STAFF WELL BEING POLICY

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Policy Renewal: December 2022

Reviewed by the SLT MAT Board

"The Trustees of the Southport Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at every opportunity and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment"

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1.   Policy statement

1.1   Southport Learning Trust has developed an employee wellbeing policy to manage its obligations to promote positive mental health and wellbeing of all staff. It covers our commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of mental health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

1.2   The aim of this policy is to describe the trust's commitment to the promoting positive mental health and wellbeing of employees in its broadest, holistic sense, setting out how we fulfil our legal obligations, the responsibilities of different functions and specialists and the range of services available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing. The trust recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving employees' ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved performance.

1.3   This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. We may vary any of the provision detailed within this policy without consultation. It has been formally adopted by the Trust Board.

2.   Who is covered by the policy?

2.1   The procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

3.   Responsibilities

3.1   The trust has a legal duty of care to employees to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The trust will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.

3.2   The trust will give regard to ACAS, Government & Health & Safety Executive guidance on this topic

3.3   In addition to reducing safety risks, this means operating in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.

3.4   The trust will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work.

3.5   ***Line managers***

Line managers will put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee wellbeing, particularly from negative pressure at work. Managers must familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety Executive's stress management standards and use these to mitigate psychological risks in their teams. For example, managers should ensure that employees understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support from managers and team members to do their job. Managers must also familiarise themselves with the trust's policies on diversity and tackling inappropriate behaviour in order to support staff, for example on bullying and harassment issues. Mangers should also familiarise themselves with the ACAS publication on [Promoting Positive Mental Health in the Workplace](#).

3.6   In particular, line managers must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by:

- Have an understanding of mental health and potential causes of this
- Make a commitment to improve mental health at work
- Champion awareness of mental health and fight any stigma attached to this
- Identify ways to improve workplace well being
- Tackle the causes of mental ill health
- Ensure staff have resources and support

Examples of how this can be achieved are as follows:

- ensuring that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications;
- keeping employees in the team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload;
- ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management;
- making sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams; and
- ensuring that work stations and working environments are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose.
- ensuring staff have resources and support if they are suffering from mental ill health
- work with trade unions / employee representative groups on ways to promote positive mental health
- educate the workforce about mental health

3.7   ***Human resources support***

The trust will engage with their HR support through Browne Jacobsen to develop trust -wide policies and procedures, to protect the wellbeing of employees, assist line managers in supporting individuals, and liaise as appropriate with occupational health and other medical professionals, with the object of helping employees to maintain good psychological health.

The trust operates practices and policies that ensure staff are able to achieve a satisfactory balance between their work and other commitments, and adhere to the working limits set out in the Working Time Regulations 1998.

3.8   ***Occupational health***

The trust has engaged occupational health professionals who will provide a comprehensive service designed to help employees stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing mental health problems. This will include preparing

medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals from the trust, liaising with GPs and working with individuals to help them to retain employment.

3.9 Occupational health professionals will play a critical part in developing rehabilitation plans for employees returning to work after absences related to mental ill health, and work with GPs and line managers on designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful. Advice will also be taken from our occupational health professionals regarding design and implementation of any suitable health promotion and lifestyle behaviour management programmes, including initiatives on managing pressure and ongoing health conditions at work.

3.10 ***Employee assistance programme provider***

The provider of external employee assistance services through the Schools Advisory Service will alert the schools' senior management to clusters or "hotspots" of psychological risk in the organisation, drawing on anonymised data provided by calls to its 24-hour helpline and information from face-to-face counselling with employees.

3.11 ***Employees***

Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, alcohol consumption and smoking) and informing the school if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee during discussions with managers, the HR Officer or the occupational health service is treated in confidence. However, it needs to be recognised that, in supporting employees, some degree of information sharing is likely to be necessary. As part of the application of this policy, the Trust schools may collect, process and store personal data and special categories of data in accordance with our data protection policy. We will comply with the requirements of the **Data Protection Legislation** (being (i) the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (unless and until the GDPR is no longer directly applicable in the UK) and any national implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998, including the Data Protection Act 2018). Records will be kept in accordance with our Workforce Privacy Notice, our Records Management Policy and in line with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation.

4. Health promotion initiatives

4.1 The trust schools will develop and run a range of health promotion initiatives designed to raise awareness of health and lifestyle issues affecting mental health and wellbeing. The Headteacher or delegated Senior Leader will have primary responsibility for leading these programmes, but line managers and employees will be expected to participate. These programmes will be evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

4.2 The programmes will cover:

- stress management;
- disability awareness;
- bullying and harassment;
- handling violence and traumatic incidents at work;
- lifestyle behaviours, with voluntary screening (for example in relation to alcohol, drugs and smoking); and
- physical activity and fitness
- developing an action plan to change attitudes towards mental ill health.

4.3 Employees will also be encouraged to establish clubs and groups designed to foster wellbeing, for example lunchtime walking or dancing clubs.

5. **Training and communications**

5.1   Line managers and employees will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change.

5.2   Employee will receive training in mental health awareness do they are able to recognise the symptoms of mental ill health in themselves, in addition to recognising causes

5.3   Managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises, including stress audits and staff surveys. All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications. The trust schools will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

5.4   The trust will consider special communication media during periods of change.

6. **Occupational health support**

6.1   Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers can contact the organisation's occupational health service directly. Employees can also speak to their line managers if they would like to be considered for support from occupational health. A comprehensive occupational health service is available, from individual health screening to the design of return-to-work plans for those rehabilitating after a period of long-term sickness absence.

