



Thinking Schools Academy Trust
“Transforming Life Chances”

Wellbeing Policy

This policy was adopted on	November 2020
This policy was reviewed on	September 2024
The policy is to be reviewed on	September 2028

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1. Wellbeing Policy Statement

The Trust defines wellbeing as the experience of overall health. It encompasses good mental, physical, financial and social health.

The aim of this policy is to create a workplace culture where employees feel comfortable to talk, seek help and support and where wellbeing is recognised and embedded into our Trust working practices.

The Trust recognises that all of our employees may encounter, throughout their lives, events that may affect them in the workplace including those relating to their health, personal and domestic situations as well as work related. The policy will provide a framework which the Trust will encourage and facilitate working practices and services that will support employee wellbeing.

Whilst the Trust recognises its legal obligations under health and safety legislation, specifically:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The Trust is committed to ensuring that we create wellbeing processes and practices that go further than managing risks and create an inclusive and positive place to work for everyone.

1. Principles

The Trust is committed to promoting and supporting the wellbeing of all of its employees, to create an inclusive culture which focusses on prevention, and where issues are identified, minimised and managed before they have a detrimental impact on employees.

The Trust recognised that a rounded approach to employee wellbeing can:

- Improve pupil achievement and academy improvement.
- Achieve increased employee engagement, productivity, recruitment and retention.
- Reduce stigma against wellbeing issues, and overall reduce sickness absence, presenteeism and leavism.
- Foster a thriving workplace where our aims and objectives can be delivered.

All matters relating to an employee's wellbeing will be treated in confidence, except where it may be necessary to break confidentiality to preserve the wellbeing of employees.

The Trust recognises that the diversity of its workforce may give rise to different wellbeing needs.

Equality Statement

We are committed to being an inclusive employer enabling all staff to feel a sense of belonging.

We commit to ensuring our policies are inclusive by nature, are of benefit, accessible and understood by all staff. As a minimum we ensure our policies and practices comply with the Equality Act 2010 but we are committed to go beyond our minimum requirement of equality legislation. Our policies aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers and create opportunities to maximise positive impacts on our staff, fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in public life. Through our actions we recognise, appreciate and value difference treating everyone fairly and seeking to embed a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion across our Trust which delivers the best outcomes for the diverse society in which and for whom we work. We are committed to undertake an equality impact assessment on all relevant policies.

2. Role & Responsibilities

2.1 The Trust is responsible for:

- Transforming all leaders within the organisation to be positive role models, championing and shaping a culture where the importance of wellbeing is recognised and supported.
- Empowering leaders to communicate and lead their teams to ensure they are aligned to the Trust inclusive culture.
- Offering a range of approaches to wellbeing in the workplace, and services that can be accessed when required.
- promoting healthy working practices and providing all employees with appropriate support to allow them to achieve their potential.
- monitoring and reviewing HR metrics as indicators of organisational wellbeing and taking steps to respond where issues are identified.
- providing a wide range of wellbeing related learning and development opportunities.

2.2 Leaders are responsible for:

- Transforming wellbeing by paying attention to their team's needs and challenging aspects that are not supportive of their wellbeing.
- Ensuring they role model and lead by example with their own wellbeing.
- providing an environment which is conducive to employees engaging with them about wellbeing.
- Encouraging and supporting employees to take personal responsibility for their own wellbeing, by signposting employees to appropriate support services and giving them the time and encouragement to participate.

- maintaining confidentiality of employees when supporting their wellbeing, disclosing to others only with the employee's consent or when the employee is deemed at risk and their wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, needs preserving.
- seeking advice and help from HR at an early stage if any issues arise.

2.3 Employees are responsible for:

- Managing their own wellbeing and taking steps to seek support at an early stage if needed.
- Maintain communication by raising concerns with their line managers or other appropriate colleagues when they have concerns that impact their wellbeing.
- Ensure that they use annual leave and their holidays to rest and to take time away from work.

2.4 Mental Health and Wellbeing Tactile Group

- Support in ensuring that the Trust reviews the support in place by the Trust.
- Meet throughout the year to discuss incentives and to support in their implementation.
- Act as champions across the Trust to promote and support mental health and wellbeing
- Share best practice and develop their skills to support them to work effectively in their team to support with reducing stress.

3. Employee Workplace Wellbeing

There are many different strategies and models that exist, however as a Trust we want to ensure that we are proactively supporting workplace wellbeing, therefore we have identified key areas which are outlined below relating to what the Trust does to actively support wellbeing in the workplace.

Job Security: As a Trust we are committed to ensuring that every member of staff has job security and whilst we cannot predict the future, we have made our policies robust in consultation with our unions. Our first aim in any potential restructure is to always consider how we can avoid job insecurity and we will always work with everyone as an individual to support them.

Some of the ways we support:

- Role clarity
- Paid time off to attend interviews
- Supporting with Learning and Development opportunities
- Redeployment
- Fair and Transparent Processes

Financial Security: The Trust operates its own pay scales to ensure that all staff no matter of which region they are in, are paid consistently in line with national benchmarking.

