



Staff Well-Being Policy

**Signed Victoria Davis
Chair of Governors**

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**Walmley Infant School
Staff Wellbeing Policy**

Walmley Infant School's Wellbeing Vision/Ethos:

"For the strength and capacity of our minds to grow and develop. To be able to overcome difficulties and challenges and to make the most of our abilities and opportunities."

Rationale

Walmley Infant School recognises that the staff are their most important resource and are to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a learning and caring community.

There is a relationship between healthier more positive staff, pupil achievement and school improvement.

There are employer duties to staff that require sensitive staff policies and practice.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a document that embraces the many school practices that support staff health and wellbeing, to minimise the harm from stress and ensure that there is cohesion and progress in working towards the health and wellbeing of all staff.

Aims

The aim of this document is to:

- support staff mental health and wellbeing
- minimise stress
- help staff to keep a healthy work-life balance
- help staff to manage their family and work responsibilities
- ensure staff feel valued
- recognise and promote the importance of a happy team
- involve staff in decision making
- takes account of equality implications

Roles and responsibilities

The senior leadership team (SLT), governing body and school staff will act professionally, show respect and empathy for each other and treat confidential information sensitively. Health and well-being will be central to school policy.

Governors

The governing body will fulfil their duty of care as an employer to guarantee that all staff are treated fairly to ensure mental health and well-being issues are dealt with appropriately.

Head Teacher / Assistant Head Teachers / SLT (leadership)

Leadership will provide opportunities for all staff to be involved in any new initiatives, and before any decisions are made, staff views will be considered. Staff will be provided with training to do their job confidently and successfully. The leadership will be aware of the workload of staff members to avoid staff experiencing stress and mental health related issues. They will ensure that the efforts and successes of all staff will be valued equally, and praise will be awarded fairly.

Leadership will provide non-judgemental and confidential support when needed. They will recognise that staff may have experiences in their personal life that may influence their work performance. If staff require additional specialist support, they will be given time and support to access any services they may require.

When staff are unable to make arrangements outside of working hours for personal issues, these arrangements will be supported where possible. When the yearly timetable is being planned staff commitments will be considered. Leadership will make sure staff inset dates and times will be given at the end of each term in preparation for the following term. Where possible, staff meetings will not be scheduled in the same week as events, such as discos, parents' evenings, curriculum evening, bed time stories etc. In the event of a curriculum evening, staff meetings will be no longer than one hour.

During performance management meetings staff will have the opportunity to discuss their aspirations and career intentions. Opportunities will be given for these to be fulfilled in an agreed timescale. All staff will be given protected time for PPA. TLR post holders will be given non-contact time for any additional responsibilities.

Staff

All staff will be committed to the mental health and well-being of themselves and others. They will act professionally and treat everyone with respect, kindness and empathy.

Staff will be aware of and acknowledge the different roles individuals have, including members of the leadership team. All staff will value the contribution their colleagues make to school. Everyone will contribute towards building team spirit and staff morale. It is important everyone is aware of the workload of every member of staff to avoid any colleagues experiencing stress and mental health related issues. The ideas and views of others will be considered before any changes or new initiatives are introduced and before any decisions are made.

It is important that staff take responsibility for their own health, safety and wellbeing and seek support from each other and the leadership team when they need it.

Staff concerned about a colleague's mental health should seek advice from www.mentalhealth.org.uk. Please read *appendix 1* or read the publication '*How to support someone with a mental health problem*' displayed in the staffroom.

New Staff

New staff will have an induction and be introduced to all staff members, as well as shown around the school. They will be given a Staff Handbook, the Behaviour Policy, Attendance Policy and Safeguarding Policy. They will also be given a Code of Conduct and any other policies that are important for them to fulfil their responsibilities. When new staff begin their employment they will be able to log onto computers and be given a lanyard with a key fob.

ECTs will have a mentor to support person to enable them to be successful.

Support in Special Circumstances

The school will provide support and discuss options as appropriate in certain circumstances. In some cases, it may be necessary to seek external services but the school will continue to support even when external services are involved.