6.2   Workplace wellbeing services provided by the occupational health team include:

- workstation assessments;
- pre-employment screening;
- fitness-for-work assessments;
- eye tests for users of visual display screen equipment;
- in-work screening for health risks, including for coronary heart disease;
- vaccination service;
- post-incident support;
- designing and advising on health promotion initiatives; and
- health and safety training.

6.3   If employees believe that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands, and raise issues such as identified training needs.

6.4   A referral to the occupational health team will be made if this is considered appropriate after an employee's initial discussion with their manager. Discussions between employees and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health team will provide a report on the employee's fitness to work, and any recommended adaptations to the working environment, to the school or trust as appropriate.

6.5   Other measures available to support employees in maintaining health and wellbeing include:

- an employee assistance programme;
- procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment);
- gym/sports facilities;
- special leave arrangements;

- opportunities for flexible working;
- support for workers with disabilities; and
- the Trust's grievance policy.
- A Southport Learning Trust Approach to Staff Well-Being developed through the DFE Workload Toolkit, see Appendix 1.

7.   Relationship with other policies

7.1   This promoting positive mental health & wellbeing policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering attendance and health, special leave, flexible working, the management of short and long-term absence, sick pay, bullying and harassment, violence at work, equal opportunities and staff training and development.

Southport Learning Trust approach to Staff Well-being

As a Southport Learning Trust school we want to ensure that leaders, teachers and support staff are only devoting time to the activity that make a difference for our students. Our teachers and support staff work incredibly hard but they need to maintain a good work-life balance to support their well-being.

Our approach to Staff Well-being

Teaching and learning, planning and curriculum

- We trust teachers to decide the best approaches for their pupils.
- Teaching and learning policy is designed to allow subject specialists to teach in the way that works best for their subjects and pupils.
- No need to write lesson plans of any kind.
- Schemes of work and resources are provided but they allow for teachers delivery style.
- 44/50 periods of teaching per fortnight maximum or at least 10% PPA time.
- A user friendly IT platform to support sharing, joint planning and reduce workload
- No pressure to 'put on a show' in lessons: a culture of typicality is reinforced by no lesson grading
- No teachers cover lessons unless they have requested to do so or if there was an emergency
- Senior Leadership Team cover regularly to support pupils during an absence and are always the first solution in an emergency
- A culture that ensures pupils are respectful and eager to learn.

1   Behaviour

- Everyone has the highest expectations of behaviour, with all staff, not just teaching staff, reinforcing those expectations.
- Clear Behaviour Policy with guidelines which is applied consistently so all staff support each other.
- Middle and senior leaders support sanctions and behaviour management.
- Senior Leadership are visible and all staff have a presence.
- Senior Leadership run lunch duty to ensure high standards of behaviour.
- The vast majority of cover is completed by our own bank of cover staff to avoid too much change for pupils and ensure expectations of behaviour are met and that work is completed to a high standard.

2   Assessment and reporting to parents

- Each school has their own Assessment Policy, with the aim of reducing workload but increasing effectiveness.
- Marking is for one audience only, the pupils.
- We never ask for any data to be entered twice.
- Simplified written reports to parents/carers.
- Minimal whole school data entries.
- Parents' Evening appointments are made thoughtfully and refreshments provided for staff.
- Staff calendar of events are planned carefully giving consideration to workload.

Professional Development

- CPD tailored specifically to staff needs, which is based on their feedback.
- Time for staff to put new things into action.
- CPD is delivered as twilights with days off in lieu often resulting in an extended summer holiday.
- Non-hierarchical approach to professional development - there are things a senior leader can learn from a NQT and vice versa.

- In-house experts on all aspects of educational practice such as examiners and experienced Faculty, Pastoral and Subject leaders who wish to support the development of others...
- Targeted support plans for teachers who are struggling.
- Few meetings, with those that do take place doing so when they are needed - not just because they are on the calendar.
- Briefings are kept succinct and are held weekly
- We develop leadership positions at all levels through completion of the appropriate NPQs with school based projects and an appropriate sponsor to support.
- Comprehensive support for NQTs, with dedicated mentors, regular meetings and study visits abroad.
- Development package for all staff at varying stages of their career. Staff can access training at other Trust schools.
- Performance Management is tailored to school, curriculum area and individual needs.
- SLT consider the impact on staff of any change.

3   We work hard, support and look after each other

- An expectation and support work in a way that suits you and make sure you make time for yourself and your family.
- No expectation of answering email outside school hours.
- We are constantly streamlining all systems and processes so they take less time.
- No tick box culture – never do anything if it's not going to make a difference.
- We regularly talk to and survey staff to get their honest opinions about how to improve.
- Staffrooms for staff to interact with colleagues..
- A culture of compassion, praise, courtesy and support for each other
- Open-door Senior Leadership – no concern is ever too small.
- Regular staff social events out-of-school.
- Well-being package for all staff to support them in work and at home with a variety of services.
- In-school health events such as yoga.
- Cycle to work scheme.
- Occupational Health Support.
- Fully equipped fitness suite at Greenbank with Trust access.
- Performance Management includes a section on well-being.
- Seasonal events for everyone to show their less serious sides (for example, World Book Day, Christmas jumpers, house activities etc.).
- Countless opportunities to get involved with the wider life of the school – Duke of Edinburgh, sports, productions and study visits locally, nationally and abroad.
- Funding Facility Time for area based Trade Union Representation and training for Local School Based representatives.