



BRIDGEWATER
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Staff Wellbeing Strategy

September 2024

Statement of Intent

Bridgewater Primary 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 and aim to create a culture to support and maintain positive mental health and wellbeing. Bridgewater Primary School is committed to making sure that this Staff Wellbeing Strategy is implemented and embedded into school practice so that each individual is able to cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of stress. The purpose of this strategy is to maintain a school ethos which supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently. We strive to promote positive and mental wellbeing by providing information and support when required. By offering guidance and strategies, along with the support of our mental Health First Aiders, we aim to support pupils and staff to be mentally happy. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure that wellbeing remains a school focus and priority.

Our mission - aims of the strategy:

- To develop a healthy, motivated workforce who are able to deliver a high-standard of education to pupils.
- To help ensure that our school promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members (teaching and non-teaching staff), recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health.
- To recognise that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness and to agree on working practices that do not restrict the opportunities for pupils to succeed.
- To communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy and strategy updates are communicated regularly.
- To respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members.
- To provide staff with training to deal with different scenarios or to be aware of who they can communicate concerns to.
- To improve staff development, co-operation and teamwork by creating effective leaders.
- 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.

What do we mean by mental health?



Adapted from Centre for Mental Health

Mental Health is “the emotional and spiritual resilience which enables us to enjoy life and survive pain, suffering and disappointment. It is a positive sense of wellbeing and an underlying belief in our and others dignity and worth. It is influenced by our experience and our genetic inheritance.” (World Health Organisation)

Mental health affects all aspects of life and behaviour. Like physical health, mental health is something we all have. It can range across a spectrum from healthy to unwell; it can fluctuate on a daily basis and change over time, see above spectrum.

Roles

The governing body:

- Will take overall responsibility for implementing this strategy and ensuring that staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance.
- 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.
- 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 Capability or Disciplinary Policy.
- Will provide a range of strategies for involving staff in the school decision-making processes.
- Will receive regular updates and feedback on the demands on staff, and seek practical solutions wherever possible.
- Will ensure the school provides personal and professional development, such as mental health updates, team events, etc.

The Headteacher:

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

- Will 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.
- Will ensure that there is clear communication between staff and senior leaders with regards to all areas of school life.
- 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.
- Will ensure that all staff are aware of and trained in-line with the school's priorities and offered opportunities for development.
- Will appoint a Wellbeing Lead Ambassador who will lead and work closely with the Emotional Friendly Schools team to ensure that the good health and wellbeing of all staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school. The team will also ensure that school policies and procedures reflect this aim.
- Will make supportive individual interventions for staff, where appropriate, such as short-term rehabilitation and return to work plans, and longer-term reasonable adjustments to work.

Staff members:

- Will make themselves aware of the school's policies on Capability, Whistleblowing, Staff Conduct and Staff Attendance etc.
- 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.
- Will ask their Line Manager for help or support if required. This includes understanding that a good relationship requires communication from both parties and so it is important that issues are raised at the earliest possible moment so that effective strategies can be put in place to discuss and manage workloads.
- Will identify opportunities for development and take advantage of those offered by the school.
- Will apply for any requests for leave of absence in advance and be honest about sickness absence leaves.
- Will share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the school with their phase leader or member of the Emotionally Friendly School's team.
- Bridgewater promotes the key areas of focus as recommended by the Salford Educational Psychologist team:



Practical actions to support new staff

- All staff will be given a school orientation by a member of SLT.
- All new staff will receive a full induction completed by their line manager or member of SLT. They will be given a staff handbook and all pertinent policies and procedures will be discussed, or their location, and will include this strategy on health and wellbeing.
- All staff will be made to feel welcome and given as much support as required.
- All staff will be made aware that there is an Emotionally Friendly Schools team who can support them with their wellbeing; two Mental Health First-Aiders (Miss Hopkins and Mrs Cope) and a Wellbeing Lead Ambassador (Miss Lovell).
- Appoint a mentor or line manager who will be the supporting person new to the role.
- Hold an initial discussion of role and induction.
- Establish a pattern of coaching.
- Provide 1:1 support for new tasks where appropriate.
- Signpost staff to resources and agencies who can support with positive mental health and wellbeing.

Procedures for handling issues of wellbeing

- The Senior Leadership Team (Headteacher, Deputy Head, and other Senior Leaders) 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 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.

Additional procedures to promote staff wellbeing:

- Ensuring Staff Wellbeing is a priority in the School Improvement Plan.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of both internal and external support services.
- Encourage and support the whole school community to be positive in its approach to mental health wellbeing.
- Provide opportunities for staff voice to be shared and to reflect and adapt practice accordingly.
- Provide guidance and support to all those connected with the organisation to help them develop confidence in their ability to manage mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Provide appropriate training and information to staff on mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Complete staff surveys as part of EFS accreditation process and use the analysis of this to create an Action Plan to inform future strategies to support health and wellbeing and staff understanding.
- Continuing professional development for all staff.
- Social events.
- Performance management and support.
- All staff encouraged to contribute to the School Improvement Plan and feedback to SLT regularly.
- All staff invited to INSET days.
- Recognition on staff birthdays/special occasions.
- Staff room for staff to relax, work and support colleagues.
- Staff 'Wellbeing' notice board in staffroom for staff to find key information.

- Staff 'Wellbeing days' initiative.
- A dedicated Emotionally Friendly Settings team that meet regularly and action initiatives.

Further information to support staff wellbeing and mental health can be found here:

- **Vivup (employee assistance programme)**. 24/7/365 confidential helpline followed by six x 30-minute sessions of telephone counselling if required. Assessment within five working days and treatment usually commences within 10 working days. Helpline **0330 380 0658** <https://vivup.tercltd.co.uk?CODE=107487>
- **The Counselling and Psychotherapy Centre at the University of Salford** offers a counselling service for a range of issues including depression, anxiety, trauma, relationship problems, stress, bereavement and loss. The service is open to people living or working in the Salford and Greater Manchester area. Self-referral via [Pragmatic Tracker Client Referral \(self-referral.net\)](https://www.self-referral.net). Up to 20 sessions of counselling can be provided. The current wait time for assessment / treatment is around 3 months.
- **Occupational Health Counselling service** – a standard management referral is required. Six telephone sessions of 45 – 60 minutes can be offered. The current wait time for assessment / treatment is around 6 – 8 weeks
- **NHS - [Find an NHS psychological therapies service \(IAPT\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)** you can search for NHS services local to where you live. You can self-refer into most of these services. Waiting times vary according to location.
- **Able Futures – mental health support service**. Whilst not counselling, they will provide free, confidential, personalised 1-1 support from a qualified mental health professional for up to nine months. Self-referral via [Mental health support for people at work | Able Futures Mental Health Support Service \(able-futures.co.uk\)](https://www.able-futures.co.uk) or **0800 321 3137** from 8am to 10.30pm, Monday to Friday.
- [Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>
- [Education Support](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/): resources to help your organisation with mental health and wellbeing including [free counselling for education staff \(08000 562 561\)](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/) <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/> <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/get-help/help-for-you/helpline/>

- Mentally Healthy Schools
<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/>
- Anna Freud: Supporting Staff Wellbeing in Schools
<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/supporting-staff-wellbeing-in-schools/>

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/supporting-staff-wellbeing/>
- Mental Health at Work
<https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/?s=resources+for+schools>
- Headspace for Educators
<https://www.headspace.com/educators>
- Wellbeing guide for staff working in schools and trusts – Local Government Association (under 'NEOST well-being guide')
<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/education-and-young-people>