



Staff Wellbeing Policy



Our vision is to enable all to flourish

Status and review cycle:

Last Reviewed: April 2025 (V2)

Responsible group: CEO

Next Review Date: April 2027

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The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership.”
— Harvey Firestone

1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 The Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust recognises that staff are the most important resource within the organisation, to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring and nurturing community. The Trust is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees. Preventing stress is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of staff and is a key priority. In light of this, the Trust understands the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause our employees to become stressed.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the Trust Board, leaders, line managers and staff members in supporting wellbeing and promoting positive mental health. This policy also provides guidance for line managers and employees on how to deal with mental health issues and prevent stress.
- 1.3 It is recognised that there is a strong correlation between healthier, more positive staff, pupil achievement and school improvement.
- 1.4 The Trust Board is committed to:
- Promoting a culture where the Trust vision and values are lived authentically and enable all staff to flourish.
 - Ensuring wellbeing is embedded in the Trust’s strategic planning and day-to-day practices.
 - Reflecting the DfE Wellbeing Charter within this policy and actively encouraging all Trust schools to sign up to the charter and reflecting its principles in local wellbeing initiatives. A copy of the DfE Wellbeing Charter is available in the Staff Wellbeing area of the Trust website.
 - Supporting leaders in school and the central team to create and develop working environments where wellbeing is nurtured and valued.
 - Ensuring that leaders recognise and respond to factors that may affect staff wellbeing.
- 1.5 This policy applies to all members of staff employed within schools and the central team and is developed in consideration of the following principles:
- Respect and compassion - we treat each other with respect, dignity, kindness, and professionalism
 - Flourishing together - we support personal and professional growth within a culture of shared success
 - Collaboration- where possible we engage staff in conversations and decisions which affect their wellbeing
 - Prevention and support - we take proactive steps to reduce workplace stress and provide access to support when needed

2. Legal framework

2.1 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 (2022) 'Workload reduction toolkit'

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Including wellbeing in the Trust's strategic plan.
- Monitoring wellbeing data, including staff surveys and exit interviews.

3.2 The headteacher, senior leadership team, line managers and, in the central team, the executive leadership team and line managers are responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a positive ethos where all staff are valued and where respect, empathy and honesty form the basis of all relationships.
- Setting a good example to staff.
- Ensuring that all policies that affect staff wellbeing are shared and implemented.
- Providing professional development and learning, which equips staff with the tools to effectively manage wellbeing.
- Implementing the Trust performance management process linking it to clear job specifications.
- Where appropriate, consulting staff on changes within the school or central office.
- Organising extra support professionally and personally during times of increased stress.
- Encouraging staff to take advantage of any initiatives introduced to promote wellbeing and effective working, e.g. the employee assistance programme.
- Authorising any staff absences related to stress and/or mental health issues, as well as granting extended leave in line with Trust policies.
- Monitoring employees' workloads and holiday entitlement.
- Regularly communicating with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
- Providing a non-judgmental and confidential support system.
- Promoting information about and access to supportive services.
- Responding sensitively and flexibly to external pressures that impact on staff lives, whilst at the same time ensuring the efficient running of the organisation.
- Ensuring all staff have read and understood this policy.
- Organising thorough inductions for new employees, explaining the Trust's policies and code of conduct.
- Making reasonable adjustments for members of staff who are struggling with long-term mental health issues.

- Ensuring regular contact is maintained with members of staff who are absent for an extended period of time.
- Monitoring levels of staff absence, sickness, staff turnover, grievance and harassment.

3.3 The local governing board is responsible for:

- Champion and monitor staff wellbeing at a local level.
- Monitor wellbeing data including staff absence and staff mobility.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of this policy.

3.4 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.
- Reporting any concerns they have about their co-workers' stress and/or mental health to the headteacher.

4. Implementation

4.1 Headteachers and leaders 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.
- Promotion and reward procedures.
- 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.

- Reasonable adjustments and occupational health advice to support individuals with health conditions.
- Flexible working arrangements, in line with the Flexible Working Policy.
- Acting as positive role models.
- Promoting an open listening culture and responding quickly to problems.
- Making the most of INSET and other team bonding opportunities to build positive relationships and an inclusive culture.
- Reaching out to staff during difficult periods in their lives for example bereavement and supporting them when they return to work after any special leave.
- Supporting new staff or staff with new roles with an appropriate level of induction or retraining designed to be manageable and proportionate.
- Welcoming and tidy staff facilities will be provided including with access to refreshments and an area for breaks and eating lunch.
- Providing opportunities for staff to give feedback including the opportunity of an exit interview.
- Appointing a named Wellbeing Coordinator who will work with leaders to ensure that the work environment promotes staff wellbeing. The wellbeing co-ordinator in this school is Heather Jones (Pastoral Lead).
- Providing all staff will receive appropriate support to help them to be able to fulfil their roles. This may include training and support from their line manager to enable them to be successful in their roles.

4.2 All staff will seek to ensure wellbeing is promoted and stress is prevented through

- Seeking to recognise issues with wellbeing, in themselves and others, and ask for support when required.
- Contributing to a positive, inclusive workplace culture
- Maintaining a work life balance that maintains wellbeing.

5. Identifying warning signs

5.1 It is recognised 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.

5.2 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, without support.
- 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.

5.3 It is recognised 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.

5.4 The school will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy workplace.

5.5 All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that can indicate that a person may be having trouble managing stress, and look out for the following indicators when identifying stress in themselves or others:

Behavioural indicators

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in eating habits
- Increased smoking, drinking or substance abuse
- Isolation from friends and family
- Working excessive additional hours
- Not taking allocated breaks

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

6. Support for new staff

6.1 When new staff join the organisation they will be supported in the following ways:

- A comprehensive induction process will be implemented where duties and expectations will be made clear.

