



Whitstable Junior School

Staff Positive Mental Health Policy

Governors' Committee Responsible: Curriculum Committee

Policy Originator: AHT / SENCO

Status: Non-Statutory

Review Period: Every 3 Years

Date approved: June 2021

Next review date: June 2024

Ratified by: Chair of Governors

Agreed by: Headteacher

Policy Statement

'Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.' (World Health Organization)

At Whitstable Junior School, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches.

The biggest asset our school has is its staff; the biggest asset they have is their health and wellbeing. This policy is intended to outline the ways in which we can work together to make sure our school is a safe, caring and happy place to work, which, if we get it right, can help to enhance individual wellbeing, through personal fulfilment and professional identity. This in turn will benefit our children and our community.

We spend more daylight hours in school than at home, so it is important that we can have ownership of many of the decisions that affect us and that we have agency in our working lives. We can do this, even in areas where we have no choices about what we do (e.g. SATs, or deadlines for assessments), by taking responsibility for these actions and approaching the tasks in our own way.

The importance of mental health is recognised within the School Development Plan with the aim of creating a successful mental health strategy to ensure that students receive the mental health support they need quickly and efficiently.

Furthermore, the school intends to test its developing provision and current systems for mental health through the application for The Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools. It is a whole school award, which focusses on ensuring effective practice and provision is in place that promotes the emotional wellbeing and mental health of both staff and students. The award has focus on changing the long-term culture of a school, and embedding an ethos where mental health is regarded as the responsibility of all.

With this award we will demonstrate that we are committed to:

- Promoting mental health as part of school life
- Improving the emotional wellbeing of our staff and students
- Ensuring mental health problems are identified early and appropriate support provided
- Offering provision and interventions that matches the needs of our students and staff
- Engaging the whole-school community in importance of mental health awareness
- Capturing the views of parents, carers, students and staff on mental health issues

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health.

The Governing body recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff in school enjoy a reasonable balance between their working life and the demands of home, family and other interests and commitments.

An acceptable work-life balance will be different for each employee and will be different at different times in careers. It is not in the interest of either the school or the individual

member of staff to work to the detriment of his/her health as excessive work without rest and recreation is not conducive to efficient or effective working.

Staff well-being is important in maintaining a positive atmosphere in the workplace. The Governing body recognises that employees are not obliged to work in school beyond their contracted hours, although teachers are expected to complete preparation, planning and assessment beyond the school day.

Scope

This document describes Whitstable Junior School's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in staff. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

The Policy Aims to:

- Support the wellbeing of all staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health
- Provide a supportive work environment for all staff
- Acknowledge the needs of staff, and how these change over time
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities
- Help staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- Ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims

Leadership

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of staff, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Mrs Annie Knoupe – Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Mrs Kate Roy and Ms Kirsten Collin- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
- Ms Kirsten Collin - SENCo/Mental Health Lead

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Appraisal policy
- Behaviour policy
- Staff code of conduct

Promoting wellbeing at all times

Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance

- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Role of line managers

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Promote information about and access to external support services

Role of senior staff

Senior staff are expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Make sure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections

- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation

Role of the Governing Body

The governing body is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the Headteacher
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

Actions in place to promote positive staff mental health and wellbeing

- Emphasis has been placed on staff wellbeing to help promote teacher retention and to create happy staff for the pupils at the school.
- Appropriate facilities are available for staff to take breaks, socialise and relax with each other at relevant times of the day.
- There are staff facilities e.g. access to refreshments, seating, and toilet facilities
- We provide high quality INSET and other forms of training throughout the year to meet CPD needs
- The school uses a whole school calendar and an assessment, recording and reporting calendar to ensure that all staff are aware of forthcoming parents evening/report timings etc in order that they can plan their workload.
- There has been agreement with staff through the 'professional expectations' process such that staff are made aware of what is 'reasonable'.
- The headteacher supports wherever possible, requests from staff for reduced/part time working where personal circumstances may impact upon their ability to perform their current role.
- The SLT support staff by doing regular staff duties and acting as positive role models.
- Performance reviews will offer the opportunity with their reviewers, any concerns which they may have about their workload or ability to balance work with other aspects of their life.
- Regular high-quality professional development sessions to support all staff.
- A large number of support staff.
- Staff will be consulted about change and involved in developing problem-solving strategies
- Regular staff questionnaires which include questions on staff working conditions. Wherever possible, we take action on the results.

- An open-door policy to senior leadership is always made available if staff are in need of speaking to someone about any issues of concern.
- Supervision and appraisal will allow for mutual communication about personal health and emotional wellbeing if both felt it is deemed necessary.
- Senior leaders provide one-to-one reflection space for all staff. Supervision has created a space for professionals to reflect on their systems of knowledge, attitudes, and values related to teaching, whilst providing an insight into their professional development. The school has found the introduction of supervision to be a vital strategy within its wellbeing plan. All staff have been offered access to clinical supervision.
- Staff have access to confidential staff counselling through supportline@kent.gov.uk
- Administrative staff to support workforce.

Where can I go for support and guidance?

- Buddy up with colleagues to support each other in providing opportunities for reflective practice and problem-solving school-based challenges
- Senior staff members have an open-door policy and will listen to needs and concerns without judgement
- Use supervision sessions which are offered outside of line management
- Use the confidential support line provided by KCC

supportline@kent.gov.uk

Support Line can help with:

- stress related issues
- difficulties in personal, work or family relationships
- problems arising from redundancy or re-organisation at work
- loss or bereavement
- depression or anxiety
- team or group problems
- drink or drug issues
- problems with money or debt.

See https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/67769/Support-Line-Leaflet.pdf for more information

Visit support sides like:

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>

https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/address-your-stress/?resource_type_id=48b51c37-3ca5-e811-8147-e0071b668081

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/helping-you/telephone-support-counselling>