Staff Well-Being Handbook

Some of the information in this booklet is taken from Supporting Staff Wellbeing in Schools – Anna Freud Centre.

What do we mean by Staff Wellbeing?

The term wellbeing can be used to describe our holistic health, including our physical, mental and emotional health. When we have good levels of wellbeing we feel like life is in balance and that we can generally cope well. We feel motivated and engaged are able to show resilience and bounce back from life's challenges.

School staff often juggle multiple tasks and demands, so a focus on staff wellbeing has become increasingly important. Taking good care of staff both emotionally and practically helps them to preform to the best of their ability and ensures that they are better able to support pupils. Workloads, deadlines and challenging behaviours can all impact negatively on the wellbeing of school staff.

Poor mental wellbeing may impact on the ability to manage during key moments of stress in the classroom or at school. Staff who have good mental health and wellbeing are more likely to have the necessary resources to be able to manage and plan during or after stressful episodes whether with a pupil, a class, a colleague, an inspector or a parent.

Good staff wellbeing can have a number of benefits for schools including:

- Positive impact on pupils, including improved educational outcomes, as both staff and children are more engaged
- Increased productivity of staff members
- Reduced absences from work in relation to sickness (both short term and long term)
- Staff being able to manage stress better and develop healthier coping strategies
- Improved job satisfaction, which can support retention
- Staff feeling valued, supported and invested in

Feedback from Staff Well Being Survey Summer 2024

As a result of survey results, the following will be put in place to ease these staff concerns

- Daily walk rounds from Senior Leaders to provide recognition to staff
- Staff briefing will continue every week to share dates and information for the upcoming week so everyone is aware of what is happening
- This information will also be shared on the school website for parents
- Hymn Practice every week will be allocated for staff to fill in their relevant sections of the school website, newsletter input, certificates to the office and corridor displays.
- A bi-annual calendar will be drawn up by the Assistant Head Teachers to show what events, themed weeks and National Days will participate in on a two year rotation
- Blocked off weeks will be planned into this so there is time for uninterrupted teaching
- As above, regular emails, Phase Meetings, Staff Meetings and the weekly briefing will continue to support with the communication systems in school

What can support staff wellbeing?

At The Rosary, we aim to ensure that all staff are supported in relation to their wellbeing. This handbook aims to outline what the school can support you with and what you can do to support your own health and wellbeing.

When it comes to supporting staff wellbeing, we must be realistic in our expectations of what the school can do. Working in a school has many challenges, but these challenges are greatly outnumbered by the joy we all receive in supporting the children to grow, learn and develop both academically and socially.

One of the main pressures which we will explore in this handbook is around the general workload, especially in relation to paperwork. Whilst the Government has asked us to reduce teacher workload, the emphasis on subject leader workload has increased for primary school teachers. In this handbook, we will look at ways that we can support teachers with these Government expectations.

This staff hand books sets out to support staff in managing their own Health and Wellbeing in the workplace.

The information below shows some of the support options that are available to staff at The Rosary.

Specialist Support –

- Crisis Support
- Referrals to Occupational Health

Targeted Support

- Supervision
- Training around Mental Health
- Section of Performance Management linked to wellbeing needs
- Wellbeing events for staff – including staff breakfasts and social events

Universal Support

- Staff Wellbeing Policy
- Dedicated staff rooms
- Senior Leadership Team always available for staff to raise their concerns to
- Staff training on child and family mental health
- Culture of no blame and stigma for mental health needs of the school community
- Regular staff feedback questionnaires on how we can improve our support for staff wellbeing

Non-negotiables (as part of the Teacher Standards)

- Consistent support for the children in our care
- Planning
- Report Writing
- Subject Leader Whole School Information and Evidence
- Contracted hours
- Attending work related meetings and training
- Marking and Assessment
- Meeting with parents
- Up-dating sections of the School Website

With the non-negotiables, all staff must manage their own wellbeing in relation to them. This means that if any aspect of the non-negotiables feels unmanageable, overwhelming or is causing you stress and anxiety, then you must reach out for support. The Senior Leadership Team are here to support all staff, however, we can only do this if you come and speak to us.

Creating an Environment of Trust

As a school, it is important to have a culture of respect and trust. Both of these qualities are built upon on a daily basis between colleagues in school.

From informal conversations in the staff room, to one to one meetings with a colleague to formal conversations, there has to be mutual respect and trust in order for consistent relationships to be formed.

