SPERRINVIEW SPECIAL SCHOOL

Staff Wellbeing Policy

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**Statement of intent**

Sperrinview Special School wants to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise that staff wellbeing is important to pupil achievement and the school’s performance.

When we have good levels of wellbeing we feel that life is in balance and that we can deal effectively with daily troubles as well as having the ability to bounce back from life’s challenges. Positive staff wellbeing can increase productivity and engagement, improve people’s job satisfaction and help reduce absence from work. It also means that staff are better able in turn to support their pupils.

Sperrinview Special 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 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.

Signed by:

Principal: Date:

Chair of Governors: Date:

Review date:

**AIMS OF THE POLICY**

1.1 To develop a healthy, motivated workforce who are able to deliver a high-standard of educational experiences and care to pupils.

1.2 To help ensure that our school promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees’ stress levels, mental and physical health.

1.3 To 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.

1.4 To communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly.

1.5 Promote effective communication, between staff and management, and ensure clear communication procedures are in place for supporting staff.

1.6 To respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members.

1.7 To provide staff with external support to deal positively with stressful incidents, and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies via training/counselling.

1.8 To improve staff development, co-operation and teamwork by creating effective leaders.

1.9 To make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work related health and wellbeing issues.

1.10 Effectiveness of policy is to be monitored by a health and wellbeing team consisting of both non - teaching and teaching staff.

**Roles**

**The Board of Governors:**

1: Will take overall responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring that staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance.

2: Will 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.

3: Will ensure that clear procedures are in place that will minimise the levels of stress caused to staff when following formal procedures such as the Disciplinary Policy.

4: Will provide a range of strategies for involving staff in the school decision making processes.

5: Will review the demands on staff, and seek practical solutions wherever possible.

6: Will provide personal and professional development such as stress management, team building, etc.

**The Principal, Vice-Principal and SLT**

1: Will ensure that all staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance and lead by example in this regard.

2: Will support the governing body in ensuring that strategies are implemented to effectively manage and, where necessary, reduce employee stress. Thus preventing unnecessary stress and ensuring that any work-based stress employees experience is at a productive, healthy level.

3: Will adopt school policies and provide clear guidance regarding time-off for personal reasons. For further information refer to our school’s Absence Policy.

4: Will ensure that there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of school life.

5: Will 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.

6: Will ensure that all staff are aware of and trained in-line with the school’s priorities and offered opportunities for development when the opportunity arises.

7: Will monitor and review any measures or work initiatives that are planned, and assess their effectiveness. Do they add to or reduce workload? Do they replace something that is already in place? SLT will allocate -time for well being team to meet and discuss concerns etc – e.g. cover provided for class if possible.

8: Will conduct risk assessment for work-related stress in consultation with SLT.

9: Will appoint a staff wellbeing team who are responsible for ensuring that the good health and wellbeing of all staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school. This team will also ensure that school policies and procedures reflect this aim**. THIS STAFF WELLBEING TEAM WILL BE CHANGED ON A 2 YEAR CYCLE TO ENSURE THAT MORE STAFF HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED AND NEW IDEAS ARE INTRODUCED.**

10: Will make, where reasonably possible, individual interventions such as short-term rehabilitation and return to work plans, and longer-term reasonable adjustments to work. Advice on this will be sought by EA Occupational Health.

**Staff members**

1: Will make themselves aware of the school’s policies on Code of Conduct, Bullying and Harassment, Staff Attendance etc.

2: Will 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.

3: Will ask their line manager whether that be the class teacher, member of SLT, VP or Principal 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 or resolves problems or issues.

4: Will identify opportunities for development and take advantage of those offered by the school.

5: Will apply for any requests for leave of absence in advance and be honest about sickness absence leaves.

6: Will share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the school at formal meetings such as staff meetings and block meetings. Opportunities may also arise during Staff Development days too.

7: Take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing by adopting healthy lifestyles.

**Actions to support new staff**

**Practical actions to support new staff**

• All staff will be given a school orientation by the Principal, Vice Principal or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

• All new, long term employed staff will receive the staff induction pack/staff handbook. This will continue to include all important policies, or their location, and will include this policy on health and wellbeing.

• All staff will be made to feel welcome and given as much support as required.

• All staff are to be issued with a name badge/security lanyard on arrival on their first day.

• At the end of the first week of employment, new staff will have an informal review with a senior member of staff.

• All new, long term staff will have an informal review with the principal/vice principal to discuss any issues they may have. Additional reviews may be scheduled at the staff members request.

**Practical actions to support new employees within school**

• Decide who will be the supporting person for the new role/employee. – name of person/s for role

• Hold an initial discussion of roles/tasks – what are the expectations of the role/task they are being asked to do/carryout?

• Where possible, hold visits to school/class or environment of new role before employment begins.

• Establish a pattern of coaching. New employee offered a short period of work shadowing prior to taking up their role within school if this is appropriate

• Provide 1:1 support for new tasks/responsibilities if required.

The Senior Leadership Team (Principal, Vice Principal, and other managers) 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 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 Education Authority (EA) 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 for handling issues of wellbeing**

See policies which impact on health and wellbeing in relation to school:

Arrangements for flexible working

Code of conduct/code of conduct for meetings and trainings

Communication policy

Dealing with allegations of abuse against staff member

Dignity at work policy and code of practice

E- safety and internet

Healthcare for staff

Health and safety policy

Guidelines for annual and unpaid leave

Induction policy

Equal opportunity policy

Risk assessments

Safe working environment

Safety of volunteers and substitute staff

Safety policy

Smoking policy

Policy on pupils and staff who are sick

Policy for exposure to bodily fluids

**Procedures to promote staff wellbeing:**

• At least one morale boosting/wellbeing activity organised by health and wellbeing team per year – **TIME TO BE ALLOCATED TO HEALTH AND WELL BEING TEAM TO PLAN, ORGANISE AND PUT ACTIVITY TOGETHER**

• Annual staff review meeting with principal/vice principal

• All staff encouraged to contribute to the School Development Plan.

