



Staff Wellbeing Policy



Staff Wellbeing and Professional Culture



Vision and Values	Core expectations
Staff wellbeing is foundational to sustainable high-quality provision. We value the dignity, contribution and lived experience of every colleague and create a culture in which people feel safe to speak openly, seek support and contribute to improvement. Leaders manage workload responsibly, protect professional learning and collaboration time, and ensure appropriate supervision and support are available in recognition of the emotional demands of hospital-school work. Wellbeing and professional growth reinforce one another: supported, knowledgeable and reflective adults build a stable culture capable of providing consistently high-quality relationships, teaching and care.	• All staff use agreed support, line-management, supervision and <u>wellbeing</u> routes and speak up promptly when pressures risk safety, wellbeing or quality. • Leaders consider workload and wellbeing when implementing change and remove unnecessary burden wherever possible. • Staff engage with professional learning that builds knowledge, skill and judgement and apply it to improve practice. • Everyone notices, supports and treats colleagues with dignity and respect, while constructively challenging conduct that undermines wellbeing or professional culture.

This policy aims to:

- Support the wellbeing of all staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health
- Provide a supportive work environment for all staff
- Acknowledge the needs of staff, and how these change over time
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs, responsibilities and health
- Help staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- Ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims

Staff Vision and Values

All Southampton Hospital School (SHS) is fully committed to providing good working conditions and health and safety standards beyond the basic standards set out in the Health and Safety at work Act 1974. SHS aims to be a 'healthy organisation' with engaged and positive employees who recognise the school's commitment to their health and wellbeing. We recognise that leaders who have empathy are more likely to create an ethos and culture that supports wellbeing. Leadership with empathy is proven to increase staff engagement, innovation, retention and overall wellbeing. We adopt the HSE definition of work-related stress as being, 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work.' We see it as our duty to have in place measures to mitigate, as far as possible, factors that could harm employee's physical and mental wellbeing, which includes work-related stress.

We recognise research that shows organisations who support the health and well-being of their staff achieve a range of positive outcomes, and those prioritising staff health and well-being achieve enhanced performance, are better at retaining staff and have lower rates of sickness absence.

The level of health and well-being of the workforce is therefore a key indicator of performance outcomes. The evidence makes it clear that cultures of engagement, mutuality, caring, compassion and respect for all, provide the ideal environment within which to care for the health of our staff.

Southampton Hospital School values all staff both personally and for their professional skills and qualities. Through the implementation of this policy we aim to ensure that all adults know that leaders are invested in them and will demonstrate this through the personal and professional support given. We value the view of all staff and will seek to ensure that their views are sought at every opportunity.

We ensure that our expectations are reasonable and that staff do not experience unreasonable levels of stress either as a direct result of the demands placed upon them or the lack of supportive relationships around them.

Dr Gabor Mate states that 'research literature has identified that three factors universally lead to stress: uncertainty, the lack of information and the lack of control'. At SHS we agree with this definition but would also include,

- Demands: workload, work patterns and the work environment
- Support: the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- Relationships: promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- Role: such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures they do not have conflicting roles
- Change: such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation

The health and wellbeing of SHS employees will be achieved through a number of wellbeing initiatives, support mechanisms and joint working between employees and external parties, such as UHS clinical psychologists, Occupational Health Consultancy, Spectrum Life (EAP) and Vivup (benefits portal).

The purpose of this document is to set out the overarching Health and Wellbeing strategy and themes for the school. The strategy covers both preventative activity to minimise the risks of ill health and reactive activity to support staff with health and wellbeing concerns.

The strategy views health and wellbeing from two perspectives: organisational responsibility and work based action; as well as encouraging employees to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing outside of work as part of their everyday life.

SHS recognises that there are a number of metrics that can indicate the overall health of the workforce. These include, although are not limited to:

- Sickness absence rates and trends
- Staff turnover rates
- Staff survey results
- Staff absence related to stress

Sickness Absence rates and trends are monitored by the Headteacher and office manager and reported to Hamwic HR and the governing body as appropriate. Return to Work interviews are conducted for all absences to allow staff to raise any concerns or issues around their wellbeing and mental health. Any absence management procedures and protocols are delivered in a supportive, sensitive and transparent manner.

