

The Special Partnership Trust
Staff Support & Well-being Policy

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with our staff attendance policy and performance management policy

Introduction

The Special Partnership Trust (SPMAT) in partnership with our HR partner is committed to providing a working environment and management practices that promote the good health and well-being of all its employees. The SPMAT is people focused. There is also an ethos and an expectation that staff will work to the best of their abilities, but also to look after themselves.

Some of the ways in which we support the wellbeing of staff may include:

- Creating an expectation that staff 'will benefit from a good work/life balance
- Using mentors to help support and provide advice for all staff in the school providing up to date training for our well-being mentors/champions;
- Providing refreshments for staff at parents evenings and school events;
- Providing staff with regular small perks, such as coffee, tea and biscuits.
- Provide a comfortable area within the school where staff can take their allocated breaks with the expectation that staff breaks will not be compromised whenever possible
- Ensuring our attendance policy recognises the needs of our staff and their unforeseen circumstances – e.g. – family friendly approach
- Identifying in each of our schools a staff well-being champion /team/mentor to address the development of well-being initiatives
- To collate the views of our collective staff to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy identifying where improvements can be made

Well-being Strategy

The SPMAT's 'duty of care' towards employees, legislation and case law, require them to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of the school's employees.

To help meet these objectives, the SPMAT has adopted:

- The attendance management policy and procedure which provides a framework with clear milestones enabling the school to effectively manage attendance;
- The health and safety policy which provides a framework for, and measurement of, safe places of work; and
- The staff wellbeing policy which focuses on the School's obligations to supporting staff's health and wellbeing.

It is vital that all staff are aware of these policies and the role all employees undertake to ensure we all work in healthy workplaces.

SPMAT needs to have a clear understanding of the causes of absence in order to formulate strategies that address non-attendance (sickness absence). The main causes of absence can be viewed as four distinct areas:

Health and lifestyle factors

Genuine illness / poor health, smoking, excessive use of alcohol, lack of exercise, body weight

Workplace factors

Working patterns, Health and safety concerns, travel times, excessive hours, safe place of work, relationships at work

Attitudinal and stress factors

Job satisfaction, career satisfaction, intention to leave, organisational commitment, stress, absence 'culture'

Domestic and relationship factors

Divorce, separation, number of children under 16, lack of flexible working arrangements, caring responsibilities, financial worries, bereavement

Our SPT recognises that clear and consistently applied procedures play an important part in managing attendance. However, these mechanisms do not necessarily address some of the underlying causes of sickness absence. It is in some of these areas where prevention may be more effective than cure.

Specific areas for preventative action could include ;

- health promotion;
- recruitment and screening procedures;
- flexible working arrangements (where operationally appropriate);
- improving the physical working environment;
- job design;
- managing career expectations through the personal development (performance management) review process;
- building trust and loyalty;
- monitoring of working hours;
- monitoring of individual workloads;
- prevention of accidents and occupational ill health;
- consultation with staff on work-related issues that may affect their health.

Advice and guidance in all these areas is available through existing policies or from organisational partners in conjunction with the Occupational Health Service and HR partner.

The Need for a Workplace Wellbeing Policy

Promoting and protecting the wellbeing of the workforce is important to the SPMAT. Many factors in the workplace influence the wellbeing of individual employees. Understanding and addressing the factors which affect staff wellbeing will have a wide range of benefits, both for the individual and the SPMAT.

The SPMAT will continue to promote and work towards performance improvement and efficiency, getting the very best from our people, retaining and attracting the people who are best skilled and well-motivated.

Wellbeing in the workplace is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to improved wellbeing at work. Addressing workplace wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce the risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health.

To fulfil this commitment the SPMAT will:

- seek to identify potential circumstances that may affect the wellbeing of staff and conduct risk assessments;
- use / seek advice from external agencies (Occupational Health) where there is an identified need
- increase awareness and understanding of how to promote wellbeing at work and the avoidance of absence;
- ensure advice and guidance is available to managers in dealing with wellbeing concerns of staff;
- ensure that there is a culture where there is no expectation that staff communicate about work related matters outside of normal working hours (except in an emergency, e.g. child protection issues);
- continue to adhere to national terms and conditions for all staff, including occupational sick pay;
- provide staff with the opportunity to undertake confidential health assessment activities;
- provide access to a cycle to work scheme;
- ensure that all staff take part in a supportive performance management process;
- Support/facilitate staff to attend locally organised staff social events;
- conduct an annual (anonymous) staff survey in order to collate information from all staff groups, which will inform future strategies to support the health and wellbeing of staff;

Where possible, staff are supported with their work/life balance and wellbeing outside the school. Examples of this may include providing staff with paid leave for both special events and celebrations, and time off to deal with family problems if appropriate.

