



CASTLE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Date:	September 2025
Review Date:	September 2026
Ratified by governors on:	23/09/2025

Policy Statement

Castle Hill Primary School is 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.

The wellbeing of staff is paramount to maintaining a successful and forward thinking school. It is our belief that the best asset in school for students are staff who are happy, motivated and focused. Castle Hill recognises that staff are their most important resource and are to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally and that how staff feel on an everyday basis is likely to affect their performance and therefore impact on the ethos and atmosphere of the school which in turn affects students. If staff are happy, motivated and are purposeful in their approach, this will have a huge positive impact on the wellbeing of students resulting in happier students who achieve more.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a document that embraces the many school practices that supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

Aims of the policy

We aim to:

- Develop a healthy, motivated workforce who are able to deliver a high-standard of education to pupils
- Help ensure that our school promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels and mental and physical health
- Recognise that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness and to agree on flexible working practices where possible without damaging opportunities for pupils to succeed
- Communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly
- Respond sensitively to external pressure which affect the lives of staff members
- Provide staff with training to deal positively with stressful incidents, and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies via training
- Make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work-related health and wellbeing issues
- Identify and understand what wellbeing at work means to the Staff and to ensure that those things remain a focus for the Senior Leadership Team

Staff workload: the work life/fulfilment balance

The staff at Castle Hill Primary School are all dedicated and committed individuals who work hard, at times in challenging situations, to ensure the very best care and learning outcomes

for all students. The school is aware of the time and energy required to support students and for the wellbeing of staff and for students the importance of staff taking breaks according to their job roles. Everyone is aware of the tremendous workload involved in running a school and therefore the senior leadership team will overview the delegation of duties to ensure that there is a fair workload for all staff. Should a member of staff feel that their workload is becoming or has become unmanageable they should discuss this matter with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team at Castle Hill Primary School will:

- Take overall responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring that staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance
- Be open and ethical in their approach to ensure that staff are listened to and treated with the utmost respect.
- Provide professional support for the Senior Leadership Team to assist coaching supervision and to update their skills in supporting staff wellbeing.
- Provide non-judgemental and confidential care procedures through, for instance, providing bespoke holistic support programmes for staff
- Adopt the appropriate policies in respect of 'family friendly' employment, including consideration of part-time working, flexible working patterns etc., where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the school
- Ensure that clear procedures are in place that will minimise the levels of stress caused to staff when following formal procedures
- Constantly review the demands on teachers and support staff, e.g. the time spent on paperwork, and strive towards seeking out alternative solutions wherever possible through having open communication channels with staff
- Adopt a process to monitor staff wellbeing via various routes including regular wellbeing questionnaires
- Consider and provide if possible, personal and professional development opportunities in areas such as stress management, team building and time management

The Head Teacher will:

- Ensure that all staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance and lead by example in this regard
- Encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. They will be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and will act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises
- Support the governing body in ensuring that strategies are implemented to effectively manage and, where necessary, reduce employee stress. This includes preventing unnecessary stress and ensuring that any work-based stress employees experience is at a productive, healthy level

- Adopt school policies and provide clear guidance regarding time-off for public or trade union duties, or for personal reasons.
- Ensure that there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of school life
- Create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns, and will enable staff to do so in an environment where stress is not considered a weakness
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and trained in-line with the school's priorities and offered opportunities for development
- Actively promote new and innovative ways of reducing workload while not impacting pupil achievement and the school's performance
- Monitor and review any measures that are planned, and assess their effectiveness
- Conduct risk assessments for work-related stress in consultation with senior staff
- Appoint a Designated Mental Health Lead (MHL) and a Deputy (DMHL), who are responsible for ensuring that the good health and wellbeing of all staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school. The MHL and the Deputy DMHL will also ensure that school policies and procedures reflect this aim
- Create a Wellbeing Group made up of staff members from a variety of roles within the school who will, in conjunction with the DMHL and the Deputy DMHL, ensure that the policy and procedures are adhered to and to carry out duties which supports those aims
- Make individual interventions such as short-term rehabilitation and return to work plans, and longer-term reasonable adjustments to work
- Ensure that clear policies, procedures and actions are in place and are followed at all times

Staff members will:

- Make themselves aware of the school's staffing policies on Capability, Managing Sickness Absence, Leave of Absence, Grievance, Flexible Working, etc.
- Assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or their colleagues
- Ask the Senior Leadership Team for help or support if required. This includes understanding that a good relationship requires communication from both parties and so it's important that issues are raised at the earliest possible moment so that effective strategies can be put in place to manage workloads
- Identify opportunities for development and take advantage of those offered by the school
- Apply for requests for leave of absence in advance and be honest about sickness absence leave
- Be encouraged to share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the school at staff meetings and directly with their Senior Leadership Team
- Be encouraged to respond to requests for completion of staff questionnaires so that all staff feedback can be included which will help form plans

Lead Members of Staff

Whilst **all** staff have a responsibility to promote and address the mental health and well-being of students, staff with a specific remit include:

- Mr R. Faulkner – Assistant Head, SENCo, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Mental Health Lead
- Mr A. Renwick – Head Teacher, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Mental Health Lead
- Mr L. McIntyre – Assistant Head
- Mrs J. Hoarty - Link Governor for Safeguarding
- Mrs J. Vickers – PSHE Lead

Actions to support new staff:

Starting at a new school can be daunting to say the least. Everything is new and relationships with colleagues, children and parents have yet to be developed. Additionally, the start of the year can be demanding and exhausting.

