



WOODTHORPE INFANT SCHOOL
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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Statement of intent

Woodthorpe Infant School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our pupils and employees. Preventing stress is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of the school's staff, which remains a key priority. In light of this, the school understands the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause our employees to become stressed.

Additionally, this policy outlines the framework for Woodthorpe Infant School to meet its duty in providing and ensuring a quality of education to all of its pupils, including pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the school and staff members in supporting wellbeing and promoting mental health, and to advise employees on how to deal with mental health issues and prevent stress.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- DfE (2019) 'Workload reduction toolkit'
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Education Act 2002
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Children Act 1989

This policy has been created with regard to the following DfE guidance:

- DfE (2025) Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- DfE (2018) Mental health and behaviour in schools
- DfE (2016) Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future
- DfE (2015) Special educational needs and disabilities code of practice: 0 to 25

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Equality Policy
- Medicine Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Attendance Management Policy
- Induction of New Staff Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Grievance Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The school's leadership as a whole is responsible for:

- Using a preventative approach to create a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely to occur, in order to improve the mental

health and wellbeing of the school community and instil resilience in pupils. A preventative approach includes teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum, particularly our Respect curriculum and reinforcing these messages in our activities and ethos.

- Using the Respect curriculum, an integral part of the school's approach to wellbeing which includes all statutory and school-specific content from the Relationships and Health Education curriculum and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education curriculum. Additionally, it teaches children to identify and discuss different emotions and feelings, as well as strategies to maintain emotional regulation.
- Ensuring that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.
- Equipping staff with the knowledge required to identify pupils whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- Raising awareness and employing efficient referral processes to help pupils access evidence-based early support and interventions.
- Working effectively with external agencies to ensure the school can provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.
- Identifying and supporting pupils with SEND and considering how to use some of the SEND resources to provide support for pupils with mental health difficulties that amount to SEND.
- Identifying where wellbeing concerns represent safeguarding concerns and ensuring that appropriate safeguarding referrals are made in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the school's ethos reflects its commitment to reducing workload and creating a working environment that is focussed, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing.
- Ensuring staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and monitored.
- Ensuring that all school policies are assessed for workload impact.
- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the school – promoting stress as a serious issue rather than a weakness.
- Consulting the headteacher on managing staff stress and promoting wellbeing, including them in any decisions that need to be made.
- Ensuring the headteacher puts measures in place to support staff wellbeing.
- Actively trying to eliminate stressors in the school, e.g. by considering the format and quantity of information it requests from the senior leadership team (SLT).

- Ensuring monitoring visits are strategic, focused and reflective of the monitoring plan, and being clear with staff ahead of the visit about what the focus will be and the information that will be required from them.
- Recognising mental health issues and appointing a mental health and wellbeing governor who will oversee managing and supporting staff mental health.
- Ensuring all committee meetings are purposeful, focussed, structured and relevant to the school development priorities.
- Ensuring provision is in place for all pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Taking all necessary steps to ensure that pupils with SEMH difficulties are not discriminated against, harassed or victimised.
- Ensuring there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible SEMH problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.
- Ensuring arrangements are in place to support pupils with SEMH difficulties.

The mental health and wellbeing governor is responsible for:

- Influencing the setting of a school vision which creates a positive wellbeing culture and is underpinned by equality values, a system of accountability, and robust policies and procedures.
- Ensuring the school's development plan includes objectives linked to improving, supporting and responding to the mental health of staff.
- Ensuring the school has appropriate policies in place that include objectives focused on meeting staff needs.
- Ensuring there is a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing embedded within leadership practice, the curriculum, the school's values and ethos and the social and physical environment.
- Ensuring a member of the SLT is a trained senior mental health and wellbeing lead to oversee the provision and support of mental health and wellbeing in school, and to ensure effective links exist with local mental health support.
- Working with the headteacher to ensure that appropriate training is put in place to support staff.
- Reporting to the governing body on the successes and areas of improvement in planned interventions and the resources that are in place.

The headteacher (mental health lead) is responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Implementing CPD which equips staff with the tools needed to effectively manage stress.

- Developing a sensitive performance management process that is linked to clear job specifications.
- Including all staff in the school's decision-making processes, where possible.
- Organising extra support for staff at times of increased stress, e.g. during Ofsted inspections.
- Encouraging staff to take advantage of any initiatives introduced to promote wellbeing and effective working, e.g. an employee assistance programme.
- Ensuring that all policies that affect staff wellbeing are properly adhered to and reviewed.
- Liaising with the governing body when considering authorising staff absences related to stress and/or mental health issues, as well as granting extended leave.
- Monitoring employees' workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring they are not overworked, and providing regular updates regarding absence to the governing body whilst maintaining staff confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Policy.
- Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example for staff.
- Regularly communicating with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress, workload or other areas that may impact on their wellbeing.
- Conducting and implementing the recommendations of risk assessments, considering the causes of stress.
- Ensuring all staff have read and understood this policy.
- Organising thorough inductions for new employees, explaining the school's policies and code of conduct.
- Ensuring that those teaching or working with pupils with SEMH difficulties are aware of their needs and have arrangements in place to meet them.
- Ensuring that teachers monitor and review pupils' academic and emotional progress during the course of the academic year.
- Ensuring that the SENDCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions, in a similar way to other important strategic roles within the school.
- Ensuring that staff members understand the strategies used to identify and support pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Ensuring that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of the school do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any member of staff or pupil.
- Making reasonable adjustments for members of staff who are struggling with long-term mental health issues.
- Ensuring that regular contact is maintained with members of staff who are absent for long periods of time.
- Overseeing the whole-school approach to mental health, including how this is reflected in policies, the curriculum and pastoral support, how staff are

supported with their own mental health, and how the school engages pupils and parents with regards to pupils' mental health and awareness.

- Collaborating with the SENDCO, SLT and governing body to outline and strategically develop SEMH policies and provisions for the school.
- Coordinating with the SENDCO and mental health support teams to provide a high standard of care to pupils who have SEMH difficulties.
- Advising on the deployment of the school's budget and other resources in order to effectively meet the needs of pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the mental health support services, the local authority (LA), LA support services and mental health support teams.
- Providing professional guidance to colleagues about mental health and working closely with staff members, parents and other agencies, including SEMH charities.
- Referring pupils with SEMH difficulties to external services, e.g. specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), to receive additional support where required.
- Overseeing the outcomes of interventions on pupils' education and wellbeing.
- Liaising with parents of pupils with SEMH difficulties, where appropriate.
- Liaising with other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals and independent or voluntary bodies.
- Liaising with the potential future providers of education, such as junior school staff, to ensure that pupils and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned.
- Leading mental health CPD.

The SENDCO is responsible for:

- Collaborating with the governing body and the mental health lead to determine the strategic development of SEMH policies and provisions in the school.
- Undertaking day-to-day responsibilities for the successful operation of the SEMH Policy.
- Supporting staff in the further assessment of a pupil's particular strengths and areas for improvement and advising on the effective implementation of support.

All staff members are responsible for:

- Being able to recognise the early signs of stress or mental health issues in themselves and their colleagues. These may be referred to as being 'full' on a day-to-day basis.
- Being aware of the signs of SEMH difficulties in children.

- Being aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Keeping the relevant figures of authority up to date with any changes in behaviour, academic developments and causes of concern.
- Supporting co-workers if they become stressed, which may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
- Maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
- Promoting a positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Being open to discussing stress, workload or other areas that may impact on their wellbeing.
- Reporting honestly about their wellbeing and any incidents of stress, e.g. being overworked.
- Where possible, asking for help when they feel under pressure or stressed.
- Attending events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health.
- Not acting in a manner which endangers themselves or others.
- Undertaking additional training and personal development opportunities.
- Reporting any concerns they have about their co-workers' stress and/or mental health to the headteacher.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Planning and reviewing support for their pupils with SEMH difficulties in collaboration with parents, the SENDCO and, where appropriate, the pupils themselves.
- Setting high expectations for every pupil and aiming to teach them the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving their full potential, and that every pupil with SEMH difficulties will be able to study the full national curriculum.
- Being responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.
- Liaising with staff on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare.
- Liaising with the mental health lead and where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.

3. Creating a supportive whole-school culture

Senior leaders will clearly communicate their vision for good mental health and wellbeing with the whole school community.

The school utilises various strategies to support pupils and staff who are experiencing high levels of psychological stress, or who are at risk of developing mental health problems, including:

- Teaching about mental health and wellbeing through our Respect curriculum.
- Counselling
- Positive classroom management
- Developing pupils' social skills
- Working with parents
- Peer support
- SLT open door policy
- Additional non-contact time for teachers
- Proactive approach to reducing unnecessary workloads
- Restorative justice approach to behaviour management

The Respect curriculum has been designed to teach about mental health to help normalise it, make pupils feel comfortable enough to discuss mental health concerns and to reduce the stigma associated with it.

Pupils know where to go for further information and staff play a proactive role in building good relationships with every child in the school. Daily circle times provide an opportunity for staff to 'check in' with pupils and for pupils to share questions, comments or concerns.

The school recognises that short-term stress and worry is a normal part of life and that most pupils will face mild or transitory changes that induce short-term mental health effects. Staff are taught to differentiate between 'normal' stress and more persistent mental health problems.

4. Staff training

The SLT will ensure that all teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with SEMH needs.

The SLT will promote CPD to ensure that staff can recognise common symptoms of mental health problems, understand what represents a concern, and know what to do if they believe they have spotted a developing problem. All staff are aware of the NottAlone website (www.nottalone.org.uk) as a collection of advice and resources.

Clear processes are in place to help staff who identify SEMH problems in pupils escalate issues through clear referral and accountability systems.

5. Identifying signs of SEMH difficulties

The school is committed to identifying pupil with SEMH difficulties at the earliest stage possible.

Staff are trained to know how to identify possible SEMH problems and understand what to do if they spot signs of emerging difficulties.

Staff members are aware of the signs that may indicate if a pupil is struggling with their SEMH. The signs of SEMH difficulties may include, but are not limited to, the following list:

- Anxiety
- Low mood
- Being withdrawn
- Avoiding risks
- Unable to make choices
- Low self-worth
- Isolating themselves
- Refusing to accept praise
- Failure to engage
- Poor personal presentation
- Lethargy/apathy
- Daydreaming
- Unable to make and maintain friendships
- Speech anxiety/reluctance to speak
- Task avoidance
- Challenging behaviour
- Restlessness/over-activity
- Non-compliance
- Mood swings
- Impulsivity
- Physical aggression
- Verbal aggression
- Perceived injustices
- Disproportionate reactions to situations
- Difficulties with change/transitions
- Eating issues
- Lack of empathy
- Lack of personal boundaries

- Poor awareness of personal space

When the school suspects that a pupil is experiencing mental health difficulties, the following graduated response is employed:

- The SENDCO is informed, and they carry out an initial observation of the child
- Following the observation, a discussion takes place between the SENDCO and class teacher
- A plan is set out to determine how the pupil will be supported
- Action is taken to provide that support
- Regular reviews are undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the provision, and changes are made as necessary

Where possible, the school is aware of any support programmes outside agencies are offering to pupils who are identified with SEMH difficulties, especially when these may impact the pupil's behaviour and attainment at school.

Staff members discuss concerns regarding SEMH difficulties with the parents of pupils who have SEMH difficulties, and take any concerns expressed by parents, other pupils, colleagues and the pupil in question seriously.

The assessment, intervention and support processes available from the LA are in line with the local offer. All assessments are in line with the provisions outlined in the school's SEND Policy.

Staff members are aware of the following:

- Factors that put pupils at risk of SEMH difficulties, such as low self-esteem, physical illnesses, academic difficulties and family problems
- The fact that risks are cumulative and that exposure to multiple risk factors can increase the risk of SEMH difficulties

Staff members understand the following:

- Familial loss or separation, significant changes in a pupil's life or traumatic events are likely to cause SEMH difficulties
- What indicators they should be aware of that may point to SEMH difficulties, such as behavioural problems, pupils distancing themselves from other pupils or changes in attitude
- Persistent mental health difficulties can lead to a pupil developing SEND. If this occurs, the headteacher ensures that correct provisions are implemented to provide the best learning conditions for the pupil. The pupil and their parents are involved in any decision-making concerning what support the pupil needs.

The school will promote resilience to help encourage positive SEMH.

Poor behaviour is managed in line with the school's Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy.

Pupils displaying signs of SEMH difficulties will be monitored and records of observations will be logged weekly on CPOMS. Although staff will be able to identify potential signs of SEMH difficulties, **only medical professionals** will make a diagnosis of a mental health condition.

Pupils' data is reviewed on a termly basis by the SLT so that patterns of attainment, attendance or behaviour are noticed and can be acted upon if necessary.

Staff members are mindful that some groups of pupils are more vulnerable to mental health difficulties than others; these include LAC, pupils with SEND and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

6. Vulnerable groups

Some pupils are particularly vulnerable to SEMH difficulties. These 'vulnerable groups' are more likely to experience a range of adverse circumstances that increase the risk of mental health problems.

Staff are aware of the increased likelihood of SEMH difficulties in pupils in vulnerable groups and remain vigilant to early signs of difficulties.

Vulnerable groups include the following:

- Pupils who have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation or other adverse contextual circumstances
- Children in need
- LAC
- PLAC
- Socio-economically disadvantaged pupils, including those in receipt of, or previously in receipt of, free school meals and the pupil premium

These circumstances can have a far-reaching impact on behaviour and emotional states. These factors will be considered when discussing the possible exclusion of vulnerable pupils.

7. Children in need, LAC and PLAC

Children in need, LAC and PLAC are more likely to have SEND and experience mental health difficulties than their peers.

Children in need, LAC and PLAC are more likely to struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings, sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with change.

Children in need may also be living in chaotic circumstances and be suffering, or at risk of, abuse, neglect and exploitation. They are also likely to have less support available outside of school than most pupils.

School staff are aware of how these pupils' experiences and how they can impact their behaviour and education.

The impact of these pupils' experiences is reflected in the design and application of the school's Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy, including through individualised graduated responses.

The school uses multi-agency working as an effective way to inform assessment procedures.

Where a pupil is being supported by children's social care services (CSCS), the school works with their allocated social worker to better understand the pupil's wider needs and contextual circumstances. This collaborative working informs assessment of needs and enables prompt responses to safeguarding concerns.

When the school has concerns about a looked-after child's behaviour, the designated teacher and virtual school head (VSH) are informed at the earliest opportunity so they can help to determine the best way to support the pupil.

When the school has concerns about a previously looked-after child's behaviour, the pupil's parents/carers or the designated teacher seeks advice from the VSH to determine the best way to support the pupil.

8. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and other events that impact pupils' SEMH

The balance between risk and protective factors is disrupted when traumatic events happen in pupils' lives, such as the following:

- **Loss or separation:** This may include a death in the family, parental separation, divorce, hospitalisation, loss of friendships, family conflict, a family breakdown that displaces the pupil, being taken into care or adopted or parents being deployed in the armed forces.
- **Life changes:** This may include the birth of a sibling, moving house, changing schools or transitioning between schools.
- **Traumatic experiences:** This may include abuse, neglect, domestic violence, bullying, violence, accidents or injuries.
- **Other traumatic incidents:** This may include natural disasters or terrorist attacks.

Some pupils may be susceptible to such incidents, even if they are not directly affected. For example, pupils with parents in the armed forces may find global disasters or terrorist incidents particularly traumatic.

The school supports pupils when they have been through ACEs, even if they are not presenting any obvious signs of distress – early help is likely to prevent further problems.

Support may come from the school's existing support systems or via specialist staff and support services.

9. SEND and SEMH

The school recognises it is well-placed to identify SEND at an early stage and works with partner agencies to address these needs. The school's full SEND identification and support procedures are available in the SEND Policy.

Where pupils have certain types of SEND, there is an increased likelihood of mental health problems. For example, children with autism or learning difficulties are significantly more likely to experience anxiety.

The school recognises that not all pupils with mental health difficulties have SEND.

The graduated response is used to determine the correct level of support to offer (this is used as good practice throughout the school, regardless of whether or not a pupil has SEND).

All staff understand their responsibilities to pupils with SEND, including pupils with persistent mental health difficulties.

The SENDCO ensures that staff understand how the school identifies and meets pupils' needs, provides advice and support as needed, and liaises with external SEND professionals as necessary.

10. Risk factors and protective factors

There are a number of risk factors beyond being part of a vulnerable group that are associated with an increased likelihood of SEMH difficulties, these are known as risk factors. There are also factors associated with a decreased likelihood of SEMH difficulties, these are known as protective factors.

The following table displays common risk factors for SEMH difficulties (as outlined by the DfE) that staff remain vigilant of, and the protective factors that staff look for and notice when missing from a pupil.

