



## Brompton Community Primary School Staff Mental Health and Well-being Policy



### **Principles**

Brompton Community Primary School places a high value on maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for its employees and it recognises its duty of care extended to mental health as well as physical health at work.

The purpose of this policy is for Brompton Community Primary School to establish, promote and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all staff through workplace practices, and encourage staff to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing.

We believe that the mental health and wellbeing of our staff is key to organisational success and sustainability.

We are committed to providing a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and well-being of all its employees.

We will strive to improve the organisational environment through effective and sensitive management, enabling individuals to cope successfully with the demands and pressures of work, and providing support for employees whose health and well-being are affected by stress. This policy should be read in conjunction with the attendance policy outlined in the staff handbook.

### **Aims**

- To build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that supports mental health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination (including bullying and harassment).
- To increase employee knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours.
- To reduce stigma around depression and anxiety in the workplace.
- To facilitate employees active participation in a range of initiatives that support mental health and well-being.
- To develop and implement procedures to manage problems that may occur within the work place and to support individuals who are suffering from stress.
- To increase awareness of stress and methods to combat it.
- To recognise signs and symptoms of stress in ourselves and others.
- To offer practical support to staff in managing stress in themselves and others.
- To monitor procedures and outcomes, and to annually assess the effectiveness of the policy.

### **Responsibility:**

All employees are encouraged to:

- understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required
- consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing the school.
- support fellow workers in their awareness of this policy
- support and contribute to the school's aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all workers.

All employees have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health
- take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace.

Managers have a responsibility to:

- ensure that all workers are made aware of this policy

- actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals
- manage the implementation and review of this policy.

## **Definition of Stress**

• There is no universal definition of stress. However, the Health and Safety Executive has recently defined stress as 'the reaction people have to excessive pressures of other types of demand placed on them. It arises when they worry they can no longer cope' (Annual Report HSE 1999). In its positive manifestation stress can act as a motivational and enabling force, in its negative format however, stress becomes harmful and disabling and therefore a potential cause of physical and mental illness. Pressures can arise from an individual's personal life as well as from work and people vary in their capacity and ability to cope with different types of pressure. Some individuals will recognise that their health is affected and will seek help; others will not recognise or acknowledge that they are stressed although it may be apparent to their manager and work colleagues. Although in itself, stress is not an illness, there is evidence that stress can lead to mental and physical ill health.

## **Strategies for Dealing with Stress - preventative measures at an organisational level**

Brompton Community Primary School will:

- Establish, promote and maintain a culture of consultation, participation and open communication throughout the school.
- Raise the awareness of staff concerning stress and its causes.
- Provide opportunities for employees to maintain and promote their health and well-being.
- Make information available for staff on stress awareness to help them to handle pressures they may encounter and to recognize stress when it occurs in themselves and others.
- Manage workplace pressures which may affect employees by undertaking regular risk assessments and taking appropriate action to reduce stress.
- Undertake annual Performance Management reviews with each member of staff to ensure that the work role and tasks match the relevant job descriptions and to ensure that job descriptions are up to date.

**It is in the interest of all to recognise the possible signs of stress.**

**These may be:**

- Persistent or recurrent moods - anger, irritability, detachment, worry, depression. Guilt and sadness.
- Physical sensations/effects - aches and pains, raised heart rate, increased sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, skin or sleep disorders.
- Changed behaviours - difficulty concentrating or remembering things, unable to switch off, loss of creativity, making more errors, double checking everything, eating disorders, increasing use of tobacco, alcohol, coffee and drugs.
- High blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, anxiety, long-term depression.
- Poor work performance - less output, lower quality, poor decision making.
- Relationships at work - conflict between colleagues, poor relationships.
- Staff attitude and behaviour - loss of motivation or commitment, poor time-keeping, Working longer hours but with diminishing effectiveness.

## **Supportive Measures for Employees:**

- Identify internal and external sources of assistance for employees with stress. This will include a confidential counselling scheme for all staff who request it and/or referral to occupational health.
- Provide a range of stress management courses where appropriate.

## **Safe Systems of Work**

All individuals should recognise the importance of training and development as a means of developing competence and well-being in the job. Individuals should take an active part in determining their own training needs in conjunction with the person responsible for their performance managements.

If individuals believe that they are suffering from stress in their personal life they may wish to inform the Headteacher if they are struggling with work based duties to discuss the issues with them, if this is not possible then they may wish to contact the LA Personnel section.

### **Managerial/Supervisor Responsibilities**

The headteacher has a particular responsibility to be aware of the legal duty as an employer and to be aware of how to recognise early signs of stress in their employees. It is important for the success of this policy that those with management responsibilities play an active role in its implementation. The responsibilities include:

- Regular workplace risk assessments, which must include the consideration of stress related factors and action must be taken to minimise the effects of risk upon the individual and the school.
- Observing and evaluating work performance.
- Providing information on the policy and where possible help individuals to overcome their problems before job performance is affected.
- Becoming familiar with this policy and attending stress management training.
- Ensuring that absences which may have been caused by stress are acted upon sympathetically and with understanding.
- Act with sensitivity and tact when dealing with individuals either they suspect of suffering from stress or who have been diagnosed.
- Contacting the Human Resources section promptly when a GP medical certificate is received which indicates that absence is possibly stress related. Guidance will then be given on the appropriate action needed.
- Ensuring staff within the management team have received training covering all relevant aspects of their work, including health and safety.

### **Integration with other Policies.**

Recruitment and Selection.

- The full range of tasks and demands of the job should be set out clearly in the job Description and should be fully discussed in the interview process. Areas of potential pressure should be identified.
- All references must seek sickness and absence records for the previous 2 years and must comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- For posts with higher levels of stress, candidate's proven tolerance to stress should be an important part of the selection process.

### **Induction**

- All employees must receive induction into their jobs. Starting a new job can be a stressful time and a planned induction should help eliminate any concerns.
- Within the induction programme, the stress policy must be discussed.

### **Attendance Management**

- As part of professional review meetings with staff, all absences should be discussed with the staff member and underlying reasons identified.
- The headteacher will arrange appropriate communication mechanisms with an absent employee upon receipt of a GP certificate which identifies a stress related illness, to discuss any underlying causes and to arrange support and assistance if the absence is likely to continue.

### **Return to Work**

- In the case of a long absence before the employee returns to work the Headteacher will agree a planned return to work with the member of staff.

### **Training and development**

- Many employees experience stress through feeling that they are not adequately trained for their existing job, especially when they change role. The identification of appropriate training activities should be agreed at the beginning of new posts and reviewed annually in the Performance Management process.

**Implementation, Monitoring, Audit and Review**

This policy will be implemented from January 2021 and will apply to all employees at Brompton Community Primary School. The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring adherence and effectiveness of this policy and for reporting to the Governing Body.