

# Staff Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health Policy



**RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL**  
**INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE**

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## 1. RATIONALE

Riverside Bridge School has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff, as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place steps to manage those factors that could harm staff members' physical and mental well-being, which includes work related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work related and within the school's control.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional well-being 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 on performance, teaching and learning, morale and productivity, which may disrupt or compromise pupil progress.

Members of the teaching and non-teaching staff are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times and Riverside Bridge School takes its duty of care very seriously 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:

- Riverside Bridge School Workforce Privacy Notice;
- School Sickness Absence Policy;
- Return-to-Work Procedure;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Equality Opportunities Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Anti-Bullying Procedure;
- Harassment Procedure;
- Grievance Procedure;
- Whistleblowing Procedure.

Other policies contribute to staff well-being 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;
- Disciplinary Policy;
- Capabilities Procedure;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Data Breach Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Alcohol/Drug Abuse Policy.

All policies are published on the school staff shared area and paper copies are available on request. Riverside Bridge School also recognises the importance of workplace unions in promoting and maintaining a positive health and well-being environment. The school support this by ensuring there are union representatives and meetings as needed.

## 2. AIM OF THE POLICY

Riverside Bridge School acknowledges the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case, as well as a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote staff well-being as far as reasonably practicable.

We are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with fairness and dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

This policy aims to:

- provide a working environment which enables staff to work in an environment in which staff well-being is supported and which enables staff to carry out their duties effectively;
- recognise the key role of the Senior Leadership Team for their responsibilities by enabling access to guidance, training and support;
- encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional well-being;
- comply with all statutory requirements;
- develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture through regular communication and consultation with staff and their trade union representatives on health and safety matters;
- develop an open culture in which mental, physical and emotional well-being is taken seriously and in which staff are supported in order that they may seek any help and support they need;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the policy through regular promotion on staff notice boards and electronic systems;
- identify the hazards that could lead to poor staff health and well-being and reduce these where possible.

## 3. LEGISLATION

Pieces of legislation that will be considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional well-being, 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.

## 4. DEFINITION OF STAFF WELL-BEING

The term “well-being” can be used to describe people’s holistic health, including their physical, mental and emotional health. When one has good levels of well-being, they feel that life is in balance and that they can generally cope well. They feel motivated and engaged and are able to show resilience and “bounce back” from life’s challenges.

School staff often juggle multiple tasks and demands, so a focus on staff well-being has become increasingly important. Taking good care of staff both emotionally and practically helps them to perform to the best of their ability and ensures that they are better able to support pupils. Workloads, deadlines and challenging behaviours can all impact negatively on the well-being of school staff.

Poor mental well-being may impact on staff’s ability to manage during key moments of stress in the classroom or at school. Staff who have good mental well-being are more likely to have the necessary resources to be able to manage and plan during or after stressful episodes whether with a pupil, a class, a colleague, an inspector or a parent.

The ethos and environment of the school will have an impact on staff well-being, therefore it is important to build a culture of trust where school staff feel valued and know how to access support.

Good staff well-being can have a number of benefits for the school 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.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

### The Governing Body should:

- 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;
- actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental and physical health problems by creating an environment where staff feel comfortable in asking for help;
- act early and provide consistent support;
- enlist the support of the school’s HR function and Occupational Health, when appropriate, and ensure staff are able to access this support;
- ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined;
- ensure that all of school’s policies are assessed for workload impact;

- consider the equality implications of any policies introduced and monitor on a regular basis;
- 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.

#### The Headteacher should:

- 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 the school;
- foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner;
- support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect within the school;
- promote a healthy workplace and practices that ensure that members of staff are able to develop a healthy mind;
- champion good management behaviours proven to prevent and reduce staff stress and the establishment of a work ethos within the school. This should discourage assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables staff to maintain a reasonable “work life balance”;
- 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;
- 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;
- follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems;
- 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;
- carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible;
- ensure that all staff have access to regular training sessions on health and well-being in schools, including practical sessions to deal with mental, physical and emotional well-being issues, and that they are given the appropriate time and resources to undertake this;
- carefully plan and agree work-life balance solutions including flexible working practices where possible and appropriate;
- 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;
- conduct an annual survey of staff, including a section on health and well-being, and share and act upon results.

### Senior Leadership Team should:

- foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner;
- 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;
- follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work-related stress and other mental health problems;
- treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and will promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams they manage. They will quickly and effectively deal with unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention;
- ensure that there is good communication within their team and there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work, seeking advice from the school's Human Resources, Well-Being Lead or Health and Safety Lead at an early stage where concerns are raised;
- ensure that a return-to-work procedure is established in the workplace that is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work;
- carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible;
- ensure workload is distributed equitably and fairly among their team and that when work is delegated, team members have the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver it;
- regularly check in with team members, thank and encourage them and offer praise when it is due;
- take action in the interests of all team members, other colleagues and pupils to manage the underperformance of any individual staff member;
- attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress;
- 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;
- demonstrate commitment to staff by encouraging a good work/life balance;
- encourage their staff to participate in activities undertaken by the school to promote well-being and more effective working;
- promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting staff on any changes in the school, to management structures and working arrangements at both a school-wide and departmental and Team level.

### Human Resources should:

- provide advice to the Senior Management Team and staff members on best practice in relation to human resource management, developing policies and procedures as required;
- ensure that there are arrangements in place for communicating the content of the school's human resource management policies, procedures and toolkits to SMT and staff;

- develop arrangements to enable SMT and staff to achieve the necessary competencies needed in relation to managing work-related stress and improving well-being;
- ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, for example referring them to the School's Occupational Health Advisers where appropriate;
- ensure there are arrangements in place to support appraisal managers experiencing problems with employee performance, including managing capability;
- collate management information which will enable the school to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as sickness absence data, staff turnover and exit interviews, cover periods provided, number of self-referrals to the school's Reflective Supervision Counsellor, number of referrals to the Employee Assistance Programme, number of referrals to the Occupational Health Adviser, numbers of grievance and harassment cases.

#### The Well-Being Team should:

- monitor the implementation of the Staff Well-Being policy;
- ensure that the Staff Well-Being policy is kept under review and updated as appropriate;
- ensure that the good health and well-being of all staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school;
- co-ordinate and deliver appropriate training and briefings to increase awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress among managers and other staff;
- organise appropriate activities to promote health and well-being;
- consult with staff voice on the development and implementation of the Staff Well-being policy.
- act as the main focus group for consulting on the effectiveness of the Staff Well-Being policy and the measures taken to implement it, including organising staff questionnaires in relation to well-being and work-related stress;
- in consultation with the senior management team, to review the policy every two years following feedback from staff surveys, reviewing management information and the findings of stress risk assessments.

#### Staff should:

- treat colleagues and others they interact with during the course of their work with fairness, consideration and respect;
- co-operate with the school's efforts to implement the Staff WELL-BEING Policy, attending briefings and raising their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress and poor well-being;
- raise concerns with a member of the senior leadership team if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their WELL-BEING.
- be liable for their own health and WELL-BEING as far as is practically possible;



- take ownership of setting out their own development plan and discussing this as appropriate with their line manager, as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and reduce the risk of stress;
- take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, supporting others as appropriate and helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues;
- engage with school initiatives that aim to improve WELL-BEING while at work.

## 6. SUPPORT MECHANISMS

### Risk Assessments

A Risk Assessment is a specific legal requirement upon employers which is governed by the provisions of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The school must by law carry out risk assessments with regard to any work process which poses a potential risk to the health and safety of staff. Risk assessments are carried out by the Senior Leadership Team who have the appropriate experience, knowledge, support and training to do so.

Any Risk assessment will seek to identify the extent of any risks to health and safety and will also establish measures to remove or reduce those risks.

### The School Well-Being Team

The Well-Being Team led by the Well-Being Co-ordinator is made up of staff members from a variety of roles within the school and are elected every September by the school staff.

The Well-Being Team ensures that the policy and procedures are adhered to and that the good health and well-being of all staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school.

Staff can at any time arrange a meeting with one of the members from the Well-Being Team to discuss any well-being and/or stress-related concerns.

### Employee Assistance Programme

Riverside Bridge School has bought in an employee assistance programme, Health Assured, which has years of experience with health and well-being. They are trusted experts in reducing stress, combating absenteeism, encouraging good mental health and promoting positivity in the workplace. They can help employees remain healthy, happy and productive, reduce workplace stress, foster a positive atmosphere, and encourage better well-being.

### Occupational Health Advisers

Riverside Bridge School has access to an Occupational Health provider. This will enable an employee to discuss any concerns about their health and well-being 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.

### Education Support

The Education 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 08000562561, or for more information go to <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk>

## 7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STAFF WELL-BEING POLICY

Riverside Bridge School will promote the well-being of staff by:

- creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors are understood and mitigated as far as practically possible through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and staff development;
- increasing staff's awareness of the causes and effects of stress;
- developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health;
- engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships, both within teams and across the school;
- establishing working arrangements whereby staff feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance;
- encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and well-being through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives;
- encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

Arrangements for well-being and stress prevention through good management practices will include:

- having clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure staff members are clear on what is expected in their role and the right person is recruited where vacancies exist;
- ensuring training and development procedures are in place so individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks and duties required of them;
- ensuring managers are aware of those behaviours proven to prevent and reduce staff stress and providing opportunities for them to self-assess against them and undertake training where appropriate;
- having effective processes and procedures for:
  - promoting staff appropriately;

- reward and recognition;
- managing performance and capability;
- absence management and return to work to ensure that individuals are supported following illness;
- harassment and anti-bullying;
- communicating with staff on the work of the School and issues affecting their work;
- seeking staff feedback, including use of anonymous staff surveys;
- flexible working arrangements and keep in touch days with staff on maternity leave.

Suitable adaptations should be made for disability and accessibility. These arrangements will be updated and augmented as required and when deemed necessary by the findings of a risk assessment.

Where problems arise, a risk assessment will be undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team to address any gaps identified in the school's policies and procedures.

## 8. STAFF WORKLOAD – THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The staff at Riverside Bridge School are all dedicated and committed individuals who work hard, at times in challenging situations, to ensure the very best care and learning outcomes for all pupils. The school is aware of the time and energy required to support pupils and for the well-being of staff and for pupils the importance of staff taking breaks according to their job roles. Everyone is aware of the tremendous workload involved in running a school and therefore the Senior Leadership Team will overview the delegation of duties to ensure that there is a fair workload for all staff. Should a member of staff feel that their workload is becoming or has become unmanageable they should discuss this matter with a member of the Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible.

Studies indicate that being in work is generally good for the health of an individual. In addition to financial reward work provides increased self-esteem, companionship, purpose and status. It is therefore imperative that the school support a healthy work life/fulfilment philosophy to ensure efficiency and the best outcomes for both staff and pupils alike.

Riverside Bridge School believes that maintaining a 'feel good' factor in the workplace is strongly influenced by:

- leaders who help employees see where they fit into the bigger organisational picture;
- effective line managers who respect, develop and reward their staff;
- consultation that values the voice of employees and listens to their views and concerns
- relationships based on trust and shared values.

External support is available to help staff deal with personal problems and issues that may impact their work performance, health and well-being.

## 9. STRESS MANAGEMENT

Riverside Bridge School recognises that work related stress has a negative impact on staff well-being, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) definition of work-related stress as “the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. There is an important distinction between ‘reasonable pressures’ which stimulate and motivate and ‘stress’ where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

The Health and Safety Executive have developed a set of Management Standards which cover the primary sources of stress at work, and that if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence.

These are:

- **Demands.** Workload, work patterns and anything within the work environment that adds to the demands that staff face, including deadlines, pupils’ behaviour and parents.
- **Control.** How much say a staff member has in what they do and how they are able to do their work?
- **Support.** Including the sponsorship and resources provided by the school, and encouragement of leaders, line managers and colleagues.
- **Relationships.** Including how positive working behaviours are promoted to avoid conflict and effectively dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role.** Including the extent to which staff understand their role within the school, how this fit with that of their department or function and the aims of the school and whether leaders ensure they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change.** Includes how well organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the school.

Where stress levels amongst staff, a group of staff or individuals increases, the school will assess the risk, take steps to try to remove the risk or where the removal of the risk is not possible, reduce the risk by any necessary changes needed in the working practices or by introducing appropriate protective or supportive measures.

The provision of risk assessment will apply to the risk of work-related stress in the same way as to any other established health and safety issue. Therefore, with regard to stress, the school will not only investigate the levels and causes of stress but will also investigate, propose and implement measures to remove or reduce the problems identified.

Riverside Bridge School will also carry stress audits regularly to investigate the levels and causes of stress amongst staff and propose solutions.

## 10. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Regular in touch meetings are carried out with senior leaders and staff to discuss concerns and arising issues and where necessary adaptations are made.
- The school operates an open-door policy, and staff are encouraged to highlight issues as soon as possible.
- The school will consult with staff on the Staff Well-being Policy and measures taken to implement the policy through the operation of the Well-Being Team.
- Staff surveys and other tools will be used to gather feedback on staff well-being.
- The views of individuals will be sought in areas or teams subject to local stress risk assessments.
- The Staff Well-being Policy and measures taken by the School to manage work-related stress will be communicated and promoted in school.
- The Staff Well-being Policy will be published on the staff shared area.
- The contents of the policy will be covered during general induction training sessions for staff and through specific training on stress awareness.

School well-being systems (drawn to the attention of staff through bulletins, posters and briefings)

- Encouragement to speak confidentially to Team Leaders and Leadership Team.
- Self-referrals to the Employee Assistance Programme (Health Assured)
- Meetings with the school's Staff WELL-BEING Committee.
- Weekly social events.
- End of term and Christmas socials.
- Staff shout out board.
- Monthly early finishes on Fridays.

## 11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The staff well-being policy is on the staff shared area.

The policy will be reviewed every two years and any amendments made accordingly.

## Appendix

### Useful Websites

- Acas [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)
- Information on stress, and employer and employee rights, in the workplace
- Alcoholics Anonymous [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)
- Fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other to recover from alcoholism.
- Carers UK [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)
- The voice of carers
- CBI [www.cbi.org.uk](http://www.cbi.org.uk)
- Guidance to businesses on managing stress at work
- Department of Health [www.gov.uk/government/organisation/department-of-health](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisation/department-of-health)
- Information on dealing with stress and mental health problems, including the use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Dignity at Work Partnership [www.dignityatwork.org](http://www.dignityatwork.org)
- Information and guidance on bullying in the workplace
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)
- The commission is working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.
- Gingerbread [www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)  
Gingerbread and One Parent Families have now merged to provide better support and a bigger voice to 1.8 million lone parents and their children throughout England and Wales.
- HSE <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>- Information on the stress management standards
- Local Government Employers [www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)  
Guidance for all councils on stress prevention and management
- Mindful Employer [www.mindfulemployer.net](http://www.mindfulemployer.net)  
Information and guidance on managing stress and mental health in the workplace
- NASUWT [www.nasuwt.org.uk](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk)  
Information on a whole range of issues related to stress and well-being
- NHS 111 <http://www.nhs.uk/111>  
National Health Service advice and guidance on health matters
- Princess Royal Trust for Carers <http://www.carers.org>  
Here to improve carers' lives by fighting for equality and recognition for carers.
- Relate <http://www.relate.org.uk>

UK's largest provider of relationship counselling and sex therapy.

- Samaritans <http://www.samaritans.org>  
Offers confidential, non-judgemental support to individuals.
- Teacher Support Network - <http://teachersupport.info>
- Work Life Balance Centre <http://www.worklifebalancecentre.org>  
Exists to help people restore control over their workload and working lives we enable them to cut down overworking and so make new decisions about how they spend their time.
- World Health Organisation  
[http://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/publications/en/oehestress.pdf](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/en/oehestress.pdf)  
Publication on work organisation and stress