

Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School

Staff Wellbeing Policy

Date policy last reviewed: 16/12/2025

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

Last updated: 26/02/2025

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Statement of intent

Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. Preventing stress is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of the school's staff, which remains a key priority. In light of this, the school understands the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause our employees to become stressed.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the school and staff members in supporting wellbeing and promoting mental health, and to advise employees on how to deal with mental health issues and prevent stress.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- DfE (2024) 'Education staff wellbeing charter'
- DfE (2024) 'Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring the school's ethos reflects its commitment to reducing workload and creating a working environment that is focussed, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing.
- Ensuring staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and monitored.
- Ensuring that all school policies are assessed for workload impact.
- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the school and promoting stress as a serious issue rather than a weakness.
- Consulting the headteacher on managing staff stress and promoting wellbeing, including them in any decisions that need to be made.
- Ensuring the headteacher puts measures in place to support staff wellbeing.
- Actively trying to eliminate stressors in the school, e.g. by considering the format and quantity of information it requests from the SLT.
- Ensuring monitoring visits are strategic, focussed and reflective of its monitoring plan, and being clear with staff ahead of the visit about what the focus will be and the information that will be required from them.
- Ensuring all committee meetings are purposeful, focussed, structured and relevant to the school development priorities.
- Developing an annual schedule of work and ensuring work is not duplicated between meetings of committees and the full governing board.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Creating and promoting a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the school.

- Implementing CPD which equips staff with the tools needed to effectively manage stress.
- Developing a sensitive performance management process that is linked to clear job specifications.
- Encouraging staff to take advantage of any initiatives introduced to promote wellbeing and effective working, e.g. employee assistance programme (Appendix 3), peer supervision (Appendix 2), wellbeing action plans (Appendix 4).
- Ensuring that all policies that affect staff wellbeing are properly adhered to and reviewed.
- Authorising any staff absences related to stress and/or mental health issues, as well as granting extended leave when appropriate.
- In the event of stress or mental health related absence; ensuring appropriate signposting is made available to support recovery.
- Monitoring employees' workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring they are not overworked, and providing regular updates regarding absence to the governing board whilst maintaining staff confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Policy.
- Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example for staff.
- Regularly communicating with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
- Enabling the implementation of the recommendations of risk assessments, and wellbeing action plans, considering the causes of stress.
- Ensuring all staff have read and understood this policy.
- Approving reasonable adjustments for members of staff who are struggling with long-term mental health issues.
- Appointing a Senior Mental Health Lead to collaboratively oversee best practice in staff and pupil wellbeing.

The Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) is responsible for:

- Influencing the setting of a school vision which creates a positive wellbeing culture and is underpinned by equality values, a system of accountability, and robust policies and procedures.
- Influencing the school's strategic plan to include objectives linked to improving, supporting and responding to the mental health of staff.
- Influencing the school to have appropriate policies in place that include objectives focussed on meeting staff needs.
- Ensuring, alongside the headteacher, a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing embedded within leadership practice, the curriculum, the school's values and ethos, and the social and physical environment.
- To oversee the provision and support of mental health and wellbeing in school, and to ensure effective links exist with local mental health support services.
- To meet with the headteacher on a regular basis to monitor and review the impact of provision and interventions.
- To work with the headteacher to ensure that appropriate training and initiatives are put in place to support staff.

- Contribute to reporting to the governing board on the successes and areas of improvement in planned interventions, and the resources that are in place.
- Act as a point of contact for staff members regarding mental health and wellbeing for the whole school community.
- Follow up concerns and implement appropriate interventions, including signposting for staff and pupils with mental health problems.
- Review and evaluate the effectiveness of any support initiatives in place.
- To signpost or refer any mental health concerns to appropriate external agencies, as appropriate.
- To maintain knowledge of current Mental Health Services available at Whitley Park Primary School and the wider community.
- To access appropriate CPD in relation to mental health best practice.
- To facilitate a peer supervision provision for staff and actively encourage regular participation.
- To cascade evidence-based training and theory to support a school culture of positive wellbeing.
- To support the negotiation of reasonable adjustments between staff members and their team leaders upon request by acting as an advocate and sharing knowledge on best practice.

The SBM is responsible for:

- Encouraging all staff to attend events and training opportunities that promote wellbeing and health.
- Providing information that helps staff to manage stress effectively.
- Ensuring that regular contact is maintained with members of staff who are absent for long periods of time.
- Ensuring new members of staff have received all the relevant information they require, including the procedures for raising concerns about wellbeing.
- Gathering information in any cases that allow monitoring of this policy, such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - Sickness and absence data
 - Staff turnover
 - Exit interviews
 - Referrals to the counselling service
 - Referrals to other mental health services
 - Grievance cases
 - Harassment cases
- Monitoring all staff absences and reporting this information to the headteacher.

All staff members are responsible for:

- Being able to recognise the early signs of stress or mental health issues in themselves and their colleagues.
- Supporting co-workers if they become stressed, which may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.

- Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and communicating clearly with leaders any barriers to this.
- Promoting a positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the school.
- Being open to discussing stress.
- Reporting honestly about their wellbeing and any incidents of stress, e.g. being overworked.
- Where possible, asking for help when they feel under pressure or stressed.
- Attending events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health.
- Not acting in a manner which endangers themselves or others.
- Undertaking additional training and personal development opportunities.
- Being proactive in seeking advice from team leaders or the SMHL with regards to responding to their own mental health and wellbeing.
- Reporting any concerns, they have about their co-worker's stress and/or mental health to the SMHL or SLT.

3. Identifying warning signs

The school recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and become stressed by different situations and stimuli throughout their working lives. Because of this, it is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues' stress.

The following sources of stress can often be attributed to work:

- Overworking or undertaking work that does not match the employee's skills and abilities.
- Fear of change and trying to cope with change, e.g. advancements in technology.
- Insufficient workload or not being able to use skills.
- Lack of job security.
- Poor relationships with colleagues and a lack of involvement.
- Harassment or bullying.
- Crisis management.
- Behaviour management.
- Not having a long-term plan in place.

The school recognises that home and personal lives can also prove stressful for staff; bereavement, separation, financial and family problems make people more vulnerable to stress at work. It is common that a combination of stress at home and work can make people particularly stressed.

The school will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy workplace.

The school has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress.

All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that can indicate that a person may be having trouble managing stress, and look out for the following indicators when identifying stress in themselves or others:

Behavioural indicators

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in eating habits
- Increased smoking or drinking
- Isolation from friends and family

Physical indicators

- Tiredness
- Indigestion and nausea
- Headaches
- Aching muscles
- Heart palpitations

Mental indicators

- Indecisiveness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory loss
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Low self-esteem

Emotional indicators

- Anger or irritability
- Anxiety
- Hypersensitivity
- Feeling drained and lethargic

4. Actions to support staff

To positively impact wellbeing in the school, the headteacher and governing board will ensure that a whole-school approach is taken.

To help manage wellbeing, the headteacher will:

- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a full life outside of work.
- Make the most of team bonding; using INSET days to build positive relationships, as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing wellbeing easier.
- Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads.
- Reach out to staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. bereavement, allowing sufficient time off and supporting them when they return to work.
- Advocate for the councils chosen employee assistance programme (Appendix 3), regularly monitoring its effectiveness and impact on wellbeing.
- Make available individual supervision services for those identified to have roles requiring additional support (e.g.: DSLs), regularly monitoring its effectiveness and impact on wellbeing.

- Provide protected time for engaging in reflective peer supervision on a termly basis for teachers and emotional literacy practitioners.

To effectively address workload issues and support staff wellbeing, the headteacher, working with the SLT and SMHL, will take the following actions:

- Measure staff wellbeing and identify workload issues by:
 - Conducting staff workload and wellbeing surveys on a **yearly** basis and organising structured conversations about workload with staff.
 - Arranging workshops and drawing together a summary of outcomes from staff surveys and questionnaires.
 - Conducting impact graphing exercises to visually assess where workload issues lie and identify key areas of focus.
- Review the areas of workload that have been identified using a workload impact assessment matrix and producing an evaluation of the school's current workload to highlight the actions that will be taken.
- Address the workload issues that have been identified, e.g. by undertaking a data collection audit and action plan and developing an action plan.
- Implement a Staff Workload Charter to outline the commitment and expectations between the governing board, SLT and school staff regarding the wellbeing and mental health of school staff.
- Evaluate the impact of the actions taken on a **termly** basis, measuring staff wellbeing and identifying new workload issues to address during the next term.

The headteacher will ensure that all changes proposed as a result of the actions outlined above are communicated to all members of staff.

All new members of staff will be provided with a comprehensive induction and their duties regarding their own and their colleagues' wellbeing will be made clear.

The school will adopt a sickness plan which will promote a positive, caring strategy for staff who are returning to work following sick leave.

The school will ensure wellbeing is promoted and stress is prevented through good management practices, including the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure the right candidates are recruited
- CPD procedures to ensure all members of staff have the necessary skills and abilities to undertake the duties required
- Promotion and reward procedures
- Performance management procedures
- Capability and absence management – return to work procedures will ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness
- Suitable adaptations for disability
- Harassment and anti-bullying resources
- Annual surveys to better understand the areas of work that have a negative effect on staff wellbeing

The school recognises that the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter can be used as an effective tool to foster positive wellbeing in the education sector. The school will consider showing its commitment to actively promoting mental health by signing up to the charter to create an enriching culture of mental wellbeing.

5. Self-management

Staff can make changes to avoid and prevent stress and/or poor mental wellbeing, as it is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored.

Staff should be prepared to speak to their team leader or the SMHL if they are struggling with their mental wellbeing, or feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.

