

# Staff Wellbeing Policy

## Statement of intent

Royal Cross 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.

## 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 (2022) 'Workload reduction toolkit'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Attendance and Absence Policy
- Induction of New Staff Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

## Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the school's ethos reflects its commitment to reducing workload and 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 monitoring visits are strategic, focussed and reflective of its monitoring plan, and being clear with staff ahead of the visit about what the focus will be and the information that will be required from them.
- Recognising mental health issues and appointing a mental health and wellbeing governor who will oversee managing and supporting staff mental health.

- Developing an annual schedule of work and ensuring work is not duplicated between meetings of committees and the full governing board.

### 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's strategic plan includes objectives linked to improving, supporting and responding to the mental health of staff.
- 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.

### The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Developing a sensitive performance management process 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, e.g. an employee assistance programme.
- Authorising any staff absences related to stress and/or mental health issues, as well as granting extended leave.
- Monitoring employees' workloads.
- 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.
- Organising thorough inductions for new employees, explaining the school's policies and code of conduct.
- Making reasonable adjustments for members of staff who are struggling with long-term mental health issues.

### The SBM is responsible for:

- Ensuring that regular contact is maintained with members of staff who are absent for long periods of time.
- Ensuring new members of staff have received all the relevant information they require, including the procedures for raising concerns about wellbeing.
- Gathering information in any cases that allow monitoring of this policy, such as, but not limited to, the following
  - - Sickness and absence data
  - - Referrals to the counselling service
  - - Referrals to other mental health services
- Monitoring all staff absences and reporting this information to the Headteacher.

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.**
- 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 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, and 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 the staff**

To positively impact wellbeing in the school, the Headteacher and governing board will ensure that a whole-school approach is taken.

To help manage wellbeing, the Headteacher will:

- Lead by example and take breaks and have a full life outside of work.
- Make the most of team bonding; using INSET days to build positive relationships, as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing wellbeing easier.
- 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.
- Direct employees to the employee assistance programme for counselling and advice services. .
- Ensure Deaf Colleagues have Access to BSL Interpreters for School Meetings and Training.
- Provide BSL Interpreters for Deaf Colleagues at Governor Meetings and Training.
- Offer Supervision for Teachers and other Staff.
- Ensure Protected PPA Time for Teachers and Support Staff with additional responsibilities.

To effectively address workload issues and support staff wellbeing, the Headteacher will ensure that any changes proposed as a result of monitoring wellbeing are communicated to all members of staff.

A mental health and wellbeing governor has been appointed by the governing board who will be responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of staff.

- All new members of staff will be provided with a comprehensive induction and their duties regarding their own and their colleagues' wellbeing will be made clear.
- The school will adopt a sickness plan in line with LCC model policies which will promote 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:**

- Clear job descriptions
- CPD procedures to ensure all members of staff have the necessary skills and abilities to undertake the duties required
- Promotion and reward procedures

- Performance management procedures
- Capability and absence management (LCC model policies) – LCC model return to work procedures will ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness
- Suitable adaptations for disability
- Harassment and anti-bullying policies and procedures
- Flexible working arrangements, in line with the LCC Model Flexible Working Policy

## **Self-management**

Staff can make changes to avoid and prevent stress and/or poor mental wellbeing.

Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they are struggling with their mental wellbeing, or feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.

Staff are encouraged to take action to manage their own mental wellbeing. 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 their workload
- Avoiding unhealthy habits, such as drinking and smoking
- Taking advantage of the wellbeing initiatives, training and support offered by the school
- Speaking to the Headteacher about any concerns they may have

## **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 in line with LCC guidance.

## **Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board and the Headteacher.

## Royal Cross School Wellbeing Charter

### Our aims

Royal Cross School is committed to considering and supporting the wellbeing of all our staff.

We believe that we have a collective responsibility to ensure working at the school remains manageable, a positive experience, and, above all, enjoyable.

By providing support, we hope that we can retain and recruit more staff and meet our core values and ethos for helping and caring for one another.

### To protect staff wellbeing, we will:

- Ensure staff have a fair and reasonable workload, including policies, planning and data management.
- Provide high-quality training and CPD opportunities that meet the needs of individual staff members.
- Continue to review workload and ensure it always remains manageable.

### Our commitments

All staff working at the school can expect:

- To work within a clear code of conduct.
- To receive a robust and high-quality induction.
- To be provided with training opportunities relevant to their role and responsibilities.
- To be allocated roles and responsibilities that are linked to their skill set and area of expertise or be provided with appropriate training to upskill and broaden areas of expertise.
- The fair and equal distribution of roles, responsibilities and tasks.
- If required, to collect data using streamlined processes that are beneficial to their work and receive training on using the school's data management systems.
- The support of the SLT to provide guidance and advice
- An agreed communication protocol which outlines the expected response times from colleagues and external communications, e.g. from parents.
- The use of technology to ensure effective and efficient communication, document and data management, and access to information.
- To be provided with access to external support, such as an occupational health or a confidential listening service (Employer Assist), if needed.
- To work within an environment where their wellbeing is prioritised and valued.
- All changes to school processes to be communicated clearly and the SLT to provide support with implementation.

In addition to the above, teaching staff at the school can expect:

- A clear curriculum planning scheme that provides flexibility, is fully resourced with high-quality materials and is planned over well-defined blocks of time.
- An agreed policy that ensures all marking undertaken is purposeful and focusses on quality feedback and the impact on pupil outcomes.

### The Headteacher and the SLT commit to the following:

- Providing staff with opportunities to discuss any concerns
- Implementing practices that allow for meaningful and useful communications

- Supporting ECTs and teachers in the early stages of their careers to adopt efficient work practices and keeping this support under regular review
- Encouraging a workplace culture that promotes a healthy work-life balance
- Making every effort to reduce the number of meetings, ensuring that those that take place are planned effectively and flexibly, and always have a key focus
- Providing staff with relevant training or CPD opportunities in school
- Monitoring staff absence levels, patterns and reasons, and using return to work meetings consistently and effectively
- Regularly monitoring the progress of work practices, including curriculum planning, communications, marking and feedback, and data collection, and adapting these where necessary
- Considering the impact of any potential changes to the school's practices before they are implemented
- Communicating changes to the school's practices to all staff and the whole school community, to ensure everyone understands the reasons behind the changes

### **The governing board commits to the following:**

- Ensuring it receives regular updates regarding absence levels that are broken down into the cause of absence and role of staff
- Making every effort to ensure committee meetings that school staff are expected to attend are purposeful, focussed and structured, and relevant to the school development priorities
- Considering the nature of information requests and being clear about the information needed from the SLT and school staff
- Work with the Headteacher in advance of all monitoring visits and agreeing the focus
- Working within any policy agreements, including those relating to using technology to reduce workload
- Establishing the role of the mental health and wellbeing governor to support the mental health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils
- Support the SLT in delivering any necessary, statutory changes in working practices in response to external measures.
- Support the SLT in maintaining protected strategic thinking time off site.
- Monitor the workload of the SLT within the small school to ensure workload is manageable and a healthy work/life balance is maintained to include 'silent email' time.