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic influences • Low IQ and learning disabilities • Specific development delay or neuro-diversity • Communication difficulties • Difficult temperament • Physical illness • Academic failure • Low self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure attachment experience • Outgoing temperament as an infant • Good communication skills and sociability • Being a planner and having a belief in control • Humour • A positive attitude • Experiences of success and achievement • Faith or spirituality • Capacity to reflect
In the pupil's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt parental conflict including domestic violence • Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) • Inconsistent or unclear discipline • Hostile and rejecting relationships • Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs • Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect • Parental psychiatric illness • Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder • Death and loss – including loss of friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) • Affection • Clear, consistent discipline • Support for education • Supportive long-term relationships or the absence of severe discord
In the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying, including online • Discrimination • Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships • Deviant peer influences • Peer pressure • Peer-on-peer abuse • Poor pupil-to-teacher/school staff relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies on behaviour and bullying • Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct) • 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems • A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health • Good pupil-to-teacher/school staff relationships • Positive classroom management

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of belonging • Positive peer influences • Positive friendships • Effective safeguarding and child protection policies. • An effective early help process • Understand their role in, and are part of, effective multi-agency working • Appropriate procedures in place to ensure staff are confident enough to raise concerns about policies and processes and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively
In the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic disadvantage • Homelessness • Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events • Discrimination • Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation • Other significant life events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider supportive network • Good housing • High standard of living • High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying • Opportunities for valued social roles • Range of sport/leisure activities

11. SEMH intervention and support

The Respect curriculum focuses on promoting pupils' resilience, confidence and ability to learn.

Positive classroom management, a restorative justice approach to repairing relationships and an 'upstander ethos' is utilised to promote positive behaviour, social development and high self-esteem.

Support through Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) is offered to pupils who require it, and the relevant external services are utilised where appropriate. A referral to a child psychologist is made where a pupil requires such services.

Where appropriate, parents have a direct involvement in any intervention regarding their child. The school supports parents in the management and development of their child.

When in-school intervention is not appropriate, referrals and commissioning support will take the place of in-school interventions. The school will continue to support the pupil as much as possible throughout the process.

Serious cases of SEMH difficulties are referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

The school implements the following approach to interventions:

- Emotional Literacy Supportive Assistant sessions including termly in-school ELSA meetings between all ELSAs, SENDCO and the headteacher.
- Theraplay
- Use of specialist sensory equipment
- Communication and social interventions
- Attachment time
- Individualised timetables
- Individualised calming activities (stay at green) e.g. bubble box
- Playtime support

12. Identifying early warning signs in staff

The school recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and become stressed by different situations and stimuli throughout their working lives. Because of this, it is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues' stress.

The following sources of stress can often be attributed to work:

- Overworking or undertaking work that does not match the employee's skills and abilities
- Fear of change and trying to cope with change, e.g. advancements in technology or changes in processes
- Insufficient workload or not being able to use skills
- Lack of job security
- Poor relationships with colleagues and a lack of involvement
- Harassment or bullying
- Crisis management
- Not having a long-term plan in place

The school recognises that home and personal lives can also prove stressful for staff; bereavement, separation, financial and family problems make people more vulnerable to stress at work. It is common that a combination of stress at home and work can make people particularly stressed.

The school will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy workplace.

The school has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress.

All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that can indicate that a person may be having trouble managing stress, and look out for the following indicators when identifying stress in themselves or others:

Behavioural indicators

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in eating habits
- Increased smoking or drinking
- Isolation from friends and family

Physical indicators

- Tiredness
- Indigestion and nausea
- Headaches
- Aching muscles
- Heart palpitations

Mental indicators

- Indecisiveness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory loss
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Low self-esteem

Emotional indicators

- Anger or irritability
- Anxiety
- Hypersensitivity
- Feeling drained and lethargic

13. Actions to support staff

To positively impact wellbeing in the school, the headteacher and governing body will ensure that a whole-school approach is taken.

To help manage wellbeing, the headteacher will do the following:

- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel 'full', to take breaks and to have a full life outside of work.
- Termly 1:1 non-contact meeting with staff.
- Make the most of team bonding; using INSET days and social events to build positive relationships, as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing wellbeing easier.
- Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads.
- Reach out to staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. bereavement, allowing sufficient time off and supporting them when they return to work.
- Be flexible to changing workloads and provide additional non-contact time, when necessary, in response to this.

To effectively address workload issues and support staff wellbeing, the headteacher, working with the SLT, will take the following actions:

- Measure staff wellbeing and identify workload issues by:
 - Commissioning staff workload and wellbeing surveys on a termly basis and organising structured conversations about workload with staff.
 - Arranging workshops and drawing together a summary of outcomes from staff surveys and questionnaires.
 - Analysing staff diaries with them and identifying priorities and where work/time can be freed up.
- Review the high areas of workload that have been identified through the wellbeing surveys and identify actions to take to support with this.
- Implement a [Staff Workload Charter](#) to outline the commitment and expectations between the governing body, SLT and school staff regarding the wellbeing and mental health of school staff.
- Evaluate the impact of the actions taken on a termly basis, measuring staff wellbeing and identifying new workload issues to address during the next term.