Staff are encouraged to take action to manage their own mental wellbeing. These actions could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity and any negative feelings; exercise will also help to clear thoughts and deal with problems more calmly.
- Managing their workload, and establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life.
- Prioritising their workload throughout the workday, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference.
- Avoiding unhealthy habits, such as drinking and smoking.
- Taking advantage of the wellbeing initiatives, training and support offered by the school.
- Speaking to their team leader or the SMHL about any concerns they may have regarding their workload, stress, or mental wellbeing.

6. Reporting procedures

The following member of staff is designated as Senior Mental Health Lead:

- Chloe Owens

If any member of staff wishes to raise a concern about their own or a staff members mental health and wellbeing with 'other' members of staff, the Senior Mental Health Lead may be consulted, if appropriate.

Upon request, the SMHL will provide the member of staff with information about the support that is available to them; this includes both within the school and outside sources. These resources include, but are not limited to:

- Employee Assistance Programme (Appendix 3)
- Wellbeing Action Plan resources (Appendix 4)
- Helplines and therapeutic services (Appendix 5)
- Formal peer supervision opportunities (e.g.: 'staff space (Appendix2)')
- Wellbeing guidance and resources

The SMHL will treat all cases confidentially. Real names of staff will not be used when the SMHL is reporting any necessary information to the headteacher.

In some cases, such as those that directly impact day-to-day activities, or where there is a perceived risk of harm, confidentiality will not be guaranteed. If this is the case, staff will be made aware of the situation.

Where complaints are raised regarding an impact to mental health and wellbeing, there may be cause for this to be escalated to the SLT. In cases where the complaint relates directly to the SMHL staff should report to SLT directly.

The headteacher will decide whether any further action will be taken.

7. Response actions

Where problems with wellbeing arise, the necessary support and appropriate actions will be considered. This may include support from HR advisers and/or external services, e.g. occupational health.

The school will continue to support staff when external services are involved.

Support will be provided to staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances outside of the workplace. The school will direct staff to support, both internal and external, and consider a plan of work and duties that can be managed differently during challenging periods.

Support for staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances within the school will be provided following the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.

8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SMHL, governing board and the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **16/12/2026**.

Staff Workload Charter

Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School

Staff Workload Charter

Our aims

Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School is committed to considering and supporting the wellbeing of all our staff. As part of this commitment, and through a coordinated effort with school staff and leaders, we aim to ensure workload can be managed and reduced.

We recognise that staff workload can become overwhelming, which in turn affects staff wellbeing and prevents a healthy work-life balance. We believe that we have a collective responsibility to ensure working at the school remains manageable, a positive experience, and, above all, enjoyable.

By providing this support, we hope that we can retain and recruit more staff and meet our core values and ethos for helping and caring for one another.

To protect staff wellbeing, we will:

- Ensure staff have a fair and reasonable workload, including policies on marking, planning and data management.
- Provide high-quality training and CPD opportunities that meet the needs of individual staff members.
- Continue to review staff workload and ensure it always remains manageable.

Our commitments

We have agreed the following commitments and expectations between the governing board, SLT and school staff, to demonstrate our support in helping to manage staff workload.

All staff working at the school can expect:

- To work within a clear code of conduct.
- To receive a robust and high-quality induction.
- To be provided with training opportunities relevant to their role and responsibilities.
- To be allocated roles and responsibilities that are linked to their skill set and area of expertise or be provided with appropriate training to upskill and broaden areas of expertise.
- The fair and equal distribution of roles, responsibilities and tasks.
- If required, to collect data using streamlined processes that are beneficial to their work and receive robust training on using the school's data management systems.

- The support of the SLT to provide guidance and advice, and simplify school processes where possible.
- A consistent and fair Behaviour Policy which allows staff to work effectively and be provided with support from the SLT to manage behaviour effectively.
- An agreed communication protocol which outlines the expected response times from colleagues and external communications, e.g. from parents.
- The use of technology to ensure effective and efficient communication, document and data management, and access to information.
- To be provided with access to external support, such as an occupational health or a confidential listening service, if needed.
- To work within an environment where their wellbeing is prioritised and valued.
- All changes to school processes to be communicated clearly and the SLT to provide support with implementation.

In addition to the above, teaching staff at the school can expect:

- A clear curriculum planning scheme that provides flexibility, is fully resourced with high-quality materials and is planned over well-defined blocks of time.
- An agreed policy that ensures all marking undertaken is purposeful and focusses on quality feedback and the impact on pupil outcomes.

