

Staff Wellbeing Policy

Priory Rise School



Approved by: Priory Rise Governing Board **Date:** October 2020

Last reviewed on: May 2020

Reviewed again on: July 2020 (After government guidance for the full re-opening of schools – July 2nd 2020)

Statement of Intent

Priory Rise School recognises the importance of the emotional and physical wellbeing of all staff. Every child matters; every member of our team matters. Priory Rise endeavours to ensure that all staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise that staff wellbeing is vital and enables pupil wellbeing, progress and achievement and school performance.

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a school ethos which supports staff health and wellbeing by ensuring all employees are treated with respect and understanding consistently. The policy also intends to consider the impact of COVID-19 on the school community and its impact on staff wellbeing.

5 key aims:

- to develop a healthy, motivated workforce who are able to deliver an excellent standard of education to pupils;
- to ensure that our school promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact that work can have on employees' mental and physical health;
- to communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to communicate wellbeing policy updates with staff where appropriate;
- to take a positive and understanding approach to the management of mental health in line with current good practice;
- to ensure all staff members are aware of the appropriate channels to access when managing and dealing with work-related health and wellbeing issues where necessary.

Roles

The governing board will:

- take overall responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring that staff will enjoy a reasonable work-life balance
- will adopt the appropriate policies in respect of consideration of part-time working, flexible working patterns where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the school
- will ensure that clear procedures are in place that will take into consideration the appropriate mental health and wellbeing for staff when following formal procedures such as the Capability or Disciplinary Policy
- will provide a range of strategies for involving staff in the school decision making process
- will review the demands on staff and seek practical solutions wherever possible
- will provide personal and professional development opportunities such as stress management, team building or other available appropriate courses
- will consider the changing needs of wellbeing for staff during COVID-19

The headteacher will:

- ensure that all staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance
- support the governing board in ensuring that strategies are implemented to effectively manage, and where necessary, support employees mental health and wellbeing
- adopt school policies and provide clear and transparent guidance for staff regarding leave of absences for personal reasons, public or trade union duties. For specific guidance, refer to the Absence Policy
- ensure that there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of school life. This will be reviewed regularly
- create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns openly and without judgement
- ensure all staff are aware of and trained in line with the school's priorities, policies and offered opportunities for development. Ensure staff are aware of the importance of self care and positive wellbeing
- appoint a wellbeing co-ordinator for staff who is responsible for ensuring that the good health and wellbeing of staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school
- make/arrange individual interventions such as: short term rehabilitation, return to work plans, longer term reasonable adjustments to work, considerations for anxiety when returning to work having been isolating during COVID-19 period.

Staff members will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the huge responsibilities of every staff member, at every level, across the school when considering wellbeing and mental health
- make themselves aware of the school's policies e.g. attendance, wellbeing, capability procedures, staff handbook etc.
- assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or their colleagues
- will ask their line manager for support or help if required. This includes understanding that positive relationships require communication from both parties and that the importance of raising issues at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure that effective supportive strategies can be employed at the earliest opportunity or as required
- identify opportunities for development and take advantage of those offered by the school
- apply for any requests for leave of absence in advance in accordance with the Absence Policy
- share, honest and respectful views and opinions about all issues concerning the school professionally through staff questionnaires and meetings
- take responsibility for checking all communication channels. This includes: attending staff meetings where appropriate, accessing school emails, reading weekly staff briefings, reading daily staff notice board etc to ensure that staff members remain fully informed
- share concerns with a member of the senior staff about a colleague who may be suffering from ill mental health or increased anxiety.

New staff at Priory Rise School

When joining the Priory Rise team at the start of the academic year, all staff members are invited to attend an orientation meeting. This is an opportunity for staff to begin to form relationships with other new team members, and to learn crucial information about the school's ethos and values alongside providing key information about Priory Rise school. At any other point in the year, new members of staff would meet with their line manager to conduct this meeting.

All new staff are signposted to the handbook and, upon induction, staff are directed to various policies on the p:drive. This includes important policies and practices to ensure the smooth running of the school.

The Priory Rise team will ensure new members of staff are made to feel welcome and are given as much support as required. A new member of staff will have dedicated line manager/mentor who can answer questions, respond to any concerns and conduct regular check-ins. Of course, all staff members welcome questions and no question or query is considered to be irrelevant.

