

# Department for Education Education Staff Wellbeing Charter

## Prioritise staff mental health

### In adopting the Department for Education Charter

#### We commit to:

- **Tackle mental health stigma** within the organisation, promoting an open and understanding culture.
- **Give the same consideration and support to mental health as physical health**, including in the management of staff absence.
- 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.

### Examples of what we currently do

#### We have:

- Provide an **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** with the Schools Advisory Service (SAS), including 24/7 GP support.
- Provide weekly **Mindfulness** sessions, **relaxation webinars** and a **4 week mindfulness course**
- Provide **Counselling sessions** and support for all staff through Occupational Health and our EAP.
- Trained **Wellbeing Champions and Qualified Mental Health First Aiders** across the Trust.
- **Stress management procedures** in place in all schools support our staff.

### Wellbeing development commitments

2025 - 26

#### We will:

- Review the **Absence Policy** to ensure mental health is included as well as physical health.
- Provide **signposting** for schools to accredited supervision providers via the Central Team.

**Give staff the support they need to take responsibility for their own and other people's wellbeing**

### **In adopting the Department for Education Charter**

**We commit to:**

- **Empower staff to take ownership of their own wellbeing and look out for the wellbeing of others.** This will include ensuring that all staff are familiar with the different dimensions of wellbeing, including **mental health, financial wellbeing and physical wellbeing.**
- Ensure that staff **know how to access appropriate guidance, support and tools,** and that their use is encouraged throughout the organisation.

### **Examples of what we currently do**

**We have:**

- All staffrooms have wellbeing boards advertising our **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** and **Headspace**
- Provide summary of **wellbeing offer on SharePoint.**
- Share a folder of wellbeing links and resources on SharePoint on **physical and mental health, finance, fitness and nutrition.**
- Ensure **induction** process has full details of wellbeing offer for new staff.

### **Wellbeing development commitments 2025 - 26**

**We will:**

- Redevelop our staff **SharePoint** area to provide clearer access to our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and wellbeing links and resources.

**Give managers access to the tools and resources they need to support the wellbeing of those they line manage**

**In adopting the Department for Education Charter**

**We commit to:**

- **Work to provide managers with tools, resources and training to support their staff.** We will not, however, expect managers to provide professional wellbeing support for which they have no professional training, and will ensure that there are clear routes in place to escalate for further support.

**Examples of what we currently do**

**We have:**

- Heads/School Business Managers/HR teams have access to resources to support staff through the **SharePoint & HR folders as well as signposting staff to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).**
- A **Staff Wellbeing** section is included within our **Staff Handbook.**

**Wellbeing development commitments 2025- 26**

**We will:**

- Further develop the **Staff Wellbeing** section of the **Staff Handbook** to include guidance checklists.
- Work towards developing a **Handbook for Managers** to support with those they manage.
- Train managers in dealing with **parental complaints** and **difficult conversations.**
- Reprocure **occupational health service** to secure supportive guidance for managers and value for money

**Establish a clear communications policy with our staff**

**In adopting the Department for Education Charter**

**We commit to:**

- Provide clear guidance to all stakeholders (internal and external) on remote and out-of-school hours working, including when it is and isn't 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.

**Examples of what we currently do**

**We have:**

- Ensure leaders have an email signature stating there are **no expectations for staff to answer emails out of hours.**
- **Email protocols** included in the **Staff Handbook** for only emailing 8am-6pm, Monday - Friday

**Wellbeing development commitments 2025 - 26**

**We will:**

- Consider whether there is a need to **introduce further communications protocols** to support all colleagues in switching off after working hours, reflecting changes in the **Workload Charter.**

## Give staff a voice in decision-making

### In adopting the Department for Education Charter

#### We commit to:

- **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 they are able to share their experience confidently and safely.

### Examples of what we currently do

#### We have:

- **Good relations with our trade unions**, having regular and additional adhoc JCC meetings.
- **Survey colleagues regularly** for their input and feed back results to the Staff Wellbeing Group and all schools via their Staff Wellbeing Group Noticeboard.

### Wellbeing development commitments 2025 - 26

#### We will:

- Continue to survey staff at school level on their thoughts and ideas, **acting where possible on suggestions received** e.g. PPA time preferences.
- Implement long term service awards as a results of staff voice.

**Drive down unnecessary workload**

**In adopting the Department for Education Charter**

**We commit to:**

- **Work proactively to drive down unnecessary workload**, making use of available tools (such as the Workload Reduction Toolkit for schools).

**Examples of what we currently do**

**We have:**

- Ensured we **welcome challenge** as this promotes positive change.
- Ensured we **support our leaders and staff** when dealing with change.
- Worked collaboratively on new **initiatives and training** to reduce the workload burden for all.
- Through **trustwide working** and **communication of practice**, we regularly **share good practice** between staff, leaders and governors **across the Trust and between MATS nationally**.