The headteacher and the SLT commit to the following:

- Conducting regular activities, e.g. staff surveys, to identify the areas of work that lead to high levels of workload and implementing approaches to reduce this
- Providing staff with **termly** opportunities to discuss areas they feel are creating high levels of workload and how these could be managed
- Implementing practices that allow for meaningful and useful communications to reduce workload
- Supporting ECTs and teachers in the early stages of their careers to adopt efficient work practices and keeping this support under regular review
- Encouraging a workplace culture that promotes a healthy work-life balance
- Making every effort to reduce the number of meetings, ensuring that those that take place are planned effectively and flexibly, and always have a key focus
- Providing staff with relevant training or CPD opportunities in school, including on recognising the early signs of stress
- Ensuring staff are clear about the purpose of marking and ensuring it is meaningful, and that they understand feedback can be given in many forms
- Ensuring the school's workload reduction initiative is included within the SDP and that enough resources are dedicated towards achieving this aim
- Monitoring staff absence levels, patterns and reasons, and using return to work meetings consistently and effectively
- Regularly monitoring the progress of work practices, including curriculum planning, communications, marking and feedback, and data collection, and adapting these where necessary
- Considering the impact of any potential changes to the school's practices before they are implemented and creating a clear implementation plan before changes are agreed

- Communicating changes to the school's practices to all staff and the whole school community, to ensure everyone understands the reasons behind the changes

The governing board commits to the following:

- Ensuring the school's ethos reflects its commitments to reducing workload and creating a working environment that is focussed, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing through the successful management of workload
- Ensuring it receives regular updates regarding absence levels that are broken down into the cause of absence and role of staff
- Making every effort to ensure committee meetings that school staff are expected to attend are purposeful, focussed and structured, and relevant to the school development priorities
- Considering the nature of information requests and being clear about the information needed from the SLT and school staff
- Providing staff with advanced notice of all monitoring visits and informing them of what the focus will be and what information is required
- Working within any policy agreements, including those relating to using technology to reduce workload
- Establishing the role of the Senior Mental Health Lead to support the mental health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils
- Regularly seeking views from staff on the impact of workload and working with the headteacher and SLT to improve any identified issues

Staff Space Handbook

Staff Space

A space to reflect. A space to share. A space to feel heard. A space to connect.

Your wellbeing is important.

'Staff Space' is a Peer Supervision opportunity available to staff at Whitley Park to come together and reflect on the challenges of our roles, connect and support each other in a safe space away from the hustle and bustle of our usual work environment.

GROUP HANDBOOK

TEACHERS



Hello,

Welcome to your Staff Space group. We hope engaging in this opportunity will support your wellbeing by providing a supportive and structured space to regularly reflect on the challenges of your role alongside your peers. It aims to facilitate an intentional space to share experiences in an empathetic and understanding environment; whilst facilitating a shared time to refuel and refocus in readiness for coming challenges.

Staff Space is a peer supervision model and has been designed by staff for staff. As such, we value your continued feedback on the design, structure and impact to ensure it meets the needs of those who take part.

Within this handbook is a guide to the format, expectations and associated processes required for Staff Space to be successful in its aims.

We hope you find it to be a valuable experience...

Confidentiality

Staff Space is a safe space to talk freely about the challenges of your role.

One of the key principles of a rewarding peer supervision experience is to create a safe space where you can fully engage in supportive reflective practice. There are several aspects involved in creating and maintaining this environment. However, as a member of your group you have a responsibility to protect your shared space by maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality.

Anything shared within your group should be treated as confidential unless otherwise stated by that person. The only reason to break confidentiality would be if there was a safeguarding concern around something shared, under which circumstances the usual reporting protocols should be followed by notifying a DSL. If you are concerned about a peer's wellbeing, signposting to staff wellbeing processes and services are detailed on the last page of this handbook.

Your 'Safe Space'

Where: St. Agnes meeting rooms have been provided to create a physical sense of escapism and containment. It is away from the school site so you are able to reflect in a way that is extracted from your usual work environment. It creates a peaceful environment to come as yourself and not be surrounded by pupils or workplace demands.

Who: Where attendance allows, groups will aim to be peer led and without hierarchy. We want you to feel comfortable talking about the challenges of your role with peers who have similar experiences and responsibilities. Although you may be grouped with those from different year groups and provisions, where possible members will be allocated based on shared or equivalent roles.

When: Staff Space meet ups will be after school during the time usually allocated for teacher training. This provides opportunity to fully engage without the pressure of taking you away from your other responsibilities. Using the already allocated training time aims to protect your personal and professional time, whilst enabling access to supervision.

Expectations

For many of you peer supervision will be a new experience. At first it may feel uncomfortable to engage in a formalised activity focused on your wellbeing. It is important to respect each other and take responsibility for maintaining a safe space for all who share in this experience. To support this, here are a series of expectations:

You are expected to be open to the experience and make full use of the time allocated to Staff Space each term. Please arrive on time and leave laptops, notebooks and paperwork behind. Where possible switch phones to do not disturb.

You can expect to have a comfortable and welcoming environment with minimal distractions.

You are expected to communicate with **Unconditional Positive Regard**, a term coined by psychologist, Carl Rogers. It embodies the intention to completely support and accept a person's experiences and perspectives regardless of your own views.

You can expect to feel free to share your workplace experiences in your own words without fear of judgement or challenge.

This is not a space to call out each-others' perceptions but to honour the impact workplace experiences have on our peers and provide an empathetic and supportive space to explore them.

You are expected to use the **PACE (Playful, Accepting, Curious and Empathetic)** principles in your interactions. It is important to communicate warmly within your group, accept the experiences of your peers, be curious about their impact and show empathy.

