

HURST GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Staff Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Policy for the attention of			
Audience	Key Audience	Optional Audience	Additional/Notes
Senior Leadership Team	√		
Teachers	√		
Teaching Assistants	√		
Administrative Staff	√		
Lunchtime Supervisors	√		
Site Manager		√	
Cleaners		√	
Governors	√		
Parents	√		
Website	√		
Local Authority		√	

Responsibility of	School Improvement Committee
Review frequency	Every 2 years as a minimum
Previous version	New Policy
This version agreed	17 October 2022
Next review date	Autumn 2024

Staff Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

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1.0 Policy statement

At Hurst Green Primary School, we are committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to members of staff and governors. Our open culture allows staff voices to be heard and using effective policies and procedures, we ensure a safe and supportive environment for all affected - both directly and

indirectly - by mental health issues. We have a separate policy which details the mental health support we provide to pupils and their families.

2.0 Scope

This policy is a guide to all staff – including non-teaching and governors – outlining Hurst Green's Primary school's approach to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

3.0 Policy Aims

- Promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for staff.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Enable staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of issues, difficulties, and mental ill health in themselves and their colleagues.
- Enable staff to understand how and when to access support.
- Provide the right support to staff with mental health issues and know where to signpost them for specific support.
- Develop resilience amongst staff and raise awareness of resilience building techniques.
- Raise awareness amongst staff and gain recognition from SLT that staff may have mental health issues, and that they are supported in relation to looking after their wellbeing.
- Instil a culture of staff welfare where everyone is aware of signs and symptoms with effective signposting underpinned by behaviour and welfare around school.

4.0 Key staff members

This policy aims to ensure all staff take responsibility to promote the mental health of staff, however key members of staff have specific roles to play:

- Senior Mental Health Lead – Lucy Vines has completed the training with Anna Freud Centre and The Department of Education.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead – All of our Senior Leadership Team are fully trained and consist of Mrs Kelly, Mrs Webb, Mr. South, Mr. Lander, and Lucy Vines as our Senior Lead DSL
- Pastoral Staff – Our pastoral Staff have all have a level of mental health first aid training

- SENCO – Our senco is Mrs. Karadia with extensive knowledge of supporting our children and families

If a member of staff is concerned about their mental health, in the first instance they should speak to the Head Teacher or Head of Mental Health. If there is a concern that the member of staff is high risk or in danger of immediate harm, the head teacher or mental health lead should be notified immediately.

If the member of staff presents a high-risk medical emergency, relevant procedures should be followed, including involving the emergency services if necessary.

Supporting staff

We recognise that staff are our most important resource and we seek to value our staff through personal and professional support, involvement in school decisions and access to professional development.

Dudley council, as an employer, has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' 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's 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.

This policy recognises that there are many sources of work-related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees or students.

We are committed to making sure that this Staff Wellbeing Policy is implemented so that each individual is able to cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of stress within a "no-blame" environment.

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a school ethos which supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

This policy applies to all employees working in Hurst Green Primary School.

The School's performance on wellbeing and stress management will be assessed in the context of the HSE Management Standards.

Here at Hurst Green we encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns.

The Senior Leadership Team should be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.

Individual Risk Assessments

If a member of staff shares with us that they are struggling with a mental health issue, then we would invite them to co-construct a risk assessment to support them at work. This would include outlining the strategies and support that we can put in place for them. At this point, we would also check who, outside of school, is available to support them.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff are aware of the support and services available to them, and how they can access these services.

Within the school (noticeboards, staffrooms, toilets etc.) and through our communication channels (newsletters, websites), we will share and display relevant information about local and national support services and events.

The aim of this is to ensure that staff understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why should they access it
- What is likely to happen next

Sources of support at school and in the local community

The Headteacher, Deputy Head, Assistant Heads and other managers encourage an atmosphere in which members of staff feel comfortable in asking for help when it is needed. They seek to be sensitive to and to recognise early any factors in an employee's life that might precipitate stress related issues. They act in a timely, supportive and proportionate manner when concerns arise.

When problems arise: -

- The school will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to the circumstances. In some cases, this may include external support such as the teacher helpline, support from the Local Authority e.g. counselling. Occupational Health and GP services may be used. The school will continue to support even when external services are involved.
- The outcome of stressful or threatening incidents will often be influenced by the response of the pupils. This will be considered in the school's response.
- During this time the school will seek at all times to maintain the confidentiality, rights and dignity of the staff involved.

Better days Project from the AOC

The better days project is a unique wraparound project that supports everyone who works in Dudley. The project can offer 6 free sessions of counselling or therapy either at school or at their centre.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a colleague is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously, and staff observing any of these warning signs should alert Lucy Vines Senior Mental Health Lead.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from colleagues becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g., long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Lateness to, or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Confidentiality

If a member of staff feels it is necessary to pass on concerns about another member of staff to someone within the school, then this should be first discussed with the member of staff involved.

We will tell them:

- Who we are going to tell
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them
- When we're going to tell them

Ideally, consent should be gained from the colleague first, however, if the colleague is sufficiently concerned, this information can be passed on without consent.

Signposting staff members to other sources of information and support can be helpful in these instances. Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the free confidential counselling service from Education Support Partnership 0800562561. Dudley LA's employee wellbeing service support the school and staff are referred as outlined in the LA's staff absence policy.

At Hurst Green staff can access counselling support through the Better Days project with The Arts for Change centre in Dudley. Access is through Lucy Vines.

We also support staff through Thrive at work, a workplace wellbeing programme which recognises the schools' efforts in improving the health and wellbeing of its employees.

Services staff can access are posted within the staff room with details about how to access the service.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing in terms of their role as a DSL. We have five DSLs in school and sharing disclosures with a DSL colleague ensures that a single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the child. DSL can provide support for each other by sharing difficult disclosures where appropriate and talking about the effect it may have on them personally.

Induction and Mental Health

On joining the school and also moving to new roles the following support will also be offered:

- New staff will be given a school orientation and relevant induction information.
- New staff will be made to feel welcome and given as much support as possible.
- Check-ins/reviews with new staff will be held throughout the first 6 months of employment (these should be in line with school policy re induction)
- Discussion of new roles and expectations alongside support for new role and related tasks.

Staff Well-being Practices

- Time is provided for subject leaders and Phase Leaders to complete major tasks.
- Time is set aside for tasks such as moderation, medium term planning, pupil progress meetings, annual reviews etc.
- Marking is kept to a minimum and oral feedback is encouraged.
- Toiletries are provided for all staff to use.
- Flu vaccinations are offered to all staff free of charge through Dudley;
- Staff can request leave to attend their own children's assemblies and performances.
- Staff can request leave to attend training for their own children e.g. phonics or autism.

- Staff can have one 'late day' per year for each day that they work – i.e. someone who works 3 days a week can have three late days per year. On a late day, staff can come into school by 9.30am. This enables staff to take their children to school, attend assemblies etc.
- Staff are regularly reminded about the people available in school that they can talk to.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The policy may be updated more frequently to reflect local and national changes. This is the responsibility of Lucy Vines our Senior Mental Health Lead.