



Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.
(World Health Organisation)

The biggest asset our school has is its staff; a fundamental asset they have is their health and wellbeing. This policy is intended to outline the ways in which we can work together to make sure our school is a safe, caring and happy place to work, which, if we get it right, can help to enhance individual wellbeing, through personal fulfilment and professional identity. This in turn will benefit our pupils and our community.

We spend more daylight hours in school than at home so it is important that we can have ownership of many of the decisions that affect us and that we have agency in our working lives. We can do this, even in areas where we have no choices about what we do (e.g. SATs, or deadlines for assessments), by taking responsibility for these actions and approaching the tasks in our own way.

All our work should be healthy, safe and supportive and governors have a responsibility to ensure our practices contribute to staff wellbeing. This includes monitoring staff absence and regularly requesting feedback from staff about wellbeing. Governors recognise the importance of the wellbeing of staff in our school.

We advocate a holistic, proactive approach to managing health and rehabilitation issues at work, with everyone working together: staff, leadership team, governors, HR, occupational health and health and safety professionals, to:

- tackle the causes of workplace injury and ill health, including stress and anxiety
- address the impact of health on employees' capacity to work, providing support for those with disabilities and health conditions and rehabilitation
- promote healthier lifestyles and wellbeing to help improve the general health of the workforce

Where requested, confidentiality can be important in establishing trusting relationships and rehabilitation, providing the safety of the person, or others is not compromised. However, where possible, staff are encouraged to share their mental and/or physical needs in an open way with colleagues, to maximise support networks available. This practice also helps to de-stigmatise issues related to health conditions in the workplace.

Mental Health Champion

All staff should be mental health champions but it is important for the staff to have a named person to maintain the importance of mental health issues and to champion their interest. Members of staff will be agreed every two years by self-nomination. This role will be to champion mental health for the school community, not to be directly responsible for it. The role will include promotion of well-being

materials; being a 'listening ear'; acting as a signpost for other services or professionals, relaying ideas and information to senior staff that could further improve wellbeing in school; having oversight of school improvement plans to ensure that mental health promotion has a key place; helping to reduce barriers to mental health in school by promoting positive language in relation to mental health.

To support the well-being of our staff our priorities are:

Language - to be mindful of the language we use to talk about mental health at all times

Communication - to encourage individuals to communicate their needs and concerns

Relationships - to promote good relationships between staff through training, time and tea (other drinks are available!)

Kindness - to promote the importance of treating people as we would want to be treated ourselves

Tolerance - for different ways people think and act, providing our goal of ensuring good outcomes for pupils is not affected.

Respect - for how a staff member may want to manage their own mental health or health, providing this doesn't impact on the safeguarding of our pupils.

Harmony - to promote ways of being with each other, including times when opinions differ, or when a person becomes upset with another.

Equality - to ensure all staff have an equal right to wellbeing in the workplace

Trust - to develop a supportive process in which staff can trust, for the continued wellbeing of staff

Empowerment - to ensure staff members feel a part of the decisions which affect them. This includes consultation on key decisions which affect individual staff, including policies and a genuine right to reply and appeal on decisions which may have an adverse effect.

Balance - to recognise the demands of workload on staff and to find ways to ensure a good balance over a school year, between work that is necessary for good outcomes for pupils and time to enjoy when not at work.

What works well at Wigginton Primary?

- We all talk to each other and are very good at being 'aware' of each other.
- Being able to go to our own children's assemblies and sports' days.
- If someone notices someone isn't 'quite right' but they don't feel they can approach them they'll flag it to a colleague who is closer to them.
- Additional time given to class teams prior to assessment collection points.
- Staff offered time and/or financial support towards professional development.
- Diverse characters and personalities with a shared dedication and commitment.
- Staff surveys and voice so ideas for change are listened to.
- Staff can communicate concerns in person, email or text, including to governors.
- Staff supported to debrief incidents of violent or aggressive behaviour from pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- We work together towards a school improvement plan: staff contribute to the formation and the evaluation of this.
- Regular briefings and communication accessible to all staff
- Shared events, such as end of year parties and occasional trips out.

How do we know?

Good staff retention.

Changes implemented through governing body include: learning support payments for taking class for whole or half days; learning support staff offered additional time or payment for residential trips to offset disparity with teaching staff paid hours.

Occupational Health offered to support our staff to return to work, or manage health conditions.

Many individuals are able to talk openly about their mental health/and or personal situations and find solutions to aid their wellbeing.

Staff are able to be honest when they are finding a professional situation difficult, knowing colleagues will offer solutions.

What would we want to happen to further improve staff wellbeing?

Provide annual training on mental health (based on questionnaire responses).

Set up a 'wellbeing team' with staff and governors.

Build trust and safe areas for communication that are accessible for all staff.

Agree a work email-free time zone at weekends.

Revisit our understanding of free speech; i.e. it is okay to disagree without it being deemed as negative.

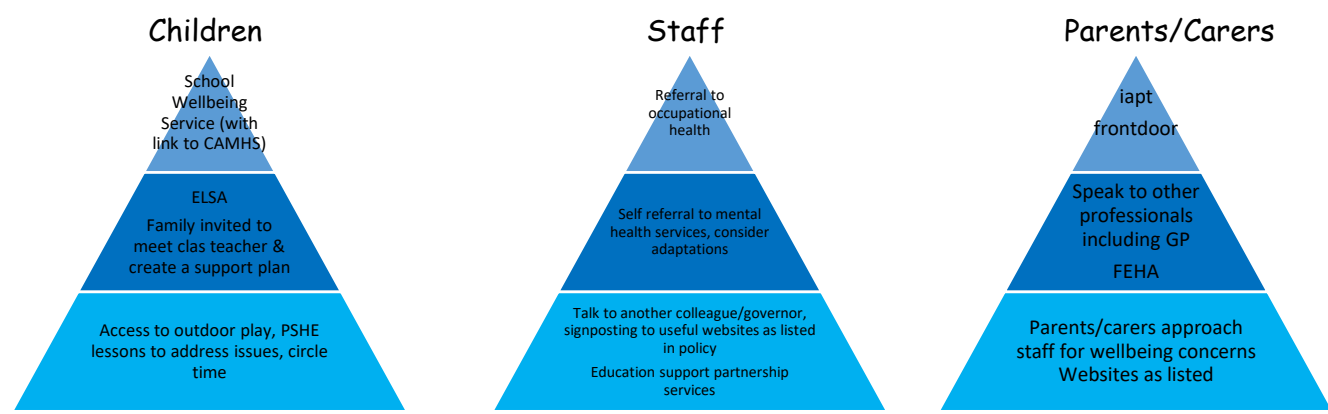
Develop our debrief procedures for staff where there has been an incident or altercation with another adult (e.g. a parent or neighbour).

Set up wellbeing champions.

Further improve induction for new staff and those returning from long term leave

Gather views of staff to ensure all staff feel they have equal voice.

Where can I go for support and guidance?



These models will be followed unless there is an immediate safeguarding concern. Should any crisis situation present itself, necessary steps would be taken.

Improving access to psychological therapies for York and Selby can be contacted on this number 01904 556840 and is an excellent support service.

Other useful websites are:

- www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/
- <https://yorkandselbyiapt.co.uk/>
- www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk

- www.Mindfulteachers.org
- Education Support: Provides mental health and wellbeing support services to all education staff and organisations 08000562561 <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>
- Mental Health at Work: Your first stop for better mental health at work <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk>
- NHS Moodzone: Whatever you need to know about coping with stress, anxiety or depression, or just the normal emotional ups and downs of life <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>
- Samaritans: Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair www.samaritans.org.uk
- Mental Health Foundation: Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- Rethink Mental Illness (England only): Support and advice for people living with mental illness 0300 5000 927
- Health Assured: phone 0800 0305182 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, Portal: healthassuredeap.co.uk

This policy has been agreed by the *Governors* and is reviewed annually.

Signed _____ (*Chair of Governors*)

Signed _____ (*Headteacher*)

Research indicates that taking the following steps can be important in the promotion and maintenance of mental wellbeing:

- 1.** Knowing personal limits and having the ability to say 'no' when necessary. This helps you to have more balance in life and will enable you to take better care of others.
- 2.** Identifying supportive people that you have in your life. If you would like to increase your support networks then you might consider taking up new hobbies or activities. You can also speak to a professional for more support.
- 3.** Talking. There are times when challenging situations affect us emotionally. If you have had a difficult day at school, try to speak to someone before you leave school as this can then help you to process how you are feeling, ask for support and separate your work and home life.
- 4.** Being flexible around change. Even with the best plans, sometimes unexpected events or situations occur. Our ability to accept change and plan and adapt can help us to manage any potential feelings of stress and anxiety and cope better overall.
- 5.** Self-compassion. If you take some time to stop and reflect on the thoughts in your head, are they more positive or critical? Once you have identified any negative thought, you can begin to introduce more positive thoughts and 'turn the volume down' on the critical voices.



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12 WAYS

to boost your wellbeing



Recommendations for a healthy workforce from Investors in People

Collaborate to reach a common goal

Organisations benefit from people working together towards clear goals.

Have inspirational and trusted leaders

Good leadership promotes positive attitudes, cross-team working and better service.

Create an open-minded culture

Employees should understand the organisation and be able to suggest and deliver creative responses to challenges. Consultation will increase confidence and encourage engagement.

Be positive about change

A static culture can be bad for organisations. If internal communications emphasise the value of positive change, they can help to create momentum.

Encourage face-to-face communication

Staff should be encouraged to speak to colleagues. It will improve their working relationships.

Set up a wellbeing committee

Ask for volunteers to set up a wellbeing committee to promote initiatives, champion the wellbeing effort and encourage employee involvement.

Encourage development

Supporting employee training helps keep people motivated and interested in their current and future roles within the organisation.