You can expect to be supported in a warm and friendly environment where your experiences are co-explored with acceptance, curiosity and empathy.

You are expected to be self-aware in your responses and the impact this has on others experience of peer supervision.

You can expect to be supported in protecting the integrity of your Staff Space group. Once established, Staff Space is designed to be a group-led provision. However, there will always be channels for you to reach out should you feel that there are barriers to your engagement. This could be concerns around confidentiality, negative interactions within your group or logistical barriers to engagement. Details of feedback and concerns procedures can be found on page 11 of this handbook.

Session Format Guide

Please use the below guide to inform the flow and format of your group.

Arrival (10minutes): Please use this time to arrive and get settled. Snacks and Beverages will be available.

Opening activity/topic setting (10-15 minutes): This time is set aside for connecting with your group, taking a moment to set your intentions for your time together. Allow each member of the group the opportunity to share how they are feeling about coming together today and the experiences of the last term. A common theme or topic can then be selected for deeper shared reflection. Think of this as an opportunity to 'check in'. As a group you can decide what type of activity feels most comfortable. Guides to various check in and mindfulness activities are available on pages 7-10 of this handbook.

Four 'F's Reflective model (25-30minutes): Please use the following prompts to help you explore the common experience, theme or topic agreed upon. This is just a starting point. Other questions may feel more appropriate to your chosen topic.

Facts: What happened? Was there any changes or differences from usual experiences? What aspects of the experience/theme/topic are we able to influence/control? What aspects are out of our influence/control? Was this an isolated occurrence or a regular experience? What did we do? What did others do?...

Feelings: How does it make us feel when X happens? Did our feelings change in the moment? Do we feel differently now?

Findings: Did those feelings stay with us...for how long? How did feeling that way effect our response? How did feeling that way effect our day/evening/week/term...? How did we address those feelings?

Future: This phase of the reflective process is about accepting the specific experiences we have discussed and the feelings they evoked as behind us. It can be a time for sharing wellbeing practices and discussion on the way our experiences can guide our mindset for the coming term.

Closing activity (10minutes): It could be tempting to leave the session here and rush back to work or personal commitments. However, this final 10 minutes is a valuable time to reset and process the experience of coming together and unpicking challenging circumstances. It is important to make the most of it. Like the beginning of the session please use this time to partake in a shared 'check out' or mindfulness practice. This part of the session might look different for individual groups but it is important to agree together on a common activity that makes the most of this shared time before you part for the evening.

Activity Options

Please see the previous section for a thorough guide to session format. This section of the hand book provides guidance to activity options that can support active participation in the Opening and Closing stages of the overall format.

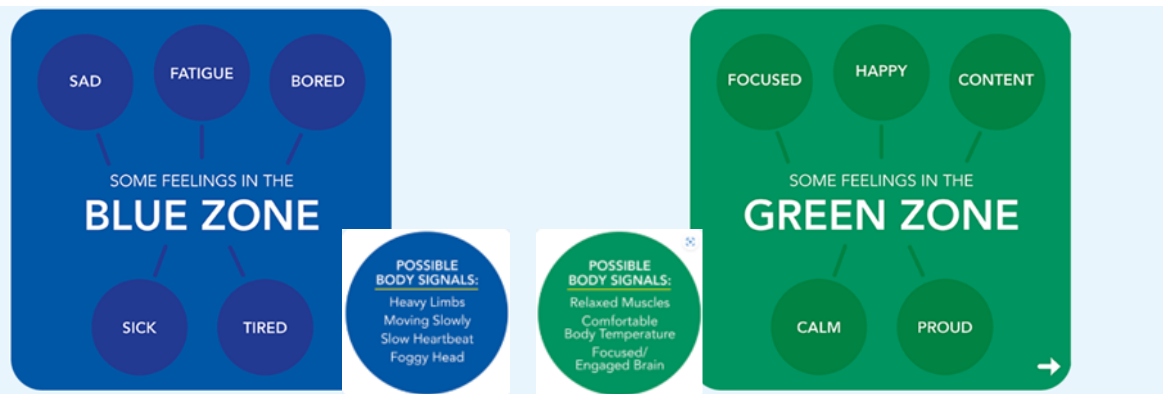
Check in/out activities

These are designed to allow as safe and consistent way of checking in with each -others wellbeing. They can be used at the start of a session alone or repeated at the session close to actively acknowledge any impact the discussion has had on you and your peer's mindset.

Sharing a Metaphor: This activity option involves selecting a metaphorical category for everyone to share how they are feeling. It serves two purposes. Firstly, it avoids a default 'I'm fine' and secondly it provides containment to reflect and express a sense of how you are feeling without the vulnerability of immediately labelling feelings. Categories can be anything from transport to desserts...animals to weather conditions.

