

## Staff Health & Wellbeing: Our Framework for Good Health & Wellbeing

Last reviewed: December 2020

This policy is due for review: December 2021

### 1 Aims

Ours is a community of learning, where secure partnerships create opportunities for students, staff, governors, parents and carers alike to participate and grow to become intellectually, emotionally and socially *fit for life*.

This policy and framework aims to:

- Support the wellbeing of all staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health
- Provide a supportive work environment for all staff
- Acknowledge the needs of staff, and how these change over time
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities
- Help staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- Provide the right support to students with mental health issues, and know where to signpost them and their parents/carers for specific support.
- Ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims

### 2 Introduction and Values

2.1 Ours is a community of learning, where secure partnerships create opportunities for students, staff, governors, parents and carers alike to participate and grow to become intellectually, emotionally and socially *fit for life*.

2.2 Wellbeing is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.” But it has taken on a much wider meaning than that, covering how satisfied people are with their lives as a whole. At Cedars we believe that there are many different types of wellbeing including physical, social, emotional, psychological, intellectual and economic wellbeing. Maintaining good wellbeing across all these areas is an ongoing process and our ongoing, daily focus, with no start or end date. The maintenance of staff wellbeing is a process that all staff are actively engaged in, supported by the Staff Wellbeing Team, and the management and leadership of the Academy.

2.3 In order that all students have individualised, specialist and outstanding provision, Cedars Academy must have a happy and motivated staff who see professional development as fundamental to their role. The foundation for this is to ensure that we consider and plan for staff well-being.

2.4 We recognise that work can bring with it a level of stress and anxiety at times. Whilst this is usually dealt with informally and appropriately by staff for example, seeking advice and support from other members of the team, there are occasions when these feelings might be more persistent in strength or time. We encourage that staff share these experiences and know that they are supported in finding ways to resolve them. Mild and brief episodes of worry can sometimes be more sustained. In the UK one in four people will experience some kind of mental health problem in the course of a year. This often manifests itself as anxiety and depression. Whilst we do not have professionals within school who are able to counsel staff, we are fully committed to supporting staff in seeking help and in their return to good health.

2.5 At Cedars Academy we recognise that not only can the job be stressful at times but that there may be circumstances outside of school that are having an impact on how staff feel. We want staff to know that they will not be judged or treated differently because of this and that there are systems in place to support them. They should know that there are people within school who they can speak to and that they do not have to cope alone.

2.6 As the employer of staff in Cedars Academy, Cedars Academy Trust Governing Body recognises the statutory responsibilities related to employment. Day-to-day management of staff is delegated to the Headteacher and line managers in Cedars Academy. Throughout this document, reference is made to the responsibilities held by the Headteacher for operational purposes. Ultimate responsibility rests with the Governing Body.

2.7 Cedars Academy Trust is committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and will provide suitable support for all members of staff. Taking action to prevent ill health and promote good health makes good educational and business sense, as sickness absence carries high costs both in monetary terms and in terms of the impact upon performance, teaching and learning, morale and productivity, which may disrupt or compromise student progress.

2.8 Members of the teaching and non-teaching staff are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times. Cedars Academy Trust takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all members of staff and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty.

These include:

- Attendance and Absence Management Policy;
- Stress Management Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Equality of Opportunity Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy/Procedure;
- Harassment Procedure;
- Grievance Procedure;
- Whistleblowing Procedure.

Other policies contribute to staff wellbeing by providing certainty, fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff in different contexts, including:

- Pay Policy
- Performance Management Policies for Teaching and Support Staff
- Information, Records and Copyright: Policies and Procedures
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Children
- Shared Parental Leave Policy [may also add maternity/paternity/adoption policies]
- Continuing Professional Development Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Alcohol/Drug Abuse Policy

2.9 Cedars Academy Trust recognises the importance of workplace unions in promoting and maintaining a positive health and wellbeing environment.

### 3 A whole Academy Approach to Staff Wellbeing

Our approach to staff wellbeing takes into account the many ways that we can support and lead efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing for all our staff. The diagram below indicates the various ways in which we are able to intervene and impact on staff wellbeing.



