WELLBEING POLICY

Contents

1.   Terms of Reference

1.1   For all employees employed by West Norfolk Academies Trust.

1.2   Definitions:

- "Headteacher" also refers to any other title used to identify the Headteacher, where appropriate, or other senior manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Headteacher.

- "Line manager" also refers to any other title used to identify a direct supervisor or other senior manager.

2.   Introduction

2.1   The Trust recognises its responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and understands that wellbeing and performance are linked.

2.2   The Trust are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

2.3   This Employee Wellbeing Policy sets West Norfolk Academy Trust's commitment to employee health and the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, physical 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. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2.4   The Trust recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on employees' wellbeing and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

2.5   The Trust are committed to balancing the needs of employees and the Trust's educational, business and operational needs.

3.   Responsibilities

3.1.   The Trust

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

3.1.2.   In addition to reducing safety risks, we will operate the business in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are reasonable and having policies and procedures in place to support employees experiencing mental ill health at work.

3.1.3.   The Trust will:

- Take overall responsibility for implementing this policy

- Adopt the appropriate policies in respect of 'family friendly' employment, including consideration of flexible working arrangements, part-time working, etc. where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the Trust

- Ensure clear procedures are in place that will minimise levels of stress caused to employees when following formal procedures such as the capability, disciplinary or sickness absence management procedures

- Ensure that employees' roles and responsibilities area clearly defined

- Put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support

- 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

- Conduct regular staff surveys regarding wellbeing and an action plan will be produced based on responses.

3.2. The Headteacher

3.2.1. The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the procedure to ensure that the procedure is communicated to employees and that it is applied consistently.

3.2.2. The Headteacher will:

- Create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns, and enable employees to do so in a supportive environment where stress is not considered a weakness.

- Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in employees and promote sympathetic alertness to employees who show signs of being under stress

- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems

- Ensure that contact is maintained with staff while absent and that a return-to-work procedure is established in the workplace that is supportive of employees

- Carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible

- Carefully plan and agree work-life balance solutions including flexible working practices where possible and appropriate

- Ensure that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications

- Make sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams

- Demonstrate commitment, via systems and practices in place in the Trust, to employees maintaining a good work/life balance, and ensure that such practices are communicated to all employees

- Manage pressures which may affect employees, including the impact of workload pressures, and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible

3.3. Line managers

3.3.1. Line managers will put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee wellbeing. Managers must familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety Executive's stress management standards, **Appendix 1**, and use these to mitigate psychological risks in their teams. For example, managers 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 organisation's policies on diversity and tackling inappropriate behaviour in order to support employees, for example on bullying and harassment issues.

3.3.2. In particular, line managers must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by:

- Creating reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns

- Paying attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in employees and promote sympathetic alertness to employees who show signs of being under stress

- Following agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems

- Carrying out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible

- Seeking agreement from the employee for a referral to Occupational Health or Counselling if this is required and/or appropriate in the circumstances

- Keeping employees in the team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload

- Ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management

- Ensuring that staff work in premises that are appropriate, safe and fit for purpose

- Allegations of bullying by staff are investigated promptly and appropriate action taken

- Zero tolerance approach to violence or the threat of violence from pupils, parents and colleagues

3.4. Employees

3.4.1. Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, exercise, alcohol consumption and smoking) and informing the organisation 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 managers or the occupational health service is treated in confidence.

3.4.2. Employees should:

- Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem at the earliest opportunity to ensure effective strategies can be implemented

- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves or others whilst in the workplace

- Ensure awareness of the Trust's policies and procedures relevant to employee wellbeing

- Assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or colleagues

- Treat colleagues and all other persons whom they interact with during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity

- If required, attend appointments with Occupational Health or other medical appointment/examination by a registered medical practitioner nominated by the Trust.

4. Support Mechanisms

4.1. Training and communications

4.1.1. 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 organisational change.

4.1.2. 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 organisation-wide methods.

The organisation will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

4.1.3 The Trust will introduce Wellbeing Focus groups and Representatives will be from schools across the Trust and each school will have a wellbeing work party.

4.2. Occupational health support

4.2.1. The occupational health provider delivers a comprehensive service designed to help employees stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing mental health problems. This includes preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals from line managers and the HR department and working with individuals to help them to retain employment.

4.2.2. Occupational health professionals can aid in developing rehabilitation plans for employees returning to work after absences related to mental ill health, and work with Senior Managers and Trust HR in designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful.

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

4.3. Counselling

4.3.1. Counselling can be provided where appropriate through the Trust's provider. This will be a confidential, independent service using professionally qualified counsellors.

4.3.2. Employees can access the Counselling Service by contacting their Line Manager

4.4. Mediation

4.4.1. A mediation service could also be supportive in order to assist employees to return to normal working relationships. This could be accessed via ACAS. Where this service is appropriate it will be discussed with the employees affected by the situation.

4.6. Other

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

- Procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment)
- Special leave arrangements
- Opportunities for flexible working
- Support for workers with disabilities
- The organisation's grievance policy

5.   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, equal opportunities and employees training and development.

The Trust takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all employees and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty.

These include:

- Leave of Absence
- Sickness Absence
- Stress Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Duty Statement
- Flexible Working Policy
- Bullying and Harassment
- Grievance Procedure
- Whistleblowing Procedure

All policies are published on the individual School and Trust websites as appropriate.

Health & Safety Executives Management Standards

Appendix 1
What are the Management Standards?

HSE's Management Standards represent a set of conditions that, if present:

- demonstrate good practice through a step-by-step risk assessment approach
- allow assessment of the current situation using pre-existing data, surveys and other techniques
- promote active discussion and working in partnership with employees and their representatives, to help decide on practical improvements that can be made
- help simplify risk assessment for work-related stress by:
    o identifying the main risk factors
    o helping employers focus on the underlying causes and their prevention
    o providing a yardstick by which organisations can gauge their performance in tackling the key causes of stress

They cover six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health, lower productivity and increased accident and sickness absence rates. The Management Standards are:
Demands – this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment
The standard is that:

- employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening:

- The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work
- People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees
- Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed

Control – how much say the person has in the way they do their work
The standard is that:

- employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work
- Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work
- The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills
- Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken
- Employees are consulted over their work patterns

Support – this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
The standard is that:

- employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening/States to be achieved:

- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues
- Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it
- Employees know how to access the required resources to do

Relationships – this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
The standard is that:

- employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening:

- The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness
- Employees share information relevant to their work
- The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour

Role – whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
The Standard is that:

- employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening:

- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible
- The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear
- Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities

Change – how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation
The Standard is that:

- employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening:

- The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes
- The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs
- Employees are aware of timetables for changes
- Employees have access to relevant support during changes