An example might be vehicles: *Participant A* might share that they feel like a racing car, they are zooming around at full throttle without stopping, the finish line is in sight then they're on to the next lap. *Participant B* might share that they feel like a cruise ship, they're steadily moving from destination to destination getting where they need to go, they've got their schedule and the know where they're going. *Participant C* might be feeling like an old reliable car whose fuel light just came on, they're hoping to get where they need to be but they are conscious that their tank is running low.

Zones of Regulation (ZoR): ZoR is not just for pupils it can be a useful way of checking in with ourselves too. You might decide as a group to each identify which zone you are in when you arrive/leave the session. You may wish to elaborate with specific feelings or simply share the zone. A brief guide to the zones and their associated body sensations can be found overleaf :

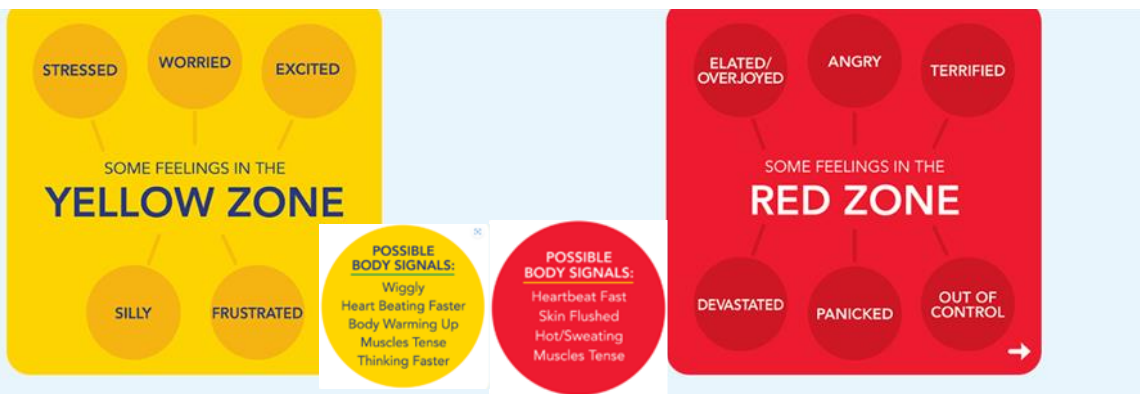


The BLUE ZONE describes low states of alertness and down feelings, such as when a person feels sad, tired, sick, hurt, lonely, or bored. Our energy is low and our body is moving slowly when we are in the Blue Zone.

When in the Blue Zone we often need to rest and recharge to meet our goals. We can regulate by seeking (or co-regulate by offering) comfort, energizing, or resting. If we are feeling sick in the Blue Zone, we may need to rest. If we are feeling tired, we may need to energize (depending on the context). If we are feeling sad, we may need comfort. In all these situations, the common theme is noticing our lower energy and/or down feelings and options for managing them.

The GREEN ZONE describes a calm, alert state. We may be feeling happy, focused, content, peaceful, or calm in the Green Zone. The nervous system feels safe, organized, and connected in the Green Zone, helping us be primed to learn. *However, we can learn in other Zones too.*

When in the Green Zone we regulate by using tools and supports that keep us moving forward comfortably, helping us feel ready to go! In the Green Zone, we might regulate by choosing to eat a healthy snack, exercise, take a break, or pause for a mindful moment. These restorative actions help us proactively care for ourselves so we can move forward with ease.



The YELLOW ZONE describes when our energy is higher, and our internal state starts to elevate. Our emotions get a little stronger. We may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, confusion, nervousness, be overwhelmed, or have the wiggles, when in the Yellow Zone.

In the Yellow Zone we may need to take action to regulate to manage our energy and feelings as they get stronger. For example, if we are feeling energetic at the lunch table it helps to use caution and take a deep breath, so we do not spill something. If we are feeling nervous before our performance, we can slow down our racing thoughts and speech by using a mindfulness tool. When we are frustrated, and pause to take notice, we can decide to take a break to collect ourselves before we say something we regret.

The RED ZONE describes a state of extremely high energy and intense, very overwhelming feelings. We may be in an extremely heightened state of alertness, potentially triggering our fight, flight, freeze or flee protective response. We may feel elated, euphoric, anger, rage, devastated, out of control, panicked, or terrified when in the Red Zone.

When in the Red Zone we might need to pause and assess if we need to regulate and gain a sense of control of our strong feelings and high energy. For example, if we are feeling angry it may help to pause and count to 10 before we act. If we are panicked, we can stop and use our self-talk to help us gain a sense of control of our thoughts in order to meet our goal. If we are elated, such as when a teammate scores the winning point, we might need to pause and take a big breath to regulate our impulse to run out on the field to celebrate if there is still time on the clock.

Source: zonestofregulation.com

Mindfulness Practices

Mindfulness practices provide a more personal space for reflecting alongside your peers and checking in with yourself. They may serve as an opportunity to clear your mind of other priorities ready to engage with the discussion or similarly to relax after the session and reset ready to move on

with your day. They work best if a nominated leader reads a scripted guidance. Some example scripts for different practices can be found below.

