

## **Rationale**

In May 2021, the DfE published The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, which has been produced as a result of the pandemic and the effect this had on the profession. It is also recognised throughout the charter that well-being and mental health is an important factor in the recruitment and retention of educational professionals.

*The DfE write, "We believe that everyone working in education should have the opportunity to enjoy the highest possible standard of wellbeing and mental health. Not only is this a good thing itself, but it is also critical in recruiting and retaining high quality education professionals now and in the future. It is also crucial in securing better outcomes for young people, including regarding their own wellbeing and mental health. We want to see a sector that is free from mental health discrimination, guided by emotional intelligence, and characterised by supportive, nurturing cultures. A sector where the conditions are such that every member of staff can thrive. We recognise that everyone has a role to play in creating and sustaining those conditions, including government, leaders, employers and education staff themselves. In signing this charter, we signal our intent to come together with people across the system with the shared aim of improving wellbeing at every level."*

*"Everyone working in education has gone above and beyond the call of duty during the Covid-19 pandemic in continuing to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, and in adapting their institutions to ensure all students and staff can return safely. Despite the challenges, we've seen exemplary leadership, innovation and resilience in the profession. Whilst many of the issues this charter seeks to help address are not new, it is more important than ever that wellbeing and mental health are at the forefront of education policy. In launching this charter, the whole sector has come together to make a commitment to protect the wellbeing and mental health of those who work in our schools and colleges." The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP Minister of State for School Standards May 2021*

## **Organisational commitments**

In signing [The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter](#), Netherhall School commits to placing wellbeing and mental health at the heart of our decision making. We will support staff to make positive choices for their own wellbeing and encourage a collegiate culture across and between all roles in the school or college. Specifically, we commit to develop a long-term strategy for improving staff wellbeing that will:

### 1. Prioritise staff mental health

We will:

- tackle mental health stigma within the organisation, promoting an open and understanding culture. In the first instance, concerns over mental health and well-being should be communicated through the line management process. If this is not possible and to ensure the promotion of an open and understanding culture, the following roles have been designated:

Sam Potts – Staff well-being representative. Please see SP for a conversation regarding and personal matters. Sam will relay information that is requested by staff to the

weekly HR meeting with the headteacher and the Business Manager and feedback to individual colleagues.

Lisa Barcock – Associate SLT mental health and well-being lead. Please see LRB if your concerns are relating to organisation or policy, and these will be fed back to SLT with an outcome clearly communicated.

Leah Holliday is also available to offer advice regarding mental health and further support networks accessible to colleagues.

- give the same consideration and support to mental health as physical health, including in the management of staff absence. Through back to work interviews, line managers will offer the opportunity to discuss any concerns regarding mental health and well-being.
- fulfil our legal duty to control the risks associated with work-related stress in the education setting so far as is reasonably practicable.
- channel support to individuals whose role is known to have a significant emotional component. This might take the form of peer support, supervision, and/or counselling.
- ensure that staff understand the real benefits that sensitive pastoral support can have, while also recognising where their limits are as non-specialists. We will, therefore, ensure there are opportunities to increase joint - working in support of pupils, as well as routes to refer for specialist support.

#### 2. Give staff the support they need to take responsibility for their own and other people's well-being

We will empower staff to take ownership of their own well-being and look out for the well-being of others. This will include, ensuring that all staff are familiar with the different dimensions of well-being, including mental health, financial well-being, and physical well-being. Line management agendas will encourage discussion about well-being and mental health. Training will be available to all colleagues and will be promoted through regular teaching and learning briefings.

We will ensure that staff know how to access appropriate guidance, support, and tools, and that their use is encouraged throughout the organisation. If you would like advice about external agencies, please see Leah Holliday.

#### 3. Give managers access to the tools and resources they need to support the well-being of those they line manage

We will work to provide managers with tools, resources, and training to support their staff. We will not, however, expect managers to provide professional well-being support for which they have no professional training, and will ensure that there are clear routes in place to escalate for further support. Please see section 1 of the policy.

#### 4. Establish a clear communications policy

We will provide clear guidance to all stakeholders (internal and external) on remote and out-of-school hours working, including when it is and is not reasonable to expect staff to respond to queries. This should not necessarily include preventing staff from

accessing email at 'unsociable' hours if it suits them personally. Please refer to the Directed Time Policy for further information.

#### 5. Give staff a voice in decision-making

We will constantly strive to improve the ways in which the voice of staff is included in the decision-making process across the school. (This may also include engagement with key stakeholders, such as recognised trade unions and others.) In particular, we will proactively seek to draw upon the experience of those with mental health issues and/ or of discrimination, ensuring that, as per commitment, they are able to share their experience confidently and safely. Please refer to section 1 of the policy for further information regarding communication.

#### 6. Drive down unnecessary workload

We will work proactively to drive down unnecessary workload, making use of available tools (such as the Workload Reduction Toolkit for schools).

#### 7. Champion flexible working and diversity

We will work to create a supportive culture around flexible working. We will agree an approach that not only recognises employees' legal right to request flexible working but acknowledges that for some staff working flexibly can be a key means of protecting and enhancing their personal well-being. We will work to promote diversity – eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity. Any personal requests should be discussed with the headteacher.

#### 8. Create a good behaviour culture

We will work with staff and pupils to maintain and implement a school-wide behaviour policy. All staff and pupils will have a shared understanding of how good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded, and the sanctions that will be imposed if pupils misbehave. We will support teachers to create calm, safe and disciplined environments, which allow teachers to teach and pupils to learn. Our approach will go hand-in-hand with understanding and supporting pupil mental health issues. SLT will support colleagues through increased presence around the school and in lessons. If further support is needed, this can be arranged through line management or by speaking to RMS.

#### 9. Support staff to progress in their careers

We will ensure that staff are able to pursue professional development without adversely impacting their own or other people's workload. In schools, we will ensure that any professional development activity is aligned to the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development.

#### 10. Include a sub-strategy for protecting leader wellbeing and mental health

We will ensure that all those with strategic decision-making responsibility (including as appropriate governors) should collaborate to develop a sub-strategy specifically for protecting leader mental health. This should include access to confidential counselling and/or coaching where needed.

### 11. Hold ourselves accountable, including by measuring staff well-being

From September 2021, we will measure the well-being of staff using an online diagnostic tool and be transparent about results. We will monitor trends over time, and act in response to changes. This policy has been created following a consultation with staff in July 2021. As a result of this consultation, the points listed below will be implemented with effect from September 2021.

- a. Electric car charging points installed in staff carpark.
- b. Cycle to work scheme.
- c. Governors' meetings move to virtual meetings.
- d. Weekly thank you cards from colleagues.
- e. End of half term celebration, sharing thanks with colleagues.
- f. SLT drop in to support colleagues in lessons – co-ordinated approach.
- g. Edulink will be used to share pastoral information with relevant teaching staff.
- h. Performance management review will be added to the calendar to ensure any concerns are raised prior to the completion of the academic year.
- i. Timetabling process – The protocol for the timetabling process will be updated for HODs, which will include time for consultation with colleagues.
- j. Voluntary Friday Forum – Colleagues are invited to share student achievement in a face-to-face morning briefing, each week, if they choose to do so.

Further, we will work with staff and relevant stakeholders (this might include parents, recognised trade unions and others) to agree an approach to organisational accountability on our commitments, giving due consideration to workload.