



Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Staff Wellbeing Policy

Date reviewed	Next review
March 2024	March 2026
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
	

'It is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all.'

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis St Pope John Paul II

Mission Statement

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is founded on faith in Jesus Christ and the life of the school community is centred in His presence.

This is our mission.

Our faith and love for God is cherished and developed by opening our hearts to God's love through worship, prayer and forgiveness.

Understand how to guide others to have a more active relationship with Jesus, celebrating us as Mission Makers and Servant Leaders, so that we can love God.

Respect and involve our parents showing them how we learn, how we use our Multiple Intelligences and how we become Learning Champions.

Live, learn and love one another by, creating a caring, safe and friendly environment where all are welcome.

Always represent the school by being a great role model.

Develop our community by working in partnership with everyone to become active global citizens. (School, Home, Church and surrounding Community)

Yearn to show others empathy and compassion by listening to others and by understanding their feelings.

Strive to be the best that we can be by being independent and resilient and by encouraging others to do the same.

Introduction

The Governing Board and the school recognise that they have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff, as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place steps to manage those factors that could harm staff members' physical and mental wellbeing, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the school's control.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as, 'the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'. There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

The Health and Safety Executive have developed a set of 'Management Standards' cover the primary sources of stress at work, and that if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands.** Workload, work patterns and anything within the work environment that adds to the demands that staff face, including deadlines, pupil behaviour and parents.
- **Control.** How much say a staff member has in what they do and how they are able to do their work.
- **Support.** Including how positive working behaviours are promoted to avoid conflict and effectively dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role.** Including the extent to which staff understand their role within the school, how this fits with that of their department or function and the aims of the school and whether leaders ensure they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change.** Includes how well organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the school.

Policy Statement

In line with our Mission Statement, Our Lady's recognises that staff are the most important resource and are to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally, professionally and spiritually within a learning and caring community, recognising that every staff member contributes to the development of pupils.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a document that encompasses the many school practices that support staff health and wellbeing; to minimise the harm from stress; ensure there is cohesion in working towards the health and wellbeing of all staff. In addition, it is to maintain the school ethos that supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently in recognition that each individual exemplifies the face of Christ.

Mental health as defined by WHO is "a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community".

Statement of Intent

The Governing Board and SLT acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case, as well as a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote staff wellbeing as far as reasonably practicable.

We are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with fairness and dignity, and can work at their optimum level. We also recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on staff wellbeing, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

Legal Framework

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'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Enable employees to balance their working lives with their personal needs.
- Safeguard the health, safety and welfare of staff.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of poor mental health and wellbeing in themselves and others.
- Create a culture of openness, to minimise the harm from stress.
- Ensure the confidentiality of the individual whilst being mindful of the employers' duty of care.

Causes of Stress

There are many factors which can cause stress at work, which are different for each individual, including:

- Lack of support (including for career progression)
- Low morale
- Poor communication
- Excessive workload
- Emotional demands of the job
- Physical demands of the job
- Parents' behaviour
- Workplace bullying
- School environment (e.g. air quality, lighting, state of classrooms, staff rooms)
- Lack of professional learning opportunities
- Lack of succession planning
- Excessive change
- Culture of blame
- Staff striving for perfection

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the school's ethos reflects its commitment to reducing workload and creating a working environment that is focussed, 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 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 SLT.
- Ensuring monitoring visits are strategic, focussed and reflective of its monitoring 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 all meetings are purposeful, focussed, structured and relevant to the school development priorities.
- Developing an annual schedule of meetings and monitoring.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Creating a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Implementing CPD which equips staff with the tools needed to effectively manage stress.
- Developing a sensitive performance management process that is linked to clear job specifications.
- 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 inspections.

