



Tall Oaks Academy Trust POLICY

Health and Well-being September 2021

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Health and Well-being Policy

Definition of wellbeing

“Stable wellbeing is when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. When individuals have more challenges than resources, the see-saw dips, along with their well-being, and vice versa.” (Dodge et al, 2012)

This policy applies to employees of the Trust and the three schools within it; Castle Wood Academy, Mercer’s Wood Academy and White’s Wood Academy. It does not form part of any employee’s Terms and Conditions of employment and is not intended to have any contractual effect. The Trust reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

The Trust is committed to protecting the health, safety and well-being of all those who work for them and endeavour to maintain a working environment in which everyone treats one another with dignity and respect and is able to co-operate with and trust their colleagues. The Trust recognises that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness.

The Trust recognises that, whatever its source, stress can be a health and safety issue in the workplace and acknowledges the importance of a supportive environment, positive working culture and of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. Additionally, the Trust will respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members.

The Trust is committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and to bring it to everyone's attention. However, this policy can only be effective if everyone co-operates to achieve its aims. This would be our expectation of all Trust staff.

What is stress?

Stress is the adverse reaction experienced in response to excessive pressures or demands. Stress is not an illness but, sustained over a period of time, it can lead to mental and/or physical illness.

There is an important distinction between working under pressure and experiencing stress. Certain levels of pressure are acceptable and normal in every job. It can improve performance, enable individuals to meet their full potential and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it produces stress.

Pressures outside the workplace (whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events such as accidents, illness, bereavement, family breakdown or financial worries) can result in stress. They can also compound normal workplace pressures.

The Trust recognises that what triggers stress, and the capacity to deal with stress, varies from person to person. Individuals react to similar situations in different ways.

The Trust's Obligations

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **The Menopause policy**
- **The Workload and Well - being Charter**
- **The findings of the annual Workload and Well-being staff survey**
- **The Stress Management policy**

The Trust has a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that the health and well-being of its employees is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from the way work is organised.

This policy takes account of our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Employment Rights Act 1996, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Working Time Regulations 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Who is covered by the policy?

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including the Executive Head teacher, Heads of School, members of the Executive Leadership Team, employees, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff as well as work experience or student placement staff (collectively referred to as “staff” in this policy).

Third parties who enter the workplace (including parents and visitors) are also required to comply with this policy.

Scope and purpose of the policy

The Trust is committed to identifying, tackling and preventing the causes of work-related stress and to providing appropriate support and consideration to staff suffering from stress, on a confidential basis where appropriate including:

- Promoting a culture of open communication, participation and encouragement;

- Through training, effective planning and allocation of workloads and ensuring feedback is provided on performance. We want staff to develop their skills and confidence and to feel able to raise any concerns they have about their work, working environment or workload;
- Using staff development, staff support systems and policies reflecting current good practice to help staff understand and recognise the causes of stress and to address work-related stress and the impact of external stressors at work;
- Providing a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation;
- Addressing violence, aggression and other forms of inappropriate behaviour through disciplinary action;
- Ensuring risk assessments include or specifically address workplace stress;
- Maintaining an appraisal process to ensure the suitability of workloads, supported by a capability procedure;
- Following comprehensive change management procedures;
- Providing well-being support and services, such as occupational health, for staff affected by or absent by reason of stress.
- Providing guidance and signposting to policies to ensure all staff are aware of important policies and how to access them, including this Policy on Health and Well-being. This will also occur through induction and throughout the probationary period.

Recognition of stress as a genuine problem requires management support and action. Those working at management and supervisory level have a specific responsibility to:

- Participate in the culture of open communication and encouragement;
- Ensure that the staff they manage receive training to effectively carry out their roles;
- Effectively plan and allocate workloads and provide feedback on performance;
- Monitor workloads and reallocate work where necessary;
- Ensure that the staff they manage understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and others and act on behaviour that falls below those standards.
- Support any employees facing high levels of stress in the workplace as well as other work related issues which are having or have the potential to have negative impacts on the staff member's health and well-being.
- 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 tact and sensitivity,

To facilitate this process, the Executive Leadership Team will be given training on best practice and are encouraged to seek advice from the Executive Headteacher on how to recognise stress in the staff that they manage in the first instance.

However, all members of staff are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they:

- Familiarise themselves with the policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives;

- Plan and organise their work to meet personal and organisational objectives;
- Speak to their Line Manager/Head of School or the Executive Headteacher if they experience or are aware of a situation that may lead to stress developing.
- Co-operate with support, advice and guidance they may be offered by their Line Manager/Head of School or the Executive Headteacher.

The Executive Headteacher will have responsibility for informing all staff of this policy and their role in its implementation.

Sources of support

The Trust is able to assist staff well-being in the following ways:

- Training/workshops on well-being and in particular stress management.
- A confidential helpline manned by independent advisers with access to specialist counsellors. The helpline provides help with physical, mental and social issues.
- Well-being strategies offered within the working day to those staff wishing to sample alternative ways of managing their well-being.

Line Managers/Heads of School who are aware/are made aware that their staff require health and well-being assistance should contact the Executive Business Manager.

Resolving cases of stress at work

If an employee believes they are suffering from stress they should discuss this with their Line Manager/Head of School.

Once an issue affecting health and well-being of an employee comes to the attention of one of the above, steps will be taken by the Trust to address that issue. Those steps may include any of the following:

- A workload review, reallocation of work, monitoring of future workload or possible redeployment;
- Referral for medical advice and/or a medical report to be provided by the Occupational Health Department or our medical advisers and or the GP (and any medical specialist) treating the member of staff concerned;
- If the member of staff is on sickness absence, discussion of an appropriate return to work programme.

The Occupational Health Department will continue to be used appropriately to help staff overcome work-related stress as well as other stress and the impact that has on their ability to do their duties.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important part of this policy. Every member of staff is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required, whether they are suffering from stress, supporting a colleague who is suffering from stress or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a policy or procedure dealing with stress.

Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary policy and procedure.

The Trust will monitor the development and dissemination of good practice, the recognition of the symptoms of stress, awareness of and effectiveness of this Policy to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives.

Useful Phone Numbers/Contacts

Counselling helpline: 01522 836711

MindEd: www.minded.org.uk

Youthinmind: www.youthinmind.info

Mind – Mental Health: www.mind.org.uk

Mental Health Foundation: www.mentalhealth.org.uk