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Statement of Intent

Norton CEVC Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive environment where the health, safety and welfare of all members of staff are paramount. The school is dedicated to promoting positive mental health, physical and mental wellbeing and will provide suitable support for all members of staff.

Preventing stress is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of the school's staff, which remains a key priority. The school understands the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause our employees to become stressed.

With this in mind, this policy has been created to outline the steps that will be taken by the school to promote the mental and physical wellbeing of our staff.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation, 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 (2024) 'Education staff wellbeing charter'
- DfE (2024) 'Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff'

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Leave of Absence Policy
- Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide a working environment which enables staff to work in an environment in which their wellbeing is supported, and enables them to carry out their duties effectively.
- Recognise the key role of the headteacher in enabling access to guidance, training and support.
- Encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.
- 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 wellbeing 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 wellbeing and reduce these where possible.

What do we mean by staff wellbeing?

The term “wellbeing” can be used to describe our holistic health, including our physical, mental and emotional health. When we have good levels of wellbeing we feel that life is in balance and that we can generally cope well. We feel motivated and engaged and are able to show resilience and “bounce back” from life’s challenges.

School staff are now more often having to juggle multiple demands, so a focus on staff wellbeing 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 wellbeing of school staff.

Poor mental wellbeing may impact on their ability to manage during key moments of stress in the classroom or at school. Staff who have good mental wellbeing 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.

Good staff wellbeing can have a number of benefits for schools 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

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body will:

- 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 and 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 SLT.
- Ensuring monitoring visits are strategic, focussed and reflective of its 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.
- Establishing a wellbeing committee to ensure staff are supported in their roles and that actions are taken to mitigate overbearing stress in the workplace.
- Ensuring all committee meetings are purposeful, focussed, structured and relevant to the school development priorities.
- Developing an annual schedule of work and ensuring work is not duplicated between meetings of committees and the full governing board.

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 strategic 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 focussed 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.
- Meeting with headteacher on a regular basis to monitor and review the impact of provision and interventions.
- Working with the headteacher to ensure that appropriate training is put in place to support staff.
- Reporting to the governing board on the successes and areas of improvement in planned interventions, and the resources that are in place.

The headteacher will:

- Create a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Be responsible for implementing CPD which equips staff with the tools to effectively manage stress.
- Aim to develop a sensitive performance management process that is linked to clear job specifications.
- 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 lives, and offer support accordingly, if and when required.
- Manage pressures which may affect staff, including the impact of workload pressures, and anticipate likely problems, acting to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.
- Aim to include all staff in the school's decision-making process.
- Organise extra support for staff at times of increased stress
- Ensure that all policies that affect staff wellbeing are properly adhered to and reviewed.
- Be responsible for authorising any staff absences, as well as granting extended leave.
- Plan and monitor a system of mentors to provide additional support for staff.
- Encourage all staff to attend events and training opportunities that promote wellbeing and health.
- Provide information that helps staff to manage stress effectively.
- Ensure that regular contact is maintained with members of staff who are absent for long periods.
- 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.
- Ensure new members of staff have received all relevant information
- Be responsible for monitoring all staff absences.

Senior management will:

- 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.
- Act in a supportive and constructive manner when dealing with cases related to wellbeing.
- Attend events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health.
- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work-related stress and other mental health problems.

- Communicate work-life balance practices to all staff and manage pressures which may affect staff and anticipate likely problems, acting to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.
- Demonstrate commitment to staff by encouraging a good work/life balance.

All staff members will:

- Where possible, be watchful of any indication of changes of behaviour in colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress.
- Support co-workers if they become stressed, which may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Be responsible for acting in a way that maintains a healthy work/life balance.
- Act in a way that promotes a positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Be responsible for reporting honestly about their wellbeing.
- Where possible, ask for help when they feel under pressure or stressed.
- Attend events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health.
- Not act in a manner which endangers themselves or others.
- Consider wellbeing support mechanisms offered by Norton CEVC Primary School

Warning signs

All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that can indicate that a person may be having trouble managing stress. The headteacher provides training or support to help staff manage workplace stress.

Some of the **behavioural indicators** that are caused by stress include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

Some of the **physical indicators** caused by stress include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

Some of the **mental indicators** caused by stress include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

Some of the **emotional indicators** caused by stress include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

At Norton, staff care and are responsible for each other's wellbeing. If a colleague feels that someone is showing the above indicators then staff are expected to raise their concerns to the Well Being Leads, Lisa Sparkes and/or Jo Bouttell, who will take appropriate action. All concerns will be dealt with sensitivity, confidentially and promptly.

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:

- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a full life outside of work.
- Make the most of team bonding; using PD days 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.
- Arrange a meeting with all members of staff in which the current working times and practices will be discussed.
- Research and implement an employee assistance programme relevant to the needs of all staff, regularly monitoring its effectiveness and impact on wellbeing.

