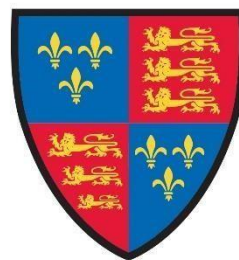




**KING EDWARD VI
FOUNDATION
BIRMINGHAM**

Educational excellence for our City



**KING EDWARD VI
ACADEMY TRUST
BIRMINGHAM**

Employee Wellbeing Policy	
Responsible Board/Committee	Academy Trust Board Foundation Board
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1. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to outline the Academy Trust and Foundation's commitment to the wellbeing of its employees, setting out how the Academy Trust and the Foundation fulfils its legal obligations, as well as detailing the range of support and initiatives available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing.

The Academy Trust and Foundation recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving an employee's ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved job satisfaction as well as the continued success of the Academy Trust and Foundation.

Poor mental health has a huge impact on an individual's life and those around them, as well as a huge impact and a cost to employers. The CIPD (The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) states that promoting wellbeing can help prevent stress and create positive working environments where individuals and organisations can thrive.

Good employee wellbeing is essential for cultivating a mentally healthy workplace, for retaining and motivating employees and for promoting pupil wellbeing and attainment.

2. Our commitment

This policy describes our commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of employees in its broadest, holistic sense, setting out how the Academy Trust and the Foundation will fulfil its legal obligations, the responsibilities of different colleagues and specialists and the range of services and initiatives available to help employees maintain positive wellbeing. The Academy Trust and the Foundation recognises that improving an employee's ability to remain resilient and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and organisational performance.

The Academy Trust and the Foundation will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee's wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to foster a mentally healthy culture, free of stigma, by incorporating these principles into line manager training and raising awareness of wellbeing issues at work. The key will be creating an environment where more people feel able to talk openly about their mental health, as they do their physical health and embedding a culture where employee wellbeing is everybody's responsibility.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees across the Academy Trust and the Foundation.

4. What is employee wellbeing and why is it so important?

Wellbeing is a wide concept with many definitions and typically includes psychological and mental wellbeing, including the management of stress; physical wellbeing; social wellbeing; and financial wellbeing.

5. Work related stress

This Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

The Health and Safety Executive has produced several Management Standards which cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- Demands – workload, work patterns and the work environment
- Control – how much say a person has in the way they do their work
- Support – the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- Relationships – promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- Role – whether employees understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- Change – how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation.

The Academy Trust and the Foundation take the wellbeing of employees very seriously and recognises that the prevention and effective management of work-related stress is essential. Stress might not be directly work related, and all stress will never be able to be eradicated from the workplace, but the Academy Trust and the Foundation are committed to preventing and addressing work-related stress where they can. Employees are asked to report stress to their line manager. Employees are also encouraged to develop a balanced and responsible approach to work and personal lives, informing their line manager if personal stress is affecting their work.

The Foundation and the Academy Trust are committed to the provision of training and support to help managers and employees to understand and recognise causes of work-related stress. Senior managers will consider flexible, or part time working where appropriate as part of the steps to prevent, recognise and manage work-related stress.

6. Sickness Absence Policy

It is important for employees and managers to work together to prevent stress-related and mental health issues and to address these as soon as they arise. However, there may be times when stress impacts so negatively on the health of an employee that they need to take time off work. Employees are encouraged to discuss their mental health with their line manager and seek support, utilising the confidential Employee Assistance Programme.

The Academy Trust and the Foundation has a management of absence policy which covers sickness absence and return to work. The procedure for sickness absence is the same for physical health and mental health, and employees will be treated equally whether their sickness absence is for a mental health or physical health issue.

On return, a structured return to work interview will be held. Support will be provided and if appropriate, a phased return to work will be planned with the employee.

7. Responsibilities for implementing the employee wellbeing policy

The Foundation and the Academy Trust will:

- Comply with its legal duty of care to employees to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work

Regulations 1999, the Working Time Regulations 1998 and the Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2003,

- Ensure that wellbeing is a strategic priority for the Foundation and is embedded across its operations and culture that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.
- Continue its commitment to ensuring employees do not have an unnecessary workload and that work is reasonably shared across different employees and groups.
- Ensure employees are consulted as much as possible about changes.

