Addison Primary School

Managing Stress and Promoting Positive Mental Health & Well-being Policy

Approved

Autumn 2026

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1 Policy statement

1.1 The School has developed a managing stress and wellbeing policy to manage its obligations to promote positive mental health and wellbeing of all staff. It covers our commitment to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff; the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health; health promotion initiatives; communicating and training on health issues; the range of support available for the maintenance of mental health and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

1.2 The aim of this policy is to describe the School's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing of staff in its broadest, holistic sense, setting out how we fulfil our legal obligations, the responsibilities of different functions and specialists and the range of services available to help staff maintain health and wellbeing. The School recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving staff's ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved performance.

1.3 The School recognises the importance of identifying and tackling the causes of work-related stress. We also recognise that personal stress, while unrelated to the workplace, can adversely affect the wellbeing of staff at work.

1.4 As part of its ongoing commitment to the wellbeing of its staff, School has signed up to the Department of Education Staff Wellbeing Charter. The charter is a declaration of support for, and set of commitments to, the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in education. A copy of the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter can be found at The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter - November 2021 (publishing.service.gov.uk).

1.5 Mental wellbeing is relevant for all staff, which means every member of staff can play a part in improving wellbeing in the workplace. By addressing mental health issues, the school can improve the general wellbeing of staff, reduce absenteeism, lower staff turnover and increase productivity.

1.6 This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. We may vary any of the provision detailed within this policy without consultation. It has been formally adopted by the Governing Body.

1.7 Any information you provide to us about your health will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. We recognise that such data is sensitive and will handle it in a confidential manner.

2 Who is covered by the policy?

2.1 The procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It also applies to any agency workers, casual staff, self-employed contractors/consultants and volunteers.

3 Legal Obligations

3.1 Addison Primary has a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that your health is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from the way work is organised.

3.2 This policy takes account of our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Employment Rights Act 1996, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Working Time Regulations 1998 and Equality Act 2010.

4 Understanding stress and mental health

4.1 Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or demands placed on them. Sustained over a period, stress can lead to mental and/or physical illness.

4.2 Mental health is a term used to describe our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing; it affects how we think, feel and act and how we cope with the normal pressures of everyday life. Positive mental health is rarely an absolute state since factors inside and outside work affect mental health, meaning that we move on a spectrum that ranges from being in good to poor mental health.

4.3 There is an important distinction between working under pressure and experiencing stress. Certain levels of pressure are acceptable and normal in every job. They can improve performance, enable individuals to meet their full potential and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it produces stress and undermines mental health.

4.4 Pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events such as accidents, illness, bereavement, family breakdown or financial worries, can result in stress and poor mental health. They can also compound normal workplace pressures.

4.5 We recognise that individuals react to similar situations in different ways and that what triggers stress and poor mental health varies from person to person.

5 Our approach to mental wellbeing

5.1 We will:

5.1.1 Promote a culture of open communication by providing both formal and informal channels through which staff can raise concerns.

5.1.2 Take account of stress and mental wellbeing when planning and allocating workloads. We will provide opportunities to discuss these through our appraisal and one-to-one processes.

5.1.3 Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking and monitor holidays to ensure that staff are using their entitlement appropriately.

5.1.4 Ensure risk assessments include or specifically address work-related stress.

5.1.5 Facilitate requests for flexible working where reasonably practicable - in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy.

5.1.6 Consider reasonable adjustments on a temporary or permanent basis, and in conjunction with relevant medical advice, where employees have advised us of concerns regarding their mental health.

5.1.7 Ensure that in any workplace reorganisation our change management processes are designed to minimise uncertainty and stress.

5.1.8 Implement policies and procedures to address factors that can cause or worsen stress in particular so that we can provide a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation and address inappropriate behaviour through disciplinary action.

5.1.9 Provide training to help all staff understand and recognise the causes of work-related stress and mental ill health, the impact of stress from factors in everyday life and the steps they can take to protect and enhance their own mental wellbeing and that of their colleagues.

5.1.10 Provide support services such as occupational health, confidential counselling and an employee assistance programme and mental health champions or mental health first aiders for staff affected by or absent by reason of stress.

