

# Woodloes Primary School

## Staff Wellbeing Policy



Last updated: October 2021

## **1. Introduction**

At Woodloes Primary School we recognise that our staff are our most important resource and are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, nurturing and purposeful learning community.

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.

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

This 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.

## **2. Aims**

We aim to ensure that our school:

- supports staff mental health and wellbeing
- minimises stress
- helps staff to keep a healthy work-life balance
- helps staff to manage their family and work responsibilities
- ensures staff feel valued
- recognises and promotes the importance of a happy team
- involves staff in decision making
- takes account of equality implications.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

The senior leadership team (SLT), governing body 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.

The governing body is responsible for:

- fulfilling its duty of care as an employer
- monitoring the workload of the head teacher
- receiving any concerns from members of staff
- ensuring that the resources are in place to keep staff workload at healthy levels
- reviewing this policy in conjunction with the head teacher
- considering how its own members are treated and valued
- ensuring that demands are not placed on individual members of staff that interfere unfairly with their work-life balance
- operating a sensitive professional development policy
- ensuring that other school policies and procedures take account of staff wellbeing
- overseeing that change management is operated in a fair and reasonable way.

The Head Teacher and leadership team are responsible for:

- providing personal and professional development such as team building, management of change, stress management, assertiveness, communication
- providing a non-judgemental and confidential support system such as coaching, mentoring and pastoral support for staff
- monitoring the workload of members of staff and being alert to signs of stress
- listening to the views of members of staff and providing a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes
- ensuring that the efforts and successes of staff are acknowledged and celebrated
- acting as gatekeeper and prioritising reforms and innovations
- ensuring that staff are equipped with the right training to do the job confidently
- ensuring that staff feel valued and that time is set aside for them
- providing meeting guidelines that are agreed upon and followed
- planning the year's timetable considerably bearing in mind staff commitments
- providing a set budget for staff facilities, environment and welfare
- including in professional development meetings opportunity for staff to discuss their aspirations and career intentions
- making special arrangements, where possible, to enable staff to combine the demands of family life and work life
- recognising 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 on their work performance e.g. health issues, bereavement or loss, or personal circumstances
- ensuring accessibility and the accessibility of SLT to members of staff
- ensuring that there are effective methods of communication

- ensuring support services are made available or signposted on behalf of members of staff where additional specialist support is needed
- maintaining contact with staff during long absences
- ensuring that a professional system operates within the school and especially for each new members of staff and that the staff induction process is put into place
- conducting risk assessments for work-related stress
- relevant time protected for staff such as PPA, staff meeting time for reports etc.

The head teacher implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate staff such as the deputy head teacher, assistant head teacher, SMT and others, who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice.

Members of staff are responsible for:

- treating one another with empathy, respect and kindness
- taking care of their own health and safety at work and communicating with key staff where they need support
- being committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and keeping in mind the workload and wellbeing of colleagues
- valuing all members of staff in the school and acknowledging the important role that everyone takes
- contributing to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to build morale and effective team spirit
- developing and respecting shared areas where possible so that there is space to relax as well as appropriate work spaces.

Examples of good practice may include:

- thanking staff for their hard work
- continually reassessing marking and planning workloads
- Ensuring, where possible, that the targets to reduce teachers' workloads are met
- avoiding holding unnecessary meetings after school
- Clarity of expectations
- Clarity of key dates
- Members of the leadership team making themselves available for planned or adhoc coaching conversations with staff
- giving staff the option to plan their own social activities
- enabling staff to attend their children's assemblies and celebration assemblies
- celebrating staff achievements
- providing pastoral services – drop-ins and confidential sessions
- providing refreshments in INSET training
- carrying out team-building exercises as part of staff CPD
- spaces for staff to be able to meet, relax and work quietly
- Annual review of Job descriptions
- holding designated health and wellbeing sessions
- providing creative opportunities for building morale and promoting wellbeing (e.g. croissant mornings, cake/fruit days, shared lunches).

### **Seeking Support**

- Ensuring teachers are aware of the support that is available to them to help manage issues with work life balance within school and from outside agencies
- Ensuring that when appropriate staff are offered support through services such as Therapeutic Support and Supervision Service.

### **Assessing Risk**

The school is clear about the sources of information it might use to inform a risk assessment to support a member of staff:

- Absenteeism
- Issues raised in staff meetings, curriculum team meetings or through appraisal meetings
- Informal talks with staff
- Increase in accidents
- Changes in performance
- Punctuality
- Changes in conduct and behaviour

### **4. Support in specific circumstances**

The school will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to specific circumstances. In some cases, it may be necessary to seek external services but the school will continue to support even when external services are involved.

Staff are encouraged to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, support will be given on an individual basis.

Where possible, staff are supported with their work-life balance and wellbeing outside the school. This could be through providing staff with paid leave for special events and celebrations, or time off to deal with specific family circumstances or crisis.

### **5. Related policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies for:

- ☐ Equal Opportunities Policy
- ☐ Professional Development Policy
- ☐ Staff Code of Conduct
- ☐ Whistleblowing Policy

**Approved by Governors**

**Date: October 2021**

**Renewal date: October 2022**