Body Scan script: It is the nature of the mind to think, and we're not trying to stop the mind from thinking. We're just training the mind to focus better by learning to notice when it has wandered away and gently bringing it back, over and over to our present-moment experience.

[pause]

Let's get into a comfortable, mindful position. Let your feet rest on the floor, hands resting in your lap, eyes closed or gazing softly to the floor. See if you can keep your spine straight while your muscles relax around it...

[pause]

Let's begin by bringing our awareness to the bottom of our feet as we notice the feeling of our feet resting against the floor. See if you can just notice the sensations in your feet where they rest against the floor...

[pause]

Now, as you continue to watch the sensations in your feet, allow yourself also to become aware of your breath moving in and out of your body. See if you can imagine your breath moving in and out through the bottom of your feet...

[pause]

With each inhalation, allow your awareness to sharpen; with each exhalation, allow tension and tightness to be released from your feet. Breathing in, focus your attention; breathing out, release tension...

[pause]

(allow a brief period of silence before moving on to the next body part, a chance to practice focusing their attention on the bodies sensations) ...

The body scan continues in this way as you move up the body. Adjusting for time as needed, you will usually focus on the thighs, hands, belly, arms, back, shoulders and neck, jaws, muscles around the eyes, and the forehead. This meditation can be lengthened by adding more parts of the body or done fairly briefly by just picking a few.

Source: Adapted from [positivepsychology.com](https://www.positivepsychology.com)

Guided visualisation: For the next few moments, focus on calming your mind by focusing on your breathing. Allow your breathing to centre and relax you. Breathe in.... and out.

In... out... In... Out...

Continue to breathe slowly and peacefully as you allow the tension to start to leave your body. Release any areas of tension, feeling your muscles relax and become more comfortable with each breath.

Continue to let your breathing relax you... Breathe in...2...3...4...hold...2...3...out...2...3...4...5 again...2...3...4...hold...2...3...out...2...3...4...5 Continue to breathe slowly, gently, comfortably... Let the rate of your breathing become gradually slower as your body relaxes.

Now begin to create a picture in your mind of a place where you can completely relax. Imagine what this place needs to be like in order for you to feel calm and relaxed.

Start with the physical layout of the place you are imagining... where is this peaceful place? You might envision somewhere outdoors.... or indoors... it may be a small place or large one... create an image of this place.

(pause)

Now picture more details about your peaceful place. Who is in this place? Are you alone? Or perhaps you are with someone else? Are there other people present? Animals? Birds? Imagine who is at your place, whether it is you only, or if you have company.

(pause)

Imagine even more detail about your surroundings. Focus now on the relaxing sounds around you in your peaceful place. Now imagine any tastes and smells your place has to offer. Imagine the sensations of touch... including the temperature, any breeze that may be present, the surface you are on... imagine the details of this calming place in your mind.

Focus now on the sights of your place – colours, shapes... objects... plants...water...all of the beautiful things that make your place enjoyable.

Picture yourself in this peaceful place. Imagine a feeling of calm... of peace... a place where you have no worries, cares, or concerns.... a place where you can simply rejuvenate, relax, and enjoy just being.

(pause)

Enjoy your peaceful place for a few moments more. Memorize the sights, sounds, and sensations around you.

Know that you can return to this place in your mind whenever you need to. Now is your time to allow yourself to relax and regroup before returning to your regular roles.

Turn your attention back to the present. Slowly notice your surroundings as your body and mind return to their usual level of alertness and wakefulness. Keep with you the feeling of calm from your peaceful place as you return to your everyday life.

Source: Adapted from innerhealthstudio.com

Feedback or Concerns

Your Staff Space group should be a welcoming, safe and supportive space for you. Should you feel this is compromised or you have feedback on the experience of being part of a Staff Space group please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Your contact to share feedback or concerns about the format, facilities, dynamics or general experience of being part of a Staff Space group is:

Chloe Owens

cowens@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk

Safeguarding concerns should be reported to a DSL in line with usual safeguarding policy and procedures.

The DSLs are:

Nathan Butler-Broad head@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk

Hannah Wood hwood@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk

Charmaine Lynch clynch@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk

Sarah Rooke crooke@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk

Anjie Maskell amaskell@whitleypark.reading.sch.uk

Unless otherwise discussed, all feedback and concerns will be treated with confidence and anonymity will be maintained in addressing anything raised.

If you are concerned for your own or a peers Mental Wellbeing, signposting to available workplace and external services can be found overleaf.

Mental Health Signposting

The following processes and services are available to all.

Employee Assistance Programme information

- *Reading Council's Employee Assistance Programme offers free and confidential information and advice for all staff - you can access the service via the website <https://wisdom.healthassured.org/login>, the **Wisdom** mobile app or by calling them on **0800 028 0199**.*

*To use the Wisdom app, or the Wisdom portal on a desktop, please enter Reading Borough Council's organisation code **MHA 179566**. You will then be prompted to create an account, and once you have done so, you can access all the online services and wellbeing tools provided by Health Assured.*

- *Get advice 24/7 on the telephone, or connect with the team via video call or online chat*
- *Browse hundreds of articles designed to improve your mental and physical health*
- *Discover a collection of podcasts, including Health Assured's very own Peace of Mind Podcast*
- *Yoga videos, guided meditations and soundscapes*

*Education Support: **08000 562 561***

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff in schools, colleges and universities.

