

Whitehouse Primary School Policy to Manage Staff Well-being

October 2020

**Review October 2022
Updated May 2021**

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

(World Health Organization)

The biggest asset our school has is its staff; the biggest asset they have is their health and wellbeing. This policy is intended to outline the ways in which we can work together to make sure our school is a safe, caring and happy place to work, which, if we get it right, can help to enhance individual wellbeing, through personal fulfilment and professional identity. This in turn will benefit our pupils and our community.

We spend more daylight hours in school than at home, so it is important that we can have ownership of many of the decisions that affect us and that we have agency in our working lives. We can do this, even in areas where we have no choices about what we do (e.g. SATs, or deadlines for assessments), by taking responsibility for these actions and approaching the tasks in our own way. All our work should be healthy, safe and supportive and governors have a responsibility to ensure our practices contribute to staff wellbeing. This includes monitoring staff absence and regularly requesting feedback from staff governors about wellbeing. Governors recognise the importance of the wellbeing of staff in our school.

We advocate a holistic, proactive approach to managing health and rehabilitation issues at work, with everyone working together, staff, leadership team, governors, HR, occupational health and health and safety professionals, to:

- tackle the causes of workplace injury and ill health, including stress and anxiety
- address the impact of health on employees' capacity to work, providing support for those with disabilities and health conditions and rehabilitation
- promote wellbeing to help improve the general health of the workforce

Where requested, confidentiality can be important in establishing trusting relationships and rehabilitation, providing the safety of the person, or others is not compromised. However, where possible, staff are encouraged to share their mental and/or physical needs in an open way with colleagues, to maximise support networks available. This practice also helps to de-stigmatise issues related to health conditions in the workplace.

Mental Health Champion

Rachel Woods

All staff should be mental health champions, but it is important for the staff to have a named person to maintain the importance of mental health issues and to champion their interest. A member of staff will be agreed each two years by self-nomination and an interview process by the Inclusion Team. This role will be to champion mental health for the school community, not to be directly responsible for it. The role will include promotion of well-being materials; being a 'listening ear'; acting as a signpost for other services or professionals, relaying ideas and information to senior staff that could further improve wellbeing in school; having oversight of school improvement plans to ensure that mental health promotion has a key place; help to reduce barriers to mental health in school by promoting positive language in relation to mental health.

To support the well-being of our staff our priorities are:

Language – to be mindful of the language we use to talk mental health at all times

Communication – to encourage individuals to communicate their needs and concerns

Relationships – to promote good relationships between staff through training, time and talking

Kindness – to promote the importance of treating people as we would want to be treated ourselves

Tolerance – for different ways people think and act, providing our goal of ensuring good outcomes for pupils is

Respect – for how a staff member may want to manage their own mental health or health, providing this doesn't impact on the safeguarding of our pupils.

Harmony – to promote ways of being with each other, including times when opinions differ, or when a person becomes upset with another.

Equality – to ensure all staff having an equal right to well-being in the workplace

Trust – to develop a supportive process in which staff can trust, for the continued wellbeing of staff

Empowerment – to ensure staff members feel a part of the decisions which affect them. This includes consultation on key decisions which affect individual staff, including policies and a genuine right to reply and appeal on decisions which may have an adverse effect.

Balance – to recognise the demands of workload on staff and to find ways to ensure a good balance over a school year, between work that is necessary for good outcomes for pupils and time to enjoy when not at work.

What works well at Whitehouse Primary?

- We all talk to each other and are very good at being 'aware' of each other.
- Being able to go to our own children's assemblies and sports' days, where possible
- If someone notices someone isn't 'quite right' but they don't feel they can approach them they'll flag it to a colleague who is closer to them.
- Learning support staff and class teachers know when colleague's 'snowed under time' is here (testing, data, reports etc) and release them or enable dedicated time out of class.
- Inset Days offer a variety of time for report writing, and time to learn.
- Staff encouraged and funded to undertake professional development where it is useful.
- We laugh a lot.
- We share a philosophy of education.
- Diverse characters and personalities with a shared dedication and commitment.
- Staff can communicate concerns in person, email or text.
- We work together towards a school improvement plan, which staff contribute to the formation and the evaluation.
- Regular briefings and communication accessible to all staff
- Shared events, such as end of year parties and occasional trips out- and cake!