- TSAT Pay scales
- Ability to offer Interim awards whilst pay negotiations take place.
- Jobs are evaluated under one scheme so that all staff undertaking the same role are paid fairly & consistently.
- Professional Growth each year.
- Access to financial education and support through our benefits portal.

Health: The Trust offers a variety of health support which includes:

- Occupational Sick Pay
- Employee Assistance Programme (which also offers additional counselling services)
- Access to Unum Dental Insurance (you can sign up for the scheme at the start of each academic year)
- Discounted gym memberships to Thinking Fitness and access to other gym discounts via our benefit portal.

Support: This looks different for everyone and whilst this may be a vague term in how it can be described it is the Trust's unwavering commitment to support people in a manner that is right for them some of the ways the Trust supports this includes:

- Positive induction to the Trust
- Support in career and learning development
- Financial advice and support that can be accessed via our benefits portal
- Anonymous feedback methods
- Professional growth
- Positive line manager involvement and support
- Risk assessments for being adopted to support you in the workplace (stress at work, mental health support, pregnancy & menopause).

Work Life Harmony: This is personal and different to every single member of the Trust and the reasons why and what this looks like is entirely a personal choice and no one should be subject any form of judgement.

The Trust recognises everyone has different demands and expectations placed upon them and we want to ensure that everyone can achieve:

- Productive and meaningful work in their working hours.
- Meaningful time away from work (weekends & annual leave).
- A positive workplace culture.

As a Trust, all of our schools and central department have committed to their own wellbeing charter and this is what will be driving your school/ departments priorities. If you need a copy, please contact your Leader.

4. Mental Health in the workplace

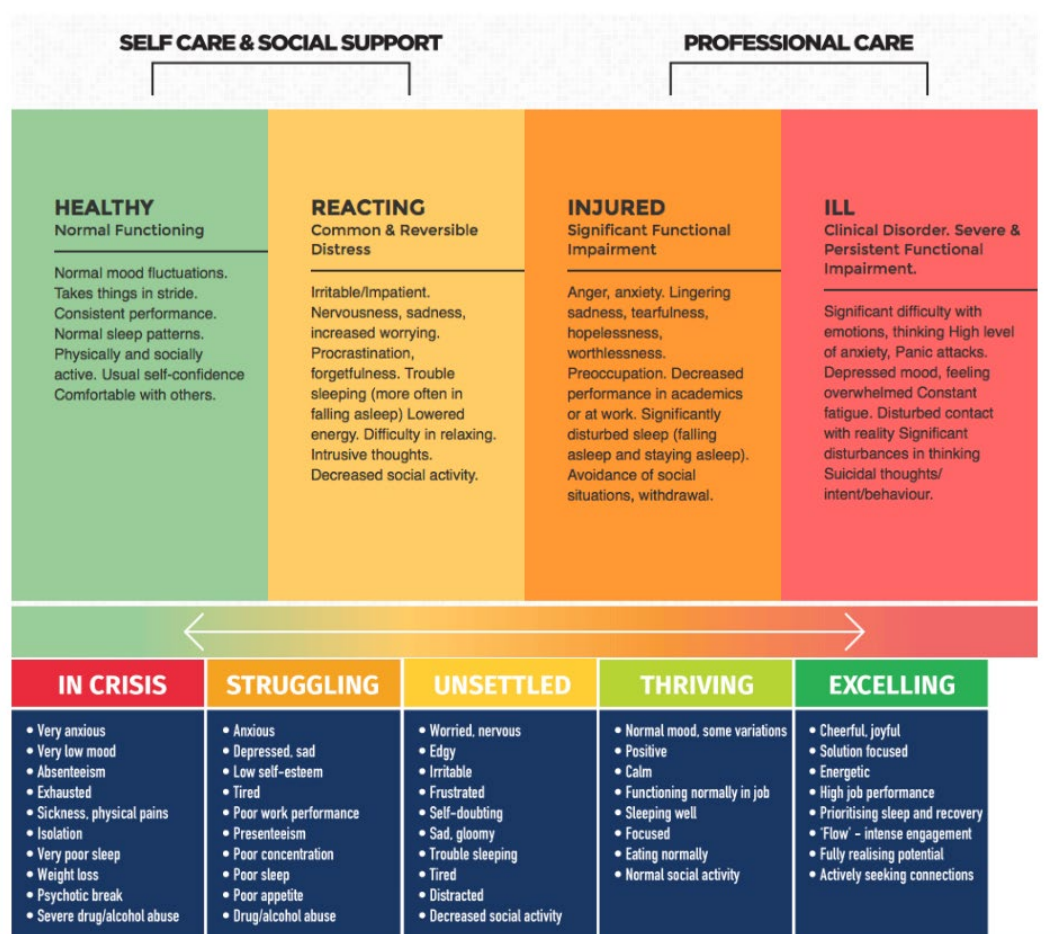
We all have mental health and it is not too dissimilar from our physical health. In the same way that our physical health can adapt and change depending on various factors; our mental health operates in the same way.