Staff are encouraged to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, support will be given on an individual basis and cover to be arranged wherever possible.

Where possible, staff are supported with their work-life balance and well-being outside the school. This could be through providing staff with paid

leave for special events and celebrations, or time off to deal with specific family circumstances or crisis. Any paid leave would be agreed prior to the event by the governing body.

Good Practice at Walmley Infant School

At Walmley Infant School.....

- Staff plan their own social activities and everyone is invited.
- Performance management meetings once a year.
- Return to work meetings.
- Gradual return to work after a long-term illness, after a report agreed by the OH.
- Support for ECTs.
- Staff Induction.
- Staff are thanked for their achievements.
- A staff room with kitchen facilities and hot water.
- Governors send Christmas cards with a personal message for each member of staff.
- Staff lanyards and fobs.
- Refreshments may be provided during parents' evening, training days and any other evening events e.g. school discos.

Related Policies

This policy should be taken into consideration as part of the following policies:

Equal Opportunities
Performance Management
Health and Safety
Managing attendance at work
Whistleblowing
Safeguarding

Appendix 1

How to support someone with a mental health problem

We all go through tough times and people help us through them. Other times we have been worried about other people's mental health. Whether they are a friend, family member or colleague, there are many ways to support somebody you care about.

2 in 3 people report having experienced a mental health problem in their lifetime.

How do I know if someone has a mental health problem?

Sometimes it will seem obvious when someone is going through a hard time, but there is no simple way of knowing if they have a mental health problem. Sometimes you don't need to know. It's more important to respond sensitively to someone who seems troubled than to find out whether or not they have a diagnosis.

Although certain symptoms are common with specific mental health problems, no two people behave in exactly the same way when they are unwell. If you know the person well, you may notice changes in their behaviour or mood.

Below are some signs of common mental health problems. Our [A-Z of mental health](#) provides information on a range of mental health problems not covered here.

Signs of depression

People who are depressed may:

- have low confidence
- lose interest in activities they normally enjoy
- lose their appetite
- get tired easily
- be tearful, nervous or irritable.

At worst they may feel suicidal.

Signs of anxiety

People experiencing anxiety may:

- have difficulty concentrating
- be irritable
- try to avoid certain situations
- appear pale and tense
- be easily startled by everyday sounds.

Panic attacks

Panic attacks are usually a sign of anxiety. Someone having a panic attack experiences a sudden and intense sensation of fear. They may breathe rapidly, sweat, feel very hot or cold, feel sick or feel faint.

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

OCD is a common form of anxiety involving distressing repetitive thoughts. Compulsions are the actions which people feel they must repeat to feel less anxious or stop their obsessive thoughts.

Some people who are distressed deliberately harm their bodies, usually secretly, using self-harm as a way of dealing with intense emotional pain. They may cut, burn, scald or scratch themselves, injure themselves, pull their hair or swallow poisonous substances.

Some people experience a severe mental health problem, such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. They may have periods when they experience their own or a different reality. They may hear voices, see things no-one else sees, hold unusual beliefs, feel exceptionally self-important or read particular meanings into everyday events.

How can I help?

There are a number of ways you can help a friend, relative or colleague who has a mental health problem:

Talking about mental health

If you are worried about someone it can be difficult to know what to do. When you are aware there is an issue, it is important not to wait. Waiting and hoping they will come to you for help might lose valuable time in getting them support.

Talking to someone is often the first step to take when you know they are going through a hard time. This way you can find out what is troubling them and what you can do to help.

Eight tips for talking about mental health

1. Set time aside with no distractions

It is important to provide an open and non-judgemental space with no distractions.

2. Let them share as much or as little as they want to

Let them lead the discussion at their own pace. Don't put pressure on them to tell you anything they aren't ready to talk about. Talking can take a lot of trust and courage. You might be the first person they have been able to talk to about this.

3. Don't try to diagnose or second guess their feelings

You probably aren't a medical expert and, while you may be happy to talk and offer support, you aren't a trained counsellor. Try not to make assumptions about what is wrong or jump in too quickly with your own diagnosis or solutions.

