Willow Nursery School Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act places a responsibility on Willow Nursery School to provide a safe system of work and that extends to protecting the general well-being of staff members. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Willow Nursery School commitment to providing a safe system of work is reflected in the culture, organisation and management of Willow Nursery School.

This document should be read in conjunction with other relevant workplace policies.

Willow Nursery School commits to ensuring that:

Safe workplace

• Staff work in premises that are safe and fit for purpose;

• There is a zero-tolerance approach to violence or the threat of violence from pupils, parents and colleagues;

• Staff are protected from harassment by pupils;

• Staff are protected from bullying by colleagues and management;

• Staff are protected, as far as is reasonably practical, from pressure from Ofsted, local or central government;

• An annual anonymous survey of staff is conducted to determine whether those who have experienced harassment/bullying in the workplace are reluctant to report the same for fear of victimisation. The survey may form part of an annual stress risk assessment;

• Whenever working practices must change, the reasons why are explained to staff;

• Contributions from staff are recognised and valued, and positive suggestions are acted upon;

• There is consideration of whether staff are currently doing work which does not need to be done or is already being done elsewhere.

• There is a review of systems for process driven work (e.g. record keeping, year books, lesson planning).

Fair and equal treatment

• All staff are valued and not unreasonably judged;

• Management is live to the issue of conscious and unconscious bias in the workplace, their effects on disadvantaged groups and the steps which may be taken to mitigate them;

• Reasonable steps are taken to reduce the risk of unconscious bias in management decision making.

Clear procedures, roles and responsibilities

• Staff are consulted on the policies and practices of the workplace;

• Every staff member understands the part that other staff members play at the school;

• There is a clear definition of roles and responsibilities where possible;

• Individuals are not overloaded with responsibility;

• Where areas of work and responsibility overlap, individuals are clear about who should take the lead;

• Staff members are asked to undertake only those roles and responsibilities they have the skills, training and experience to undertake;

• Where two or more managers direct or influence the work of a colleague, those managers keep each other regularly informed of the tasks they have delegated to avoid overloading an individual with work or creating conflicting expectations;

• Staff can exercise professional autonomy in the workplace;

• Staff members are provided with a revised job description when their roles and responsibilities change materially.

Personal and social time

* Staff have a space in which they may socialise during breaks, share ideas, hold meetings, discuss projects, catch-up with personal emails, arrange medical appointments etc;
* Staff members do not regularly forgo lunchbreaks/eat lunch at their desks;
* The hours worked by individual staff members are tracked;
* Directed time is clearly defined in letters of appointment;
* Social events are organised from time to time. We usually have a staff Christmas Meal as a yearly social event. Staff arrange events at other times throughout the year, which have in the past included: Bowling, Theatre Trips, Bingo nights, Meals out,
* Social champion: A discussion was had around appointing a member of staff to be our Social Champion. It was felt that this appointment was not necessary, as different staff have different interests and a variety of staff are happy to arrange social events.
* It is not expected that all staff attend all events, again this depends upon personal preferences.

Stress risk assessments

• Levels of stress in the workplace are monitored and its effects on the workforce are reviewed annually;

• School and college leaders are encouraged to build processes in the workplace which assist in the detection of both individual and organisational stress;

• Diagnostic tools are made available for this purpose.

Staff members commit to ensuring that:

Support from colleagues (including managers)

• Where good work is the result of group effort, they acknowledge everyone who contributed;

• They are supportive of colleagues who are experiencing or have experienced ill-health, particularly hidden illnesses;

• They share important work-related information with all relevant colleagues and not just with friends.

The school staff have a whatsapp group, that every staff member is part of. This technology allows messages to be shared to all quickly. It also allows staff to check in on each other, particularly during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Additionally, management commits to:

• Promoting open dialogue and involving staff in decision making;

• Ensuring good, clear communication and developing trust;

• Encouraging peer support and buddy systems (e.g. health and wellbeing buddies);

• Encouraging colleagues to respect diversity at work;

• Setting realistic expectations of themselves and others;

• Discouraging working in isolation – group working will be the norm;

• Arranging regular catch-ups with those they line manage and using them as an opportunity to normalise conversations about mental health;

• Anticipating the needs of colleagues who appear to be struggling and asking them whether they want direct support;

• Ensuring that colleagues who struggle to cope at work have early access to occupational health services;

• Modifying performance management practices (e.g. stop learning walks and drop-ins) where a colleague has been, or is, experiencing ill-health;

• Responding positively if told by someone that they are stressed, or that they cannot undertake additional duties;

• Treating people as individuals and changing their management style to suit the needs of the staff member and the task;

Monitoring and Review

The governing body and headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of this policy annually. In developing, applying and evaluating this policy Willow Nursery School will monitor the impact on staff by reference to their protected characteristics.

**Reviewed: Autumn 2021**

**Next Review: Autumn 2022**