HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

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Health and Wellbeing Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 As the employer of staff in Southfields Academy, the Board of Trustees recognise the statutory responsibilities related to employment. Day-to-day management of staff is delegated to the Principal/Headteacher and line managers in Southfields Academy. Throughout this document, reference is made to the responsibilities held by the Principal/Headteacher for operational purposes. Ultimate responsibility rests with the Board of Trustees.

1.2 Health and Wellbeing is about holistic health, including physical and emotional. The World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing is *"a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."* Southfields Academy and the Board of Trustees are committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and will provide suitable support for all members of staff. Taking action to prevent ill health and promote good health makes good educational and business sense, as sickness absence carries high costs both in monetary terms and in terms of the impact upon performance, teaching and learning, morale and productivity, which may disrupt or compromise student progress.

1.3 Members of the teaching and non-teaching staff are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times. The Board of Trustees of Southfields Academy takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all members of staff and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty.

These include:
- Attendance and Absence Management Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Equality of Opportunity Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy/Procedure;
- Harassment Procedure;
- Grievance Procedure;
- Whistleblowing Procedure.

Other policies contribute to staff wellbeing by providing certainty, fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff in different contexts, including:

- Financial Probity Policy;
- Pay Policy;
- Performance Management Policies for Teaching and Support Staff;
- Data Protection Policies;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding Children;
- Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental Leave and Adoption Policies;
- Continuing Professional Development Policy;
- Special Leave Policy;
- Flexible Working Policy;
- Alcohol/Drug Abuse Policy.

All policies are published on Southfields Academy website.

2.   Who This Policy Applies To

2.1   This policy will apply to all employees working in Southfields Academy.

3.   Aims

3.1   This policy aims to:

3.1.1   Provide a working environment which enables staff to work in an environment in which staff wellbeing is supported and which enables staff to carry out their duties effectively.

3.1.2   Recognise the key role of the Principal/Headteacher/Senior Leaders/Line Managers for their responsibilities by enabling access to guidance, training and support.

3.1.3   Encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

3.1.4   Comply with all statutory requirements.

3.1.5   Develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture.

3.1.6   Develop an open culture in which mental, physical and emotional wellbeing is taken seriously and in which staff are supported in order that they may seek any help and support they need and encourages the discussion and understanding of mental health issues.

3.1.7   Ensure that all staff are aware of the policy through regular promotion on staff notice boards and electronic systems.

3.1.8   Identify the hazards that could lead to poor staff health and wellbeing and reduce these where possible.

4.   Legislation

4.1   Pieces of legislation that will be considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, including, but not exclusively:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- Working Time Regulations;
- Employment Rights Act 1996;
- Employment Relations Act 1999.

5.   Responsibilities

5.1   **HR Function shall:**

5.1.1   Provide the necessary professional advice and support.

5.1.2   Assist in the formulation of return-to-work programmes and provide advice on the implementation of statutory requirements.

5.2 **The Board of Trustees:**

5.2.1 Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that recognise and deal with the issue of common mental and physical health problems, which will include: consideration of organisation of work; health risk assessment where appropriate; early recognition for staff with common mental and physical health problems; and interventions that include short-term rehabilitation and return-to-work plans and longer-term reasonable adjustments.

5.2.2 Actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental and physical health problems by creating an environment where staff feel comfortable in asking for help.

5.2.3 Act early and provide consistent support.

5.2.4 Ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

5.2.5 Attend regular training on health and wellbeing in schools.

5.2.6 Ensure that all of Southfields Academy's policies are assessed for workload impact.

5.2.7 Take into account the equality implications of any policies introduced and monitor on a regular basis.

5.2.8 Ensure the policy is monitored, evaluated and reviewed in the light of changing needs and legislative frameworks.

5.3 The Principal/Headteacher shall:

5.3.1 Recognise the value of good management practice with systems in place to effectively manage staff and encourage a partnership approach with staff.

5.3.2 Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.

5.3.3 Promote a healthy workplace and practices that ensure that members of staff are able to develop a healthy mind.

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

5.3.5 Understand the differing needs of staff, at different points and events during their life cycles, and offer support accordingly, if and when required. This may include support for pregnant women, older women during the menopause, and those with caring responsibilities.

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

5.3.7 Ensure that a return-to-work policy is established in the workplace that is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work.

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

5.3.9 Ensure that all staff have access to training sessions on health and wellbeing in schools, including practical sessions to deal with mental, physical and emotional wellbeing issues. This will include Mental Health First Aid.