Further details of our whole Academy Strategy to promote staff emotional health and wellbeing, **Cedars Academy Staff Health & Wellbeing Strategy (A Framework for Good Health & Wellbeing)**, can be found in Appendix 1.

## 4 Legislation

4.1 Legislation that will be considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, including, but not exclusively:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- Working Time Regulations;
- Employment Rights Act 1996;
- Employment Relations Act 1999.

## 5 Responsibilities

5.1 Gateshead LA HR Team shall:

5.1.1 Provide the necessary professional advice, support and training to Cedars Academy Trust and all Academy staff as and when required.

5.1.2 Assist with the referral of staff to Occupational Health, Counselling or mediation when appropriate.

5.1.3 Assist in the formulation of return-to-work programmes and provide advice on the implementation of statutory requirements.

5.2 Cedars Academy Trust shall:

5.2.1 Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that recognise and deal with the issue of common mental and physical health problems, which will include: consideration of organisation of work; health risk assessment where appropriate; early recognition for staff with common mental and physical health problems (which may require training); and interventions that include short-term rehabilitation and return-to-work plans and longer-term reasonable adjustments.

5.2.2 Actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental and physical health problems by creating an environment where staff feel comfortable in asking for help.

5.2.3 Act early and provide consistent support.

5.2.4 Enlist the support of Gateshead LA HR Team and Occupational Health, when appropriate, and ensure staff are able to access this support.

5.2.5 Ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

5.2.6 Attend regular training on health and wellbeing in schools.

5.2.7 Ensure that all of Cedars Academy Trust's policies are assessed for workload impact.

- 5.2.8 Take into account the equality implications of any policies introduced and monitor on a regular basis.
- 5.2.9 Develop a wellbeing strategy, in consultation with the workplace unions, to include a provision of benefits offered to staff.
- 5.2.10 Provide opportunities for staff to participate in free annual health checks, should they so desire.
- 5.2.11 Ensure the policy is monitored, evaluated and reviewed with the recognised workplace unions on an annual basis, in the light of changing needs and legislative frameworks.
- 5.3 The Headteacher shall:
- 5.3.1 Recognise the value of good management practice with systems in place to effectively manage staff and encourage a partnership approach with staff, workplace unions and Cedars Academy's Health and Safety Committee.
- 5.3.2 Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.
- 5.3.3 Promote a healthy workplace and practices that ensure that members of staff are able to develop a healthy mind.
- 5.3.4 Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress.
- 5.3.5 Understand the differing needs of staff, at different points and events during their life cycles, and offer support accordingly, if and when required. This may include support for pregnant women, older women during the menopause, and those with caring responsibilities.
- 5.3.6 Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems.
- 5.3.7 Ensure that a return-to-work policy is established in the workplace that is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work.
- 5.3.8 Carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible.
- 5.3.9 Ensure that all staff have access to regular training sessions on health and wellbeing in schools, including practical sessions to deal with mental, physical and emotional wellbeing issues, and that they are given the appropriate time and resources to undertake this.
- 5.3.10 Carefully plan and agree work-life balance solutions including flexible working practices where possible and appropriate.
- 5.3.11 Demonstrate commitment, via systems and practices in place in Cedars Academy to employees maintaining a good work/life balance, and ensure that such practices are communicated to all staff.
- 5.3.12 Manage pressures which may affect staff, including the impact of workload pressures, and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.

5.3.13 Conduct an annual survey of staff, including a section on health and wellbeing, and share and act upon results.

5.4 Senior Leaders/Line Managers shall:

5.4.1 Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.

5.4.2 Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress.

5.4.3 Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work-related stress and other mental health problems.

5.4.4 Ensure that a return-to-work policy is established in the workplace that is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work.

5.4.5 Carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible.

5.4.6 Attend regular training on health and wellbeing in schools.

5.4.7 Communicate work-life balance practices to all staff and manage pressures which may affect staff and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.

5.4.8 Demonstrate commitment to staff by encouraging a good work/life balance.

5.5 Staff should:

5.5.1 Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem, if possible, to a clearly identified line manager or named individual.

5.5.2 Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves or others whilst in the workplace.