Line managers will:

- Ensure a good induction programme is in place for all new and promoted employees.
- Ensure that wellbeing will feature in strategic planning documents.
- Support a culture that is open and supportive of employees experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Encourage conversations around wellbeing for example as part of regular line management meetings and one to ones.
- Champion good management practices and act as a role model for others including on work life balance.
- Put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee's wellbeing, particularly from negative pressure at work, and ensure appropriate rest breaks are taken by employees.
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and wellbeing and mitigate psychological risks in their teams. For example, line managers should ensure that employees understand their role within the team, receive the necessary information and support to do their job and know who to approach with problems concerning their role.
- Make sure job descriptions are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between team members.
- Ensure that workstations are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose.
- Ensure return to work interviews are carried out after periods of absence.

Human Resources will:

- Develop Academy Trust and Foundation-wide policies and procedures to protect the wellbeing of employees.
- Work with line managers to identify issues early on and agree appropriate interventions. Liaise as appropriate with occupational health and other medical professionals, with the objective of helping employees to maintain good psychological health.
- Be available to provide confidential support by phone, email or face-to-face on wellbeing matters, which may include signposting employees and line managers to key services.
- Collate management information which will enable the Academy Trust and the Foundation to measure its performance in relation to employee wellbeing, such as sickness absence data, employee turnover, number of referrals to OHS.
- Seek the views on employees on the effectiveness of the Foundation and the Academy Trust's wellbeing policy using employee surveys and other engagement tools.

Employees will:

- Co-operate with the Academy Trust's and the Foundation's efforts to progress wellbeing initiatives.
- Take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours and a healthy lifestyle and taking appropriate rest breaks from work throughout the day.
- Inform the Academy Trust and the Foundation if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health.
- Have a responsibility to try to manage problems as they arise. Any health related information disclosed by an employees during discussions with line managers, the HR team or the occupational health service is treated in confidence.
- Undertake any training that is offered about employee wellbeing or resilience training so that they are aware of its importance and can help build a culture of trust, kindness and positive employee wellbeing.
- Treat one another with empathy, respect and kindness.
- Take care of their own health and safety at work and communicate with key employees where they need support or have any concerns.
- Be committed to the ethos of employee wellbeing and being mindful of the workload and wellbeing of colleagues.
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues having a negative impact on their health and wellbeing.

8. Communicating wellbeing concerns

8.1 Work can be one of the most stressful factors in people's lives, however often people do not feel able to ask for help when they are struggling. That is why it is vital that line managers routinely check-in with employees whom they line manage to ask about wellbeing, and, if appropriate, to discuss mental health. In consultation with employees, creating a wellness action plan is a recommended way of structuring and recording these conversations where issues are shared/discussed between individual employees and managers. In addition, wellbeing should be routinely discussed during one to one meetings with employees and their line managers.

8.2 Employees are encouraged to start a conversation with their line manager or another colleague whom they trust and feel comfortable with, so that support can be provided or at least an empathetic ear. Employees may also:

- a) speak to the Academy Trust and Foundation's independent Employee Assistance Programme counsellors
- b) contact the HR team for help and advice
- c) contact one of the Foundation and Academy Trusts designated Mental Health First Aiders.

- 8.3 Once line managers or the HR team are aware of the challenges employees are facing, it may be appropriate to signpost to a GP and/or to refer to occupational health so more information can be acquired about how specific mental health issues are likely to affect workload, and what adjustments could be made to support (see 9.0 below). Depending on the circumstances, employees may also be referred to other appropriate agencies.
- 8.4 If an employee informs their line manager or another colleague about mental health concerns, the details will be kept confidential and related information must not be shared unless consent is given to do so. However, if there are serious concerns for an individual's safety or that of others, following discussion and agreement, professional advice may be sought. Only in exceptional circumstances will a colleague seek professional advice without agreement i.e. where someone's safety or that of the pupils in the care of the Foundation and Academy Trust, is placed first. In these circumstances, the employee will be informed of this.

9. Making reasonable adjustments

- 9.1 There might be reasonable adjustments that can be made to help with mental health issue(s). These could be permanent or temporary changes to an employee's contract depending on the circumstances.
- 9.2 Employees who consider that reasonable adjustments would support them, should discuss these with their line manager or another appropriate manager. Examples of reasonable adjustments may include:
- Talking to a manager more often
 - Agreeing to a temporary change of duties or working pattern
 - Agreeing to changes to their start and finish times
 - Agreeing for them to work somewhere else at times if they need to.

The Academy Trust and the Foundation acknowledges that sometimes, an employee may be so unwell, that they need time off work to recover. We recognise that the way the Academy Trust and the Foundation manages a period of sickness absence is key in shaping how well and how quickly an employee is able to return to work. To effectively support employees to recover and return to work as quickly as possible the

Foundation and the Academy Trust will follow the principles and steps in the Absence Management Policy.

10. Display Screen Equipment Assessments

The Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 2002 (Ref 2) place a statutory duty on the Foundation and the Academy Trust to manage the risks of working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE). All workstations in use across the organisations must comply with Health & Safety (DSE) Regulations.

The Foundation and the Academy Trust will take every step to mitigate risks associated with employees working with DSE. Employees will be given a DSE Assessment to understand any health

risks associated with working display screen equipment (DSE), such as PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones.

When using DSE equipment, employees must:

- Complete a DSE Workstation Assessment
- Reduce risks to their own health and safety by making sure they take regular breaks from DSE work
- Undertake an eye test if required (see Display Screen users)
- Contact their line manager if they have any concerns regarding the use of DSE equipment or if they are experiencing any potential health risks associated with using their DSE equipment. Where hotdesking is used, there is no expectation that those DSE will complete a DSE Workstation Assessment for every workstation that they use. However, all DSE users must have completed a DSE Workstation Assessment and should apply their learning from that assessment to all other workstations they use.

11. Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA)

The Foundation and the Academy Trust has a number of employees who are trained Mental Health First Aiders. Mental Health First Aid is exactly what it suggests, a first aid approach to mental health. The role of a MHFA in the workplace is to be a point of contact for any employee who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to signposting the employee to receive appropriate help.

They will have completed a recognised course and have:

- an in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing
- practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues
- are confident to step in, reassure and support a person in distress
- have enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening
- the knowledge to help someone recover their health by guiding them to further support such as a referral to the counselling service run by the EAP provider or to their GP.

12. Workplace wellbeing services and initiatives

As part of the ongoing commitment to wellbeing, the following services and initiatives are available to all employees at the Academy Trust and the Foundation. The aim of these services is to strike a balance between the responsibilities of the Academy Trust and the Foundation and the individual employee in maintaining a healthy and positive workplace:

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

This confidential helpline offers employees and their family 24/7 counselling and advice on a variety of personal, family or workplace issues. The service is paid for by the Academy Trust and the Foundation and is provided by an independent, professional organisation.

Please visit www.employeeassistance.org.uk/ for more information. To login and book an appointment with one of their counsellors or advisors, the access code is: **kedwardvi**. You can also call for free confidential support on 0800 328 1437.

BHSF

BHSF is a not-for-profit health and wellbeing provider with a proud history of making healthcare accessible to working people. With their health cash plan, called Health4All, employees can claim money back on things like trips to the dentist, opticians or physio, plus much more.

Employees simply opt in, and payment is taken from their monthly salary via payroll deduction. Employees can choose the level of cover that is right for them and add their partner/children if they wish.

Employees can claim back varying amounts, depending on the level of cover they choose.

Please visit www.bhsf.co.uk for further information, enquiries are to be made via payroll - tracey.shore@ske.uk.net.

St Martin's Counselling & Psychotherapy

The Academy Trust and the Foundation has engaged the services of St Martin's for some time now. A referral is made via the line manager and an assessment discussion takes place in order for St Martin's to decide which intervention/treatment is best. Please visit www.smchh.co.uk for further information. If you feel you would like to arrange some counselling, please speak to your Head or line manager.

Cycle to Work Scheme

It is well documented that exercise not only improves physical health, but mental health also. This scheme is an employee benefit that can save employees up to 49% on a bike and accessories. Employees pay nothing upfront and the payments are taken tax efficiently from monthly salary by the Academy Trust/Foundation. Please visit www.cyclesolutions.info/employee-benefits for further information, including how to contact the service.

Eye Tests

Employees who are regular display screen users may be eligible for a paid eye test.

