



Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Review Due:	March 2024
Last Review	March 2021
Applicable to:	All Trust Schools
Reviewed By:	SD
Approved By:	

Comments:

This policy has been drafted to comply with employers' responsibilities to support the mental health of employees. Trust Leaders have reviewed the policy.

Draft approved by external solicitors.

The is a new policy.

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1. Scope

The Partnership Trust has a legal duty of care to employees to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The Partnership Trust will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.

2. Introduction

The Partnership Trust has developed an Employee Wellbeing Policy to manage its obligations to maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all staff. It covers the Partnership Trust's commitment to employee health, 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 The Partnership Trust's commitment to handling individual issues.

The Partnership Trust will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work.

3. Policy statement

The Partnership Trust has legal obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to reducing safety risks, this means operating the business in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.

The aim of this policy is to describe The Partnership Trust's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of employees in its broadest, holistic sense, setting out how The Partnership Trust fulfils its legal obligations, the responsibilities of different functions and specialists and the range of services available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing.

This policy aims to:

- Support the wellbeing of all staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health
- Provide a supportive work environment for all staff
- Acknowledge the needs of staff, and how these change over time
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities
- Help staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- Ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims

4. Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board is expected to:

- Make sure every school within the Trust is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the Executive Team
- Ensure support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload

Local Governing Body

The Governing Body is expected to:

- Ensure that the school's culture and ethos supports staff welfare and wellbeing, including with regard to staff workload and the creation of a supportive working environment' Monitor and support the wellbeing of the Headteacher
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of the Local Governing Body's monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits by the Local Governing Body and what information will be required from them

Headteachers/Senior Leaders

Leadership Teams are responsible for ensuring that measures are in place to minimise the risks to employee wellbeing, particularly from negative pressure at work. Leadership Teams must familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety Executive's stress management standards, and use these to mitigate psychological risks in their teams. For example, Leaders should ensure that employees understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support from managers and team members to do their job. Managers must also familiarise themselves with The

Partnership Trust's policies on diversity and tackling inappropriate behaviour in order to support staff, for example on bullying and harassment issues.

In particular, Leadership Teams must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value 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, be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand 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
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation
- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them, where necessary, in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections

Employees

Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, alcohol consumption and smoking) and informing The Partnership Trust if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee during discussions with a member of the Senior Leadership team, line managers, the HR department or the occupational health service is treated in confidence. Only where appropriate (i.e where there may need to be adjustments within the school environment) the employee information may be shared with the Headteacher if not being shared directly in order to put support in place and/or seek advice.

All employees are encouraged to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Human Resources

The HR department will develop The Partnership Trust-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.

Occupational Health

Occupational health professionals will provide a comprehensive service designed to help employees 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 line managers and the HR department, liaising with GPs and working with individuals to help them to retain employment.

Occupational health professionals will play a critical part in developing rehabilitation plans for employees returning to work after absences related to mental ill health, and work with GPs and line managers on designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful. Occupational health professionals will also design and implement health promotion and lifestyle behaviour management programmes, including initiatives on managing pressure and ongoing health conditions at work.

Occupational Health Support

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.

If employees 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 Trust's HR department. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands, and raise issues such as identified training needs.

A referral to the occupational health team will be made if this is considered appropriate after an employee's initial discussion with their manager or the Trust's HR department. Discussions between employees and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health team is likely to provide a report on the employee's fitness to work, and any recommended adaptations to the working environment, to the Trust's HR department.

5. Employee Assistance Programme Provider

The Employee Assistance Programme, Education Support is a support service that all staff can access 24/7, 365 days a year. It is completely confidential and provides support by telephone or online. The programme offers in the moment support, counselling, advice, financial and legal information, access to a library of fact sheets and advice and signposting to relevant services.

The contact details are:
Education Support
08000 856 148
Edsupport.org.uk/onlinesupport

6. Training and Communications

Line managers and employees will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees 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 change.

Line managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises, including stress audits and staff surveys. All employees 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 any Trust-wide methods. The Partnership Trust will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

7. Relationship with other policies

This Employee Wellbeing Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering attendance and health, including policies on work-life balance, special leave, flexible working, the management of short and long-term absence, sick pay, bullying and harassment, violence at work, grievance policy, equal opportunities and staff training and development.

Line managers, human resources and occupational health must ensure that personal data, including information about individuals' health, is handled in accordance with the Partnership Trust's Data Protection Policy / Policy on Processing Special Categories of Personal Data.