• All staff invited to staff training days.

• Recognition on staff milestone birthdays/special occasions, times of celebration or bereavement – DONE WITHIN CLASS TEAMS IN CONSULTATION WITH GIFT COMMITTEE.

• Consultative whole staff block meetings held once a term to give staff the opportunity to voice concerns and to have their views sought. The SLT will bring issues to principal/vice principal during subsequent SLT meetings.

**Appendix 1: Staff health and wellbeing survey**

Employee name:

Work hours:

1. On average, how many hours per day do you work during term time? (This should include time spent working from home.) Where this is greatly variable, please include your typical number of working hours, as well as the number of hours you have worked during busy periods in the school year. The second figure should represent times during which you have worked such longer hours for a week or more, ‘one off’ instances should not be included.

2. How many hours do you work each week outside of term time? (This should include hours both at school and working from home.)

3. How many hours of teaching do you have timetabled each week?

4. In total, how many hours a week do you spend during term time working before school, after 6pm and during weekends?

5. Are you ever called on to cover for other staff members? (not including afternoon cover)

6. If so, approximately how many hours, per term, do you provide cover?

7. Do you receive administrative and/or clinical support from the school?

**Workload**

**(please state whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, don’t know).**

1. I never seem to have enough time to get my work done.

2. I can decide when to take a break during my working day.

3. I am pressured to work long hours.

4. I have a choice in deciding what I do at work.

5. I can make my own decisions about how I do my work.

6. The pace of my work is too fast.

7. I know how to go about getting my job done.

8. I understand how my work contributes to the objectives for my organisation.

9. I am unclear about what’s expected of me at work.

10. I do not have the right resources or equipment to do my job.

11. I am gaining valuable experience in my job.

Work schemes/Flexible working arrangements

1. Have you ever utilised flexible working options while employed at this school? If so, did you feel this scheme was successful in your case, why or why not?

2. Are you aware of any schemes in place to assist staff members with creating a healthy work-life balance and/or manage their stress at your school?

3. At any point in your employment with the school, have you discussed the possibility of taking part in a flexible employment scheme to help you manage your work-life balance? If so, how was this discussion initiated/prompted (i.e. as part of a performance review session etc.)?

4. Do you feel the school is sympathetic/flexible when you have to reschedule your work around other commitments?

5. Do you find it difficult to balance your private/family life with work?

**Health and wellbeing:**

1. Do you believe that the school has sufficient policies and procedures in place to safeguard the health and wellbeing of its employees?

2. Has your work at the school ever negatively affected your health and/or wellbeing? If you feel comfortable doing so, please provide brief details.

3. Do you feel that the school has been supportive if/when you have had to ask for help for work related health and wellbeing issues such as stress?

**Please tick which of these statements has applied to you during your employment at this school.**

• Friends and family have commented on the long hours I work.

• If I became ill, I would feel unable to take a day off due to my workload.

• I feel in control of the role of work in my life i.e. I feel able to balance my working life with my private life.

• I spend a lot of my holidays catching up on paperwork.

• I enjoy my job.

• I find my job challenging but enjoyable.

• I find my job challenging and do not enjoy it.

• I enjoy being relatively busy in my role.

• I generally feel overwhelmed by my workload and/or my role generally.

• I sometimes feel overwhelmed by my workload and/or my role generally.

• I feel my job here is insecure.

• I find my job very rewarding.

• I have cancelled holidays or cut them short in order to meet some of the demands of my work.

• I have had medical advice to cut down my working hours.

• I have missed family and social occasions because of work commitments.

• I have pretended to be ill in order to take a day’s break.

• I regularly feel exhausted while at work.

• I make choices about how I divide my time.

• I make sure work does not dominate my whole life.

• I enjoy being part of the education sector.

• I feel valued by the school.

• (If a teacher) I feel valued by my students. (Strike this line if not a teacher.)

• I often feel I need greater control over the hours I work.

• If conditions remain as they are, I will consider changing jobs.

• If conditions remain as they are, I will consider changing schools.

• My partner/spouse has to take an unfair share of childcare.

• My partner/spouse has to take an unfair share of domestic work.

• My working relationships are generally poor.

• My working relationships are generally positive.

• My workload is generally well planned and under control.

• Sometimes I resent the hours I spend at work away from family and friends.

• When I go on holiday, it takes me several days to ‘wind down’.

• When I return to work after a holiday, I don’t feel rested.

• When I take time off, I miss my work.

• Work has affected my relationship with my partner/spouse/friends/children/family.

• I regularly worry about work outside of school hours.

• I rarely worry about work outside of school hours.

IF YOU FIND THAT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RAISED BY ANSWERING THIS SURVEY AND YOU REQUIRE SUPPORT, BUT FEEL YOU CANNOT DISCUSS WITH A COLLEAGUE FROM SCHOOL, SEE THE LIST BELOW OF APPROVED EA SUPPORT SERVICES.

**SAMARITANS : 116 123**

**AWARE NI:** online support groups see EA Healthwell hub/health resources – www.healthwell.eani.org.uk

**MIND WISE:** online support groups see EA Healthwell hub/health resources – www. healthwell.eani.org.uk

**PARENTLINE NI: 0808 8020 400**

**CARERS NI - ADVICE LINE: 028 9043 9843**

**LIFELINE: 0808 808 8000**

**CRUSE BEREAVEMENT: 0808 808 1677**