5.5.3 Consider wellbeing support mechanisms offered by Cedars Academy Trust; e.g. counselling.

5.5.4 Consider attending training on health and wellbeing issues where they feel that this is appropriate.

5.5.5 Where possible, be watchful of any indication of changes of behaviour in colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress.

5.6 The governing body shall:

5.6.1 Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment

5.6.2 Monitor and support the wellbeing of the headteacher

5.6.3 Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing

5.6.4 Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload

5.6.5 Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work

5.6.6 Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them.

## 6 Support Mechanisms

### 6.1 Rationale for support

6.1.1 We recognise that a member of staff who is experiencing mental well-being problems may exhibit behaviours that are different from their normal self. They may lose confidence, gain in confidence, appear demotivated or uncharacteristically agitated. Without exception, they will not be judged on this, but will be offered support from within school and then externally by professionals. This would be a staged process and a member of staff knowing that they are being supported internally may be enough. Each person will be treated as an individual and the support they require will be led by them.

6.1.2 There may be times when school feels that a member of staff requires support and they actively resist this. In this case, if the concern for that person is sustained over a period of time and is being expressed by several different sources, then school will take action for the collective well-being of the school and the long-term health of the individual concerned.

### 6.2 Counselling

6.2.1 Counselling can be provided where appropriate through Cedars Academy's provider, Kalmer Counselling or Gateshead LA OH. This will be a confidential, independent service using professionally qualified counsellors.

6.2.2 Staff can access the Counselling Service by contacting Liz Neale, Keith Vincent or Julie Ramsey.

### 6.3 Mediation

6.3.1 In addition to the Counselling Service there is also a mediation service in order to assist employees to return to normal working relationships. Where this service is appropriate it will be discussed with the employees affected by the situation.

### 6.4 Teacher Support Network

6.4.1 The Teacher Support Network is a group of independent charities and a social enterprise that provides practical and emotional support to staff in the education sector and their families. Information, support and coaching is offered to all staff. The Teacher Support Network provides over 1000 factsheets covering a wide range of issues including money advice, how to cope with bereavement, mental health, diet and nutrition and how to manage stress. To access the free support line, staff can call 08000 562 561, or for more information go to <http://teachersupport.info/>

### 6.5 Occupational Health

6.5.1 The Academy has access to Gateshead LA Occupational Health provider. This will enable an employee to discuss any concerns about their health and wellbeing with a nurse or doctor trained in occupational medicine. This is an opportunity to discuss any health condition and get feedback about managing or improving that condition to help an employee to carry out their duties or return to work. The information given is entirely confidential and will not be shared with the Governing Body or members of staff within Cedars Academy Trust.

## 6.6 Staff Wellbeing Team

We recognise that all matters relating to a person's mental health are confidential and will not be shared across the school without that person's consent. At Cedars Academy, the Staff Wellbeing Team works closely with the Senior Leadership Group to have responsibility for promoting the well-being of all staff, and are available to be approached at any time if someone is feeling anxious, stressed or depressed and if they have concerns about a colleague. In this way, information can be kept in one place and disclosed to others, such as external professionals, on a need to know basis. The Wellbeing Team also organise wellbeing activities for staff throughout the year.

\* All staff should be aware that we cannot promise confidentiality if information given has a direct impact on their day to day role within school

\* We will always undertake to keep a 'plan of action' confidential between the member of staff and the senior leadership team, although it may be beneficial to share it within a team if the action requires them to know

With a clear system in place, we hope to reduce informal discussions about another person's well-being that could take place around school. If there is a concern, there is one person to talk to. This is in line with our high expectations of professional conduct.

## 7 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed each year by the Staff Wellness Team in liaison with the Senior Leadership Group. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing body.

Last reviewed: December 2020

This policy is due for review: December 2021



## Appendix 1

# Cedars Academy Staff Health & Wellbeing Strategy (A Framework for Good Health & Wellbeing)

## 1 Rationale for a Framework for Good Health and Wellbeing

### 1.1 Promoting Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the extent to which an individual feels able to complete tasks and reach goals; being self-efficacious is similar to thinking with a growth mindset. It's also essential to happiness and to a sense of wellbeing (Maddux, 2002).

