



# Woodlands Primary and Nursery School

## Mental Health and Well-being Policy

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## **Introduction**

Staff health and well-being at work is recognised as part of a broader approach to promoting health. It involves all stakeholders associated with the school community including parents, students, service providers and educational support services.

It is evident that organisations who adopt an organisational approach to improving the health and well-being of staff within the organisation can achieve substantially reduced costs associated with staff turnover, absenteeism and risk management. It is also evident that staff morale, job enrichment, quality of work and work-life balance alongside continuous improvement of educational achievement are all important, positive outcomes. Ultimately this can lead to improved productivity and the improvement of overall organisational performance.

It is also essential that the healthy organisation recognises people as its main strength and resource. It is crucial, therefore, that they develop policies, systems and practice which optimise people's ability to work together and achieve their full potential within an inclusive, empathic and emotionally literate context.

## **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of this establishment to a) promote health and well-being throughout all management policies and support services including information networks and health promotions: alcohol awareness, diet, self-management exercise and by a liaison with appropriate external agencies; b) to prevent as far as possible any circumstances that could be described as detrimental to the mental health and well-being of staff and students. The purpose of the policy is as follows:

- To support staff effectiveness and teaching and other associated activities which contribute to achieving the school's objectives;
- To ensure that staff ability is enhanced in order to benefit from all provisions;
- To ensure that when responding to one individual's health difficulties that this approach does not significantly affect other people's health and well-being within the institution.

## **Definitions**

The term mental health difficulties can encompass a wide range of experiences. These can range from stress and anxiety through to serious mental illness and conditions which are diagnosed and treated by specialist health providers. Although a difficult definition to give in absolute terms, it is important that all within the community avoid the use of negative terms with stigma attached. This kind of behaviour may well deter staff and students from accessing the support required. Inappropriate use of medical terms might also be misleading and cause unnecessary labelling. Consequently, within this institution all staff and students will be encouraged to respond to individual needs as opposed to specific labels.

## **Links with Other Policies**



This health and well-being policy interacts with and refines several already established policies. The setting's duty of care towards both staff and students is determined externally by legislation such as the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974; Human Rights Act 1988; Data Protection Act 1988; Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Act 2001. Its links between this policy and other guidance are clear and include the following: Health & Safety Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy; Anti-racist Policy; Complaints and Grievance Procedures; Sickness Absence Policy; Capability Procedures; Stress Management Guidance, Fitness to Teach Guidance; Occupational Health Guidance; Job Share Policy; Confidentiality Policy; Disability Statement and Policy; Disciplinary Procedures; Whistleblowing Policy; Access and Inclusion Policy.

### **Confidentiality**

It is important to note that confidentiality is of paramount importance with regard to those experiencing mental health difficulties and problems. However, it is essential that students and staff are aware that, in certain circumstances, where an individual is deemed to be at risk then this policy will need to be breached. At all times it is the safety of the majority that needs to take precedence over confidentiality of the individual and the majority that need to take precedence over confidentiality.

### **Responsibility of the Institution**

It is the responsibility of this institution to:

- Promote the emphasis towards good health and well-being and consideration of the school within all relevant aspects of its day-to-day running;
- Ensure the provision of central support and advisory services as appropriate;
- To produce and disseminate explanatory notes to the policy in order to offer practical step-by-step procedures and guidance;
- To provide training to staff and students in the area of well-being and mental health problems;
- To promote and encourage a non-stigmatising community in order to enhance the effectiveness of its actions;
- To monitor the effectiveness of this policy through annual reporting to the governing body.

### **Responsibility of Key Role Holders**

It will be the responsibility of Woodlands Primary and Nursery School staff to:

- Provide external health services and specialist therapeutic agencies with accurate information on all aspects of work activities for members of staff or students in order that informed recommendations can be made;
- To advise external health service agencies with regard to the scope of the support services the school can offer to staff and students;



- To ensure the establishment of effective monitoring processes so as to be able to evaluate the impact of the policy;
- To make recommendations on developments and improvements to the policy;
- To establish an on-going effective communication with external agencies and ensure appropriate supervision for those within the school who are providing therapeutic input;
- To ensure the promotion of this policy throughout the whole school organisation.

