



# Staff Wellbeing Policy

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### **Statement of Intent**

Community Inclusive Trust is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. Preventing stress is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of all staff, which remains a key priority. In light of this, the Trust understands the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause employees to become stressed.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the Trust in supporting wellbeing and promoting mental health, and to advise employees on how to deal with mental health issues and prevent stress.

## **1. Legal Framework**

1.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- DfE (2018) 'Workload reduction toolkit'

1.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Managing Absence Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

2.1 The ELT is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the ethos reflects its commitment to managing workload and creating a working environment that is focussed, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing.
- Ensuring staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and monitored.
- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the school – promoting stress as a serious issue rather than a weakness.
- Consulting with the schools and line managers for the central team on managing staff stress and promoting wellbeing, including them in any decisions that need to be made.
- Ensuring measures are in place to support staff wellbeing.
- Ensuring monitoring visits are strategic, focussed and reflective of its monitoring plan, and being clear with staff ahead of the visit about what the focus will be and the information that will be required from them.
- Recognising mental health issues and appointing a mental health & wellbeing champion (Director of Safeguarding & Wellbeing) who will oversee managing and supporting staff mental health.

2.2 The Wellbeing Champion is responsible for:

- Influencing a vision which creates a positive wellbeing culture and is underpinned by equality values, a system of accountability, and robust policies and procedures.
- Ensuring a strategic plan includes objectives linked to improving, supporting and responding to the mental health of all staff.
- Ensuring appropriate policies are in place that include objectives focussed on meeting staff needs.

- Ensuring there is a whole Trust approach to mental health and wellbeing embedded within leadership practice, the curriculum, values and ethos, and the social and physical environment.
- Identifying senior members of staff to oversee the provision and support of mental health and wellbeing in each setting, and to ensure effective links exist with local mental health support.
- Meeting with senior members of staff on a regular basis to monitor and review the impact of provision and interventions.
- Working with senior members of staff to ensure that appropriate training is put in place to support staff.
- Reporting to ELT on the successes and areas of improvement in planned interventions, and the resources that are in place.

2.3 The SLT in schools and line managers within the central team are responsible for:

- Creating a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout in each setting.
- Implementing CPD which equips staff with the skills needed to effectively manage stress.
- Including all staff in the decision-making processes, where possible and where relevant to their role.
- Encouraging staff to take advantage of any initiatives introduced to promote wellbeing and effective working, e.g. the Trust's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Ensuring that all policies that affect staff wellbeing are properly adhered to and reviewed.
- Authorising any staff absences, as well as granting extended leave, e.g. bereavement leave. (Refer to Additional Entitlements to Paid & Unpaid Leave Policy on CIT website).
- Monitoring employees' workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring they are not overworked, and providing regular updates regarding absence to the Wellbeing Champion whilst maintaining staff confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Policy.
- Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example for staff.
- Regularly communicating with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
- Ensuring all staff have read and understood this policy.

2.4 The Wellbeing Champion, in conjunction with the central HR team and school HR Admins, is responsible for:

- Encouraging all staff to attend events and training opportunities that promote wellbeing and health.
- Providing information that helps staff to manage stress effectively.
- Ensuring that regular contact is maintained with members of staff who are absent for long periods of time.
- Ensuring new members of staff have received all the relevant information they require, including the procedures for raising concerns about wellbeing.
- Gathering information in any cases that allow monitoring of this policy, such as, but not limited to, the following:
  - Sickness and absence data
  - Staff turnover

- Exit interviews
  - Referrals to the counselling service
  - Referrals to other mental health services
  - Grievance cases
  - Harassment cases
- Monitoring all staff absences and reporting this information to the senior member of staff.

2.5 All staff members are responsible for:

- Being aware of the early signs of stress or mental health issues in themselves and their colleagues.
- Supporting co-workers if they become stressed, which may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
- Maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
- Promoting a positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the setting.
- Being open to discussing stress.
- Reporting honestly about their wellbeing and any incidents of stress, e.g. being overworked.
- Where possible, asking for help when they feel under pressure or stressed.
- Attending events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health.
- Not acting in a manner which endangers themselves or others.
- Undertaking additional training and personal development opportunities.

3. **Identifying Warning Signs**

3.1 The Trust recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and become stressed by different situations and stimuli throughout their working lives. Because of this, it is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues stress.

3.2 The following sources of stress can often be attributed to work:

- Overworking or undertaking work that does not match the employee's skills and abilities.
- Fear of change and trying to cope with change, e.g. advancements in technology.
- Insufficient workload or not being able to use skills.
- Lack of job security.
- Poor relationships with colleagues and a lack of involvement.
- Harassment or bullying.
- Crisis management.
- Not having a long-term plan in place.

3.3 The Trust recognises that home and personal lives can also prove stressful for staff; bereavement, separation, financial and family problems make people more vulnerable to stress at work. It is common that a combination of stress at home and work can make people particularly stressed.

3.4 The Trust will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy workplace.

- 3.5 The Trust has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress.
- 3.6. All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that can indicate that a person may be having trouble managing stress.
- 3.7 All members of staff will look out for the following indicators when identifying stress in themselves or others:

**Behavioural Indicators**

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in eating habits
- Increased smoking or drinking
- Isolation from friends and family

**Physical Indicators**

- Tiredness
- Indigestion and nausea
- Headaches
- Aching muscles
- Heart palpitations

**Mental Indicators**

- Indecisiveness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory loss
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Low self-esteem

**Emotional Indicators**

- Anger or irritability
- Anxiety
- Hypersensitivity
- Feeling drained and lethargic

**4. Actions to Support Staff within the Trust**

- 4.1 To positively impact levels of stress, the Wellbeing Champion in conjunction with senior leaders will make changes to help manage stress and will:
- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a work life balance outside of work.
  - Make the most of team bonding; using INSET days to build relationships, as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier.
  - Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads.
  - Reach out to staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. bereavement, and supporting them when they return to work.
  - Promote the Trust's Employee Assistance Programme relevant to the needs of all staff, regularly monitoring its effectiveness and impact on wellbeing.
- 4.2 To effectively address workload issues and support staff wellbeing, the Wellbeing Champion, working with senior leaders, will measure staff wellbeing and identify workload issues by:

- Commissioning staff surveys on a regular basis and organising structured conversations about workload with staff.
  - Arranging workshops and drawing together a summary of outcomes from staff surveys and questionnaires.
  - Addressing the workload issues that have been identified, e.g. by undertaking a data audit and developing an action plan.
- 4.3 The senior leader will ensure that all changes proposed as a result of the actions outlined in 4.2 are communicated to all members of staff.
- 4.4 A named person in each setting will also be identified to ensure all staff are supported in their roles and that actions are implemented to mitigate stress in the workplace.
- 4.5 All new members of staff will be provided with a comprehensive induction and their duties will be made clear.
- 4.6 The Trust will carry out return to work interviews which will promote a positive, caring strategy for staff who are returning to work following sick leave.
- 4.7 The Trust will ensure wellbeing is promoted and stress is prevented through good management practices, including the following:
- Recruitment and selection procedures.
  - Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure the right candidates are recruited.
  - CPD procedures to ensure all members of staff have the necessary skills and abilities to undertake the duties required.
  - Promotion and reward procedures.
  - Performance management procedures.
  - Capability and absence management – return to work procedures will ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.
  - Suitable adaptations for disability.
  - Harassment and anti-bullying resources.
  - Flexible working arrangements, in line with the Flexible Working Policy.
  - Annual surveys to better understand the areas of work that have a negative effect on staff wellbeing.
5. **Self-Management**
- 5.1 Staff can also make changes to avoid and prevent stress, as it is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored.
- 5.2 Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they are feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.
- 5.3 Staff are encouraged to take action to manage their own stress; these actions will include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity and any negative feelings, exercise will also help to clear thoughts and deal with problems more calmly.
  - Managing their workload and establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life,



- Prioritising work, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference.
- Avoiding unhealthy habits, such as drinking and smoking.
- Taking advantage of the wellbeing initiatives and support offered by the school/Trust.

## **6. Reporting Procedures**

- 6.1 In the event that one of the named wellbeing people in school is subject of a complaint, the complaint will go in the first instance to Ann White – Wellbeing Champion for the Trust.
- 6.2 In the event that the Wellbeing Champion is subject of a complaint, the complaint will go to the CEO.
- 6.3 If any member of staff wishes to raise a concern about wellbeing, the Wellbeing Champion should be notified.
- 6.4 The Wellbeing Champion will provide the member of staff with information about the support that is available to them; this includes both within the setting and outside sources. These resources include:
- Employee Assistance Programme
  - Named wellbeing person on site
- 6.5 The Wellbeing Champion will treat all cases confidentially.
- 6.6 In some cases, such as those that directly impact day-to-day activities, confidentiality will not be guaranteed. If this is the case, staff will be made aware of the situation.
- 6.7 The Wellbeing Champion, once in receipt of the complaint, will investigate and report to ELT for the central team or senior leader for schools.
- 6.8 ELT or the senior leader within schools will decide whether any further action will be taken.

## **7. Response Actions**

- 7.1 Where problems with wellbeing arise, the necessary support and appropriate actions will be considered. This may include support from HR advisers and/or external services, e.g. occupational health.
- 7.2 The Trust will continue to support staff when external services are involved.
- 7.3 Support will be provided to staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances outside of the workplace. The Trust will direct staff to support, both internal and external, and consider a plan of work and duties that can be managed differently during challenging periods.
- 7.4 Support for staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances will be provided following the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Wellbeing Champion and ELT.
- 8.2 Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 8.3 All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.
- 8.4 The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2021.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Staff Workload Charter**

#### **Our Aims**

Community Inclusive Trust is committed to considering and supporting the wellbeing of all our staff. As part of this commitment, and through a coordinated effort with staff and leaders, we aim to ensure workloads can be managed.

We recognise that staff workload can become overwhelming, which in turn affects staff wellbeing and prevents a healthy work-life balance. We believe that we have a collective responsibility to ensure working remains manageable, a positive experience, and, above all, enjoyable.

By providing this support, we hope that we can retain and recruit more staff and meet our core values and ethos for helping and caring for one another.

To protect staff wellbeing, we will:

- Ensure staff have a fair and reasonable workload.
- Provide senior members within the Trust with Leading a Mentally Healthy School (LAMHS) training.
- Provide Mental Health First Aid training.
- Provide high-quality training and CPD opportunities that meet the needs of individual staff members.
- Continue to review staff workload and ensure it always remains manageable.

#### **Our Commitments**

We have agreed the following commitments and expectations between the Wellbeing Champion, ELT and staff, to demonstrate our support in helping to manage staff workload.

All staff working within the Trust can expect:

- To work within a clear Code of Conduct.
- To receive a robust and high-quality induction.
- To be made aware of the named person to contact if needed as part of their induction process.
- To be provided with training opportunities relevant to their role and responsibilities.
- To be allocated roles and responsibilities that are linked to their skill set and area of expertise or be provided with appropriate training to upskill and broaden areas of expertise.
- The fair and equal distribution of roles, responsibilities and tasks within their job description.
- The support of senior leaders to provide guidance and advice, and simplify the processes where possible.
- The use of technology to ensure effective and efficient communication, document and data management, and access to information.
- To be provided with access to external support, such as occupational health or a confidential listening service, if needed.
- To work within an environment where their wellbeing is prioritised and valued.

- All changes to any processes to be communicated clearly and senior leaders to provide support with implementation.

In addition to the above, teaching staff within the Trust can expect:

- A clear curriculum planning scheme that provides flexibility, is fully resourced with high-quality materials and is planned over well-defined blocks of time.
- An agreed policy that ensures all marking undertaken is purposeful and focusses on quality feedback and the impact on pupil outcomes.

The ELT and senior leaders within school commit to the following:

- Conducting regular activities, e.g. staff surveys, to identify the areas of work that lead to high levels of workload and implementing approaches to reduce this.
- Providing staff with opportunities to discuss areas they feel are creating high levels of workload and how these could be managed.
- Implementing practices that allow meaningful and useful communications to manage workload.
- Supporting all staff in the early stages of their careers to adopt efficient work practices and keeping this support under regular review.
- Encouraging a workplace culture that promotes a healthy work-life balance.
- Making every effort to reduce the number of meetings, ensuring that those that take place are planned effectively and flexibly, and always have a key focus.
- Providing staff with relevant training or CPD opportunities, including on recognising the early signs of stress.
- Ensuring that workload reduction initiative is included within the SDP/strategic vision and that enough resources are dedicated towards achieving this aim.
- Monitoring staff absence levels, patterns and reasons, and using return to work meetings consistently and effectively.
- Regularly monitoring the progress of work practices.
- Considering the impact of any potential changes within practices before they are implemented and creating a clear implementation plan before changes are agreed.
- Communicating changes to any practices to all staff and the whole workforce, to ensure everyone understands the reasons behind the changes.

The Trust commits to the following:

- Ensuring the Trust's ethos reflects its commitments to managing workload and creating a working environment that is focussed, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing through the successful management of workload.
- Ensuring it receives regular updates regarding absence.
- Making every effort to ensure meetings that staff are expected to attend are purposeful, focussed and structured, and relevant to the development priorities.
- Considering the nature of information requests and being clear about the information needed.
- Providing staff with advanced notice of all monitoring visits and informing them of what the focus will be and what information is required.
- Working within any policy agreements, including those relating to using technology to manage workload.
- Regularly seeking views from staff on the impact of workload and working with the Wellbeing Champion and senior leaders to improve any identified issues.

## **The Community Inclusive Trust**

### **Staff Wellbeing Policy**

This Policy has been approved by the HR & Safeguarding Committee

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chair of the Trust Board

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chief Executive Officer