeing Policy and the measures taken to implement it, including organising staff questionnaires in relation to wellbeing and work-related stress and validating findings of school level risk assessments.
- Review the policy every two years following feedback from staff surveys, management information and the findings of stress risk assessments in consultation with the senior management team.

5. Arrangements for implementing the Wellbeing policy.

5.1 Risk Assessment

- At whole school level a risk assessment will be developed by the Head Teachers/Heads of School to establish whether the Trust's policy and school's procedures are sufficient to enable compliance with the HSE's "Management Standards" in relation to the management of work-related stress. Where gaps in arrangements are identified, the relevant central team members and Senior Management Team will consult so that the necessary action can be taken to address any gaps identified.
- Where problems arise at a department or local level, a risk assessment will be undertaken by the relevant senior manager.
- When risk assessments are undertaken at a departmental level, the staff working in the area which is subject to the risk assessment will be consulted. Any safety representative appointed by recognised Trade Unions under the provisions of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977, representing staff working in the area covered by the risk assessment will also be consulted.

5.2 Arrangements for wellbeing and stress prevention through good management practices will include:

- Having clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure staff members are clear on what is expected in their role and the right person is recruited where vacancies exist.
- Ensuring induction, training and development procedures are in place, so individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks and duties required of them.
- Ensuring managers can reflect on their own professional behaviour which may hinder the processes to reduce staff stress and to encourage them to engage in professional development opportunities and appropriate training.
- Having effective processes and procedures for:
 - Promoting staff engagement and wellbeing,
 - Reward and recognition,
 - Managing performance and capability,
 - Absence management and return to work support to ensure that individuals are supported following illness. This may include additional support including risk assessments, wellbeing plans or referrals to therapeutic services or Occupational Health,

- Harassment and anti-bullying,
- Clear Communication regarding internal or external contextual factors that may be affecting their performance,
- Seeking staff feedback, including use of anonymous staff surveys,
- Flexible working arrangements and keep in touch days with staff on or returning from maternity leave.
- Suitable adaptations to be made for disability and accessibility.

These arrangements will be updated and augmented as required as part of a wellbeing risk assessment and plan and will be reviewed as individually necessary.

6. Consultation and Communication

- The Trust will consult with staff on the Staff Wellbeing Policy and measures taken to implement the policy through the operation of the wellbeing team.
- Staff surveys and other tools will be used to gather feedback on staff wellbeing.
- The views of individuals will be sought in areas or teams subject to local stress risk assessments.
- In those areas where safety representatives have been appointed by recognised Trade Unions under the provisions of safety representatives and safety committees Regulations 1977, these safety representatives will also be consulted on the development of local stress risk assessments.
- The Staff Wellbeing Policy and measures taken by the Trust to manage work related stress will be communicated and promoted in schools by the Wellbeing lead and HR.
- The Staff Wellbeing Policy will be published on all school and Trust websites.
- Leaflets (or a summary document) will be produced for staff who do not have easy access to a computer and as part of the new staff Induction process. The contents of the policy will be covered during general induction training sessions for staff and through specific training on stress awareness.

7. Monitoring and reviewing the wellbeing policy.

7.1 Trustees will:

- The Staff Wellbeing Policy will be reviewed regularly, updated and presented for approval to the Board of Trustees. This will consider feedback from staff surveys, all relevant management data, stress risk assessments and action plans from individual schools.
- Will evaluate the implementation of the Staff Wellbeing Policy

7.2 School Leadership Teams will:

- Construct individual school Wellbeing Action Plans and monitor these for impact including the operation of arrangements such as the staff counselling service.
- With the support of HR develop school-based risk assessments based on the Health & Safety Executive's "Management Standards for Work Related Stress".
- Co-ordinate and deliver appropriate training and briefings to increase the awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress among managers and other staff.
- Organise appropriate activities to promote health and wellbeing.
- Consult with staff voice/union representatives on the development and implementation of the school wellbeing action plan.
- Ensure that the school wellbeing team acts as the focus group for all matters associated with the Staff Wellbeing Policy, the associated school action plan, staff surveys and their implementation and review.

7.3 The Local Governing Body will:

- Monitor the school Wellbeing Action Plan for impact including the operation of arrangements such as the staff counselling service.
- Approve the annual school Wellbeing Action Plan and regularly review progress against agreed actions.

8. Action planning

Priorities from staff surveys taken across all Trust schools, will be reviewed and discussed with Head Teachers/Heads of School by the Wellbeing team and Trust Wellbeing leads to inform school level support.

The outcomes of these surveys will be presented to individual school Local Governing Bodies who will have responsibility for ensuring that school action plans are produced by the Head Teacher/Head of School and monitored for impact throughout the year. An outline template for the creation of a School Wellbeing Action Plan is shown as Appendix 1.