### **Responsibility of Staff**

It is the responsibility of all Woodlands Primary and Nursery School and support staff to ensure the following:

- Maintain a non-stigmatising community;
- To treat each other and all students with dignity and respect as an individual and not as a problem or condition;
- Access and take advantage of appropriate training and sources of information;
- To uphold confidentiality while safety is not at risk;
- To recognise their own limits in terms of how they can support both themselves and others.

It is the responsibility of students to also:

- Contribute towards the maintaining of a non-stigmatising community;
- To treat each other and their teachers with dignity and respect and not to label one another or treat each other simply as a problem or condition;
- To access appropriate support on offer within the school context including both individual and group support;
- To understand the confidentiality procedures and the fact that these will need to be breached if their behaviour is evidently going to put them at risk;
- To recognise their own limits as to how they can support others and know when to seek help and advice.

### **The Sources for School Based Staff who Provide Support for Others**

The school will ensure that all staff members, who are providing any form of therapeutic input or support for students with mental health difficulties, are appropriately supported and supervised. This will be ensured by the link with external specialist therapeutic agencies alongside access to school based specialists including the clinical psychologist, the creative arts therapist, the educational psychologist and the school counsellor. Services available to students and staff will be made public by regular awareness campaigns and by a staff induction procedure and publicity for students on the school web.

### **Key Indicators**



## 1. Physical health

There is much research evidence to show that regular ie daily, light or moderate exercise is beneficial for the prevention of heart disease alongside a range of life threatening diseases. There is also a clear link between physical exercise and mental well-being.

The provision of opportunities for physical activity is one way in which the school could contribute to promoting health and preventing illness in both students and their teachers. We are, therefore, committed to ensuring that the following are in place:

- Opportunities to participate in fitness or exercise activities;
- The existence and quality of an on-going staff health promotion/education programme which covers physical health issues;
- The existence of other preventative initiatives in the area of physical health.

The latter may include the immunisation programme, injury prevention, personal and physical safety and the promotion of healthy food choices.

## 2. Personal well-being

There are many psycho-social factors which influence health and well-being and it is evident that mental health promotion in the workplace can prevent stress alongside promoting and understanding of mental illness. We would consequently aim to ensure that the following is in place:

- An ongoing mental health promotion or education programme for both staff and students which is of high quality and supported by external agencies;
- As far as possible we will respond to requests for flexible working arrangements in order to cater for family and other external responsibilities or demands;
- We will develop a database to ensure that all the people providing resources alongside organisations and information which is relevant in this area are made available to staff and students;
- We will ensure that diversity is tolerated, both amongst staff and students, and that there is an awareness of the relevant legislation amongst both staff and students;
- We will ensure the existence and quality of effective communication systems in order to reduce stress across all curriculum areas and across all procedures and systems.

## 3. Organisational health

There is a great deal of research to show that harmonious working relationships which are created by effective leadership and staff involvement in decision making alongside effective administration systems are vital in terms of contributing to staff health and well-being. Administrative and professional support can assist school based staff to undertake their designated roles with organisational purpose and direction. We, therefore, seek to ensure the following:



- That leadership is considered to be supportive of all staff needs and that this is ensured via both formal and informal communication processes including a well-being questionnaire, informal consultations with staff regarding their input and feelings and regular recognition of staff achievements both formally and informally;
- We will also aim to ensure that staff are empathic and supportive of one another and that there are opportunities available on a regular basis to ensure quality staff interaction e.g. team teaching, mental programmes, social activities;
- We shall also ensure that all staff have a clear understanding and acceptance of their roles and responsibilities within the school context and this will be conducted via the reviewing of the sections and actual performance as part of our self-monitoring processes and procedures;
- At all times the work demands on staff will be reviewed and monitored to ensure that they are both reasonable and realistic and do not engender stress or low morale.

#### 4. Community relationships

It is essential that a strong and positive relationship exists between the school and the local community. This is important for staff's support and development as well as providing co-operation and access to resources. We will therefore aim to ensure the following:

- The existence and quality of parent involvement in the school. This will include the development of a mechanism for parents' views about the school to be regularly obtained and made known to all staff;
- The existence and quality of the relationship between the school and local recreation and leisure agencies regarding access to resources and services for health and well-being;
- The existence and quality of the relationship between the school and local businesses via the development of a formal communication process with specific responsibility for this allocated to staff members on the team;
- We will ensure that local agencies and specialist provision are aware of the school's health and welfare policy and seek to further develop relationships and conduct regular communication with such agencies.