New staff will take part in an induction process. This takes the form of:

- meeting with the induction manager at the end of the first week (as part of the staff induction policy)
- two further meetings within the first month (Staff Induction document and Probationary Assessment document)
- further review meetings should take place at 16 weeks and 24 weeks into employment (as stated in the Probationary Assessment document)
- at the end of the first term, an induction form should be completed (Staff Induction document).

Should there be any concerns in the interim period, these can be raised and addressed by the employee/line manager.

For newly qualified teachers (NQTs), the process is rigorous. The NQT is allocated a senior leader (not working within their year group) as a mentor. The senior leader will arrange a suitable time for weekly meetings to check-in and discuss targets, concerns, future events and dates of significance, and will signpost support where required. The NQTs will be assessed each term using the local authority as an Appropriate Body. These reports will be shared and discussed with the NQT. Currently, the NQTs are assessed for a period of one year.

In the last academic year, we recognise that our NQTs have not completed the full year of teaching and therefore may require additional support. Regular check-ins from the year leader will take place to ensure the now RQTs feel supported in their second year.

Members of staff who will become NQTs 2020-21 will also require close monitoring as they have missed a substantial amount of teaching time from March 2020-June 2020. Each NQTs dedicated mentor will monitor their progress and wellbeing throughout the year and will put measures into place to support the NQT quickly if necessary. Mentors will also flag early concerns with Ruth Seagar or Cath Dobson. Additional training may be required.

NQT Mentors and year leaders will liaise closely to ensure the NQT has the best opportunities to be successful. Strategies to support NQTs will be shared at the earliest opportunity.

Practical measures to support new roles in school will include:

- allocating a mentor to support the person in the new role;
- holding initial discussions with line managers about the role;
- hold regular review meetings with mentor/line manager;
- hold a 3 month review interview with mentor/line manager;
- offer opportunities for handover/modelling/shadowing as relevant and appropriate for the new role;
- ensure the new member of staff has received safeguarding training;
- ensure the new member of staff is familiar with the processes, structures and systems to enable them to work safely within the school environment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers recently returning to the profession, following a period of absence, will be offered a mentor to support them in their first year back. This mentor will guide and support the teacher as an NQT mentor would.

In the case of teachers new to the school but not in their first year and teachers returning from maternity absence, the year leaders would offer appropriate support, guidance and advice.

Procedures for handling issues of wellbeing

The Leadership team, both Senior Leadership team and Middle Leadership team encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable to ask for help or raise any concerns. The leadership team are sensitive to issues and problems which may affect the mental health and wellbeing of any staff members and respond in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when made aware.

Such matters are explored in regular meetings and, during these times, reminders are given to staff at all levels to be mindful of each other's wellbeing and to seek support where necessary.

Where additional professional advice is required, the school has access to Occupational Health and Human Resource professionals through the local authority. Where appropriate, these avenues can be offered to an employee as a support.

The school will provide support to any employees experiencing poor mental health and compromise to their wellbeing. In some cases, this may include external support such as the teacher helpline or support from the staff member's GP or from the local authority. These various options should be discussed with the member of staff.

During this time, the school will ensure that at all times the staff member's privacy and dignity is respected. This means maintaining confidentiality, upholding the employee's rights and dealing with the employee with empathy and sensitivity.

When a member has been absent for school for a period of time, a return to work interview will be carried out by a line manager/senior leader in order to engage with the individual, to identify support that can be offered in promoting positive wellbeing.

Procedures to promote staff wellbeing

At Priory Rise School we are committed to promoting the wellbeing of all our staff team.

We are committed to developing and maintaining an ongoing and embedded culture of positive wellbeing throughout the whole staff time. To enable this, we:

- Commit to continuous clear and transparent methods of communication. For example: attending staff meetings, accessing school emails, creation of a whole school calendar, reading weekly staff briefings, reading daily staff notice board etc to ensure that staff members remain fully informed. This is especially important during our COVID-19 pandemic.
- Ensure that clear structures and systems of organisation across the school are fully embedded.
- All team members are informed of roles and responsibilities of staff across the school. During these times, roles and responsibilities may vary to adapt to circumstances and government guidance. Where this is the case, reasonable adjustments may be made and staff will be communicated with as soon as possible.
- During weekly briefing meetings we will celebrate the successes of the week and share key information for the following week/s. This is emailed to all staff and a copy pinned to the staff notice board.
- Carry out a programme of rigorous and fair Performance Management, as a means of celebrating personal successes and promoting continued personal development.
- Continue a programme of professional development for all staff. We are committed to ensuring all staff members continue to develop professionally. We provide a programme of in-house training for teachers and support staff. NQTs receive dedicated weekly training sessions purposefully tailored to their needs. In addition, following meetings with line managers, staff may receive additional professional development opportunities. This may take the form of observations of other more experienced staff or meetings with other professionals in the school e.g. SENCO, Data manager, EAL lead etc. Other courses may be available.
- Continue implementation of the Priory Rise Golden ticket scheme for all staff members across the school. Staff can 'book' leave of absence for the equivalent of an afternoon from 1.30pm for a reason of their own choice. Teachers negotiate with the Head/Deputy. All other staff members negotiate with their line manager. During COVID-19 times, it is requested that a minimum of 3 weeks notice is given.
- Commitment to allocate appropriate staff development and INSET training to develop new initiatives across the school.
- Commitment to allocate appropriate staff development and INSET time in lieu of time spent on writing individual, end of year reports.
- Dedicated time for Middle Leaders to carry out additional responsibilities (equivalent to an 0.1 of the school week on alternate weeks of the year).
- Incorporate restorative check-ins at the start of any staff meetings held (excluding briefing meeting).
- Carry out annual staff questionnaires which are valued, reviewed, discussed and responded to by the Leadership of the school. Actions taken as a response are shared with the whole staff team.

- Senior Leadership and Middle Leadership conduct an annual review of the shape of the school year with regard to particular points of workload and implement subsequent adaptations for the coming year.
- Middle leaders are supported by regular meetings with Senior Leaders to discuss the effective running of teams/issues/concerns.
- Positive mental health training takes place annually across the staff team.
- A rigorous commitment to the provision of dedicated PPA time for teachers. Wherever possible, teacher's PPA time is honoured according to the pre-constructed timetable. On the very rare occasion, as a result of staff absence, where PPA time is compromised the school is committed to ensure that appropriate time is recompensed. Where INSET or bank holidays impact on PPA time, consideration will be made for this and an alternative equivalent time is provided.
- A notice board in the staffroom shares positivity amongst the staff team – thanking and celebrating staff achievements and kindness. This can include positive emails from parents to share with the staff.
- Hold a range of staff social gatherings throughout the school year where possible and if government guidance allows.
- Regularly review policies that may impact wellbeing of staff e.g. Feedback and marking policy, Code of Conduct, Online safety, homework policy etc. Regularly review policies in light of new government guidance.
- A commitment to ensure professionalism in the attendance, timings, punctuality and conduct during meetings held at every level e.g. dedicated start and finish times for meetings and training sessions, a culture of punctuality at meetings, apologies and requests for leave of absence are submitted in a timely fashion. Continue to uphold a culture of care, kindness, understanding and positivity in every interaction across the whole school.

Supporting the well-being of school staff

We cannot overestimate the importance of looking after each other and supporting your own well-being and the well-being of your staff during these difficult times. Change can be disruptive, and people respond in different ways, but all of us will face challenges, both personal and professional, over the coming weeks and months. Being mindful of the need to take care of your own well-being is the best place to start.

[Looking after each other and ourselves](#): a guide to support the mental health and well-being of staff at schools and colleges during periods of disruption.

[Supporting staff wellbeing in schools](#): practical guidance about what school staff and senior leaders can do to support their own and their colleagues' well-being.

[Supporting staff well-being from Mentally Healthy Schools](#): advice, guidance and resources for schools on how to support and improve staff well-being.

Staff well-being best practice: staff well-being ideas to support each other during this difficult time.

What keeps us going: a staff activity that focuses on staff's personal mental health and how to cope with issues that we face.

Teachers, looking after yourself is essential, not optional: Professor Tamsin Ford of The University of Cambridge explains why it is so important that teachers look after both their mental and physical health.

Taken from: https://www.naht.org.uk/advice-and-support/coronavirus-news-and-guidance-for-school-leaders/coronavirus-supporting-pupils-mental-health-and-well-being/?utm_campaign=1936937_Coronavirus%3A%20supporting%20pupils%27%20mental%20health%20and%20well-being&utm_medium=email&utm_source=National%20Association%20of%20Head%20Teachers&dm_i=3OT7,15IJT,3KIE2Y,42XNV,1