5.1.11 Self-referral or from the GP - https://www.westlondon.nhs.uk/our-services/adult/iapt/IAPT-Hammersmith_Fulham-back-track-iapt

5.1.12 Mind – https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4806/how-to-support-staff-who-are-experiencing-a-mental-health-problem_wales_v2.pdf

5.1.13 Mental wellbeing support particularly for the education sector https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/get-help/help-for-you/helpline/

6 Responsibilities

6.1 Employees

All staff should ensure that they are familiar with this policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. Staff should plan and organise their work to meet personal and organisational objectives and co-operate with support, advice and guidance that may be offered by line managers or the HR Department. Anyone who experiences or is aware of a situation that may result in work-related stress or undermine mental wellbeing at work should speak to a manager or a mental health champion/first aider.

6.2 Line managers

All line managers have a responsibility to recognise potential issues of work-related stress or mental ill health in the staff they manage. They will be given training to support them in this and should seek advice from the HR Department in the event that they have concerns. All managers should provide support to staff by working with the HR and through making appropriate referrals to the Occupational Health In particular, they need to:

- Promote a culture of open communication
- Effectively plan and provide feedback on performance
- Ensure that staff receive necessary training and support
- Monitor workloads and reallocate work where necessary

- Ensure that staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and others, and act on behaviour that falls below those standards

6.3 Human resources support

The School will engage with their HR support to develop school-wide policies and procedures, to protect the wellbeing of employees, assist line managers in supporting individuals, and liaise as appropriate with occupational health and other medical professionals, with the object of helping employees to maintain good psychological health.

The School operates practices and policies that ensure staff are able to achieve a satisfactory balance between their work and other commitments and adhere to the working limits set out in the Working Time Regulations 1998.

6.4 Occupational health (OH)

The School has engaged occupational health professionals who will provide a comprehensive service designed to help staff stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing mental health problems. This will include preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals from the School liaising with GPs and working with individuals to help them to retain employment/engagement.

OH professionals will play a critical part in developing rehabilitation plans for staff returning to work after absences related to mental ill health, and work with GPs and line managers on designing/amending jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful. Advice will also be taken from our occupational health professionals regarding design and implementation of any suitable health promotion and lifestyle behaviour management programmes, including initiatives on managing pressure and ongoing health conditions at work.

6.5 Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA)

We have appointed a number of mental health first aiders who can be contacted by any member of staff (via your line manager) experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. Mental health first-aiders can discuss your concerns and provide details of available support.

7 Training and communications

7.1 Line managers and staff should regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to

adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change.

7.2 Line Managers will receive training so they are able to recognise the symptoms and causes of mental ill health.

7.3 Staff will receive training in mental health awareness so they are able to recognise the symptoms of mental ill health in themselves and others in addition to recognising causes.

7.4 Managers and staff are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises, including stress audits and staff surveys. All staff are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications and school-wide methods. The school will ensure that structures exist to give staff regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

7.5 Managers and staff are encouraged to utilise Wellness Action Plans where appropriate. A Wellness Action Plan is an informal plan that can be considered for staff who already have a mental health disorder or concern but they are also useful for staff who are currently well, but want to take a more pro-active approach to staying mentally fit at work. A plan can be tailored to the individual's needs and seeks to identify any possible triggers to stress, how the individual wishes to be communicated with and steps/actions that can be taken by the school to assist when they are not coping.

7.6 The school will consider special communication media during periods of school change.

8 Occupational health support

8.1 Line managers can contact the organisation's occupational health service on hello@smartclinicuk.com. Staff can also speak to their line managers if they would like to be considered for support from occupational health. A comprehensive occupational health service is available, from individual health screening to the design of return-to-work plans for those rehabilitating after a period of long-term sickness absence.

8.2 Workplace wellbeing services provided by the occupational health team include:

- Workstation assessments
- Pre-employment screening
- Fitness-for-work assessments
- Eye tests for users of visual display screen equipment
- Post-incident support
- Designing and advising on health promotion initiatives
- Health and safety training.

8.3 If staff believe that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager or the Head Teacher. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands and raise issues such as identified training needs.