The headteacher will ensure that all changes proposed as a result of the actions outlined above are communicated to all members of staff.

A mental health and wellbeing governor will be appointed by the governing body who will be responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of staff.

All new members of staff will be provided with a comprehensive induction and their duties regarding their own and their colleagues' wellbeing will be made clear.

The school will ensure wellbeing is promoted and stress is prevented through good management practices, including the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures

- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure the right candidates are recruited
- CPD procedures to ensure all members of staff have the necessary skills and abilities to undertake the duties required
- Performance management procedures
- Capability and absence management – return to work procedures will ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness
- Suitable adaptations for disability
- Harassment and anti-bullying resources
- Flexible working arrangements
- Annual surveys to better understand the areas of work that have a negative effect on staff wellbeing

14. Self-management

Staff can make changes to avoid and prevent stress and/or poor mental wellbeing, as it is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored.

Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they are struggling with their mental wellbeing or feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.

Staff are encouraged to take action to manage their own mental wellbeing. These actions will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity and any negative feelings; exercise will also help to clear thoughts and deal with problems more calmly
- Managing their workload, and establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life
- Prioritising their workload throughout the workday, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day, and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference
- Avoiding unhealthy habits, such as drinking and smoking
- Taking advantage of the wellbeing initiatives, training and support offered by the school
- Speaking to the headteacher about any concerns they may have regarding their workload, stress or mental wellbeing

15. Reporting procedures

The wellbeing officers for our school are the headteacher and mental health and wellbeing governor. If any member of staff wishes to raise a concern about wellbeing, the headteacher should be notified in the first instance. If the concern is about the

headteacher, this should be made to the wellbeing governor. The wellbeing officer will provide the member of staff with information about the support that is available to them; this includes both within the school and outside sources. These resources include the following:

- Access to counselling through Care First
- Referral to occupational health
- Compassionate leave
- Information and resources at www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk

The wellbeing officer will treat all cases confidentially. Real names of staff will not be used when wellbeing officers are reporting to governors.

In some cases, such as those that directly impact day-to-day activities, confidentiality will not be guaranteed. If this is the case, staff will be made aware of the situation.

The wellbeing officer in receipt of the complaint will investigate and decide whether any further action will be taken.

16. Response actions

Where problems with wellbeing arise, the necessary support and appropriate actions will be considered. This may include support from HR advisers and/or external services, e.g. occupational health.

The school will continue to support staff when external services are involved.

Support will be provided to staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances outside of the workplace. The school will direct staff to support, both internal and external, and consider a plan of work and duties that can be managed differently during challenging periods.

17. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body and the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.

Appendix 1 – Staff workload charter

Our aims

Woodthorpe Infant School is committed to considering and supporting the wellbeing of all our staff. As part of this commitment, and through a coordinated effort with school staff and leaders, we aim to ensure workload can be managed and reduced.

We recognise that staff workload can become overwhelming, which in turn affects staff wellbeing and prevents a healthy work-life balance. We believe that we have a collective responsibility to ensure working at the school remains manageable, a positive experience, and, above all, enjoyable.

By providing this support, we hope that we can retain and recruit more staff and meet our core values and ethos for helping and caring for one another.

To protect staff wellbeing, we will:

- Ensure staff have a fair and reasonable workload, including policies on marking, planning and data management.
- Provide high-quality training and CPD opportunities that meet the needs of individual staff members.
- Continue to review staff workload and ensure it always remains manageable.

Our commitments

We have agreed the following commitments and expectations between the governing body, SLT and school staff, to demonstrate our support in helping to manage staff workload.

All staff working at the school can expect:

- To work within a clear code of conduct.
- To receive a robust and high-quality induction.
- To be provided with training opportunities relevant to their role and responsibilities.
- To be allocated roles and responsibilities that are linked to their skill set and area of expertise or be provided with appropriate training to upskill and broaden areas of expertise.
- The fair and equal distribution of roles, responsibilities and tasks.
- If required, to collect data using streamlined processes that are beneficial to their work and receive robust training on using the school's data management systems.