During the Covid pandemic we have strengthened our bonds, with shared social media connections and groups, video calls and working as a team, within our well-staffed bubbles.

How do we know?

- Low sickness rate amongst staff for minor illness.
- Occupational Health offered to support our staff to return to work or manage health conditions.
- Many individuals are able to talk openly about their mental health/and or personal situations and find solutions to aid their wellbeing.
- Staff are able to be honest when they are finding a professional situation difficult, knowing colleagues will offer solutions.
- Excellent staff retention. Staff rarely leave Whitehouse
- Staff generally feel valued, as reported in our staff survey.
- **'You have created an ethos in which everyone is valued and their individual uniqueness is celebrated.'** Ofsted 2017.

- Posters up around school to support wellbeing of pupils and staff.

What would we want to happen to further improve staff wellbeing?

- Agree a work email free time zone at weekends.
- Revisit our understanding of free speech; i.e. it is okay to disagree without it being deemed as negative.
- Develop our debrief procedures for staff where there has been an incident or altercation with another adult (e.g. a parent or neighbour).
- Further improve induction for new staff
 - Maintain and develop communication networks between staff

Where can I go for support and guidance?

- Ask for referral to Occupational Health Services through NTC.
 - Wellbeing for Education Return programme used at WPS
 - **Mental Health First Aid** NTC funded initiative for longer term impact over next couple of years so that every school will have MFHA champion is used.
 - <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/august/place2be-launches-free-online-training-programme-for-50-000-uk-teachers/> for online support and training for teachers
- QWELL- Mental Health App. www.qwell.io is a **digital emotional wellbeing service** commissioned by **North Tyneside Council** and delivered by Kooth Plc. Qwell is freely available now to **ALL Primary, Secondary, Special and FE staff across North Tyneside**. Staff have faced particular challenges throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and as we gradually ease out of lockdown it is important to continue looking after ourselves and one another. Qwell provides a **safe, anonymous and confidential way** for education staff to access emotional wellbeing and early intervention support that looks to cover a range of mental health issues. QWELL is accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, and the online counselling team are available from **12 noon to 10pm Monday-Friday and 6pm-10pm at weekends, 365 days a year**, providing a much needed out-of-hours service for emotional support in an accessible and convenient way. The service is **free to users** and requires **no referral**, instead only requiring the user to set up an account on the website. Other useful support includes **self-help resources, peer to peer support, access to a daily journal and measured goals**.

- To see what Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) are available in your area, go to www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological%20therapies%20%28IAPT%29/LocationSearch/10008. By putting in your postcode you can see what services are available, including iTalk, and which services have self-referral.

Other useful websites are:

www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/

www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk

www.Mindfulteachers.org www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxietydepression/improve-mental-wellbeing/

