



Employee Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

This policy has been produced for GEMS FirstPoint School, when 'The School' is referred to in this policy it is solely GEMS FirstPoint School that is being referred to.

Review Cycle	1 Year
Last Review	November 2023
Next Review	November 2024



Introduction

The School has developed an employee wellbeing policy to manage its obligations to maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all staff. It covers the School's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of mental health, and School commitment to handling individual issues.

Our Wellbeing Vision Crafted by Students

We aim for our school to be a comfortable, happy and joyful environment where we are kind to each other. We aim for our school to feel like home, where we all show understanding towards one another and where **everyone feels included**.

Objectives

The aim of this policy is to describe the School's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of employees in its broadest, holistic sense, setting out how the School fulfils its legal obligations, the responsibilities of different functions and specialists and the range of services available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing. The School recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving employees' ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and School performance.

School commitment

The School has legal obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to reducing safety risks, this means operating the School in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.

The School will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work.

Responsibilities

School

The School has a duty of care to employees to ensure health at work. The School will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.

Line managers

Line managers will put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee wellbeing, particularly from negative pressure at work. For example, managers should ensure that employees understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support from managers and team members to do their job. Managers must also familiarise themselves with the School's policies on tackling inappropriate behaviour to support staff, for example on bullying and harassment issues.

In particular, line managers must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by:

- ensuring that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications.
- keeping employees in the team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload.
- ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management.
- making sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams; and



Human resources

The HR department will develop School-wide policies and procedures to protect the wellbeing of employees, assist line managers in supporting individuals, and liaise as appropriate with occupational health and other medical professionals, with the object of helping employees to maintain good health.

Medical Professionals

Medical professionals provide guidance on enabling staff to return to work, after experiencing health problems. This guidance will always be followed by the HR department.

Medical professionals may be consulted where required to help play a part in developing rehabilitation plans for employees returning to work after absences related to ill health, and work with GPs and line managers on designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful. Medical professionals may also design and implement health promotion and lifestyle behaviour management programmes, including initiatives on managing pressure and ongoing health conditions at work.

Employees

Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example, in relation to diet) and informing the School if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee during discussions with managers, the HR department or the occupational health service is treated in confidence.

It is prudent for employees to consider approaches they may take to ensure their own mental health as well as physical health. This can be achieved in the following ways – (5 ways to wellbeing at work)

- Connect - making time for relationships with friends, family, colleagues, and elsewhere within your community.
- Be active - exercising, physical activity and enjoying good health.
- Take notice - being aware of the world around you and reflecting on your experiences. Practicing gratitude and displaying appreciation
- Keep learning - trying new things and challenging yourself.
- Give - doing something nice for others, volunteering, making yourself and others happy.

Staff Wellbeing Committee

The Staff Wellbeing Committee is led by staff, for staff, and has three main aims –

- Ensure GEMS FirstPoint School is an inclusive, welcoming and celebratory environment for all staff.
- Arrange social events and functions to promote collegiality among the staff body.
- Engage in reviews and development plans to support the direction of the school – for example, a school workload review.

Possible warning signs, which all staff should be aware of include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn.
- changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of enthusiasm for vocation
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol

- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope



If you have concerns about a colleague, please do speak with them about your concerns, you may also wish to contact a member of the Executive Leadership Team, school counsellor or the school HR Manager for support. We are all here to help and look out for one another.

Health promotion initiatives

GEMS FirstPoint School provides training programmes that relate to health promotion. Line managers and employees are expected to engage in such training when offered.

The programmes may cover:

- stress management
- disability awareness
- bullying and harassment
- physical activity and fitness
- mental wellbeing

Training and communications

Line managers and employees, as part of on-going professional development, will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of School change.

Managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises. All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications, and School-wide methods. The school will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

Data protection

When managing an employee's health, the school processes personal data collected in accordance with GEMS data protection practices. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the school's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure.

Related Policies / Procedures / Groups

- Absence Procedure
- Professional Development Programmes
- School Counsellor
- School Medical Room

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a colleague is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should alert a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Policy Status

This policy is not intended to form part of an employee's contract of employment and the school reserves the right to amend it at any time. This policy will be monitored by the Executive Leadership Team and reviewed / updated by HR as appropriate and at least yearly.

Useful Resources

- [Education Support - the mental health and wellbeing charity for education staff](#)
- <http://schoolwell.co.uk/>
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/useful-resources/>
- [If you are struggling with any aspect of school or home life, have you spoken with your line manager, member of the Executive Leadership Team, school counsellor or the school HR Manager? We are all here to help](#)

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