There will be times where we can make subtle changes or take actions ourselves to support our mental health and there may be times where we need to reach out for support from others or professionals.

The Trust has many support mechanisms in place and some of these include:

- Line Manager Support – (1-2-1's and general support)
- Employee Assistance Programme.
- Smart Clinics online CBT and courses
- Welbee toolkit
- Annual training and awareness.
- Mental Health Awareness session ran by external accredited trainers.

The mental health continuum (below) recognises that it is a spectrum so throughout our lives we will move throughout the scale and also what are some of the signs and symptoms someone may be experiencing.



5 Support in the Workplace

5.1 Management & Leader Practices:

As a Trust, we understand that wellbeing is different to everyone which is why we have a variety of management practices that are undertaken to support health and wellbeing in the workplace:

- Fair recruitment and selection procedures.
- Support through induction to ensure clarity of roles.
- Training and Development as appropriate to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/duties required of them.
- Ensuring staff feel valued and rewarded.
- Ensuring that where adjustments or support is needed that this is considered on an individual basis.
- Zero tolerance to any form of bullying and harassment in the workplace in line with our Bullying & Harassment – Dignity at Work policy.
- Effective mechanisms for communicating with employees on the work of the Trust and issues affecting their work including the use of the intranet.
- A transparent management support system that responds quickly to problems.
- The regular and systematic monitoring of staff absences, staff/pupil/parent relationships and the recruitment and retention of staff.

5.2 Health & Safety & Welbee

The Trust operates a variety of risk assessments, and these are used to support an individual's wellbeing in the workplace.

The Management Standards, which cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not properly managed; are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence.

These are:

- ***Demands*** – i.e. workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- ***Control*** – i.e. how much say the individual has in the way they do their work.
- ***Support*** – i.e. the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the Trust, line management and colleagues.
- ***Relationships*** – i.e. promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- ***Role*** – such as whether people understand their role within the Trust and their School; and whether the school ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- ***Change*** – such as how change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the Trust.

Each year the Trust conducts a wellbeing survey via Welbee and from the outcomes identified are what informs each school's wellbeing action plan for that year.

6 Raising concerns relating to wellbeing

If an employee believes that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing, or others, at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager.

The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands, and raise issues such as identified training needs.

The Trust will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to the circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Definitions of Wellbeing

Term	Definition
Health	A 'state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity', as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
Wellbeing	How we manage our health and cope day-to-day. Levels of wellbeing will differ between employees and can be influenced by a variety of different factors both in and outside of the workplace.
Stress	The Trust adopts the definition of stress as used by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE): 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'. Stress can impact on both physical and mental health and have consequences on social and financial wellbeing. Employees may experience stress in different ways, and it may manifest differently from person to person.
Stigma	Misconceptions or misunderstandings of wellbeing issues that can be dismissive, offensive or hurtful.
Presenteeism	Attending work despite suffering from poor health or wellbeing, often resulting in increased stress, poor productivity and morale.
Leaveism	The practice of employees using allocated time off such as annual leave, time in lieu etc. when they are unwell.



24-hour employee assistance line



Access to 24-hour support from a trained counsellor, legal or financial specialist. Just call 0845 862 2113 and quote Smart Clinic or login to your client area.

Self-support and guidance



A wealth of support, guidance and self-directed training programmes, supporting you with issues including anxiety, sleep issues, weight loss and stress.

App and online client areas



Smart Clinic services available in your pocket, whenever you want us. To get started, login to your client area and download the Smart Clinic app.

Mental health Therapies



Structured counselling, CBT, online CBT, anxiety management or stress coaching from the Smart Clinic team. Just login to your client area for access.

Online mental health



Online CBT and self-help courses available via your client area whenever you need them.

CPD Accredited courses



...including stress management, assertiveness and time management courses.

The Trust wellbeing pages can be accessed via the intranet: [Thinking You - Thinking Page Home](#)



Appendix 3 - Additional benefits

Information on the benefits offered by the Trust can be found on the intranet here: [Benefits - Benefits Home](#) however to highlight some of the ways the Trust supported wellbeing:

- Flu vouchers – these are available in term 2 each year and communication will be sent to schools and via email for you to be able to sign up for a flu voucher if you are not eligible on the NHS.
- Eyecare – Staff can have their eyes tested and money off if they attend Specsavers with one of our vouchers.
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Access to Thinking Fitness Gyms & Thinking Lettings at reduced rates
- Retail discounts
- Access to the Blue Light Scheme
- Trust CPD – take part in our Trust Conference Days, sign up to our Trust Learning and Development courses that are advertised and run throughout the year.
- Enhanced Pension schemes (LGPS and TPS – as appropriate)
- Hybrid and Flexible working options
- Professional subscriptions access to TES and the CST.