At the Shaping the future of CPD conference 2016, Dr Steve Watson, Lecturer in Mathematics Education at the University of Cambridge, explained that teacher self-efficacy correlates with improved student outcomes, more so than subject knowledge and personality.

A teacher with a strong sense of self-efficacy is more likely to:

- Feel confident in choosing the best approach to suit the needs of their classroom
- Be adaptable and resilient when faced with challenge or change
- Engage in enquiry and research in their own classroom and feel secure enough to share this with others
- Feel able to work collaboratively and contribute to building a knowledge creating profession

Good staff wellbeing can have a number of benefits for schools including:

- Positive impact on pupils, including improved educational outcomes, as both staff and children and young people are more engaged
- Increased productivity of staff members
- Reduced absences from work in relation to sickness (both short term and long term)
- Staff being able to manage stress better and develop healthier coping strategies
- Improved job satisfaction, which can support retention
- Staff feeling valued, supported and invested in

## 2 Cedars Academy 5-point plan for teacher wellbeing

### 1 Hold all staff to account

Make all staff accountable, but ensure support is retained through constructive feedback and flexibility. Keep expectations high, yet stay flexible by removing unnecessary checklists and letting staff teach in a style that suits their students.

## 2 Reduce unnecessary workload

Get rid of endless meetings for meetings sake, tick-box proformas and use of the phrase: ‘Ofsted will be coming this year’. Trust staff to do their job and if they can’t meet expectations, adapt and refine what is expected; be flexible.

## 3 Invest more money in staff professional development

All professional development activities should be chosen by the teacher, not an appraiser. Invest in your staff by providing tailored, differentiated in-house CPD for every member of staff.

## 4 Share more

To challenge the preconceptions cast by the media and promote positivity, increase the amount of good news stories within the profession shared by teachers, bloggers and school leaders.

## 5 Praise and recognise every member of staff

Promote staff wellbeing as a school priority as it is the key to school success. Eradicate bullies, task-masters and leaders who berate staff with remedial tasks and heavy-handed, ill-thought out workloads.

# 3 Leading an academy that prioritises wellbeing

In order to change the culture and ethos of a school it is vital that any strategies to support staff wellbeing are led by the senior leaders in the academy. Below are our considerations when leading an academy that prioritises staff wellbeing:



## **4 Creating an ethos and environment that promotes respect for individual needs**

### **4.1 Model good working practices and self-care to encourage a work/life balance**

This can include encouraging taking regular breaks, finishing on time, regular meetings with line managers, not taking work home and asking for help and support when needed. It is not enough for SLT to talk about doing these things, they need to model that they do them too.

### **4.2 Communicate clearly with staff, particularly around any changes that might be taking place at school**

If possible, consult with staff about changes and offer reassurance. Remember to also feedback on the positives and things that are going well!

### **4.3 Encourage a sense of community**

This can be done by allowing opportunities for all staff to get together (reinforcing that all staff are important) and having non-work related activities and clubs for staff.

### **4.4 Staff Development to support staff wellbeing and that of students - keep staff wellbeing and development on the agenda**