4. Keep questions open ended

Say "Why don't you tell me how you are feeling?" rather than "I can see you are feeling very low". Try to keep your language neutral. Give the person time to answer and try not to grill them with too many questions.

5. Talk about wellbeing

Exercise, having a healthy diet and taking a break can help protect mental health and sustain wellbeing. Talk about ways of de-stressing and ask if they find anything helpful.

6. Listen carefully to what they tell you

Repeat what they have said back to them to ensure you have understood it. You don't have to agree with what they are saying, but by showing you understand how they feel, you are letting them know you respect their feelings.

7. Offer them help in seeking professional support and provide information on ways to do this

You might want to offer to go the GP with them, or help them talk to a friend or family member. Try not to take control and allow them to make decisions.

8. Know your limits

Ask for help or signpost if the problem is serious. If you believe they are in immediate danger or they have injuries that need medical attention, you need to take action to make sure they are safe. More details on dealing in a crisis can be found below.

If it is a family member or close friend you are concerned about, they might not want to talk to you. Try not to take this personally: talking to someone you love can be difficult as they might be worried they are hurting you. It is important to keep being open and honest and telling them that you care. It may also be helpful to give them information of organisations or people they can reach out to. A list can be found below.

How do I respond in a crisis?

People with mental health problems sometimes experience a crisis, such as breaking down in tears, having a panic attack, feeling suicidal, or experiencing their own or a different reality.

You may feel a sense of crisis too, but it's important to stay calm yourself.

There are some general strategies that you can use to help:

- Listen without making judgements and concentrate on their needs in that moment.
- Ask them what would help them.
- Reassure and signpost to practical information or resources.
- Avoid confrontation.
- Ask if there is someone they would like you to contact.
- Encourage them to seek appropriate professional help.
- If they have hurt themselves, make sure they get the first aid they need.

Seeing, hearing or believing things that no-one else does can be the symptom of a mental health problem. It can be frightening and upsetting. Gently remind the person who you are and why you are there. Don't reinforce or dismiss their experiences, but acknowledge how the symptoms are making them feel.

How do I respond if someone is suicidal?

If someone tells you they are feeling suicidal or can't go on, or if you suspect they are thinking of taking their own life, it is very important to encourage them to get help. You or they should contact a GP or NHS 111. They can also contact the [Samaritans](#) straight away by calling 116 123 (UK) for free at any time. They could also get help from their friends, family, or mental health services.

You can ask how they are feeling and let them know that you are available to listen. Talking can be a great help to someone who is feeling suicidal, but it may be distressing for you. It is important for you to talk to someone about your own feelings and the Samaritans can help you as well.

Useful organisations and resources

The first person to approach is your family doctor. He or she should be able to give advice about treatment, and may refer you to another local professional. See our guide on [How to talk to your GP about your mental health](#).

Specialist mental health services

There are a number of specialist services that provide various treatments, including counselling and other talking treatments. Often these different services are coordinated by a community mental health team (CMHT), which is usually based either at a hospital or a local community mental health centre. Some teams provide 24-hour services so that you can contact them in a crisis. You should be able to contact your local CMHT through your local social services or social work team.

Samaritans

The [Samaritans](#) offer emotional support 24 hours a day, in full confidence. Call **116 123** or email jo@samaritans.org.

Mind Infoline

[Mind](#) provides information on a range of mental health topics to support people in their own area from 9.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. Call **0300 123 3393** or email info@mind.org.uk.

Rethink Advice and Information Service

Rethink provide specific solution-based guidance: **0300 5000927** Fax: **020 7820 1149**
E-mail: advice@rethink.org.

Anxiety

[Anxiety UK](#) runs a helpline staffed by volunteers with personal experience of anxiety from 9:30-5:30, Monday to Friday. Call **08444 775 774**.

Citizens Advice

[Citizens Advice](#) provides free, independent and confidential advice for a range of problems as well as providing information on your rights and responsibilities.

Step Change

StepChange provides help and information for people dealing with a range of debt problems. Freephone (including from mobiles) **0800 138 1111** or visit the website on www.stepchange.org.

MindEd

[MindEd](#) is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults.