



ST. MARY'S  
ACADEMY TRUST

# **St. Mary's Academy Trust**

## **Health and Well-being Policy**

**Date agreed by HR Committee: 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

**Date to be reviewed: August 2021**

# Health and Wellbeing Policy

## 1. Introduction

St. Mary's Academy Trust recognises the statutory responsibilities related to employment. Day to day management of staff is delegated to the Headteacher in our schools. Throughout this document, reference is made to the responsibilities held by the Headteacher for operational purposes. However, ultimate responsibility rests with the Chief Executive. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Stress Policy.

St. Mary's Academy Trust is committed to promoting a positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and will aim to provide suitable support for all members of staff. Acting 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 pupil progress.

All staff are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times. St. Mary's Academy Trust takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer and a number of policies and procedures relate to this duty.

These include:

- Managing Attendance Policy;
- Health and Safety Policies;
- Grievance Procedure;
- Whistleblowing Procedure;
- Dignity at Work;
- Special Leave Policy.

All policies are accessible on St. Mary's Academy Trust intranet.

## 2. Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to all employees of St. Mary's Academy Trust schools.

## 3. Absence

St. Mary's Academy Trust analyses the causes of absence in order to formulate strategies that address non-attendance. The main causes of sickness absence can be viewed in four main areas:

**Causes of Absence:**

<p><b>Health and Lifestyle Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genuine illness</li> <li>• Smoking</li> <li>• Lack of exercise</li> <li>• Body weight</li> </ul>	<p><b>Workplace Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working patterns</li> <li>• Excessive hours</li> <li>• Safe place of work</li> <li>• Relationships at work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attitudinal and Stress Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job satisfaction</li> <li>• Intention to leave</li> <li>• Organisational commitment</li> <li>• Stress</li> </ul>	<p><b>Domestic and Relationship Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divorce or separation</li> <li>• Health of a loved one</li> <li>• Financial worries</li> <li>• Bereavement</li> </ul>

The following methods have been identified as appropriate measures of employee performance and wellbeing for the purposes of managing health and wellbeing:

- Absences will be recorded and monitored for developing patterns;
- Exit questionnaires will be used and followed up with exit interviews where appropriate;
- The Occupational Health and Counselling service that St. Mary's Academy Trust use will be monitored without breaching confidentiality;
- HR will conduct an annual review, agreed jointly with the trade unions, of staff wellbeing indicators to identify trends.

**4. Causes of Stress**

The following table identifies the main causes of stress and provides a brief overview of what can be done to manage these risks:

<b>Cause of stress</b>	<b>What can be done</b>
<p><b>Demands.</b> Employees often become overloaded if they cannot cope with the amount or type of work they are asked to do.</p>	<p>The job design discussed with the manager should be considered to identify ways to manage the overload. Consideration should also be given where appropriate to alternative work patterns and environment.</p>
<p><b>Control.</b> Employees can feel dissatisfied and perform poorly if they have no say over how and when they do their work.</p>	<p>Consideration should be given to how employees are involved in decision making and their contribution as individuals and as part of teams.</p>

<p><b>Support.</b> Employees can feel lonely and stressed if they feel they are unable to speak to their line managers or if they feel they lack adequate support, constructive feedback and advice.</p>	<p>Employees should be given the opportunity to speak about the issues causing them stress with their line manager understandingly and should remain informed of any developments or alterations.</p>
<p><b>Relationships.</b> Employees can face problems related to bullying, harassment or discipline due to poor working relationships or lack of recognition or reward.</p>	<p>The policies and procedures related to handling grievances, absence, misconduct and bullying and harassment will be reviewed on a regular basis.</p>
<p><b>Role.</b> Employees can feel apprehensive if there is uncertainty regarding their role or where there is a lack of clearness in terms of what is expected of them.</p>	<p>Particular consideration should be paid to induction of new staff and the formation of important and well-structured reporting lines. Performance management meetings will be held for all staff in accordance with our policies.</p>
<p><b>Change.</b> Change in curriculum demands, technology and organisational structure can lead to self-doubt and uncertainty.</p>	<p>Where changes are expected every effort must be made to communicate and discuss with all those affected to resolve any issues together.</p>

## 5. Aims of the Health and Wellbeing Policy

This policy aims to:

- Provide a working environment whereby employees feel their wellbeing is supported, allowing them to carry-out their duties effectively.
- Provide advice and information about minimising risks to health.
- Outline specific responsibilities.
- Educate employees about the causes, effects and management of stress.
- Provide relevant support to staff, in particular ensuring management are proactive and respond in a timely manner to concerns raised by staff and unions.
- Develop an open culture in which mental, physical and emotional wellbeing are taken seriously and in which employees are supported enabling them to seek any support or help if required.
- Identify the hazards that could lead to poor employee health and wellbeing and reduce these where possible.

## 6. Legislation

Pieces of legislation that are considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing include:

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

## 7. Responsibilities

### **HR will:**

- Provide the necessary professional advice, support and training to all St. Mary's Academy Trust employees as and when required.
- Monitor the application of the policy within the schools of St. Mary's Academy Trust with relevant stakeholders.
- Make appropriate referrals to the counsellor in accordance with the Managing Attendance Policy.
- Promote awareness amongst employees of the importance of a work-life balance and the opportunities to achieve this with St. Mary's Academy Trust.
- 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.
- Collate management information which will enable the Trust to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee wellbeing, such as:
  - Produce sickness absence data
  - Monitor staff turnover, exit interviews
  - Monitor of self-referrals to the counsellor service
  - Monitor of grievance and harassment cases

### **Headteachers will:**

- Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that recognises and deals with the issue of mental and physical health problems, which include: consideration of organisation of work; health risk assessment where appropriate; early recognition for staff with mental and physical health problems (which may require training); and interventions that include return-to-work plans and longer-term reasonable adjustments.
- Actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental and physical health problems by creating an environment where employees feel comfortable asking for help.
- Carry out stress risk assessments when it is identified an employee is suffering from stress or where there is a perceived risk of stress and ensure that any reasonable measures identified are implemented.
- Ensure employees are consulted at all times over all aspects of their employment that may cause stress or impact on their health and wellbeing when changes affecting them are planned.
- Recognise that employees 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 or personal circumstances. E.g. pregnancy, menopause, those with caring responsibilities.
- Treat all discussions with employees around personal stress as confidential unless it is necessary to involve others to deal with the issue and the employee gives a written agreement for disclosure.

- Attend regular health and safety training in the workplace.
- Ensure that staff are provided with appropriate developmental opportunities.
- Communicate work-life balance practices to all employees and manage pressures which may affect employees and anticipate likely problems, acting to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.
- Demonstrate a commitment to employees by encouraging a good work-life balance.
- Familiarise themselves with the Dignity at Work Policy concerning bullying and harassment and ensure employees are aware this is not tolerated in the workplace.
- Recognise the value of good management practice systems in place to effectively manage employees and encourage a partnership approach with employees, workplace unions and health and safety.
- Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.
- Promote a healthy work environment and practices that ensures that employees are able to develop a healthy mind.
- Act early and provide consistent support.
- Ensure employee roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

**Employees will:**

- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves and others whilst in the workplace.
- Be proactive in identifying occasions when they may be suffering from health and wellbeing problems, either work-related, or due to external factors, and alert their management when appropriate.
- Where employees feel unable to discuss their issues with their managers, they are encouraged to discuss it with the CEO, HR, or their Trade Union representative. (St. Mary's Academy Trust recognises that, as with Dignity and Respect at work, where the manager may be seen as a cause of stress, in part or in full, concerns over stress can be immediately taken to the CEO).
- Take advantage of opportunities for training when recommended.
- Familiarise themselves with the Dignity at Work Policy.

**Trade Unions will:**

- Work with St. Mary's Academy Trust schools to raise awareness and promote the importance of health and wellbeing in the workplace.
- Where aware of concerns, identify these to HR and work with the school to in resolving the issues.
- Share the development of the policy via appropriate joint consultation, negotiation and agreement.

## **8. Stress Risk Assessment**

The Trust is obliged to assess the nature and scale of risk to the health of its staff in order to implement appropriate preventative and protective steps.

The policy recognises that employees' tolerance threshold differs and that non-work factors may play a part in determining an individual employee's response.

Where possible, it is of great importance that employees share with the Trust any relevant information which might impact upon their ability to cope with reasonable pressures at work, to include issues such as Disability etc.

Details of the factors likely to lead to work-related stress and methods of assessment and guidance on the completion of a risk assessment is available from Human Resources.

Strategies for stress prevention can include the following:

- Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures.
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that the 'right' person is recruited for the job.
- Training and development procedures to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the duties required of them.
- Promotion and reward procedures.
- Managing performance procedures.
- Absence management and return to work procedures to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.
- Suitable adaptations for disability.
- Dignity at Work Policy.
- Procedures for communicating with employees on the work of the school and issues affecting their work.
- Flexible working arrangements, and contact days with staff on maternity leave.
- An annual wellbeing survey of staff.

## **9. Communication of the Well-being policy**

Communication methods include:

- The Health and Wellbeing policy will be accessible on the St. Mary's Academy Trust intranet site.
- The Health and Wellbeing policy will be issued to all staff via SMAT Communications.
- The Health and Wellbeing policy will be included as an agenda item by Headteachers in staff briefings.

## **10. Support Mechanisms**

### **A. Counselling**

Counselling offers an employee an opportunity to work with an experienced and impartial mental health professional to clarify and understand their difficulties to find more helpful ways of coping and dealing with them.

Up to 8 counselling sessions will be made available to employees who are suffering from issues impacting upon their work performance and that are exceeding their ability to cope. All referrals are made through Human Resources.

### **B. Teacher Support Network**

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/>

### **C. Flu Vaccination**

The flu bug can cause a spectrum of mild severe illness, even among people who were previously fit and well. By having the flu vaccination, employees protect themselves against the flu, while setting an example to colleagues, as well as showing their commitment and promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace. All employees will be reimbursed up to £10 per year towards the flu vaccination where they are not eligible for a free vaccination via the NHS.

### **D. SMAT Social Events**

These are arranged and communicated via SMAT Communications and include a wide variety of events e.g. night at the dog racing, German markets, board games nights, bowling and much more. Aiming to include a wide range of staff at some point with the variety of events arranged.

### **E. Enhanced Special Leave Policy**

Following the TUPE transfer of employees SMAT offer more a generous Special Leave policy than BMBC.

### **F. Mindfulness and Wellbeing Sessions**

St. Mary's Academy Trust offers an excellent range of mindfulness and wellbeing sessions to promote health and wellbeing through exercise and team activities. A range of lunchtime and after-work mindfulness and wellbeing sessions are offered on an ad hoc basis for employees of St. Mary's Academy Trust.

### **G. Butlin's Privilege Holiday Club**

In partnership with Butlin's, through their Privilege Holiday Club, staff can receive an extra £20 off online deals as well as an extra 5% discount on group bookings of 20 or more. Staff must book directly with Butlin's. Terms and Conditions apply.



## **11. Monitoring and Reviewing the Well-being policy**

The Health and Wellbeing policy will be reviewed every two years by HR in conjunction with Trade Unions.

This review will involve an examination of the management data referred to in section 7.1 which will be collated by Human Resources, together with feedback from the Staff Survey and the findings of risk assessments.

A report will be made to the HR Committee, which will approve any revisions or amendments to the policy.

## **12. Data Impact Assessment**

At all stages of this procedure data obtained will be used only for the purpose for which it is intended and will be stored securely with restricted access to those involved in the process. Following the process data will be stored on the electronic personal file for the duration of the employees' employment with the Trust and for 6 years thereafter. The data will be destroyed at this time using a confidential shredding service.

## **13. Equality Impact Assessment**

This policy has been impact assessed by the HR Committee, if on reading this policy you feel there are any equality and diversity issues, please contact HR who will if necessary ensure the policy is reviewed.