Financial Wellbeing Assistance

Any employee experiencing financial concerns should not suffer in silence. Employees are encouraged to contact their line manager or another trusted colleague. In addition, support is available through the Education Support Partnership's advice line on 020 7697 2772. Employees can also email grantscaseworker@edsupport.org.uk to see if they are eligible for

a grant – see further guidance at <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/helping-you/applygrant> or [Teaching Staff Trust – Education Financial Hardship Grants](#)

Engagement surveys

The Academy Trust and the Foundation will carry out periodic employee engagement and wellbeing surveys, seeking and monitoring feedback on initiatives and assessing the impact of wellbeing measures and services.

13. Occupational Health Service (OHS)

A referral to the Academy Trust and the Foundation’s occupational health provider may be made following a period of absence, or if this is considered appropriate, after an employee's initial discussion with their line manager or the HR department. Discussions between employees and our occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health team is likely to provide a report on the employee's fitness to work, and any recommended adaptations to the working environment, to the HR Partner.

If employees believe that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should in the first instance speak to their line manager or their HR Partner. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands and raise issues such as identified training needs.

OHS can play a critical part in developing rehabilitation plans for an employee returning to work after absences related to mental or physical ill health in consultation with them, and work with GPs and line managers on designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful.

14. Smoking at Work

Smoking and vaping are prohibited in all Academy Trust and Foundation buildings and all outside areas of the Academy Trust and the Foundation’s estate. Failure to follow this requirement may result in action being taken under the Academy Trust and Foundation’s Disciplinary Procedures. Information and support on stopping smoking can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/take-steps-now-to-stop-smoking/>.

15. Working Time Directive

The Working Time Regulations 1998 and the Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2003, which implement the European Working Time Directive into law, govern the hours most workers can work. The regulations set:

- Limits on the average working week
- Statutory entitlement to paid leave for most workers
- Minimum rest break entitlements.

An employee's contractual hours and entitlements to paid leave are outlined in their contract of employment.

The Regulations specify limits to individual working time. "Working Time" is defined by the Regulations as being any period during which the employee is working, at the employer's disposal and carrying out his/her duties. The definition also covers any period during which the employee is receiving relevant training authorised by the Academy Trust and the Foundation.

Employees across the Academy Trust and Foundation must be encouraged to take regular rest breaks. More information on the Working Time Directive is available at <https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours>

16. Reviewing the policy

The HR team will periodically review this policy and in the future will look to:

- provide access and signposting to more services and resources relating to healthy lifestyles and mental wellness
- Provide wellbeing initiatives across the organisation and measure their impact
- Demonstrate the value of wellbeing
- Create a network of wellbeing champions
- Provide relevant training and toolkits, for example in resilience training
- monitor outcomes from our wellbeing and engagement surveys, adapting the policy as necessary

Appendix 1 Useful Sources of Help

ACAS – www.acas.org.uk

Mind – www.mind.org.uk

HSE – www.hse.gov.uk

CIPD – www.cipd.co.uk

Mental Health Foundation – www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mental Health England – www.mhfaengland.org

Rethink – www.rethink.org

Education Support Partnership – www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk

Smoking Cessation - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/take-steps-now-to-stopsmoking/>

Financial and legal guidance www.employeeemployeeassistance.org.uk/

Further reading

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thriving-at-work-a-review-of-mental-health-andemployers>

Appendix 2

Hints and tips to positive wellbeing¹

Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates feeling close to, and valued by other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

Social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

With this in mind, try to do something different today and make a connection.

- Talk to someone instead of sending an email.
- Speak to someone new
- Ask how someone's weekend was and really listen when they tell you
- Put five minutes aside to find out how someone really is
- Give a colleague a lift to work or share the journey home with them

Be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being.

It does not need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

Here are a few ideas:

- Take the stairs, not the lift
- Go for a walk at lunchtime
- Leave the car in the garage and cycle to work
- Get off the bus one stop earlier than usual and walk the final part of your journey to work
- Organise a work sporting activity
- Do some 'easy exercise', like stretching, before you leave for work in the morning
- ○ Walk to someone's desk instead of calling or emailing

Take notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your wellbeing and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. Here are a few ideas:

- Get a plant for your workspace
- Have a 'clear the clutter' day
- Take notice of how your colleagues are feeling or acting
- Take a different route on your journey to or from work
- Visit a new place for lunch

Learn

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

Here are a few ideas:

- Find out something about your colleagues
- Sign up for a class
- Set up a book club
- Do a crossword or Sudoku
- Research something you have always wondered about

Further information can be found here: <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-atwork/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing>