



# Staff Wellbeing Policy

Reviewed: September 2024

Next review: September 2025

## Statement of intent

Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School and Nursery is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of our employees. We recognise that there is a direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and ethos of a school are determined by the extent to which staff work towards a shared vision.

We believe that it is essential that all staff feel part of a valued team, can express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we embrace the many school practices that support staff health and wellbeing, to minimise the harmful effects of stress and ensure that there is cohesion in working towards health and wellbeing for all staff. It outlines some of the ways in which we commit to maintaining staff wellbeing and it recognises that each individual member of staff and their circumstances are different but provides an overview of the basis on which everyone can contribute, and expect to be treated.

## Definition

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as: “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.” The Health and Safety executive also points out that; “this makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.”

## Responsibilities

The leadership team (LT), governing board and school staff will work towards an ethos where everyone is valued, where respect, empathy and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships and where health and wellbeing are held central to school practice. We

expect all staff to show respect and empathy for each other, and to treat confidential information sensitively and according to school policy.

Individual members of staff are expected to:

- Treating one another with empathy, respect, and kindness
- Being committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and keeping in mind the workload and wellbeing of colleagues
- Being able to recognise the early signs of stress in themselves and their colleagues.
- Supporting other members of staff if they become stressed, such as include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
- Undertaking additional training and personal development opportunities.
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Be willing to openly discuss stress.
- Contributing positively to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to build morale and effective team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

The headteacher and leadership team are responsible for:

- Maintain positive relationships with all staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Organising proper inductions for new starters, explaining the school's policies and code of conduct.
- Ensuring all staff have up-to-date, regular training and that they are confident in their ability.
- Conducting and implementing the recommendations of risk assessments, taking into account the causes of stress.
- Having regular communication with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
- Monitoring the employee's workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring staff aren't over-worked.
- Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example for staff.
- Ensuring the efforts and successes of staff are acknowledged and celebrated
- Recognising that staff may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work and which may have a temporary influence of their work performance e.g. health issues; bereavement or loss; personal circumstances

- Listening to views of members of staff and providing strategies for involvement in the decisionmaking process
- Ensuring that all staff read and understand the policy.

The Headteacher implements these responsibilities with the support of appropriate staff and senior leaders who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice.

- 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
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies

The governing board is responsible for:

- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the school, promoting stress as a serious issue, rather than a weakness.
- Consulting the headteacher on measures to promote wellbeing, including them in any decisions that need to be made.
- Ensuring headteacher puts measures in place to support staff with stress and emotional wellbeing.
- Actively trying to eliminate stressors in school.
- Operating a sensitive performance management policy
- Ensuring resources are in place to keep staff workloads at healthy levels and to provide staff wellbeing support.

### Causes of stress

The school recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and that different people can become stressed throughout their working lives. Because of this it is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleague's stress.

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

- Over-working or work that doesn't match the employee's skills and ability
- 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
- No long-term plan in place

The school recognises staff can also experience stress outside of school, home and personal lives can also prove stressful; 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 stressed.

#### Identifying a stressed colleague

To help stressed colleagues, identifying the symptoms of stress is very important. Someone may be suffering from one or more of the negative effects; however, they may not be stressed. When a stressor persists over a longer period the indicators become more obvious and acute.

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

The school has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of workrelated stress.

All members of staff will look out for the following symptoms when identifying a colleague with stress:

- Mood swings and consistently bad moods, such as feeling angry or depressed
- Low self-esteem, loss of confidence, feeling lonely, worthless or overwhelmed
- Attitude and behaviour, including low morale, feeling unmotivated, poor concentration, lower quality of work, bad timekeeping, difficulty concentrating
- Noticeable change in behaviours; using drugs, smoking, drinking more alcohol, eating disorders

All members of staff will also look out for physical indicators of stress, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Low energy, including fatigue and tiredness.
- Upset stomach, including diarrhoea, constipation and nausea.
- High blood pressure, heart disease and ulcers.
- Frequent colds and infections, due to a weakened immune system.
- Aches, pains and tension in joints and muscles.

## School management

In order to positively impact levels of emotional wellbeing in the school, headteachers and the governing board will ensure any changes to the whole school will be implemented to positively affect all staff.

To help manage wellbeing the headteacher will:

- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a life outside of work.
- Provide an employee assistance scheme and work with staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. a bereavement.
- Encourage team building; using PD days to build relationships as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier.
- Ensure that staff wellbeing is a high priority and highlighted through wellbeing sessions and with regular supportive and informative communication, that addresses the five strands of wellbeing.
- Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads; one of the main contributors to stress is over-working; helping staff manage their workload will make them more relaxed.
- Provide creative opportunities for building morale and promoting wellbeing.

## Self-management

Staff can also make changes to avoid and prevent stress, stress is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored

Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they're feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.

Staff will take action in order 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, establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life is vital.
- 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, these may provide temporary relief; however, in the long-term unhealthy habits will only create more problems.

Ways in which we 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 by:

- Assess and audit well-being annually

- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling with the 'Employment Assistance' scheme or referrals to occupational health services
- Completing an individual stress management plan / risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise
- Constantly review workload and streamline paperwork, where possible
- Parent meetings in the school day once a year
- Well-being days (1 per year) to plan in and use when needed - time to attend children's sports day, Christmas performances, appointments etc
- Day to write end of year reports
- Staff meetings are kept to an hour – additional twilight meetings instead of PD days (where possible)
- Open door policy – approachable and visible SLT
- Improved canteen services – offering healthy choices.
- No late set times to stay in school – leave when everything is done
- Emails are not expected to be responded to after school hours – statement on email saying this
- Residential visits – all staff that attend a residential visit will be given the opportunity to take 1 day at home – Monday to Friday during the half term the visit was in and need to follow the Special Leave policy and complete a request form.

#### Monitoring and Review

This policy will be delegated to the Headteacher for review annually. Any changes made to this policy by the Headteacher will be communicated to all members of staff. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.