

# Bedford High School

A Specialist Business and Enterprise College

To Care To Learn To Achieve



## Staff Wellbeing Policy

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### Document control

Date updated:	January 2023
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Electronic copies of this plan are available from:	FROG VLN
Hard copies of this plan are available from:	HR, Facilities and Communications Manager

### Changes History

Date	Description	Changes
25/01/2022	No Changes	

## **Statement of Intent**

Bedford High School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that staff are our most important resource and are to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a learning and caring community. The Governing body recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff in school enjoy a reasonable balance between their working life and demands of home, family and other interests and commitments. There is a relationship between healthier and more positive staff, student achievement and academic improvement.

Bedford High School will always strive to be a reasonable employer and will take the necessary action, within the limits of employment law to promote staff wellbeing and minimise stress wherever possible.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the school and staff members in supporting wellbeing and promotion mental health, and to advise employees on how to deal with mental health issues and prevent issues.

### **1. Legal framework**

1.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- DfE (2018) 'Workload reduction toolkit'

1.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and procedures:

- Dignity at Work Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Equality Scheme
- Flexible Working Policy
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice
- Health and Safety Policy
- Induction Policy
- Leave of Absence Policy
- Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Handbook
- Whistleblowing Policy

### **2. Roles and responsibilities**

## **2.1 The Governing Body is responsible for:**

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the school's ethos reflects its committed to reducing workload and creating a working environment that is focused, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing.
- Ensuring staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and monitored.
- Ensuring that all school policies are assessed for workload impact.
- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the school – promoting stress as a serious issue rather than a weakness.
- Consulting with the Headteacher on managing staff stress and promoting wellbeing, including them in any decisions that need to be made.
- Ensuring the Headteacher puts measures in place to support staff wellbeing.
- Actively trying to eliminate stressors in the school e.g. by considering the format and quantity of information it requests from the Senior Leadership Team.
- Protect senior leaders' wellbeing and mental health.
- Ensuring subject visits are strategic, focussed and reflective of its subject visit plan, and being clear with staff ahead of the visit about what the focus will be and the information that will be required from them.
- Recognising mental health issues and appointing a mental health and wellbeing governor who will oversee managing and supporting staff mental health.
- Ensuring staff are supported in their roles and that actions are taken to mitigate overbearing stress in the workplace.
- Ensuring all Governors meetings are purposeful, focussed, structured and relevant to the school development priorities.
- Developing an annual schedule of work and ensuring work is not duplicated between meetings of committees and the full governing body.

## **2.2. The mental health and wellbeing governor is responsible for:**

- Influencing the settings of a school vision which creates a positive wellbeing culture and is underpinned by equality values, a system of accountability, and robust policies and procedures.
- Ensuring the school's strategic plan includes objectives linked to improving, supporting and responding to the mental health of staff.
- Ensuring the school has appropriate policies in place that include objectives focussed on meeting staff needs.
- Ensuring there is a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing embedded within leadership practice, the curriculum, the school's values and ethos and the social and physical environment.
- Meeting with senior leaders on a regular basis to monitor and review the impact of provision and interventions.

- Working with the Headteacher to ensure that appropriate training is put in place to support staff.
- Reporting to the governing body on the successes and areas of improvement in planned interventions, and the resources that are in place.

### **2.3 The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- Creating a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Implementing CPD which equips staff with tools needed to effectively manage stress.
- Developing a sensitive performance management process that is linked to clear job descriptions.
- Including all staff in the school's decision making processes, where possible.
- Organising extra support for staff at times of increased stress e.g. during Ofsted visits.
- Encouraging staff to take advantage of any initiatives introduced to promote wellbeing and effective working e.g. employee assistance programme.
- Monitoring employees' workloads, ensuring they are not overworked, and providing regular updates regarding absence to the governing body whilst maintaining staff confidentiality in line with GDPR Data Protection Policy.
- Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example to the staff.
- Regularly communicating with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
- Conducting and implementing the recommendations of risk assessments, considering the causes of stress.
- Ensuring all staff have read and understood this policy.
- Organising thorough inductions for new employers, explaining the school's policies and code of conduct.

### **2.4 The Human Resources Manager is responsible for:**

- Encouraging all staff to attend events and training opportunities that promote health and wellbeing.
- Providing information that helps staff to manage stress effectively.
- Ensuring that regular contact is maintained with members of staff who are absent for long periods of time.
- Ensuring new members of staff have received all the relevant information they require, including the procedures for raising concerns about wellbeing.
- Gathering information in any cases that allow monitoring of this policy.
- Monitoring all staff absences and reporting this information to the Headteacher.

2.5 All staff members are responsible for:

- Being able to recognise the early signs of stress or mental health issues in themselves or their colleagues.
- Supporting co-workers if they become stressed, which may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
- Maintaining a healthy work life balance.
- Promoting a positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Being open to discussing stress.
- Reporting honestly about their wellbeing and any incidents of stress e.g. being overworked.
- Where possible, asking for help when they feel under pressure or stressed.
- Attending events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health.
- Not acting in a manner which endangers themselves or others.
- Undertaking additional training and personal development opportunities.

### **3. Identifying warning signs**

3.1 The school recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and become stressed by different situations and stimuli throughout their working lives. Because of this, it is important staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues stress.

3.2 The following sources of stress can often be attributed to work:

- Overworking or undertaking work that does not match the employee's skills and abilities.
- Fear of change and trying to cope with change e.g. advancements in technology.
- Insufficient workload or not being able to use skills.
- Lack of job security
- Poor relationships with colleagues and a lack of involvement.
- Harassment or bullying
- Crisis management
- Not having a long term plan in place

3.3 The school recognise that home and personal lives can also prove stressful for staff; bereavement, separation, financial and family problems make people more vulnerable to stress at work. It is common that a combination of stress at home and work can make people particularly stressed.

3.4 The school will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy workplace.

3.5 The school has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work related stress.

3.6 All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that can indicate that a person may be having trouble managing stress.

#### **4. Actions to support staff**

4.1 To help manage stress, the Headteacher will:

- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed.
- Make the most of the team bonding; using INSET days to build relationships, as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier.
- Assist with work and help to employees to manage their workloads.
- Support staff during difficult points in their personal lives e.g. bereavement
- Regularly monitor the effectiveness of workload, and impact on wellbeing.

4.2 To effectively address workload issues and support staff wellbeing, the Headteacher, working with the SLT, will take the following actions;

Measure staff wellbeing and identify workload issues by;

- Organise where necessary structured conversations about workload with staff.
- Arranging workshops and drawing together a summary of outcomes from staff surveys and questionnaires.
- Implement a staff workload Charter to outline the commitment and expectations between the governing board, SLT and school staff.
- Evaluate the impact of the actions taken, measuring staff wellbeing and identifying new workload issues to address (annually).

4.3 The school will ensure wellbeing is promoted and stress is prevented through good management practices, including the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures.
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure the right candidates are recruited.
- CPD procedures to ensure all members of staff have necessary skills and abilities to undertake the duties required.
- Performance management procedures.
- Capability and absence management – return to work procedures will ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.

## **5. Self – management**

5.1 Staff are encouraged to also make changes to avoid and prevent stress.

## **6. Reporting procedures**

6.1 Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they are feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.

## **7. Response actions**

7.1 Where problems with wellbeing arise, the necessary support and appropriate actions will be considered. This may include support from HR advisers and/or external services e.g. occupational health.

7.2 The school will continue to support staff when external services are involved.

## **8. Monitoring and review**

8.1 This policy will be reviewed biannually by the governing body and the Headteacher.

8.2 Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

8.3 All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.