8.4 A referral to the occupational health team will be made if this is considered appropriate after an individual's initial discussion with their manager or Head Teacher. Discussions between staff and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health team will provide a report on the individual's fitness to work, and any recommended adaptations to the working environment, to the school.

9 Other services

9.1 Other measures available to support staff in maintaining health and wellbeing include:

- Procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment)
- Opportunities for flexible working
- Support for workers with disabilities
- Help and information can also be obtained from Mind, the mental health charity: https://www.mind.org.uk/ or the Samaritans: www.samaritans.org

9.2 If any member of staff is considered by their line manager or colleagues to be at serious risk of self-harm, or of harming others, action must be taken straight away. The matter should be referred to their line manager or a senior leader who will seek medical advice from the Occupational Health Department if that is reasonably practicable. Every effort will be made to contact

any person nominated by the member of staff as an emergency contact. Where necessary the emergency services will be called. The wellbeing of the member of staff and those around them will always be our first concern.

10 Addressing work-related stress

10.1 If you believe you are suffering from work-related stress, you should discuss this with your line manager in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so, you should contact a mental health first aider or the HR Department. You should also access the support services referred to in clause 7.

10.2 Once an issue affecting your health comes to the attention of your line manager or the HR Department, we will discuss with you what steps can be taken to address that issue. Those steps may include any of the following:

- A review of your current job role, responsibilities, workload and working hours. Adjustments may be agreed to these, on a temporary basis and subject to further review, where appropriate
- Where it appears that stress has been caused by bullying or harassment, investigation under our Disciplinary and/or Grievance Procedures
- Referral for medical advice, treatment and/or a medical report to be provided by [the Occupational Health Department,] our medical advisers or any specialist or GP who has been treating you
- If you are on sickness absence, discussion of an appropriate return to work programme. Our Sickness Absence Policy may be applied

11 Absence due to stress or mental ill health

11.1 If you are absent due to work-related stress or mental ill health, you should follow the sickness absence reporting procedure contained in your contract and our Sickness Absence Policy.

11.2 In cases of prolonged or repeated absence, it may be necessary to apply the procedure set out in our Sickness Absence Policy.

12 Reasonable Adjustments (case by case approach)

12.1 There may be reasonable adjustments that can be made to your role if you are experiencing a mental health issue. These adjustments could be on a temporary basis or they could be

permanent changes. Examples of the types of adjustments that can be considered are as follows:

- Changes to your physical working environment
- Changes to your working pattern
- Adapting the way our policies are applied
- Reviewing tasks or deadlines to help someone have a reasonable workload while managing their mental health
- Providing rest areas away from the main staff room to allow an employee to rest away from social demands
- Modifying supervision to provide regular check ins, prioritising work and creating structure in the working day
- Providing training or coaching to build confidence in skills relevant to the job
- Agreeing a preferred communication method to help reduce anxiety

13 Confidentiality

13.1 Information about stress, mental health and mental wellbeing is highly sensitive. Every member of staff is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required when dealing with information about stress or mental health whether they are supporting a colleague or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a workplace policy or procedure.

13.2 A breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.

13.3 However, there are occasions when information about stress or mental wellbeing needs to be shared with third parties. For example:

- Where steps need to be taken to address work-related stress such as reallocating work within a team
- Where medical advice is required on how to support a member of staff, address issues raised by work-related stress or address issues raised by mental ill health
- Where allegations of harassment, bullying or other misconduct require a disciplinary investigation or proceedings to take place
- Where a member of staff presents an immediate danger to themselves or others

13.4 In these circumstances, wherever possible, matters will be discussed with the member of staff concerned before any action is taken.

14 Protection for those reporting stress or assisting with an investigation

14.1 Staff who report that they are suffering from work-related stress or mental ill health, who support a colleague in making such a report or who participate in any investigation connected with this policy in good faith will be protected from any form of intimidation or victimisation.

14.2 If you feel you have been subjected to any such intimidation or victimisation, you should seek support from your line manager OR HR. You may also raise a complaint in accordance with our Grievance Procedure.

14.3 If, after investigation, you are found to have provided false information in bad faith, you will be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

15 Relationship with other policies

15.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering attendance and health, for example policies on work-life balance, special leave, flexible working, the management of short and long-term absence, bullying and harassment etc…

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