- The support of the SLT to provide guidance and advice, and to simplify school processes where possible.
- A consistent and fair Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy which allows staff to work effectively and be provided with support from the SLT to manage behaviour effectively.
- A clear expectation that there is no requirement to have access to emails/school communication on your personal devices, and that there is no need to reply to messages outside of your usual working hours.
- To use Microsoft Teams as the primary means of communication.
- The use of technology to ensure effective and efficient communication, document and data management, and access to information.
- To be provided with access to external support, such as an occupational health or a confidential listening service, if needed.
- To work within an environment where their wellbeing is prioritised and valued.
- All changes to school processes to be communicated clearly and the SLT to provide support with implementation.

In addition to the above, teaching staff at the school can expect:

- A clear curriculum planning scheme that provides flexibility and is fully resourced with high-quality materials.
- An agreed policy that ensures all marking undertaken is purposeful and focuses on quality feedback and the impact on pupil outcomes.

The headteacher and the SLT commit to the following:

- Conducting regular activities, e.g. staff surveys, to identify the areas of work that lead to high levels of workload and implementing approaches to reduce this.
- Providing staff with termly opportunities to discuss areas they feel are creating high levels of workload and how these could be managed.
- Implementing practices that allow for meaningful and useful communications to reduce workload.
- Supporting ECTs and teachers in the early stages of their careers to adopt efficient work practices and keeping this support under regular review.
- Encouraging a workplace culture that promotes a healthy work-life balance.
- Making every effort to reduce the number of meetings, ensuring that those that take place are planned effectively and flexibly, and always have a key focus.
- Providing staff with relevant training or CPD opportunities in school, including on recognising the early signs of stress.
- Ensuring staff are clear about the purpose of marking and ensuring it is meaningful, and that they understand feedback can be given in many forms.

- Monitoring staff absence levels, patterns and reasons, and using return to work meetings consistently and effectively.
- Regularly monitoring the progress of work practices, including curriculum planning, communications, marking and feedback, and data collection, and adapting these where necessary.
- Considering the impact of any potential changes to the school's practices before they are implemented and creating a clear implementation plan before changes are agreed.
- Communicating changes to the school's practices to all staff and the whole school community, to ensure everyone understands the reasons behind the changes.

The governing body commits to the following:

- Ensuring the school's ethos reflects its commitments to reducing workload and creating a working environment that is focused, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing through the successful management of workload.
- Ensuring it receives regular updates regarding absence levels that are broken down into the cause of absence and role of staff.
- Making every effort to ensure committee meetings that school staff are expected to attend are purposeful, focused and structured, and relevant to the school development priorities.
- Considering the nature of information requests and being clear about the information needed from the SLT and school staff.
- Providing staff with advanced notice of all monitoring visits and informing them of what the focus will be and what information is required.
- Working within any policy agreements, including those relating to using technology to reduce workload.
- Establishing the role of the mental health and wellbeing governor to support the mental health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils.
- Regularly seeking views from staff on the impact of workload and working with the headteacher and SLT to improve any identified issues.

What this looks like at WIS

Area	Action	Who
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termly timetable that shows staff meetings, monitoring & assessments. 	HT
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use or rewards e.g. stickers Introduced Class Dojo points – 5x R's 	All staff
Diary dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School dates are sent out to staff for the year in September. Staff to put class/school dates on the school 365 calendar. 	HT All staff
Messaging/emails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Message/email between 7am and 6pm Monday to Friday. 	All staff
School Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHT/HT covering playground duty to release staff to set up their stalls. 	DHT/HT
CPOMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed settings so staff only receive incidents linked to children in their classes. 	
Watch children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only log on CPOMs if there is an incident. 	All staff
Reading policies & completing training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time given during staff meeting & INSET days. 	All staff
Weekly briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved from Monday to Tuesday. 	HT
Time for TAs to read planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use INSET days – to give time back e.g. report writing. 	TAs
Parents' Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separated the evenings to Monday and Wednesday 	HT
PPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPA time at home 	All staff
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key events are planned for in advance (no surprises) Good amount of leadership time 	All staff HT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good staff relationships • Planning is simplified (helps workload) • Instruction from the teacher to TA, when covering classes • Staffroom treats e.g. chocolate, sausage cobs • Reduced workload expectations at key times e.g. incl. ½ day INSET (post Ofsted) • Extra playground duties at key times • Teachers & TAs off timetable last 2 weeks in July 	<p>All staff SLT Teachers All staff HT & DHT HT & DHT HT</p>
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