- All new staff will be provided with a clear job description.
- A comprehensive and collaborative probation process which focusses on clear and timely feedback being given to enable the staff member to flourish in their role.
- An allocated mentor will be provided for every new member of staff.

7. Support for new roles

7.1 When staff move to a new role they will be supported in the following ways:

- A meeting will be arranged to agree job description/roles and responsibilities and identify support/training required.
- Introductions/visits to working environment in which the role will be carried out.
- An induction programme will be implemented
- An allocated mentor will be provided
- 1:1 support for new tasks will be provided.

8. Positive practices to support wellbeing

8.1 Positive practice to promote staff wellbeing in the workplace will include:

- Access to free employee assistance service
- Access to occupational health services
- Policies in place that support staff wellbeing – e.g. Behaviour, Marking and Feedback, Menopause Policy, Right to Request Flexible Working Policy, Authorised Special Leave, Cycle to Work, Workplace Respect and Conduct Statement.
- Availability of individual wellness action plans
- A weekly Herald that collates relevant information for HTs to support their leadership and to disseminate to staff as appropriate
- Central project management of capital projects during school holidays to prevent school staff needing to be on site
- Visible and approachable leaders and line managers
- Staff being kind to each other and unkindness and bullying are not tolerated.
- Tidy and welcoming staffroom
- Regular and authentic praise and thank yous from leaders and line managers
- An open-door policy from leaders
- Excellent communication and organisational systems so all staff know what they should be doing and when.
- Meeting times which are time-limited, focussed and productive.
- Successes are celebrated.
- *No staff meetings during parents' evening weeks.*
- *Careful consideration of when activities happen to prevent everything happening in the last weeks of a term.*
- *Termly work life balance weeks – early finish/minimal marking activities/no clubs.*
- *Positive comments made about the school and staff are shared.*
- *Social activities are organised for staff by staff.*
- *No governor meetings in the first or last week of term or during parents evening weeks.*
- *Biscuit Friday to boost morale where staff take it in turns to bring in treats.*
- *Mindfulness activities are promoted e.g. taking lunch break away from working room; a walk around school.*
- *Well-being day for all staff.*

9. Self-management

9.1 Staff can make changes to avoid and prevent stress and/or poor mental wellbeing, as it is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored.

9.2 Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they are struggling with their mental wellbeing or feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.

9.3 Staff are encouraged to take action to manage their own mental wellbeing. These actions could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Being self-aware of personal wellbeing
- Be deliberate about making time for activities that support personal wellbeing outside of the workplace
- Keeping appropriately 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 workload, and being deliberate about establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life
- Prioritising workload throughout the workday, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference
- Taking advantage of the wellbeing initiatives, training and support offered by the school/central team/Trust
- Speaking to the line manager about any concerns they may have regarding their workload, stress, or mental wellbeing
- Not working excessively over contracted hours
- Taking appropriate breaks – for example not skipping lunch
- Speaking with a colleague or line manager when work is becoming overwhelming
- Requesting a wellness action plan

10. Support when problems arise

10.1 When staff experience difficulties, line managers will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to the circumstances. In some cases, this may include external support for example HR advisors and occupational health. Internal support will continue to be provided when external support is in place.

10.2 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.

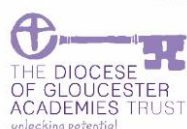
10.3 Support for staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances within the school will be provided including ensuring the Grievance Policy and Whistleblowing Policy are accessible.

11. Wellness action plans (WAPs)

11.1 A wellness action plan (WAP) is a tool that can be used by line managers to support a specific member of staff in managing workplace wellbeing. Any member of staff or line manager can request a discussion about implementing a WAP.

11.2 A WAP is designed to support staff with specific actions that will be taken to improve wellbeing. It identifies what both the school/Trust and the individual need to do to help the individual to stay well at work. It also helps the individual develop an awareness of their working style, stress triggers and responses, and enables them to communicate these to their line manager.

11.3 A WAP is a confidential document drawn up between the member of staff and their line manager. This is not a legal or contractual document, but it can help the member of staff and their line manager to agree together, how to practically support the individual in their role and improve wellbeing. A template for a WAP is included at Appendix 1.



Appendix 1: Wellness action plan template

Commented [NW1]: This is all new but looked super messy with tracked changes so I have accepted changes and can be edit further if needed.

Employee name:	
Line manager name:	
Date:	

<p>What will you find helpful to stay mentally healthy? For example, taking regular breaks, balancing work hours and finding time to relax.</p>
<p>Are there any situations that you have already noticed are having an impact on your wellbeing? For example, having to care for loved ones or children, or worried about finances.</p>
<p>Have you noticed any particular stressors in your working patterns or arrangements? For example, issues with technology, work demands, too many or too few team/line manager interactions, lack of control, home working</p>
<p>What can your line manager do to proactively support you? For example, regular feedback, more frequent meetings; practical support</p>
<p>What has worked (or has not worked) in the past to help you manage your stress? For example, 1:1 Meetings with line manager, team support; taking regular breaks, good sleep patterns, exercising.</p>
<p>Are there any early warning signs of poor mental health that you can look out for? For example, finding it difficult to switch off and go to sleep, not having a structure or routine, not connecting with others, finding it difficult to motivate yourself. Could you let your manager or peers know?</p>
<p>If we notice early warning signs that you are experiencing poor mental health – what should we do? For example, talk to you discreetly about it, contact someone that you have asked to be contacted)</p>

Are you aware of the employee support available to you? e.g., employee assistance, occupational health

Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Agreed actions	Who	When	Review date

Employee signature		Date:	
Line manager signature		Date:	