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

5.3.11 Demonstrate commitment, via systems and practices in place in Southfields Academy to employees maintaining a good work/life balance, and ensure that such practices are communicated to all staff.

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

5.4   Senior Leaders/Line Managers shall:

5.4.1 Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.

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

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

5.4.4 Ensure that a return-to-work policy is established in the workplace that is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work.

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

5.4.6 Attend training on health and wellbeing in schools.

5.4.7 Communicate work-life balance practices to all staff and manage pressures which may affect staff and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.

5.4.8 Demonstrate commitment to staff by encouraging a good work/life balance.

5.5   Staff should:

5.5.1 Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem from their line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

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

5.5.3 Consider attending training on health and wellbeing issues where they feel that this is appropriate.

5.5.4 Where possible, be watchful of any indication of changes of behaviour in colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress.

6.   **Support Mechanisms**

6.1   **Counselling**

External counselling by Wandsworth Council will be provided when considered necessary.

6.2   **Mediation**

Mediation services will be provided by Senior Managers when necessary in order to assist employees to return to normal working relationships. Where this service is appropriate it will be discussed with the employees affected by the situation.

6.3   **Teacher Support Network**

The Teacher Support Network is a group of independent charities and a social enterprise that provides practical and emotional support to staff in the education sector and their families. Information, support and coaching is offered to all staff. The Teacher Support Network provides over 1000 factsheets covering a wide range of issues including money advice, how to cope with bereavement, mental health, diet and nutrition and how to manage stress. To access the free support line, staff can call 08000 562 561, or for more information go to http://teachersupport.info/

7.   **Staff Benefits**

7.1   Staff are automatically enrolled as members of the Aspire Centre which is the Academy's onsite sports centre and adult learning facility. Staff can use the fitness suite and the swimming pool during supervised sessions before the school day begins and on some nights after school.

7.2   Staff are provided with tea and coffee during break time and there is a designated staff counter in the dining room at which staff can purchase hot food, salads, sandwiches and soup at cost price during the school day.

7.3   The Academy has a private day nursery on site at which staff can enrol their children and at which a discount is available for Academy staff. Subject to the position and to negotiation with the Principal part time working is supported at all levels.

7.4   Staff training days will, where possible, have a well-being session. Food will be provided free of charge on these training days.

7.5   Before full Parents' Evenings staff staying will be provided with a hot meal prior to the event free of charge.

7.6   Where staff have had excessive cover a "well-being day" will be allocated at the end of term.

7.7   Staff sports clubs are on offer run by staff to support well-being, e.g. yoga, badminton and team sports at different times during the year.

7.8   All staff are invited to the Annual Christmas lunch, International Evening and the Softball Tournament which allows staff to mix between departments for their enjoyment and well-being.

Appendix 1

Guidance on Supporting Staff with Mental Health Problems for the Senior Leadership Team

Mental health includes emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how individuals think, feel and act. It determines how individuals handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing when individuals realise their potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and make a positive contribution to the community.

Mental Health Disorders detrimentally affects the way people think, behave and interact with others. Examples are:

- Mood swings
- Anxiety disorders
- Personality disorders
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse
- Trauma related disorders (PTSD)
- Psychotic disorders (e.g. delusions/hallucinations)
- Bipolar disorder

Dealing with Mental Health Disorders:

Knowing how to recognise symptoms and support staff is key as early intervention can prevent problems escalating. There is a legal duty to ensure the mental health of staff and senior staff should lead the development of a culture and ethos which enables staff to be open and honest about their needs.

Early Warning Signs:

One of the most common indicators is a general change in a person's 'usual' behaviour. Other signs might include:

- An increase in unexplained absences and sick leave, or conversely an increase in working long hours and staying late.
- Poor timekeeping.
- Physical symptoms such as headaches and back aches; constant tiredness, low energy levels.
- Changes in behaviour such as an increase in the consumption of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes, sedatives, etc.
- Changes in performance – not getting things done, out of character errors, indecisiveness, memory problems, conflict with team members and/or manager.
- Unusual displays of emotion, irritability, erratic behaviour, anxiousness, tearfulness; changes in sleep patterns.

Meetings:

If you think a colleague is showing some signs of early mental ill-health you should talk to them, find out what they may be struggling with in the workplace (which might include work pressures or relationships with colleagues), and what might help them. The important thing is that you use your empathy, communication and listening skills to make the staff member feel comfortable and able to be honest and open.

You should:

- Set time aside with no distractions.
- Let them share as much or as little as they want to.
- Don't try to diagnose or second guess their feelings.
- Keep questions open-ended.
- Talk about wellbeing.
- Listen carefully to what they tell you.
- If appropriate suggest they contact their GP or the Education Support Partnership (who offer counselling and support to teachers).