As a school we recognise that each member of staff is an individual and that in dealing with stress and workload, what one member of staff finds stressful another will not.

To address this, the school operates an open culture of discussion and will regularly discuss workload management in staff meetings. The school uses the DfE Workload Toolkit to identify key practices that have a significant impact on teacher's workload. Staff will be encouraged to contribute actively on these discussions on how practices could be improved to reduce workload pressures.

To ensure that staff are content and feel supported the school has put in place several procedures:

- A member of the governing body, is the wellbeing lead, taking overall responsibility for monitoring the wellbeing of staff.
- The headteacher will meet with all members of staff annually to discuss working hours and practices.
- The governing body will undertake an annual staff wellbeing survey. Any proposed will be discussed with all members of staff.
- The governing body will allocate funds towards a wellbeing budget. All members of staff are welcome to make suggestions for the use of this fund. The headteacher will have the final say as to how the fund is spent.
- Workload and wellbeing will be referred to in Governors Meetings
- Two members of staff, Jo Bouttell and Lisa Sparkes, have been given the responsibility for staff wellbeing and will be able to guide members of staff to access support.

The school recognises that the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter can be used as an effective tool to foster positive wellbeing in the education sector. The school will consider showing its commitment to

actively promoting mental health by signing up to the charter to create an enriching culture of mental wellbeing.

Schools Advisory Service

The school allocates funds so that all staff can access support from School Advisory Service (SAS). This information is shared during the induction process of all staff. The SAS provide wellbeing and medical services such as counselling, mediation and stress awareness sessions. When staff share concerns regarding their mental or physical wellbeing these services are easily accessed.

Occupational Health

The school has access to Suffolk County Council Occupational Health and Human Resources through Schools Choice. This enables an employee to discuss any concerns about their health and wellbeing 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. The information given is entirely confidential.

Support Agencies

As part of this policy, staff are provided with an appendix which cites a number of relevant websites which could be useful depending on life circumstances.

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

Reporting procedures

The following two members of staff will be designated as wellbeing officers; this is in the event that one of the wellbeing officers is the subject of the complaint:

- Lisa Sparkes

- Jo Bouttell

If any member of staff wishes to raise a concern about wellbeing, one of the two wellbeing officers will be notified.

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.

Leave of Absence

Staff who are unwell or who have time off due to unforeseen circumstances will meet with the headteacher for a 'Return to Work' interview (Appendix 2). In this interview there will be the opportunity to discuss how the school can support the member of staff regarding wellbeing.

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.

Support for staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances within the school will be provided following the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.

Monitoring and review

The headteacher will review this policy on an annual basis, and will make any changes necessary.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

Reviewed September 2024

1 Useful Websites

Acas www.acas.org.uk

Information on stress, and employer and employee rights, in the workplace

Alcoholics Anonymous 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

The voice of carers

CBI www.cbi.org.uk

Guidance to businesses on managing stress at work

Department of Health www.gov.uk/government/organisation/departments/departments-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

Information and guidance on bullying in the workplace

The Equality and Human Rights Commission 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

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

Guidance for all councils on stress prevention and management

Mindful Employer www.mindfulemployer.net

Information and guidance on managing stress and mental health in the workplace

NASUWT www.nasuwt.org.uk

Information on a whole range of issues related to stress and wellbeing

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/oehstress.pdf

Publication on work organisation and stress

Appendix 2

Norton CEVC Primary School Return to Work Form <i>Learn Believe Achieve</i> <i>Hand in hand with God and each other</i>
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Return to Work Form

Part 1: Self-Certification (to be completed by employee)

Name:	Job Title:
1 st Day of Absence:	Date Returned to Work:
Number of working days absent:	Are you: full time / part time * *Delete as appropriate
State briefly why you were unfit for work (specify nature of illness or injury. Words like "illness" or "unwell" are not enough)	
I reported my absence to: _____ on (date): _____	

Signed (employee): Date:

Part 2: Return To Work Discussion (to be completed by SLT)

SLT's Name:	Date of RTW Discussion:
Has the necessary medical certification been presented? (e.g., where required, a fit note/s) Yes/No	
Summary of discussion:	
Any other comments or issues raised, and any further action agreed:	

Signed (employee): Date:

Signed (SLT): Date:

Staff workload charter

Norton CEVC Primary School

Staff workload charter

Our aims

Norton CEVC Primary 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 a trained mentor as part of their induction process.
- 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 simplify school processes where possible.
- A consistent and fair Behaviour Policy which allows staff to work effectively and be provided with support from the SLT to manage behaviour effectively.

- An agreed communication protocol which outlines the expected response times from colleagues and external communications, e.g. from parents.
- 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, is fully resourced with high-quality materials and is planned over well-defined blocks of time.
- An agreed policy that ensures all marking undertaken is purposeful and focusses 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
- Ensuring the school's workload reduction initiative is included within the SDP and that enough resources are dedicated towards achieving this aim
- 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 focussed, 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, focussed 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