Wyburns Primary School

Everyone has Brilliance inside of them

Well-being and Mental Health Policy

Updated: June 2026

‘Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few moments, even you’ (Anne Lamott).

Intent

Wyburns Primary school believes staff mental health and wellbeing is as important to the success and sustainability of the school as physical health. A workplace where mental health and wellbeing is valued and looked after results in an increase in staff satisfaction, engagement with the school and therefore productivity.

We take a positive, proactive approach to improving mental health and wellbeing and will promote and maintain this through workplace practices in addition to encouraging everyone to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing. This policy applies to all staff, contractors and visitors.

Our commitment

Wyburns Primary school is committed to addressing the issues that contribute to poor mental health as identified in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

We commit to;

- Build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that supports mental health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination.

- Treat people with mental health issues in the same way as any other staff, unless they ask for help or demonstrate clear signs that they need crisis care.

- Not make assumptions of a person’s capabilities, their promotability or the amount of absences from work they may need because of their illness.

- Increase staff knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and associated behaviours.

- Reduce stigma around mental health issues in the workplace.

- Create an environment where staff are encouraged to talk, both formally and informally, to their senior leadership team or someone within their wellbeing team.

Management Standards

The Management Standards cover six key areas of work design that if not properly managed, can be associated with poor mental health, lower productivity, and increased absence rates.

Demands - this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.
Control – how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
Support – this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, senior leadership team and colleagues.
Relationships – this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
Role – whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
Change – how operational change (large or small) is managed and communicated.

Responsibilities

Staff have a responsibility to:

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from the senior leadership team where required.
- Take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, exercise, alcohol consumption and smoking);
- Comply and co-operate with the sickness absence management procedure where they are absent due to mental ill health, including the sickness absence reporting procedures;
- Inform their line manager or mental health first aider/champion as soon as reasonably practicable of any mental health issues (both where the issue arises from an external source or if they believe work or their work environment poses a risk to their health) and update each school on a periodic basis in line with this policy. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee during discussions with mental health champions/first aiders, managers, the HR department or the occupational health service will be treated in confidence;
- Ensure medical or other mental health advice and/or treatment, where appropriate, are received as quickly as possible.

Senior Management Team have a responsibility to:

- Comply with legal obligations for managing mental health issues including the application of the Equality Act 2010 where, if a mental health issue has adverse effects on someone's ability to perform day-to-day tasks, this is considered a disability and therefore protected.
- Ensure that full attention is given to staff health, safety and welfare and to develop systems of work to minimise risks to employee mental health and wellbeing;
- Act as role models to encourage healthy behaviours e.g. taking regular breaks, not working excessive hours and maintaining a healthy work life balance;
- Ensure employees understand their role within the school and receive the required information and support from managers and team members to do their job;
- Monitor and be aware of the early signs of poor mental health and take action as appropriate;
- Designate/train particular managers/individuals to be mental health champions/first aiders in the workplace who can raise mental health awareness. They can also provide an additional source of confidential support for someone experiencing mental ill health and who does not wish to confide in

their manager.

- Ensure employees are aware of support and assistance available including counselling and occupational health advice and guidance;
- Be familiar with relevant school policies and procedures on equality and diversity to ensure any inappropriate behaviour e.g. bullying and harassment is handled appropriately and staff are supported;
- Ensure performance management procedures are carried out effectively to ensure targets and objectives are clear, to identify any issues with workload and/or demands on the employee and provide support/additional training where necessary; and
- Implement school procedures fairly, sensitively and confidentially.
  In particular, line managers/school leaders must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by: having regard to the resources available in the Department for Education school workload reduction toolkit (see **https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-workload-reduction-toolkit)** and using such resources as appropriate
- ensuring that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications;
- ensuring induction processes are robust and thorough;
- keeping employees up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload and, wherever possible, involving staff in workplace decisions that affect them;
- ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management;
- making sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately; and
- ensuring that work stations are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose.

Promoting good mental health

Occupational Health

- Occupational health professionals will provide support to schools to help employees stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing mental health problems. This may include preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals from line managers; liaising with GPs and working with individuals to help them to retain employment.
- Occupational health professionals will provide guidance and support for employees returning to work after absences related to mental ill health, and work with GPs and line managers on possible adjustments/adaptions to working environments/arrangements to assist with a successful reintegration into the workforce. Occupational health professionals may also provide guidance and support on managing pressure and ongoing health conditions at work.

Health promotion initiatives

The school will develop and run a range of health promotion initiatives designed to raise awareness of health and lifestyle issues affecting mental health and wellbeing.
School leaders will have primary responsibility for leading these initiatives, but line managers and employees will be expected to participate. These initiatives will be evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

Training and communications

- Line managers and employees will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change.

- Line managers will receive appropriate training and support to enable them to manage employees who have mental ill health issues and to assist them to spot the signs of possible mental ill health at an early stage and identify appropriate support.

- Managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises, including stress audits and staff surveys.

- All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings and staff development sessions, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications and school-wide methods. The school will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns whether formally or informally.

