

# Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Primary person responsible for updates to this policy: Jo Lynch

Job title: Well-Being Lead

Last review date: February 2022

Next review date: September 2022

**Circulation:** This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children.

'Parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

*"St. Anthony's School for Girls aims to provide high quality education in a caring, supportive and Catholic environment, infused by Christ's Gospel, in order that each of our pupils is able to develop fully as an individual, well-adjusted to the wider community."*

Definition of mental health and well-being from the World Health Organisation:

**.... a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.**

### Statement of intent

At St Anthony's School for Girls, we are committed to supporting the positive mental health and Well-being of our whole school community (children, staff, parents and carers).

We have a supportive and caring ethos and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued.

We want to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally.

We recognise that staff Well-being is important to pupil achievement and the school's performance.

The school is committed to making sure that this Staff Wellbeing Policy is implemented so that each individual is able to cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of stress.

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a school ethos which supports staff health and Well-being by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

At our school we know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

### Staff Wellbeing During Covid

It is recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic is having an ongoing impact on the work and personal lives of all members of the school community, including staff. Due to the pandemic, we are now coping with a wide range of issues and feelings, such as, fear, anxiety, vulnerability and social isolation. Maintaining and promoting Wellbeing is especially important during challenging times such as the current pandemic. Relationships are at the heart of St Anthony's School and are facilitated by open communication across all of the staff team. This Wellbeing policy is particularly relevant at this time of additional stress and uncertainty and should be followed by all St Anthony's staff. It is essential that staff and pupils know who they can approach in the event of a Wellbeing concern and that these channels are clearly communicated to all so that we can take responsibility for our own Wellbeing. Supporting all staff and pupils and encouraging open conversations about how they are feeling will help create a positive culture around mental Wellbeing. It is important to recognise that everyone is likely to experience lack of motivation and low mood at times and that this is a very reasonable emotional response to the current situation. Creating a strong sense of support as a school community, can help improve resilience across the school.

At St Anthony's School we take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, aiming to help staff and children become more resilient, happy and successful and to work in a pro-active way to avoid problems arising.

We do this by:

- developing a healthy, motivated workforce who can deliver a high standard of education to pupils.
- ensuring that our school promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health.
- recognising that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness and to agree on flexible working practices where possible without damaging opportunities for pupils to succeed.
- communicating the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly.
- responding sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members.
- providing staff with support to deal positively with stressful incidents and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies.
- improving staff development, co-operation and teamwork by creating effective leaders.
- ensuring staff members are aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work-related health and wellbeing issues.

### **Staff roles and responsibilities, including those with specific responsibility**

Wellbeing Lead – Joanne Lynch

Deputy Wellbeing Lead (SENDCo) – Jack Lewis

Named Wellbeing Governor – TBC

DSL – Raffaella Merolla - Jack Lewis (Acting Deputy)

Deputy DSL - Olivia Green

### **The Governors, Headteacher and the School's SLT will:**

- Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect within the school
- Champion good management practices and the establishment of a work ethos within the school which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables employees to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements.
- Encourage staff to be able to talk freely about any issues which impact on their ability to carry out their jobs.
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and wellbeing.

- Will appoint a staff Wellbeing lead who is responsible for ensuring that the good health and Well-being of all staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school. The co-ordinator will also ensure that school policies and procedures reflect this aim.
- Will make individual interventions such as short-term rehabilitation and return to work plans, and longer-term reasonable adjustments to work.
- Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and dignity and will promote a culture of mutual respect.
- Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- Encourage their staff to participate in events and initiatives undertaken by the school to promote wellbeing and more effective working.
- Take action in the interests of all their colleagues where performance by a member of staff may cause stress to their colleagues.

#### **Staff members will:**

- make themselves aware of all the school's policies
- 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.
- take responsibility for their own wellbeing and ask their Line Manager for help or support if required. This includes understanding that a good relationship requires communication from both parties and so it's important that issues are raised at the earliest possible moment so that strategies can be put in place to manage workloads /challenges more effectively.
- identify opportunities for development, including those that promote positive wellbeing and take advantage of those offered by the school.
- apply for any requests for leave of absence in advance and be honest about sickness absence leaves.
- share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the school at formal meetings.

#### **The Headteacher will:**

- ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to the School's Occupational Health advisers where appropriate.
- enable the school to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee wellbeing, such as: Sickness absence data, Staff turnover, exit interviews, number of referrals to Occupational Health, numbers of grievance and harassment cases.
- Seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of the school's Wellbeing Policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.

#### **The Wellbeing Lead will:**

- Ensure that the Wellbeing Policy is kept under review and updated when appropriate.
- Organise, in conjunction with the staff, appropriate events and initiatives to promote health and wellbeing.
- Liaise with the staff on the development and implementation of the Wellbeing Policy.

## **Procedures for handling issues of Wellbeing**

The Senior Leadership Team must encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. The Senior Leadership Team should be sensitive to any situations which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.

