

Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School



Staff Wellbeing Policy

Reviewed: November 2022
Review date: November 2023

1. Introduction

At Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School we recognise that our staff are our most important resource and are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a close-knit, 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 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 underpin 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.

The nominated persons are

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead -J. Evans,
- SENDCO Lead - N. Suleman
- Wellbeing Working Team - S.Abbott/N.Thompstone/ J.Hand
- Wellbeing Nominated Governor – Glyn Goodchild

The governing body is responsible for:

- fulfilling its duty of care as an employer
- monitoring the workload of the headteacher
- 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 headteacher
- 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
- 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 headteacher is responsible for:

- Maintaining positive relationships with their staff and valuing 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
- Planning the year's timetable considerably bearing in mind staff commitments
- Making sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understanding 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
- Promoting information about, and access to, external support services
- Helping to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keeping in touch with staff if they are absent for long periods
- Monitoring staff sickness absence, and having support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conducting return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- Conducting exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that led to their resignation.

The headteacher implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate staff such as the deputy headteachers, senior leaders, Wellbeing lead and pastoral staff and who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice.

The Wellbeing Team are responsible for:

- Providing staff drop in sessions where needed
- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversation
- Signposting staff to non-school related activities e.g. book club, running club
- Cascading information /knowledge to improve wellbeing of all staff
- Promoting wellbeing and good mental health through sharing of new initiatives and support within the local community
- Regularly reviewing the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seeking alternative solutions wherever possible
- Providing resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Contributing to the Wellbeing action plan and reviewing the impact of planned actions
- Ensuring that staff have opportunities to contribute to the wellbeing of staff e.g. policies, planned wellbeing activities

- Conducting annual staff wellbeing surveys
- Ensuring support services are made available or signposting on behalf of members of staff where additional specialist support is needed.

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:

- Providing fitness classes for staff (subsidised or free where possible)
- Giving staff the option to plan their own social activities
- Celebrating staff achievements and promoting kindness via various methods e.g. Staff shout out/ Random Acts of Kindness
- Providing pastoral services – drop-ins and confidential sessions with Wellbeing Leads and signposting to outside agencies and support if needed
- Creative spaces for staff to be able to meet, relax and work quietly whilst being sensitive to current social distancing rules
- Providing creative opportunities for building morale and promoting wellbeing (e.g. shared lunches, 'Zoom quizzes')
- Having an open door policy with SLT
- Supporting teachers in their workload by ensuring professional development meetings are designated to plan, assess and report
- Ensuring staff meetings are purposeful
- Wellbeing plan in place to implement and review practice
- Wellbeing survey conducted and reviewed at least twice in the academic year
- Reviewing of workload management on a frequent basis and implementing changes that reduce workload and maintain a good work/home-life balance.

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. 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. It may include:

- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise
- At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies for:

- Feedback
- Bereavement and loss
- Performance management
- Health and safety
- Attendance management and procedure
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Whistleblowing.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Equality Act (2010) and
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Staff Code of Conduct