Employee concerns and absence from work due to mental ill health

- If employees believe that they are suffering from poor mental health resulting from an external issue or that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager or the school's mental health first aider/champion. The discussion may cover external factors causing poor mental health or internal factors such as workload issues, poor relationships with colleagues or training needs.
- Where an employee is absent from work due to mental ill health, the school will maintain regular, open and meaningful communication with the employee by an agreed method and at agreed intervals.
- The employee must continue to follow the absence reporting requirements set out in the Sickness Absence Management Procedure including those relating to FIT notes.
- The school may, as appropriate, make a referral to an occupational health advisor where an employee's absence or other issues indicate a potential mental health concern. In certain circumstances, particularly those involving stress or depression, a referral should be made as early as possible, usually after two weeks absence from work, as evidence suggests that early intervention increases the chance of a successful return to work.
- Where a referral is made, the employee will be advised of the process and the reasons for the referral. Discussions between employees and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health advisor is likely to provide a report on the employee's fitness to work, and any recommended adjustments/adaptations to the working environment, to the line manager.

Further information on occupational health referrals and reasonable adjustments are set out in the Trusts' Sickness Absence Management Procedure.

Co-operating with a referral to an Occupational Health Adviser

Employees are obliged to attend appropriate appointments with an Occupational Health Adviser. Where an employee refuses to consent to the Occupational Health Adviser contacting their GP, decisions, which may have implications for their future employment, will be taken on the basis of the information available at the time.

Medical suspension

In certain circumstances, where it is felt that an employee is not fit to attend work due to their mental ill health, the headteacher or chair of LSB may suspend an employee on medical grounds. Any such suspension will be on full normal pay. Further details on medical suspension can be found in the Sickness Absence Management Procedure.

Disabled Employees

There may be cases where the mental health issue could amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010. This will depend on the nature of the mental ill health and whether it has a substantial long-term effect on the employee's ability to carry out day to day activities. The legal definition of a "disability" is wide and managers should seek advice from the school's HR/legal advisers as to whether an employee falls within this definition. In such cases, the employee's manager should seek HR/Occupational Health advice as early as possible.

Further information on disabled employees can be found in the Sickness Absence Management Procedure.

Reintegrating employees into the workforce following absence

The school will take all reasonable steps to support an employee returning from absence due to mental ill health and to assist them with reintegration into the workforce. Employees will be kept up to date with any developments in the workplace during their absence. The process of reintegrating staff will differ depending on the length of absence and nature of their mental ill health and any treatment they are receiving.

5. Record retention and data protection

Any medical/health information concerning employees collected will count within the "special categories of personal data" and as such will be kept confidential and stored securely in line with the school's retention schedule in the "restricted access" section of the personal file.

Any personal data collected/recorded in line with this policy will only be processed in line with the schools' data protection policy/policy on processing special categories of personal data.

Further information on retention periods and data protection requirements regarding health-related data, including FIT notes, meeting minutes and referrals to occupational health, can be found in the Sickness Absence Management Procedure.

6. Sources of information

Sources of information for employees

When a member of staff is experiencing mental ill health, they may benefit from seeking external support. There are a number of services that may be able to help. These include:

- Access to work can provide advice and an assessment of workplace needs for individuals, with disabilities or long-term health conditions, who are already in work or about to start. Grants may be available to help cover the cost of workplace adaptations that enable an employee to carry out their job without being at a disadvantage. These might be used to pay the costs of

adapting equipment or buying special equipment for the employee, the cost of getting to work if they cannot use public transport and/or disability awareness training for colleagues. For more information, go to **www.gov.uk/access-to-work**

- Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales. Their helpline and website provide information and support to empower anyone experiencing mental ill health and general advice on mental health-related law. For more information, go to **www.mind.org.uk** or call 0300 123 3393.
- NHS choices has a website that offers information and practical advice for anyone experiencing mental ill health. For more information, go to **www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth**
- Remploy offers a free and confidential Workplace Mental Health Support Service for anyone absent from work or finding work difficult because of a mental health condition. It aims to help people remain in, or return to, their role. For more information, go to **www.remploy.co.uk** or call 0300 4568114
- Rethink Mental Illness is the largest national voluntary sector provider of mental health services, offering support groups, advice and information on mental health problems. For more information, go to www.rethink.org or call 0300 5000 927.

6.2 Sources of information for managers

There are a range of organisations and programmes to help an employer and its managers.

- ACAS website provides information and guidance to help support and manage staff experiencing mental ill health. For more information, go to **www.acas.org.uk/managingmentalhealth**
- Employee assistance programmes can provide round-the-clock support for staff dealing with personal problems that might adversely impact their job performance, health, and wellbeing. This includes issues such as relationship problems, money worries and other pressures. An employer can join an EAP for a fee. For a list of providers, go to www.eapa.org.uk
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England offers courses that can help managers and/or HR staff identify, understand and help a person who may be experiencing mental ill health. There is a MHFA Line Managers' Resource available at https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/resource/mental-health-first-aid-line-managers-resource/.
- Mindful Employer is a UK-wide, NHS initiative. It is aimed at increasing awareness of mental health at work and providing support for businesses in recruiting and retaining staff. For more information, go to www.mindfulemployer.net or call 01392 677064.
- Time to change can help organisations develop an action plan, set objectives and activities that will be undertaken to achieve them. For more information, go to **www.time-to-change.org.uk**
- Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales. The Government's independent review, Thriving at Work, includes six core and four enhanced standards for how organisations can better support employees' mental health. **https://www.mind.org.uk/media/25263166/how-to-implement-the-thriving-at-work-mental-health-standards-final-guide-online.pdf.**