- Encouraging staff to take advantage of any initiatives introduced to promote wellbeing and effective working, e.g. an employee assistance programme.
- Ensuring that all policies that affect staff wellbeing are properly adhered to and reviewed.
- Authorising any staff absences, as well as granting extended leave.
- Monitoring employees' workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring they are not overworked, and providing regular updates regarding absence to the Governing Board whilst maintaining staff confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Policy.
- Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example for 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 employees, explaining the school's policies and code of conduct.
- Encouraging all staff to attend events and training opportunities that promote wellbeing and health.
- 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, such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - Sickness and absence data
 - Staff turnover
 - Exit interviews
 - Referrals to the counselling service
 - Referrals to other mental health services
 - Grievance cases
 - Harassment cases
- Monitoring all staff absences and reporting this information to the headteacher.

All staff members are responsible for:

- Being able to recognise the early signs of stress or mental health issues in themselves and 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.

Identifying Warning Signs

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 that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues stress.

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

The school recognises 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.

The school will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy workplace. The school has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress. All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that can indicate that a person may be having trouble managing stress. All members of staff will look out for the following indicators when identifying stress in themselves or others:

Behavioural Indicators

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in eating habits
- Increased smoking or drinking
- Isolation from friends and family

Physical Indicators

- Tiredness
- Indigestion and nausea
- Headaches
- Aching muscles
- Heart palpitations

Mental Indicators

- Indecisiveness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory loss
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Low self-esteem

Emotional Indicators

- Anger or irritability Anxiety
- Hypersensitivity
- Feeling drained and lethargic

Actions to Support Staff

To positively impact levels of stress in the school, the headteacher and governing board will make changes to the whole school. To help manage stress, the headteacher will:

- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a full life outside of work.
- Provide wellbeing time to support their own wellbeing.
- Make the most of team bonding; using INSET days to build relationships, as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier.
- Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads.
- Reach out to staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. bereavement, allowing sufficient time off and supporting them when they return to work.
- Arrange a meeting with all members of staff in which the current working times and practices will be discussed.
- Provide supervision meetings for staff to discuss any issues or concerns.

To effectively address workload issues and support staff wellbeing, the headteacher, working with the SLT and Mental Health First Aider (when trained), will take the following actions:

- Measure staff wellbeing and identify workload issues by:
 - Commissioning staff surveys.
 - Arranging workshops and drawing together a summary of outcomes from staff surveys and questionnaires.
 - Analysing staff diaries and identifying which members of staff are spending too much time on certain aspects of the job.
- Review the areas of workload that have been identified and highlight the actions that will be taken.
- Address the workload issues that have been identified and evaluate impact.

The headteacher will ensure that all changes proposed as a result of the actions outlined above are communicated to all members of staff. A mental health and wellbeing governor will be appointed by the governing board who will be responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of staff. All new members of staff will be provided with a comprehensive induction and their duties will be made clear. The school will adopt a sickness plan which will promote a positive, caring strategy for staff who are returning to work following sick leave.

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 the 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
- Suitable adaptations for disability
- Harassment and anti-bullying resources
- Surveys to better understand the areas of work that have a negative effect on staff wellbeing

Self-Management

Staff can also make changes to avoid and prevent stress, as it is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored. Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they

are feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work. Staff are encouraged to take action to manage their own stress, these actions will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity and any negative feelings, exercise will also help to clear thoughts and deal with problems more calmly.
- Managing their workload and establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life.
- Prioritising work, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference.
- Avoiding unhealthy habits.
- Taking advantage of the wellbeing initiatives and support offered by the school.

Reporting Procedures

The following member of staff will be designated as the wellbeing officer; this is in the event that the wellbeing officer is the subject of the complaint:

- Miss Isabel Quinn, Headteacher

If any member of staff wishes to raise a concern about wellbeing, the wellbeing officer will be notified. The wellbeing officer will provide the member of staff with information about the support that is available to them; this includes both within the school and outside sources. The wellbeing officer will treat all cases confidentially. In some cases, such as those that directly impact day-to-day activities, confidentiality will not be guaranteed. If this is the case, staff will be made aware of the situation. The wellbeing officer in receipt of the complaint will investigate. The headteacher will decide whether any further action will be taken.

Response Actions

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. The school will continue to support staff when external services are involved. Support will be provided to staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances outside of the workplace. The school will direct staff to support, both internal and external, and consider a plan of work and duties that can be managed differently during challenging periods. Support for staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances within the school will be provided following the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.