All new staff should be supported in addressing their own mental health and well-being by:-

- being given a school orientation by the Head Teacher/Assistant Head Teacher.
- receiving the Staff Handbook. This will continue to include all important policies, or their location, and will include this policy on Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- being made to feel welcome and given as much support as required.
- being issued with a name badge on arrival on their first day or asap.
- being encouraged and supported to speak to someone regarding any dips in mental health and well-being
- at the end of the first week of employment, new staff will have a meeting with a senior member of staff.
- having a 3-month review interview with a senior member of staff. Additional reviews may be scheduled at 6-months and/or a year.

Actions to support Early Career Teachers (ECTs)

The Mental Health and Wellbeing of trainee teachers and ECTs is just as important as your current members of staff. Helping them to develop good habits for the future is vitally important, not just for your school, but for their careers.

We will encourage trainees to talk about the emotions and for your existing staff to help them spot the signs of Mental Health and Wellbeing issues, showing the trainees that your existing staff know how to support those who are struggling. During discussions, it would be useful for mentors and long standing teachers to lead by example and share their own strategies for dealing with stressful times and situations and how to maintain an effective work-life balance.

Ways that school can support mental health and well-being are:-

- **Support:** Have an open-door policy. Ensure trainees know who to speak to in the school if they have concerns and reassure them that no concern is ever too small

- **Demand:** Be mindful of asking too much of trainees, they will be very keen to be involved in wider school life and are often too keen to say “yes”. Remember they are a trainee teacher so asking them to be involved in everything throughout the school can often put an enormous amount of stress on them to say yes, and reduces the time they have for planning and studying
- **Role:** Have a clear partnership agreement with your ITT provider – agree with the training provider about what their expectation is of a school when hosting a trainee so that the trainee does not receive conflicting information. This is very important when discussing their Mental Health and Wellbeing
- **Relationship:** Select mentors who are experienced and have capacity to support Mental Health and Wellbeing of trainees– the relationship between a mentor and trainee is a key factor in the process. Make sure that mentors are trained, have realistic expectations and build relationships rooted in trust and shared values
- **Knowledge:** Ensure trainees have access to any Mental Health and Wellbeing programmes in your school – trainees must know what there are activities that are being offered in school and, if you have partnerships with external organisations (such as Healthy Mind UK), trainees should know about this

Actions to support School Meals Supervisory Assistants (SMSAs)

At Castle Hill we value our SMSA’s as an integral part of staff in ensuring that dinner times run smoothly. We insist that the children treat the SMSA’s with the same respect that they show teachers and TA’s.

To support SMSA’s we:-

- Have an ‘open door’ policy where they can speak to any member of staff
- Meet where necessary to discuss concerns regarding their role or any other issues
- Have a text message group where information is shared (not all have Whatsapp)
- Share all policies and any information regarding external support

Actions to support School Governors

The Mental Health and Well-being of the Governing Body is looked after by all governors looking out for one another as much as they can. Training is strongly encouraged to help governors feel confident in their role and new governors are welcomed and inducted into the role.

The Governing Body try to keep all meetings focused and as short as possible so that governors do not need to be anxious about when meetings will finish. Each governor meets with the chair on an individual basis to give them opportunities to feedback on their role. These meetings are

also a chance for them to share any frustrations they may have as well as what they enjoy about their role.

The Governing Body is looking to build stronger relationships with one another by creating opportunities to meet together outside of board meetings. The chair meets with the Head Teacher on a regular basis. As well as discussing school matters, one of the purposes of this regular meeting is to provide an opportunity for some healthy discussion of frustrations as the Head Teacher's role is often mentally and emotionally taxing and it is the board's responsibility to provide support where needed.

Procedures for handling issues of wellbeing

The Senior Leadership Team (Head Teacher and two Assistant Head Teachers) must 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.

Where additional, professional advice is required, the school has contacts with Occupational Health Professionals and Human Resource experts and these avenues should be utilised. Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the confidential counselling service listed in The Staff Handbook. This service provides staff with serious concerns to obtain advice and support outside of the workplace. The school will provide support to any employees facing high-levels of stress in the workplace, as well as other work-related issues which are having/have the potential to have negative impacts on the staff member's Mental Health and Wellbeing. The various options for dealing with such issues should be discussed with staff members where appropriate. In some cases, this may include external support such as the teacher helpline or support from the Local Authority e.g. counselling. During this time, the school will ensure that at all times the staff member's privacy and dignity is respected. This means maintaining confidentiality, upholding the employee's rights and dealing with the employee with tact and sensitivity.

Procedures to promote staff well-being

Procedures will include:

- 'open door' policy to speak to any member of SLT
- Regular communication via written updates emailed and shared on WhatsApp group
- Continuing professional development for all staff
- Regular social events
- Performance management meetings that include discussions about mental health and well-being
- Signposting to external support when needed
- All staff encouraged to contribute to the School Development Plan
- All staff invited to INSET days
- Recognition on staff birthdays/special occasions
- Administrative staff will support the wider workforce