*Compass Recovery College: **0118 9373945***

<https://www.compassrecoverycollege.uk/>

Offers a wide range of workshops that are an educational route to recovery from mental health challenges and increasing positive wellbeing. You don't need a referral from a clinician or service to enrol. As a participant, you can choose which workshops interest you or suit your needs. Workshops are delivered both online and in person.

Struggling at work?

Request a meeting with your line manager. They can work with you to develop a Wellness Action Plan (WAP).



'Mind' offers lots of templates and advice for self help and manager guided action plans to help identify what keeps us well at work, as well as to facilitate a conversation around support or adjustments between managers and employees.

**WAP guide for
all staff:**



www.mind.org.uk

**WAP guide for
line managers:**



SAMARITANS

116 123

Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you. We're here 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



shout

85258

Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope. Text 'Shout' to 85258.



Employee Assistance Programme information

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- Get advice 24/7 on the telephone, or connect with the team via video call or online chat
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- Discover a collection of podcasts, including Health Assured's very own Peace of Mind Podcast
- Yoga videos, guided meditations and soundscapes

WELLBEING ACTION PLANS AT WHITLEY PARK

A guide to using and implementing the 'Mind' template.

A Wellbeing Action Plan (WAP) can be conducted **proactively by line managers** as a tool to get to know their team and boost productivity **OR reactively by either an employee or their line manager** as a guide to support conversation and adaptations in response to a wellbeing concern.

STEPS

1. Print a hard copy of the WAP template.

WAP templates with guidance aimed at *employees* and *line managers* can be found on the Mind Website, in the shared drive or by request from the Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL). This is a sensitive, ideally handwritten (unless technology is required as a reasonable adjustment), 'living document' that should **never be completed or stored on the shared drive** to ensure confidentiality.

2. Employee to fill in relevant sections.

This is a personal document and there are no right or wrong answers. Try to share as much relevant information as possible to ensure a plan is agreed that fully supports you and your wellbeing. Once complete, pass it to your line manager.

3. A meeting is held between the employee and line manager.

Ideally this should be a face-to-face meeting. Look at the document together, as a line manager you can annotate the form with relevant notes from your conversation and any agreed adaptations you can make to support the employee. Either party can request support with this meeting from the SMHL with the other's consent. However, it is encouraged to use this as an opportunity to support your individual working relationship.

4. Consider and agree any additional people information should be shared with.

The document itself is confidential between line managers and employees, however if actions or preferences affect the wider team (e.g.: a preferred communication format) you may need to communicate this with others. It is important to do this transparently, with consent.

5. Store the document securely.

The hard copy should be handed to the school business manager (SBM) to be securely saved in the employee's digital personnel file. **The SMB does not review this document; they act as the digital key holder to protect personal information.** It is important to do this in person and not share the document digitally. The original is then kept by the line manager and stored **securely in a private locked location**. If this isn't possible in your personal workspace, a suitable space can be provided in the SBM's office. Should there be a change in staff structure or either party cannot access the original, a copy can be requested from the SBM.

6. Agree a review date

The document should be reviewed at least annually. If this has been conducted as a reactive document or in response to a temporary change of circumstance it may be appropriate to review sooner. Either party can request a review before the agreed date if needed. Please use the box below to keep a record of reviews:

REVIEW DATES

| Initial Meeting |
|-----------------|
| |

| Review Scheduled | Date conducted | Initial when completed |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| e.g.: December 2025 | 17/12/2025 | LM EM |
| | | |
| | | |

Helplines and services

Education Support: **08000 562 561**

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff in schools, colleges and universities.

Compass Recovery College: **0118 9373945**

<https://www.compassrecoverycollege.uk/>

Offers a wide range of workshops that are an educational route to recovery from mental health challenges and increasing positive wellbeing. You don't need a referral from a clinician or service to enrol. As a participant, you can choose which workshops interest you or suit your needs. Workshops are delivered both online and in person.

Samaritans: **116 123**

jo@samaritans.org

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

Helpline, email and chat services to support whatever you are going through. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please note emails can take several days for response.

Shout: **85258**

<https://giveusashout.org/>

A free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone struggling to cope.

Counselling Directory:

<https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/>

An online directory of private counselling and therapy services in the UK. All listed practitioners are accredited and searchable by theme or specialisation.

Better Help:

<https://www.betterhelp.com/>

An online counselling and therapy service that links you to a registered therapeutic practitioner via online quiz, sessions are then conducted online.

Mind:

<https://www.mind.or.uk/workplace/>

Useful advice and resources to support mentally healthy work place practices including Wellbeing Action Plan templates and Guidance.