All staff are encouraged to take a responsible approach to health and wellbeing issues, including adopting a robust self-management to their own health.

One of the main concerns in promoting the wellbeing of staff is to encourage positive mental health. In doing so, it is recognised that positive action must be taken to reduce the occurrence of workplace stress. The Health and Safety Executive define stress as being “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”. However it is important that the difference between “pressure” and “stress” be acknowledged: pressure does not necessarily give rise to stress and pressure can sometimes motivate. While acknowledging that pressure and stress may also be caused by a range of issues external to the workplace, the Governing Body’s prime responsibility in this is to address work-related stress.

Policy Objectives

The policy aims are to:

- provide advice and information about minimising risks to health;
- educate staff about the causes, effects and management of stress.

To achieve these objectives line managers will:

- carry out risk assessments to identify health and wellbeing issues related to work.
- implement appropriate control measures to minimise risks to health and well-being;
- monitor and audit arrangements in an effort to improve the quality of the working environment;
- raise awareness of the causes, signs and symptoms of stress and stress related illness, and of the ways in which the school supports individuals;

- ensure they are equipped to respond to staff well-being concerns;
- educate employees in techniques for recognising and coping with potentially stressful situations;
- provide information about appropriate welfare services to all employees, including the availability of any employee assistance programmes.

The following have been identified as appropriate measures of employee performance and well-being for the purposes of managing health and well-being:

- absences will be recorded and monitored for data analysis in accordance to the staff attendance policy ;
- exit questionnaires will be used and followed up with appropriate line management exit interviews when staff leave employment
- use of Occupational Health and counselling services will be monitored without breaching confidentiality.

Wellbeing Responsibilities

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring:

- the engagement of line managers at all levels in the importance of managing staff wellbeing;
- allocation of appropriate resources to enable line managers to deliver the agreed strategy proactively, including (where appropriate) the use of occupational health referrals for expert opinion;
- active implementation of the principles and behaviours contributing to positive staff wellbeing;
- alertness to employees' personal circumstances and offering additional support where appropriate to members of staff experiencing risks to their wellbeing which derive from outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation;
- each school has a bereavement policy and bereavement co-ordinator which informs practice/protocols within the school
- ensuring effective communication between managers and staff;
- in particular, ensuring effective communication where there are organisational and/or procedural changes which give rise to increased levels of stress in the workplace;
- ensuring that bullying, harassment and discrimination are not tolerated.

Headteachers will:

- request assistance from the HR partner with stress risk assessments, if required, when it is identified that an employee is suffering from actual stress or where there is a perceived risk of stress and ensure that any reasonable measures identified are implemented. This would be supported by a note from GP/Occupational Health or following Occupational Health recommendations;
- ensure that employees are consulted over aspects of their employment that may cause stress or impact on their health and well-being when changes affecting them are planned;
- ensure that employees receive appropriate training and resources to carry out their duties;
- ensure that staff are provided with appropriate development opportunities to manage absence in accordance with the Absence Management Strategy;
- consider workloads to ensure jobs are realistic, timed and manageable;

- monitor working hours, overtime and holidays to encourage individuals to take breaks as required by legislation;
- familiarise themselves with the impact of bullying and harassment and ensure that employees are aware that this is not tolerated in the workplace;
- recognise that employees may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work, and which may have a temporary influence on their work performance e.g. health issues or personal circumstances;
- treat all discussions with employees around personal issues as confidential unless it is necessary to involve others to deal with the issue and the employee gives written agreement for disclosure. Line managers will keep a confidential written record should any further support/discussion be required

The SPMAT will, if required:

- provide advice and guidance to the LGB and/or Head of School on the Staff Wellbeing Policy;
- provide guidance to the LGB and/or Head of School on the implementation of the policy to include the appropriate management of individual cases;
- through the Health and Safety provider advise, guide and support Principals in carrying out stress risk assessments where required;
- where necessary, through the Occupational Health provider, support employees experiencing stress and advise them and their line manager of the support available;
- raise awareness amongst all staff of the importance of work/life balance.

Employees will:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety at work and work collaboratively with the SLT in any measures taken to reduce stress;
- Take reasonable care to avoid causing health and wellbeing problems for other employees;
- be proactive in identifying occasions when they may be suffering from health and wellbeing problems, either work-related, or due to external factors, and alert their line manager to these where appropriate.

Trade Unions will:

- work with the SPMAT to raise awareness and promote the importance of health and wellbeing in the workplace;
- where aware of concerns, identify these to the school and work with the school to resolve the issues.

This policy links to:

- OH referral process.
- Absence Management Policy
- Family Friendly Policy inc ; maternity, flexible working