Managing a colleague who may feel unable to talk

- Of course, an individual may not want to talk about issues they are going through. A Senior Manager should not try to rush them or pressure them to talk. Instead, it may be best for a Senior Manager to simply ensure that the individual knows they are available at any time, to talk about anything.
- The situation should then be monitored and, if it continues to be a cause for concern, the way forward should be discussed.

Supporting a colleague with Mental Health Disorders:

The charity, Mind, highlights three things to remember when supporting someone with a mental health issue:

- Be positive – focus on what employees can do, rather than what they can't.
- Work together and involve them in finding solutions as much as possible.
- Remember people are often the experts when it comes to identifying the support or adjustment they need and how to manage their triggers for poor mental health.

It can be helpful to develop a support plan or healthy work plan with your member of staff. This can be used to facilitate useful conversations about factors that impact on their wellbeing, identify signs that indicate they may be struggling, and highlight things that may help.

Reasonable Adjustments:

A mental health difficulty can qualify as a disability under the Equality Act. This means that a member of staff has the legal right to request reasonable adjustments to be made to their work routine, their work environment or how they do their job.

Any adjustments requested by an individual member of staff to support them are considered balanced against the Academy's duty of care to all staff, alongside the efficient running of the Academy and the Academy's duty of care to all students to determine whether such requests can be considered as reasonable adjustments.

Adjustments for mental health can often be simple, practical and cost-effective measures to help an individual. They could, for example, involve support with managing workload or reducing timetables, or providing a quiet area for staff to use. There may also be a need to support a member of staff to attend medical or counselling appointments.

Supporting the rest of the Department

When members of the Department become aware that a work colleague is experiencing mental ill health they may find it distressing.

The members of Department may need more support than is usual. This might include their Head of Department and having catch-ups with each member on how they are doing. The Head of Department should also make clear that they are available at any time to talk about any concerns or worries an individual may have.

Time Off and Returning to Work:

If someone needs to take a longer period of time off for their mental health it is important to maintain regular contact if practicable, as keeping communication lines open can help prevent staff feeling isolated at home.

When a member of staff returns to work, it is important to meet with them to discuss their reintegration to work. This may include the development of an action plan which can be discussed and agreed with the member of staff. This might help identify triggers and outline more general support that the staff member might need.

What to do in a crisis:

Sometimes a colleague will need more urgent help. They may be having a serious panic attack, feeling suicidal or perhaps are thinking about hurting themselves or others.

Try and stay calm and:

- Really listen to them, in a non-judgemental way; try and provide reassurance.
- Ask them how you can help or what would help.
- Ask them if there is someone they would like you to contact.
- Keep the conversation going but try not to offer quick solutions.
- If they need immediate help speak to Jackie Valin, Wanda Golinska or Larry Davis.

Useful Websites

Acas www.acas.org.uk
Information on stress, and employer and employee rights, in the workplace

Alcoholics Anonymous www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
Fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other to recover from alcoholism.

Carers UK www.carersuk.org
The voice of carers

CBI www.cbi.org.uk
Guidance to businesses on managing stress at work

Department of Health www.gov.uk/government/organisation/department-of-health
Information on dealing with stress and mental health problems, including the use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Dignity at Work Partnership www.dignityatwork.org
Information and guidance on bullying in the workplace

The Equality and Human Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com
The commission is working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

Gingerbread www.gingerbread.org.uk
Gingerbread and One Parent Families have now merged to provide better support and a bigger voice to 1.8 million lone parents and their children throughout England and Wales.

Good Thinking www.good-thinking.uk
For free advice, tools and apps that help boost how you feel, at anytime around the clock, wherever you are in London.

HSE http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/
Information on the stress management standards

Mindful Employer www.mindfulemployer.net
Information and guidance on managing stress and mental health in the workplace

NHS 111 http://www.nhs.uk/111
National Health Service advice and guidance on health matters

Princess Royal Trust for Carers http://www.carers.org
Here to improve carers' lives by fighting for equality and recognition for carers.

Relate http://www.relate.org.uk
UK's largest provider of relationship counselling and sex therapy.

Samaritans http://www.samaritans.org
Offers confidential, non-judgemental support to individuals.

Teacher Support Network
http://teachersupport.info

Work Life Balance Centre http://www.worklifebalancecentre.org
Exists to help people restore control over their workload and working lives we enable them to cut down overworking and so make new decisions about how they spend their time.

World Health Organisation http://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/en/oehstress.pdf
Publication on work organisation and stress