MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

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Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

1. **What is positive mental health and wellbeing?**
    Just as we all have physical health that varies from person to person and from time to time, we all have mental health which fluctuates.

    The World Health Organisation defines mental health as *'a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community'*.

2. **Why it matters to Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery**
    Whilst most of us have positive mental health and wellbeing most of the time, our mental health can change. There may be times when we are 'thriving', times when we start to struggle, and times when we develop a diagnosable mental health condition. 1 in 6 UK workers are currently experiencing a mental health condition, and 1 in 4 workers will have some form of mental health condition in any one year. So in Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery we might have 15% staff who are experiencing some mental health condition such as anxiety, depression, or feeling the effects of undue stress. These conditions might last a long or a short time or they might come and go. And just as we help our employees to keep physically well and support them through physical illness or disability we undertake to do the same for our staff with respect to mental health and wellbeing. We aim to help all staff keep mentally well and to support them through periods of poor mental health whether they remain at work or take time off.

3. **What the policy aims to do**
    The purpose of this policy is for Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery to establish, promote and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff through workplace practices, and encourage staff to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing. We pursue this aim using a whole organisation approach (see 7, below) which includes promoting positive mental health for all staff, recognising and addressing sources of stress in the workplace, and supporting those staff who are experiencing poor mental health.

    This policy sets out what help is available to support all staff to have positive mental health and wellbeing, how to access help, what procedures to follow, what documents to use, and how we measure and report on its impact.

    By developing a positive culture and by implementing practical, relevant and effective practices we can contribute to Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery's success and sustainability.

Overall, this policy aims to:

a) Build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that promotes positive mental health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination (including bullying and harassment);
b) Increase employee knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours;
c) Recognise and address sources of stress in the workplace;
d) Support those staff who are experiencing poor mental health;
e) Reduce stigma around depression and anxiety in the workplace;
f) Facilitate employees' active participation in a range of initiatives that support and promote mental health and wellbeing for all staff.

4. **What and who the policy is for**
   Mental health conditions and the effects of stress can affect anyone, regardless of their position in the organisation. This policy applies equally to all employees including part-time staff and volunteers (from now on referred to as 'staff').

5. **Where the policy sits alongside other HR policies**
   This policy should be read and followed in conjunction with our other relevant policies at Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery, such as attendance and disciplinary policies.

6. **How it contributes to Your Workplace's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy or Plan**
   This policy is part of Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery overarching strategy/plan to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. Whereas the strategy/ plan outlines several areas of improvement over the next 3 years and might include specific plans, the focus of this policy is on what values we hold, what responsibilities we have, what we will undertake and in turn what we expect from our staff.

7. **Promoting a whole organisation approach**
   Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery undertakes:

   a) To adopt a 'whole organisation approach' described in an annual plan or pledge that is reviewed by the Board and to have staff wellbeing on all Board agendas;
   b) To appoint a Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead on the Board and workplace champions in key parts of the organisation and to have staff wellbeing on all team meeting agendas;
   c) To promote staff wellbeing by engaging proactively with staff, identifying and offering wellbeing initiatives following the 5 Ways to Wellbeing (developed by the New Economics Foundation - see Appendix A), e.g. keeping active, organising social events, CPD events on wellbeing, volunteering or fundraising etc.;
   d) To provide training for line managers and all staff to raise mental health awareness and support better wellbeing;
   e) To have fair and non-discriminatory recruitment practices and to welcome applications from people with mental health conditions;

f) To identify and effectively address sources of stress in the workplace following the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) stress at work guidance e.g. flexible working, appropriate induction, training when roles change, training on customer care etc.;

g) To ask regularly about employees' wellbeing; to be aware of common mental health conditions and the impact these can have at work; to talk with employees about their work in the context of their mental health and wellbeing; to make reasonable adjustments to work during periods of poor mental health or recovery; to comply with the Equality Act 2010;

h) to enable conversations about mental health without stigma;

i) To provide information about and promote access to helplines and/or local services as appropriate.

8. Who is responsible for what

Hollinswood Primary School Leaders have a responsibility to:

a) Ensure that all staff are made aware of this policy;

b) Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals;

c) Manage the implementation and review of this policy.

In turn we encourage our employees to undertake to:

a) Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required;

b) Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery

c) Support fellow staff in their awareness of this policy;

d) Support and contribute to Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery's aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all staff.

All staff have a responsibility to:

a) Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing as well as their physical health;

b) Take reasonable care that their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace;

c) Alert their line manager (or, if this is not possible, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead) if they notice that their mental health is slipping or that they are struggling at work;

d) Alert their line manager, or their colleague's line manager, if they believe that one of their colleagues is struggling with their mental health or wellbeing so that their colleague can be supported promptly and so that they themselves can be supported;

e) Take part in constructive conversations about what support or reasonable adjustments can be made to support them at work or on their return to work after a period of illness;

f) Stay in touch during time off work;

g) Avoid using stigmatising language about people with mental health conditions and avoid discriminatory behaviour.

9. **How Your Workplace measures the impact of this policy**

    As an organisation, Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery acknowledges that measuring and reporting the impact of this policy and procedures is key to achieving its aims, i.e. promoting and maintaining the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff. We are therefore committed to the effective measurement of the impact of this policy and to reporting on it regularly.

    The policy has many strands and the impact will be assessed in a number of different ways, including monitoring and reporting:

    a) Staff turnover due to mental health conditions or stress and as a proportion of all staff turnover;
    b) Staff absences due to mental health conditions or stress and as proportion of all staff absences;
    c) Accidents or errors at work that might be attributable to mental health difficulties at work;
    d) Staff survey data about stress and stigma - optional for staff to complete –
    e) Number of new referrals to counselling/ EAP;
    f) Where appropriate, feedback from suppliers and customers.

10. **How this policy is communicated**

    Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery will ensure that:
    a) All staff receive a copy of this policy at induction;
    b) This policy is easily accessible by all members of the organisation;
    c) Employees are informed when a particular activity aligns with this policy;
    d) Employees are empowered to actively contribute to and provide feedback on this policy;
    e) Employees are notified of all changes to this policy.

11. **How often this policy will be reviewed**

    This policy will be reviewed annually. Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:
    a) Feedback from staff and management;
    b) Reference to the impact measurements detailed in section 13 above;
    c) Review of the policy by management to determine if its overall objectives have been met and to identify both barriers and supports to ensuring that progress is sustained.

12. Appendices

A. How to promote positive mental health for all staff

Hollinswood Primary School and Nursery is committed, through the implementation of this policy and our own actions, to promoting positive mental health for all staff. Equally, we want to provide staff with information and resources on how they can look after their own wellbeing and to lead by example in this regard - through our day-to-day behaviours, through providing activities within work that support individual wellbeing, and through promoting a healthy work/life balance.

The following five evidence-based steps have been researched and developed by the New Economics Foundation, and are recognised as being important for our individual wellbeing. These may help stimulate ideas for activities (inside and outside the workplace) that support this aim:

Connect: Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing these relationships. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Be Active: Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Take Notice/Be mindful: Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Keep Learning: Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

Give: Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

B. How to recognise signs of mental health problems at work

We may become aware of signs which indicate that a colleague is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing difficulties. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns to the employee's line manager and/or Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead. Possible warning signs include:

a) Changes in productivity e.g. deterioration in performance at work, lethargy in a previously energetic person, new pattern of unexplained lateness or absences, recent inability to concentrate on work, recent inability to complete work;

b) Changes in social functioning e.g. deterioration in social functioning, withdrawal from colleagues, isolation;

c) Changes in personality or behaviour e.g. extreme mood swings, acting anxious or agitated, showing rage, uncontrolled anger, behaving recklessly;

d) Increased alcohol or drug use;

e) Changes in eating and sleeping patterns;

f) Signs of (self-inflicted) physical harm.

C. How to identify areas of stress at work

The HSE defines stress as '***the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them"***. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

They identify six main areas of work design which can affect stress levels, and which should be managed carefully and proactively. These are:

a) **Demands:** workload, work patterns, environment;
b) **Control:** how much say you have in the way you do your work;
c) **Support:** encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by organisation, line management and colleagues;
d) **Relationships:** promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour;
e) **Role:** understanding your role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that you don't have conflicting roles;
f) **Change:** how organisational change is managed and communicated.

We undertake to support managers to:

a) Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded;
b) Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking;
c) Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement;
d) Ensure that staff are fully trained to discharge their duties;
e) Ensure that staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities;
f) Ensure that good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes;
g) Attend training as requested;
h) Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction;
i) Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation;
j) Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments.

D. How to support a member of staff experiencing poor mental health

Staff may notice signs of possible mental health problems in a colleague and are encouraged to approach the colleague concerned and offer to talk and to help them speak to their line manager as early as possible.

Line managers will arrange a time to talk privately and listen non-judgmentally to the employee's current concerns and situation, whether this arises from problems inside or outside of work. They will assess the impact on their work and if the person is well enough to be at work; whether work stressors are contributing to the current condition and, with the employee, agree what next steps will be most appropriate in the short term and in the medium term. They will confirm who else needs to know and make arrangements for how best to support the employee and how often.

It may be helpful to make reasonable adjustments and /or to put in place a Wellbeing and Recovery Plan (see below). They will make notes about what took place as soon as possible and share these with the affected member of staff.

NB. This information and notes may be shared only on a 'need to know' basis.

How to make reasonable adjustments:

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with a disability. These can be time limited and could include for example:

a) Schedule modification – start earlier/later, use leave (or be provided with additional leave) to attend appointments, work part time initially;
b) Job modification – job sharing, reassigning work, redeployment to vacant position;
c) Environmental modification – sound proofing, screens to increase privacy, bright lights, reserved parking space, increased personal space;
d) Policy changes – e.g. additional leave to attend appointments, compassionate leave, additional time to reach deadlines/milestones;
e) Human assistance - e.g. allowing a job coach to come to the workplace;
f) Providing mental health training for work colleagues;
g) Technological assistance – e.g. allowing computer for home working, providing software to assist with structure or prompts during the day;
h) Supervisory assistance – e.g. extra supervision, additional training, adjusted training in the person's preferred learning style.

How to make a Wellbeing and Recovery Plan:

If the employee has a long standing or relapsing mental health condition it can be helpful to draw up a Wellbeing and Recovery Plan (WRAP) involving the employee, the line manager and relevant health professionals. This can include:

a) Details of an employee's condition;
b) The employee's early warning signs or triggers;
c) Medication and any side effects;
d) What to do, and who to contact, in an emergency;

e)   The role that Hollinswood Primary School & Nursery can play.

How to respond in an emergency:
If there is a fear that the colleague is in danger of immediate harm then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.   In the event of a delay in getting to hospital staff should take a taxi rather than driving their own car.

How to stay in touch when an employee is off work:
It is important for a line manager to stay in touch with an employee when they are off work, to let them know what is happening at work, that colleagues are still holding them in mind, and to prepare for a return to work. It may be helpful to arrange a meeting to discuss what arrangements (if any) need to be in place when they return; what work load to expect, what support and reasonable adjustments can (and cannot) be made e.g. a phased return, later starts, shorter days, time off for appointments. This plan should be summarised in writing and reviewed regularly as the employee's needs change.