**Wellbeing development commitments 2025 - 26**

**We will:**

- Continue to **listen to staff voice** through our staff questionnaires and feedback.
- Review **Workload Charter** to ensure a **fair and reasonable workload for all**.
- Train leaders and school staff in the **use of AI and new data dashboards** to support a reduction in workload.

## Champion flexible working and diversity

### In adopting the Department for Education Charter

#### We commit to:

- 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 wellbeing. We will work to **promote diversity – eliminating discrimination, and advancing equality of opportunity**.

### Examples of what we currently do

#### We have:

- Ensure our **Flexible Working Policy** is clear and accessible to all staff requiring adjustments to their contracted working hours and patterns.
- **Supported colleagues with leave to attend significant events**, e.g. to attend their children(s) graduation ceremonies/wedding of near relative/close friend.
- Embedded our **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy** and implemented this from advertising of vacancies through to employment of our colleagues.
- Introduced compulsory **equality, diversity and inclusion training** for all staff.
- Ensured our recruitment processes **eliminate any risk of discrimination**.

### Wellbeing development commitments 2025 - 26

#### We will:

- Ensure all staff are aware of their **entitlements** and **how to apply** for flexible working.
- Review flexible working requests centrally to **ensure fair application** of the policy.
- Promote HET as **one employer** when considering **flexible working** requests.

## Create a good behaviour culture

### In adopting the Department for Education Charter

#### We commit to:

- Working 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 staff 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 and SEND issues.

### Examples of what we currently do

#### We have:

- Produced a **template Behaviour Policy** setting out the culture, rewards and sanctions for each school to support good behaviour.
- Ensured **positive links with sector experts** for advice, guidance and support.
- Supported schools with **managing challenging behaviour** and **implementing structures and systems** for the benefit of all staff and pupils.
- **SEND conferences** support the wider sector with a range of **training materials** to support children with special educational needs.

### Wellbeing development commitments 2025 - 26

#### We will:

- Continue to provide staff with **additional CPD** to help them meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.
- Develop a **traded service** to support schools with **Inclusion**.

**Support staff to progress in their careers**

### **In adopting the Department for Education Charter**

**We commit to:**

- Ensuring 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.

### **Examples of what we currently do**

**We have:**

- **Run a wide variety of CPD opportunities** including promoting the full range of NPQs.
- **Run a Teaching and Learning Ambassador Programme** for internal progression of teaching staff.
- Provided a trust-wide **Teacher Development Programme** to support all teachers to meet the Teacher Standards.
- Provided support staff with **training, regular updates and networking opportunities**.
- Encouraged colleagues to make themselves available for development, secondment and promotion by internally **advertising all vacancies on SharePoint**.
- **Supported apprenticeships** for existing colleagues and new joiners.
- Implemented a **new apprenticeship training scheme for Teaching Assistants** who wish to undertake specific training in SEND.

### **Wellbeing development commitments 2025 - 26**

**We will:**

- Deliver a **development programme for 'Aspiring Headteachers'**.
- Provide a range of **CPD to teaching assistants** to support their classroom pedagogy.
- Continue to develop a range of **new apprentice opportunities**.
- **Raise aspirations** across the workforce by **celebrating success and showcasing individuals**.

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

### In adopting the Department for Education Charter

#### We commit to:

- Ensuring that all those with strategic decision-making responsibility (including where governors and trustees) should collaborate to **develop a sub-strategy specifically for protecting leader mental health**. This should include access to confidential coaching where needed.

### Examples of what we currently do

#### We have:

- Provided confidential **counselling** through the Employee Assistance Programme Scheme (EAP) for all colleagues.
- Provided confidential **counselling** through our Occupational Health service.
- Provided **external coaching** for leaders within the Trust.
- Delivered **resilience training** for Headteachers.
- Created a **culture of shared responsibility and collaborative working**.

### Wellbeing development commitments 2025 - 26

#### We will:

- Continue to provide '**supervision**' for all school **leaders** in managing the demands of their roles.
- Promote the specific **leadership support** available through our **Employee Assistance Programme** and SharePoint.

**Hold ourselves accountable, including by measuring staff wellbeing**

### **In adopting the Department for Education Charter**

**We commit to:**

- **Measure the wellbeing of staff** using recognised tools and metrics and be transparent about results. We will monitor trends over time, and act in response to changes.
- 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.

### **Examples of what we currently do**

**We have:**

- Tracked and analysed **staff absence trends**, implementing **support and change** where needed.
- **Collected feedback from staff regularly** on topics such as wellbeing and workload.
- Maintained a **Wellbeing Working Group** to work on behalf of schools in developing trust policies and procedures.
- Developed and implemented a **Workload Charter**.
- Developed an **Ethical Leadership Charter**.

### **Wellbeing development commitments 2025 - 26**

**We will:**

- **Develop further survey questionnaires** for colleagues to explore workload and wellbeing culture.
- Refresh the **Wellbeing Charter**.
- Continue to **report to governors on workload and reduction measures**.