In our school, the following is in place to ensure we have an Environment of Trust –

1. Safeguarding is at the forefront of all that we do for our children, staff, governors and parents
2. All one to one conversations with a member of the Senior Leadership Team remain confidential (information is fed back to the Executive Head Teacher to ensure consistent support)
3. All staff members are treated the same. There is no discrimination when requests are sent to the Head of School or Executive Head Teacher
4. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure we are all aware of the expectations of our roles within the school
5. Staff absence is monitored to ensure unauthorised absences are not impacting on other members of the team
6. Mental Health and Wellbeing concerns are taken seriously by the Head of School and Executive Head Teacher and treated on an individual staff basis
7. Support is available for all staff who are concerned about their health and wellbeing. The door is always open! Reach out when you need support, this may be difficult to do at times if you are feeling overwhelmed, however, when you take that first step and reach out for support you have already lightened your load.

Prioritising Wellbeing

In any school, it is important that the Senior Leadership Team lead by example and model good working practices, self-care and a work life balance.

In managing our own health and wellbeing, it is important that all staff try to make time for the following whilst at work –

1. Work/life balance –
    a. Taking your allocated breaks away from your desk/classroom
    b. Eating a healthy meal at lunch time
    c. Regular check ins with your Phase Leader/Line Manager
    d. Not taking work home – try to manage this within your day at school
    e. Ask for help when needed

2. Communication –
    a. Talk to a member of the Senior Leadership Team when you need support
    b. Regularly checking your emails to be aware of any changes
    c. Attendance at the weekly Staff Briefing to be aware of what is happening in the upcoming week

3. Sense of Community –
    a. Staff breakfasts
    b. Non working lunch (not allowed to talk about school!!)
    c. Take a walk with colleagues during your lunch break

4. Training
    a. Programme of regular training for staff on health and wellbeing – children and adults
    b. Staff wellbeing questionnaires
    c. Staff wellbeing on the agenda for governors

Looking after your own Wellbeing

It is important for staff to know how to look after their own wellbeing. Only you know how you are feeling and what support you need. Taking the following steps can support you in looking after yourself while at work.

1. Know your personal limits and having the ability to ask for help when necessary. This will help you to have more balance in life and will enable you to take better care of yourself and others.

2. Identify supportive people that you have in your working life. Who can you turn to in work when you need support? By finding this person, you can dramatically improve your work life balance as a problem shared is a problem halved! When you are having a stressful day, speak to your trusted colleague who can help you find ways to ease away the worry to ensure you are not taking the problem home with you.

3. Talking. This is the most obvious one but also the most difficult. When we talk about what is concerning us, we leave ourselves vulnerable and open. However, in our school where we have a culture of respect and trust, this is what we must try to do in order to get support.

4. Being flexible about change. Even with the best laid plans, in a school, change is often unexpected and unpredictable. Our ability to accept change and to plan and adapt can help us to manage any potential feelings of stress and anxiety and cope better overall.

5. Finally, take some time for self compassion and reflection. Meditation is a great way to ease the mind. Headspace is an app you can get on your phone that provides guided meditations to help you with your wellbeing.

What does The Rosary already do to support staff wellbeing?

Staff Breakfast	Templates provided for Subject Leader folders
Lieu days for staff who run an after school club or intervention	Work from home days when teachers have to complete paper work requirements
Open door policy in relation to speaking to a member of the Senior Leadership Team	Staff Social events
Staff training around managing your own and children's wellbeing	Occupational Health Referrals based on individual need
Planning templates	Reviewed marking and feedback policy
PPA time above the 10% guidance	Subject Leader release time during the school day
Meeting dates shared with staff at the beginning of each term	Sharing the planning workload with partner teacher
Mentoring and Coaching	Tea and Coffee, breakfast and lunch provided on training days and twilights
Mental Health First Aider	2 staff training days per year taken as twilights so additional holiday days
Discretionary Leave granted on individual basis	Training support for staff for career development

Further Support on Offer

- Supervision offer for all staff
- Half termly event dates to be shared with all staff at the beginning of each half term
- Knowledge Organisers available for each topic
- Planned phase meetings within the school day
- Setting time restrictions on work emails so staff do not receive them at the weekend or before/after school hours
- Free provision of Head Space app

(the use of the word Head teacher is shown for roles split between the Executive Head teacher and the Head of School)