ROLE OF ALL STAFF understand that trusting relationships are central to the vision, values and work of our school.

We aim not to contribute to blocked trust.

We expect to treat each other with empathy, respect, gentleness, compassion and curiosity

We interact with each other from a position of social engagement and not social defence

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We support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance

We encourage each other to express our emotions and will not shame or undermine when acknowledging anxieties or stressors

All staff are expected to:

- Understand that trusting relationships are central to the vision, values and work of our school
- Understand how to move blocked trust towards shared trust

- Treat each other with empathy, respect and curiosity
- Interact with each other from a position of social engagement and not social defence
- Share an understanding of how situations within and outside of work can cause toxic levels of stress and how to help calm, soothe and regulate the reactions of ourselves and others
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Encourage each other to express our emotions and not shame or undermine when acknowledging anxieties or stressors
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or classrooms
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing
- Encouraged to express their emotions and are not shamed or undermined when acknowledging their anxieties or stressors
- Create and support regular opportunities to engage with each other in environments that are supportive and pleasant

ROLE OF SENIOR TEACHERS

Senior teachers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Promote an open-door policy ensuring that all staff are valued and have regular contact with them
- Ensure that staff are celebrated for their achievements and successes
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Ensure there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of school life
- Promote information about and access to external support services, including Hamwic wellbeing initiatives
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- encourage each other to express our emotions and not shame or undermine when acknowledging anxieties or stressors
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- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation

ROLE OF HEADTEACHER

The Headteacher is expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff

- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Make sure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about and access to external support services, including Hamwic wellbeing services and initiatives
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections
- Arrange an annual personal day for all staff
- Encourage all staff to be fully involved in the decisions of the school through staff meetings, working groups and feedback surveys

ROLE OF HAMWIC

Hamwic Education Trust provides the strategic framework, specialist services and oversight that support schools in securing staff health and wellbeing. This includes a Trust-wide wellbeing approach including 24/7 Employee Assistance and counselling, Occupational Health, a Trust Wellbeing Lead and weekly wellbeing surgery, together with HR and Health & Safety expertise. Schools are supported to develop effective local wellbeing provision, including Senior Mental Health Leadership, while Trust-wide CPD, coaching and professional development contribute to a positive culture in which staff are supported to remain well, develop professionally and thrive.

ROLE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD

The governing board is expected to:

- Nominate a named governor for health and wellbeing
- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the headteacher
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

PROMOTING WELLBEING AT ALL TIMES

SHS is aware that the nature of our school means that staff are potentially exposed to grief/loss and complex and upsetting case histories on a more frequent basis than in a mainstream setting. The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives.

Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:

- Agreeing flexible PPA/working arrangements, allowing staff to work from home where possible.
- Providing additional paid therapeutic support from NHS clinical psychology team
- Conducting remote meetings where possible, reducing unnecessary travel or time
- Ensuring that teachers undergoing lone working are involved in regular team meetings and are given time for supervision and discussion of difficult cases with leaders and/or psychologists
- Senior teachers offering supportive coaching for staff members struggling with workload, to identify and fix problems early.
- Ensuring that all monitoring and QA processes are accompanied by discussion with teachers to allow their views to be fully heard: full lesson observations are not deemed appropriate in this setting due to pupil and staff wellbeing.
- Ensuring that work-life balance is upheld through the setting of deadlines and tasks: no task will be set at the end of the working day with completion expected the next working day
- Ensuring that work emails are sent during appropriate times, to avoid the need for late night communications. All emails sent after 5pm should be scheduled unless of an urgent nature.
- Ensuring that staff are given time to hand-over at the end of the working day
- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as Spectrum Life counselling and occupational health services
- Completing relevant risk assessments and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise

At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed annually by Headteacher and will be approved by the full governing board.

SHS Staff Wellbeing Policy			
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