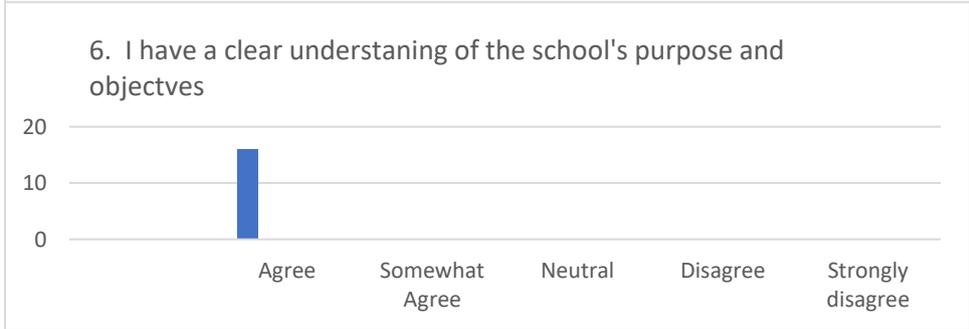
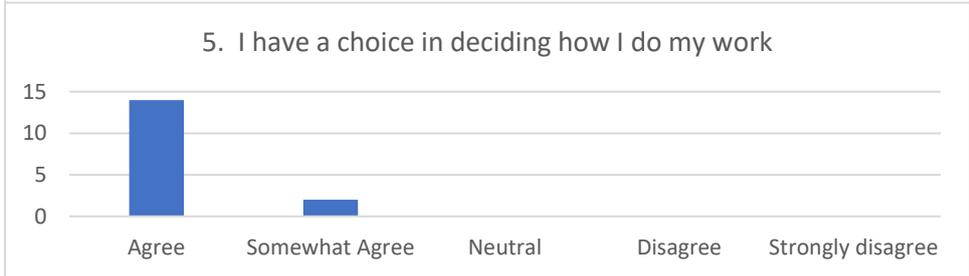
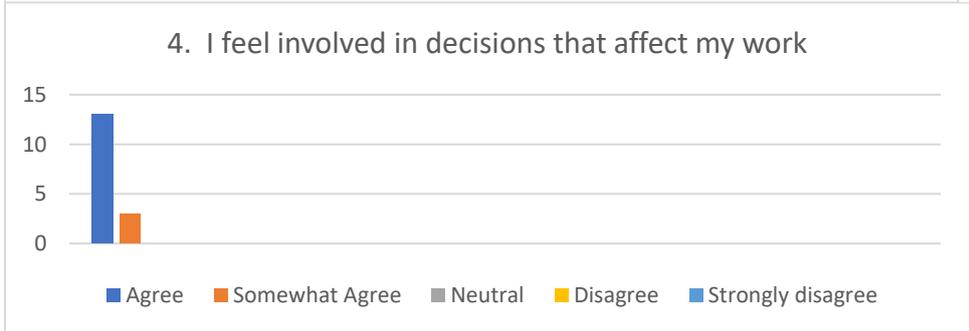
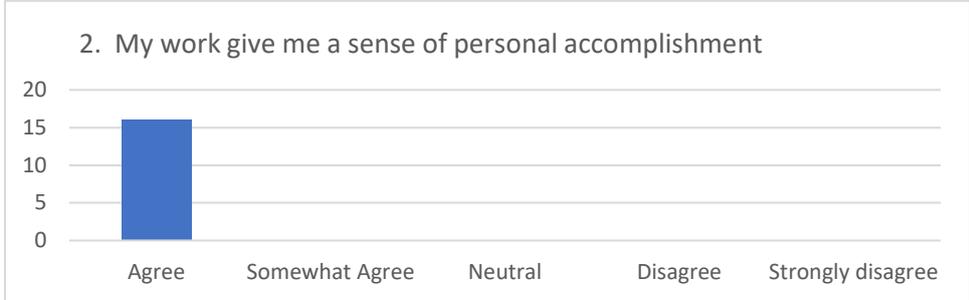
www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/helping-you/telephone-support-counselling

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/ www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/how-to-manage-and-reduce-stress.pdf

Appendix A

Staff Wellbeing Survey Results 2020

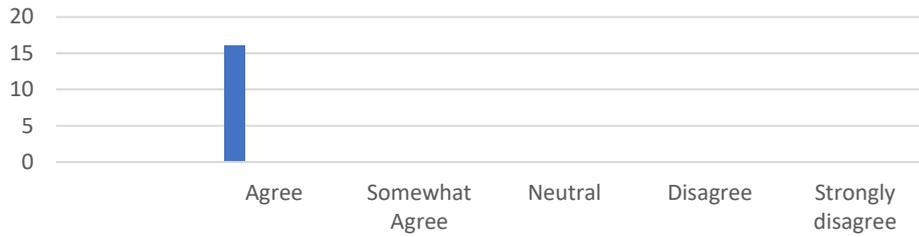
In all, 16 out of 24 members of staff responded to the survey.