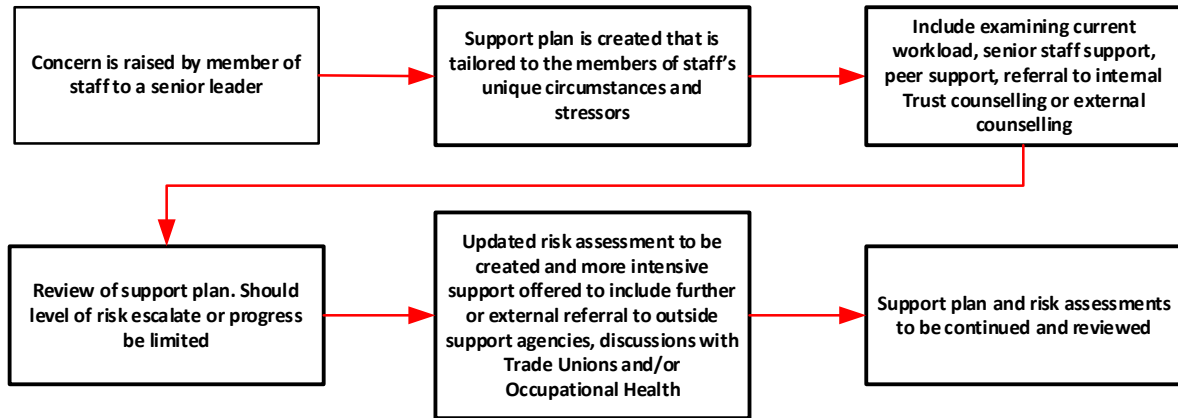
Appendix 1 – Exemplar of school based Staff Wellbeing Action Plan

	PROPOSED ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	TARGET DATE	REVIEW
DATA COLLECTION	Staff surveys contain a wide range of questions on Health and Wellbeing including Mental Health Wellbeing to assess and identify key areas for raising awareness and providing further support	A high % of staff respond positively to the survey and state that they feel supported and informed on Mental Health Wellbeing by senior leaders		
	Sickness absence statistics are regularly monitored to identify if there are cases of stress (work or otherwise) where employees can be supported by senior leaders and managers.	Monthly reports on sickness absence		
	Exit interviews are conducted consistently and outcomes reviewed to identify if any leavers state wellbeing issues or stress as a reason for leaving.	Interventions throughout the year should mean that 0% of staff report that the reason for leaving is related to wellbeing and/or stress		
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Review the use of staffroom facilities and staff working schedules to ensure there is opportunity to take restful breaks during the day e.g., to eat lunch, so that staff can take “time out” and socialise.	Regular monitoring of the use of the staffroom and encourage staff to use this room to take lunch and breaks rather than s working lunch at their desk or in their classroom.		
	Ensure that individual school environments are risk assessed for hazards which may impact on safety and healthy work practices.	Regular H&S inspections and timely responses to reported concerns		

	Staff to be fully and safely equipped to work effectively and safely without detriment to personal and collective wellbeing	Equipment to be regularly tested. Any equipment found to be faulty to be repaired or replaced quickly. Online systems to be reviewed for effectiveness and identified issues to be rectified as soon as possible.		
WELLBEING ACTIVITIES/BENEFITS	Promotion of Employee Assistance Programme, mental health support and mindfulness activities or briefings. Referral to qualified counsellors within the Trust as well as signposting to relevant outside agencies for support.	Staff counselling and other additional support such as wellbeing plans and additional supervision. Staff survey will show that higher % of staff have an increased awareness of mental health issues and how to access help.		
	Promotion of flexible working opportunities across the Trust when appropriate to create a better work/home life balance for staff to include "Family Days".	Managers are more adaptable to allowing staff to work from home as and when appropriate or have flexible working arrangements in such instances as returning from maternity leave.		
	Welfare and peer support. Staff to be able to connect with those who are on leave or working from home.	Staff will feel supported and cared for by their peers and will be able to identify when they are beginning to feel isolated and consequently access support.		
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Mental health and equality training	Evaluation of training programmes and their impact following such training		
	Regular briefings/information sessions for staff	Staff surveys to highlight the understanding of staff about mental health/wellbeing and their view of the ease and accessibility of help as required.		

Appendix 2

Support Pathway



We are mindful that some staff may be struggling but do not wish to engage. A risk assessment around their wellbeing will be completed by the Headteacher/Head of School and their reluctance to engage will be discussed with them to find a suitable pathway that is acceptable to them. If their Mental Health is impacting on their safety or performance, more formal processes to keep them or the children safe will need to be put into place as per our Safeguarding and Staff Code of Conduct policies.