Where additional, professional advice is required, the school has contacts with Occupational Health Professionals and Human Resource experts and these avenues should be utilised. (see Appendix 1)

Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the confidential counselling service. This service provides staff with serious concerns to obtain advice and support outside of the workplace. Staff also have access to an Employee Assistance Programme, 'Health Assured': a confidential benefit designed to help staff deal with a range of personal and professional problems, including health and general wellbeing. (see Appendix 2)

The school will provide support to any employees facing high levels of stress in the workplace, as well as other work-related issues which have the potential to have negative impacts on the staff member's/their colleagues' health and wellbeing. The various options for dealing with such issues should be discussed with staff members where appropriate. In some cases, this may include external support such as the teacher helpline or support from the Local Authority e.g. counselling. (see Appendix 1)

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 tact and sensitivity. However, there may be rare occasions where we are unable to maintain full confidentiality, for example, due to safeguarding concerns. We will endeavour to inform employees where possible.

## **Steps taken to promote staff Wellbeing**

- Weekly communication via staff meetings and daily morning briefing email.
- Continuing professional development for all staff.
- Appraisal
- Annual job description meetings.
- All staff invited to INSET days.
- Staff rooms for staff to relax, work and support colleagues.
- Consultative staff meetings held once a term to give staff the opportunity to voice concerns and to have their views sought.
- Twice yearly questionnaires, analysed by the Wellbeing Lead and Deputy Headteacher.

## Actions to support new staff

- All staff will be given a school orientation by Headteacher.
- All new staff will receive the staff induction pack/staff handbook. This will continue to include all important policies, or their location, and will include this policy on mental health and wellbeing.
- All staff will be made to feel welcome and given as much support as required.
- At the end of the first week of employment, new staff will have a review with a senior member of staff.
- All new staff will have a 3-month review meeting with a senior Leader. Additional reviews may be scheduled at 6-months and/or a year or as and when required.

## Monitoring and evaluation

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be accessible via the school website - hard copies are available on request. The policy will be reviewed at least once per year.

## Appendix 1

Staff Well-being Questionnaire

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ixr09aJEwkePiM0c9RQhWEYr2qF7gy5HnPM0rv48R\\_tUNEdKWTZJQUczQzJJOFVFR1VCUjREN0tCSS4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ixr09aJEwkePiM0c9RQhWEYr2qF7gy5HnPM0rv48R_tUNEdKWTZJQUczQzJJOFVFR1VCUjREN0tCSS4u)

## Appendix 2

### What is our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)?

Our EAP is a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health and general wellbeing.

The service provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues. It offers not only reactive support when someone needs it, but also proactive and preventative support to deliver the best possible outcomes.

Our provider, Health Assured, prides themselves on offering the highest level of service quality, assured through the calibre of people they employ and their exceptional clinical governance infrastructure.

Balancing everyday life with the requirements of work and home can create pressures for all of us. Work is a large part of people's lives. With increasing working hours as well as technological developments to support remote working, it is vital to ensure that there's a productive, healthy environment that is conducive to a healthy lifestyle.

Alpha Plus Group, in partnership with Health Assured, provides all employees with complimentary access to an enhanced Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to assist you in achieving this balance.

### Services Available

Health Assured offers cover for you and your immediate family members\*, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year:

- **Life support:** Unlimited access to counselling for emotional problems and a pathway to structured telephone counselling or face-to-face counselling sessions (employees only) at your convenience.
- **Legal information:** For any issues that cause anxiety or distress including debt management, accountancy, lawsuits, consumer disputes, property or neighbour legalities (employees only).
- **Bereavement support:** Health Assured offers qualified and experienced counsellors who can help with grief and related stress plus a team of legal advisors to help with legal issues.
- **Medical information:** Qualified nurses are on hand to offer advice on a range of medical or health related issues. They can't diagnose but can offer a sympathetic ear and practical information and advice.
- **CBT online:** We recognise the value of self-help tools in dealing with a range of issues, which is why we have a range of CBT self-help modules, informative factsheets and invaluable advice videos from leading qualified counsellors.

*\*Health Assured define dependants as immediate family members (spouse/partners) and children aged 16 to 24 in full time education, living in the same household.*

## Wellbeing Portal

In addition to the counselling support and advice, Health Assured also offers a virtual library of wellbeing information. These informative articles and self-help guides provide support on a range of health and advisory issues, as well as instant guidance to aid of an employee's physical and mental health.

We understand that the information needs to be available in a way that is suitable for you, whenever you require it. From simple lifestyle changes to advice for many of life's most common concerns, the portal offers:

- Interactive health assessment providing personal tailor-made dietary tips and fitness plans
- Fitness and lifestyle advice, such as detoxing methods
- Four week self-help programmes
- Mini health checks
- Financial wellbeing articles

## Health e-Hub Mobile App

Sometimes it can be difficult to balance the pressures of work with the demands of home life. When daily life feels overwhelming you need help and support to deal with the practical and emotional challenges you may be facing. The free Health Assured app offers access to holistic health and wellbeing support at the tap of a finger anywhere and anytime.

- Support videos and webinars
- Four-week programmes
- Home life support and advice
- Work life assistance
- Physical and emotional health
- Mini health checks
- Life Support
- Emotional Health
- Physical Health
- Online CBT
- Wellbeing videos and webinars
- Medical information