7. I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to



8. I feel valued for the work that I do



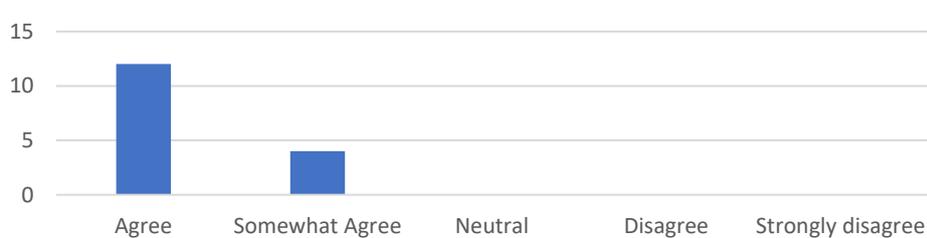
9. In my job, I am clear about what is expected of me



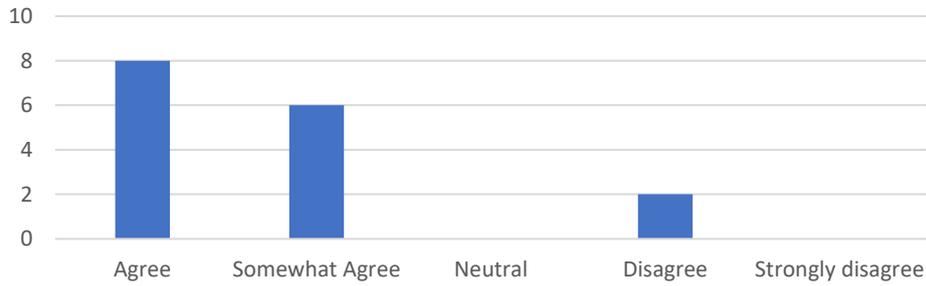
10. I have the skills and tools I need to do my job effectively



11. I have an acceptable work load

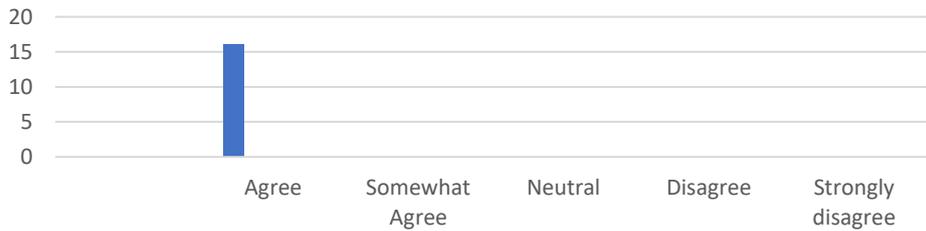


12. I achieve a good balance between my work and my private life



No further comments were added to explain why two people disagreed about a good work/life balance

13. I feel that this school as a whole is managed well



14. I feel that change is managed well here



15. The school demonstrates a commitment to employee wellbeing



16. The leaders in our school genuinely care about our wellbeing





Staff comments

What Promotes your wellbeing?

Maintaining and sharing a sense of positivity around myself and others.

Being positive about my role.

In these testing times, wellbeing is both emotional and physical, I feel, as a school, we are protected as a consequence of actions carried out by the school.

I feel that the work-load isn't excessive. Colleagues support each other and the head has an open-door policy for all staff.

Being trusted to get on with my job.

Having a TA and co-teacher; having a safe, well-organised school; seeing the head come round daily checking everything is OK.

Having a Head that is approachable and I know that whatever is said to her is totally confidential.

Having work friends that are supportive, with a great sense of humour.

Happiness at work and home. Sleep, healthy eating and exercise.

As a staff we are clearly signposted to any resources/advice that may be helpful to us. There is also an entrenched ethos of openness and kindness towards staff that is strongly lead by the Headteacher and SLT. As a staff and as an individual, we do not hesitate to speak to someone if we need further support. Our personal lives and needs that may arise due to them are very much respected and supported.

Feeling appreciated and work/life balance.

Knowing that if I have a worry, I can talk about it and feel listened to. The Wellbeing Mentor makes it know that they are there to help and support on a regular basis. They regularly ask I I'm OK and what can they do to help.

How does your school support your wellbeing within your role?

I know who to talk to if I need support and I know that the Well Being Mentor will do all they can to help and support me to make thing better.

By showing appreciation for hard work put in.

We are encouraged to take opportunities to access training to support our responsibilities and class based roles and we have also been given time to develop our knowledge of how our subject are taught across the school.

Working within a supportive team.

The trust that we are given that we will do our jobs to the best of our ability and do the best for the children in our care.

We are asked for our input and opinions and feel valued in our role.

Ensuring that I am happy in my role and the Head will support when and where she can when you are struggling.

I know that if I am struggling in my role there are member of staff I can talk to, members of the SLT and also the Head. This is then properly dealt with.

Being in a team of 3 within our bubble – a very privileged position.

Regular checks and updates by Head, forward planning for possible changes.

Classroom and equipment good quality and well maintained.

All required resources available.

Very supportive Head, SLT and very good atmosphere in school.

No strict school day timings dictating when to arrive or leave.

Open and caring environment, where concerns are listened to and acted upon.

Opportunities for training. Support from colleagues and Head.

Rachel and SLT staff at Whitehouse are supportive, helpful and always at hand if needed.

What does wellbeing mean to you?

Feeling safe, fulfilled and seeing that the Head and SLT are doing everything possible to make work manageable and to see that children and staff are safe, happy and engaged.

Working and maintaining a healthy, motivated and focused mind-set.

Being in a position to be able to carry out your role. Feel supported. Being given opportunity to carry out your role effectively.

To feel happy to come to work where my contribution is valued.

To feel confident and comfortable at work.

Feeling support and feeling as though I have a work/life balance.

Feeling happy to come to work, knowing that I am able to do my job well within reasonable working hours, having close friends on staff that you can laugh with, rant to and ask for support and advice.

Feeling safe, which I do, and also finding the balance between work and home life. This is something I occasionally find difficult; but probably due to my own inability to switch off sometimes.

Wellbeing at work means a respect for each person and their unique needs as an individual. It means listening to each other whilst also having high standards of expectations for the school and its pupils.

Feeling positive, enthusiastic and happy to come to school each day.

Feeling part of a team.

Having a good work/life balance.

Wellbeing means a variety of things such as work/life balance, feeling valued, valuing others' opinions and ideas, supporting each other and knowing that myself and others genuinely care that everyone is okay. Knowing that I have the support and resources to teach what needs to be taught and working in a happy environment.

Being happy to come to work everyday.

Any further comments or suggestions

Given the recent changes due to Covid, I think we adapt and cope very well with change at Whitehouse.

Rachel consistently shows gratitude for our work ethic, she ensure colleagues feel valued and supported. She shares school goals with us and encourages a sense of teamwork across the school. Her commitment towards keeping us safe during this pandemic has been outstanding. Thank you.

The pandemic has led to so many changes, Rachel and the SLT have worked hard to ensure that the school is safe for everyone to return. She is constantly checking everyone is OK and happy to listen.

It is re-assuring that she doesn't pretend to have all of the answers but is doing her up-most to keep the school safe and morale high – which it is.

Having heard from various sources the difficulties being encountered in other schools, I want RW to Know that she has done a fantastic job keeping our chins up in these trying circumstance. Very lucky to have her as Head.