Norwood Green Junior School

Staff Wellbeing Policy

Policy ratified by the GB: May 2025

Policy to be reviewed: May 2028

Rationale

At NGJS, we recognise that our staff are our most important resource and are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, purposeful learning community.

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, have the opportunity to express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance.

This 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.

Wellbeing Aims

We aim to ensure that our school:

- supports staff mental health and wellbeing
- minimises stress
- helps staff to keep a healthy work-life balance
- ensures staff feel valued
- recognises and promotes the importance of a happy team
- takes account of equality implications.
- promotes mental heath and wellbeing
- enhances physical health
- fosters a supportive work environment
- provides access to support services
- measures and evaluates wellbeing initiatives
- encourages participation and involvement in decision-making

Roles and responsibilities

The senior leadership team (SLT), governing body 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.

The governing body is responsible for:

- fulfilling its duty of care as an employer
- monitoring the workload of the Headteacher
- receiving any concerns from members of staff
- ensuring that the resources are in place to keep staff workload at healthy levels
- reviewing this policy in conjunction with the Headteacher
- considering how its own members are treated and valued
- ensuring that demands are not placed on individual members of staff that interfere unfairly with their work-life balance
- operating a sensitive performance management policy
- ensuring that other school policies and procedures take account of staff wellbeing
- overseeing that change is operated in a fair and reasonable way.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

Strategic Leadership and Vision
- Setting and communicating a clear strategic vision for wellbeing for staff, pupils, and parents.
- Ensuring wellbeing policies, practices, and culture are embedded, regularly monitored, and evaluated for impact.

Staff Support and Accessibility
- Being accessible and approachable, along with the senior leadership team (SLT), to all staff members.
- Maintaining contact and support for staff during periods of long absence.

Workload Management and Work-Life Balance

- Prioritising reforms and initiatives with consideration for staff workload and the pace of change.
- Planning the annual timetable thoughtfully, taking staff commitments into account.
- Making special arrangements where possible to help staff manage family and work responsibilities.
- Protecting dedicated time for staff (e.g., PPA, staff meetings).

Training and Development
- Ensuring staff have access to appropriate training and resources to perform their roles confidently.
- Allocating resources for staff wellbeing and professional development.

Modelling Positive Behaviours
- Demonstrating and promoting a healthy work-life balance and mental health awareness.
- Supporting and empowering the Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) in their role.

The Headteacher will implement these responsibilities with the support of appropriate staff such as the Deputy Headteachers, SMT and Senior Mental Health Lead and who all strive to be positive role models through their own practice.

The Headteacher is responsible for the following, supported by the Senior Mental Health Lead:

- providing personal and professional development such as team building, management of change, stress management, assertiveness, communication
- providing a non-judgemental and confidential support system such as coaching, mentoring and pastoral support for staff
- monitoring the workload of members of staff and being alert to signs of stress
- listening to the views of members of staff and providing a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision making processes
- ensuring that the efforts and successes of staff are acknowledged and celebrated
- ensuring that staff feel valued and that time is set aside for them
- including in professional development meetings opportunity for staff to discuss their aspirations and career intentions
- 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 on their work performance e.g. health issues, bereavement or loss, or personal circumstances
- ensuring that there are effective methods of communication
- ensuring that a mentor system operates within the school and especially for each new members of staff and that the staff induction process is put into place
- conducting risk assessments for work-related stress

The Senior Mental Health Lead is responsible for:

- ensuring support services are made available or signposted on behalf of members of staff where additional specialist support is needed
- Ensuring that pupils, parents and staff know they can talk to a senior leader for mental health concerns
- partaking in training and feeding back to staff
- providing guidance and training for staff on mental health issues
- consulting with external agencies for additional support and interventions (pupils, parents and staff)
- monitoring the effectiveness of mental health strategies and report to SLT
- helping in promoting a culture where mental health is openly discussed and supported

Members of staff are responsible for:

- treating one another with empathy, respect and kindness
- taking care of their own health and safety at work and communicating with key staff where they need support
- being committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and keeping in mind the workload and wellbeing of colleagues
- valuing all members of staff in the school and acknowledging the important role that everyone takes
- contributing to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to build morale and effective team spirit
- developing and respecting shared areas where possible so that there is space to relax as well as appropriate work spaces.

Monitoring well-being and making improvements

All staff members take part in the school's appraisal procedure at the start of the academic year through to the end of the year. Appraisers are encouraged to check on the wellbeing of their appraisees at the start of every meeting and follow through with additional support.

An annual survey (mid-year) is conducted. Results are examined by SMT to make improvements to practise.
Regular reviews on staff workload, conducted in a safe manner where concerns can be raised without judgement

Examples of good practice may include:

- Refreshments are provided in the staff room
- Regular lunches organised for staff throughout the year, including Year group-led lunches to enhance team building
- Staff social team-building events in September
- Health and Wellbeing charity events (e.g. coffee & cake events)
- Governor financial commitment to end-of-term staff events
- Celebrating staff achievements (e.g. new qualifications celebrated; staff thanked publicly for those who have taken on a specific role, such as led theatre trip, Sports day, etc.)
- Ensuring school environment is pleasant, clean and conducive to positive thinking
- Pastoral Leader appointed to support staff's own emotional wellbeing and support staff through child protection and safeguarding concerns, which can be emotionally draining for staff
- PPA organised for each year group together as a support mechanism

Support in specific circumstances

NGJS will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to specific circumstances with staff as a need arises. In some cases, it may be necessary to seek external services, informing staff of their intention. In such circumstances, the school will continue to support even when external services are involved.

Staff are encouraged to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, support will be given on an individual basis.

Where possible, staff are supported with their work-life balance and wellbeing outside the school. This could be through providing staff with paid leave for special events and celebrations, or time off to deal with specific family circumstances or crisis.

Related policies and documents:

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies / documents for:

Leave of Absence Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
Performance Management Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Management of Absence Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Sabbatical Leave Policy
Staff Induction Programme
Staff Wellbeing and Workload Review – Feb 2019