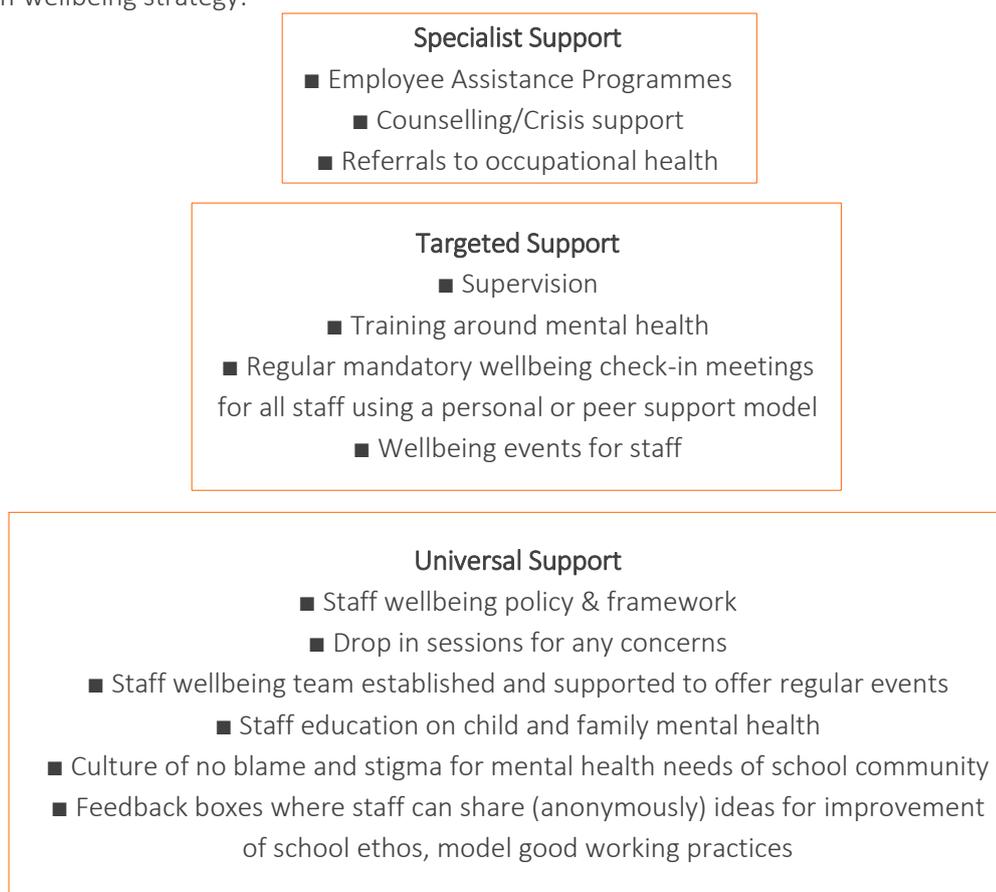
Offer resilience-based workshops for staff to help normalise the process of speaking about wellbeing. This can be done via lunch time seminars and inset days and can include topics such as managing stress. It can also be useful to provide opportunities for colleagues to debrief with each other on a regular basis.

### **4.5 Provide staff with regular opportunities to feedback on any thoughts or concerns regarding staff wellbeing and how to improve it.**

This can help to develop a more inclusive culture.

## 5 Supporting staff wellbeing

The diagram below outlines universal, targeted and specialist support services which is incorporated into our school's staff wellbeing strategy:



## 6 Our thoughts on looking after our own wellbeing

Research indicates that taking the following steps can be important in the promotion and maintenance of mental wellbeing:

### 1 Knowing personal limits and having the ability to say 'no' when necessary

This helps you to have more balance in life and will enable you to take better care of others.

### 2 Identifying supportive people that you have in your life

If you would like to increase your support networks then you might consider taking up new hobbies or activities. You can also speak to a professional for more support.

### **3 Talking**

There are times when challenging situations affect us emotionally. If you have had a difficult day at school, try to speak to someone before you leave school as this can then help you to process how you are feeling, ask for support and separate your work and home life.

### **4 Being flexible around change**

Even with the best plans, sometimes unexpected events or situations occur. Our ability to accept change and plan and adapt can help us to manage any potential feelings of stress and anxiety and cope better overall.

### **5 Self-compassion**

If you take some time to stop and reflect on the thoughts in your head, are they more positive or critical? Once you have identified any negative thought, you can begin to introduce more positive thoughts and 'turn the volume down' on the critical voices.

## **Appendix 2: Useful Websites**

[Schools in Mind](#)

[www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk](http://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk)

[www.mindfulteachers.org](http://www.mindfulteachers.org)

[www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk](http://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk)

[NHS – Five steps to mental wellbeing](#)

<https://www.acas.org.uk/>

<https://www.carersuk.org/>

[www.cbi.org.uk](http://www.cbi.org.uk)

[www.gov.uk/government/organisation/department-of-health](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisation/department-of-health)

[www.dignityatwork.org](http://www.dignityatwork.org)

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

[www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>

[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

[www.mindfulemployer.net](http://www.mindfulemployer.net)

[www.nasuwt.org.uk](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk)

<http://www.nhs.uk/111>

<http://www.relate.org.uk>

<http://www.samaritans.org>

<http://teachersupport.info>

<http://www.worklifebalancecentre.org>