

## Southgate School Wellbeing Strategy

### Introduction

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that we embrace the many school practices that support staff health and wellbeing, to minimise the harmful effects of stress and ensure that there is cohesion in working towards health and wellbeing for all stakeholders. It outlines some of the ways in which we commit to maintaining wellbeing and it recognises that each individual member of our school community and their circumstances are different but provides an overview of the basis on which everyone can contribute, and expect to be treated.

It is also recognised that there is a direct correlation between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and ethos of a school are determined by the extent to which staff work towards a shared vision: **A personalised, aspirational and specialist offer for every pupil, every day.** The Southgate community have worked collaboratively to develop our school vision based on the key values of supporting relationships, independence, opportunity and communication.



Our school consistently strives to deliver a high and increasingly exceptional level of provision to our pupils in all areas. This can best be achieved if all school stakeholders feel that their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing is a priority, can recognise when they are struggling, and understand the steps that they can take to seek support.

### Roles and responsibilities

The senior leadership team (SLT), governing body and school staff will work towards an ethos where everyone is valued, where respect, empathy and honesty are the cornerstones of all school relationships and where health and wellbeing are held central to school practice. We expect all staff to show respect and empathy for each other, and to treat confidential information sensitively and according to school policy.

### **The governing body is responsible for:**

- fulfilling its duty of care as an employer
- monitoring the workload of the headteacher
- ensuring that the resources are in place to keep staff workload at healthy levels
- considering how its own members are treated and valued
- ensuring that wherever possible demands are not placed on individual members of staff that interfere with their work-life balance
- operating a sensitive and robust performance management policy

- overseeing that change management is operated in a fair and reasonable way.

**The senior leadership team, in collaboration with a wider middle management team, is responsible for:**

- providing personal and professional development such as team building, management of change, stress management, assertiveness, communication
- providing a non-judgemental and confidential support system such as coaching, mentoring and pastoral support for staff
- monitoring the workload of members of staff and being alert to signs of stress
- listening to the views of members of staff and involving staff in school decision making processes where appropriate
- ensuring that the successes of staff are acknowledged and celebrated
- structuring reforms and innovations to ensure a supportive role out which avoids overwhelming staff
- providing training opportunities that enable staff to equip themselves to do the job confidently
- developing a culture that promotes staff valuing each other
- planning the year's timetable considerably bearing in mind staff commitments
- including in professional development meetings opportunity for staff to discuss their aspirations and career intentions
- recognising that staff may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work, and which may have a temporary influence on their work performance e.g. health issues, bereavement or loss, or personal circumstances, and signposting to appropriate support
- reflecting to develop and improve methods of communication
- ensuring support services are made available or signposted on behalf of members of staff where additional specialist support is needed
- maintaining appropriate contact with staff during long absences
- ensuring that a robust staff induction and probation process is put into place
- conducting risk assessments for work-related stress when staff identify they need one
- relevant time protected for staff such as PPA, staff meeting time for reports etc.

**Members of staff are responsible for:**

- treating one another with empathy, respect and kindness
- taking care of their own health and safety at work and communicating with key staff where they need support
- being committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and keeping in mind the workload and wellbeing of colleagues
- valuing all members of staff in the school and acknowledging the important role that everyone takes
- contributing to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to build morale and effective team spirit
- developing and respecting shared areas where possible so that there is space to relax as well as appropriate work spaces.

Additionally, all staff should support the pupils' understanding of their own mental health and emotional wellbeing, enabling them to identify a broad range of emotions through work on Zones of Regulation, and to develop strategies that will help them to manage these emotions. Where there are greater concerns over an individual pupil's wellbeing, this should be recorded appropriately on school systems and staff will work collaboratively with the Therapy, Pastoral and Intervention teams to provide appropriate support.

Through building relationships with parents and carers, we will be able to work together to support pupil wellbeing beyond the school gate. We will also strive to empower families in recognising and supporting their own mental health and wellbeing through improved communication and targeted events and support.

Staff wellbeing will remain a core element of our annual staff survey. SLT and a core wellbeing team will use results from the survey to review this strategy annually.

## **Staff**

We recognise that wellbeing is more than just a coffee van. Wellbeing comes through knowledge and understanding, CPD, communication and support. This includes: having a clear job description, being provided appropriate training, having a tiered line management structure, and providing access to medical support and counselling. We believe that it is essential that all staff feel part of a valued team, have the opportunity to express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance

### **Aim:**

**We aim to create a safe and welcoming environment, integrating health and wellbeing into day to day activities to maintain a positive and healthy workplace.**

Our priorities:

- To support staff development through a robust performance management process
- To encourage access to external services to promote the health and wellbeing of staff
- To identify key areas of need across school and provide additional support, information and training
- To empower staff to realise their own potential through an embedded coaching culture
- To entrench equality and diversity initiatives, ensuring all staff are respected and treated with equity

To achieve these aims we will:

- Involve staff with setting targets for performance management, to enable them to develop their own skill set in line with the school's development plan
- Provide a robust CPD offer that develops the skills of new and experienced staff, linked to the School Development Plan
- Ensure regular meetings with line managers to review and support performance management progress
- Ensure a rigorous process to support returns to work following staff absence
- Have a line management system that allows for more personalised support, particularly where staff have new or existing underlying health conditions
- Develop a robust referral system to Employee Healthcare to support staff appropriately
- Promote self-referral to Employee Healthcare, CareFirst or Schools Advisory Service
- Share information about appropriate external wellbeing initiatives
- Trial health and wellbeing initiatives in school (e.g. Zumba, mindfulness, termly walks)
- Offer whole school information sessions covering a range of issues relating to health and wellbeing (e.g. information on menopause, supporting children with additional needs)
- Develop leadership through appropriate coaching training
- Share and embed a thorough Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

- Demonstrate a commitment to equality through fair recruitment and reasonable adjustments in work
- Host termly staff fora around Wellbeing and EDI to promote staff voice

Key Performance Indicators:

- Staff sickness levels will continue to reduce
- Staff retention will increase
- Staff survey results will demonstrate a positive workforce

## **Pupils**

Schools are key to the promotion of mental health and wellbeing among young people. Children and young people spend a considerable amount of time at school during a critical period for the development of their personality and socio-emotional competences. This is in line with a more holistic vision of education, which recognises that children and adolescents need a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional competences to achieve positive outcomes in school and in life.

Such an approach recognises the social, emotional and physical needs of children and young people and includes wellbeing and mental health as a key learning goal. The link between academic and socio-emotional learning has been clearly underlined by empirical evidence, including neuroscientific research, demonstrating that learning is a relational and emotional process. Addressing learners' wellbeing is therefore key to raising educational outcomes.

### **Aim:**

**We aim to significantly reduce pupil anxiety across school, embedding effective restorative practice and early intervention and therapy support to promote pupil serenity and positive attitudes to learning.**

Our priorities:

- To implement specialist provision, therapy and intervention to sustainably improve all areas, including using external professionals and commissioned services to have a demonstrative positive impact on pupils
- To ensure communication does not become a barrier to supporting pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing
- To embed restorative practices, to reduce anxiety and physical interventions, as part of wider provision across school
- To reduce instances of bullying across school, ensuring all pupils feel safe and supported in school
- To provide personalised curriculum for identified pupils to reduce the impact and barriers of the SEMH need to accessing an appropriate curriculum
- To promote positive self-esteem in our pupils

To achieve these aims we will:

- Develop clear roles and responsibilities within the intervention team and create stronger links between class teams and intervention
- Expand and refine the resources and environment to ensure all needs are met
- Support the Therapy, Pastoral and Intervention team to provide CPD appropriately to ensure all needs are met
- Deliver targeted in-class interventions in key classes and 1:1 with identified pupils and upskill class staff
- Display and discuss the Southgate Way and core values, so pupils feel confident in understanding these
- Ensure effective restorative practices take place following incidents to help pupils to develop greater emotional intelligence
- Develop a new anti-bullying policy alongside key stakeholders
- Ensure tracking of any bullying incidents so early intervention can take place

- Promote pupil safety through regular access to high quality and comprehensive Relationship Education or Sex and Relationship Education
- Develop pupil understanding of contextual safeguarding and safety in the community
- Continue to seek pupil voice through School Council and curriculum impact surveys
- Explore the introduction of Pupil Wellbeing Warriors to encourage peer support as part of our commitment to personal development
- Develop specialism areas within the pastoral team (e.g. bereavement, anti-bullying, sexualised behaviours)
- Employ the use of external schemes to support explicit teaching of emotional wellbeing and mental health (e.g. MyHappyMind, Pol-Ed)

Key Performance Indicators:

- Decrease in the number of Stage 1, 2 or 3 days experienced by pupils
- Decrease in the number of physical interventions
- Positive responses in pupil voice surveys
- Decrease in the number of bullying incidents across school
- Case studies will demonstrate the positive impact of interventions

## **Families and Wider Community**

We recognise that the additional needs of our pupils can present extra challenges for the families and carers who form a vital part of the Southgate community.

Furthermore, the geographical spread of our community can mean that face to face contact between home and school can pose an added barrier to communication and support.

To counteract this, the school employs a Family Liaison Officer, who works together with the school's own therapy and pastoral teams, as well as with external services, to help to provide the varying support that our families need.

### **Aim:**

**We aim to enable families, carers and the wider community to understand their own emotional wellbeing and mental health needs and equip them with the necessary tools to support themselves and the children in their care.**

Our priorities:

- To extend our therapy offer to share key information with parents and carers
- To provide opportunities for parents/carers to connect with external services
- To promote greater communication between homes and school to ensure parents/carers feel well supported
- To enable parents/carers to better understand their own emotional wellbeing and mental health needs, and to recognise and support these in their children

To achieve these aims we will:

- Develop our offer of parent sessions (e.g. sensory coffee morning, introduction to Makaton, Team Teach for families), including investigating the possibility of offsite events to broaden our reach
- Share links with appropriate external agencies to provide appropriate support
- Explore involvement of parents/carers in plans relating to emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Introduce wellbeing information at parent/carer events, e.g. parent/carer evenings
- Encourage a culture of openness around emotional wellbeing and mental health, to help to remove any stigma
- Explore opportunities for parents/carers to seek peer support from other members of the wider Southgate community to encourage an even greater support beyond the school gates
- Develop an offer that welcomes parents/carers for future pupils to help them feel supported through their child's transition
- Assess and improve accessibility for parents/carers to both events and information

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase in engagement with parent/carer events



- Parent/carer survey responses will have an increasingly positive voice