

Prime7

Multi Academy Trust

(Middleton Cheney, King's Sutton and Chipping Warden Academies)



Staff Well-Being Policy

Signed: Ian Lowe– May 2025

CEO

Next Review: May 2027

1. Terms of Reference

1.1. For all employees employed by Prime7 Multi Academy Trust (Trust)

1.2. Definitions:

“Headteacher” also refers to any other title used to identify the Headteacher, where appropriate, or other senior manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Headteacher.

“Line manager” also refers to any other title used to identify a direct supervisor or other senior manager.

2. Introduction

2.1. The Trust recognises its responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and understands that wellbeing and performance are linked.

2.2. The Trust are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

2.3. This Policy sets out the Trust’s commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, physical health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of mental health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues. This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2.4. The Trust recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on employees’ wellbeing and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

2.5. The Trust are committed to balancing the needs of employees and the Trust’s educational, business and operational needs.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. The Trust

3.1.1. The Trust has a legal duty of care to employees to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The Trust will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.

3.1.2. In addition to reducing safety risks, we will operate the business in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are reasonable and having policies and procedures in place to support employees experiencing mental ill health at work.

3.1.3. The Trust will:

- Take overall responsibility for implementing this policy
- Adopt the appropriate policies in respect of ‘family friendly’ employment, including consideration of flexible working arrangements, part-time working, etc. where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the schools within the Trust
- Ensure clear procedures are in place that will minimise levels of stress caused to employees when following formal procedures such as the capability, disciplinary or sickness absence management procedures
- Ensure that employees roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- Put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support
- Seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work

3.2. The Headteacher

3.2.1. The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the procedure to ensure that the procedure is communicated to employees and that it is applied consistently.

3.2.2. The Headteacher will:

- Create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns, and enable employees to do so in a supportive environment
- Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in employees and promote sympathetic alertness to employees who show signs of being under stress
- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems
- Ensure that contact is maintained with staff while absent and that a return-to-work policy is established in the workplace that is supportive of employees
- Carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible
- Carefully plan and agree work-life balance solutions including flexible working practices where possible and appropriate
- Ensure that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications
- Make sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams

- Demonstrate commitment, via systems and practices in place at their school, to employees maintaining a good work/life balance, and ensure that such practices are communicated to all employees
- Manage pressures which may affect employees, including the impact of workload pressures, and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible
- Ensure the well-being policy is accessible to all employees

3.3. Line managers

3.3.1. Line managers will put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee wellbeing. Managers must familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety Executive's stress management standards and use these to mitigate psychological risks in their teams. For example, managers should ensure that employees understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support from managers and team members to do their job. Managers must also familiarise themselves with the organisation's policies on diversity and tackling inappropriate behaviour in order to support employees, for example on bullying and harassment issues.

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

- Creating reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns
- Paying attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in employees and promote sympathetic alertness to employees who show signs of being under stress
- Following agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems
- Carrying out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible
- Seeking agreement from the employee for a referral to Occupational Health if this is required and/or appropriate in the circumstances
- Attending regular training on health and wellbeing in schools
- Keeping employees in the team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload
- Ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management
- Ensuring that work stations are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose
- Encouraging employees to take a lunch break during the working day

3.4. Employees

3.4.1. Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, exercise, alcohol consumption and smoking) and informing the organisation if

they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee during discussions with managers or the occupational health service is treated in confidence.

3.4.2. Employees should:

- Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem at the earliest opportunity to ensure effective strategies can be implemented
- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves or others whilst in the workplace
- Ensure awareness of the Trust's policies and procedures relevant to employee wellbeing
- Assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or colleagues
- Treat colleagues and all other persons whom they interact with during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity
- If appropriate, attend appointments with Occupational Health or other medical appointment/examination by a nominated registered medical practitioner

4. Support Mechanisms

4.1. Training and communications

- 4.1.1. Line managers and employees will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change.
- 4.1.2. All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications and organisation-wide methods. The organisation will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.
- 4.1.3. The organisation will consider special communication media during periods of organisational change.

4.2. Occupational health support

- 4.2.1. Line managers can contact the organisation's occupational health service for advice on managing issues regarding work-related stress and wellbeing. The occupational health provider delivers a comprehensive service designed to help employees stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing mental health problems. This includes preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals from line managers and the HR department, liaising with GPs and working with individuals to help them to retain employment.

- 4.2.2. Occupational health professionals can aid in developing rehabilitation plans for employees returning to work after absences related to mental ill health, and work with GPs and line managers on designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful.
- 4.2.3. A referral to the occupational health team will be made if this is considered appropriate after an employee's initial discussion with their line manager. Discussions between employees and the 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 Academy.
- 4.3. Counselling
 - 4.3.1. Counselling may be provided where appropriate through the Trust's provider. This will be a confidential, independent service using professionally qualified counsellors.
- 4.4. Mediation
 - 4.4.1. A mediation service could also be supportive in order to assist employees to return to normal working relationships. This could be accessed via the Counselling Service/ACAS/other. Where this service is appropriate it will be discussed with the employees affected by the situation.
- 4.5. Other

Other measures available to support employees in maintaining health and wellbeing include:

 - Procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment)
 - Special leave arrangements
 - Opportunities for flexible working
 - Equal Opportunity

5. Stress management

- 5.1. The prevention and effective management of stress that is work related is central to the Trust's responsibility to its employees and to the role of managers and supervisors.
- 5.2. All employees have the right to expect that their working conditions and relationships will be such that they do not result in unnecessary anxiety or prolonged stress symptoms.

This policy statement is an indication that the Trust is committed to:

- 5.2.1. Preventing, in so far as is practicable, employee stress resulting from inappropriate work practices, excessive workloads or interpersonal relationships within the workplace.

- 5.2.2. Where work-related stress does occur, taking steps to minimise the impact of this stress on individuals.
- 5.2.3. Providing training and support to help managers and employees understand and recognise the nature, causes and management of work-related stress; and, for managers in particular, how to prevent or minimise work-related stress.
- 5.3. The Trust recognises that the pace of change across the education sector and pressure on resources increases the likelihood of work-related stress. Whilst it may not be possible to eradicate all work-based stress, the Trust wishes to create an organisational culture in which issues of employee stress are taken seriously and the wellbeing of employees is given a high priority.

6. Stressors

- 6.1. The Trust cannot address all potential stressors and cannot eradicate all stress from the workplace. A demand-free school is not practicable and could not be effective.
- 6.2. The Trust recognises that stress may not be directly work related and can result from a range of causes, including domestic circumstances and conflicting demands between workplace and home. However, this policy outlines the Trust's intention to prevent and address work-related stress, where it is able to do so.
- 6.3. Employees are required to report matters of concern relating to health and safety, including stress at work, to an appropriate manager. Employees are encouraged to develop a balanced and responsible approach to work and their personal lives and to inform management where personal stress is affecting their work.

7. The Responsibilities of School Leaders

- 7.1. Prevention, recognition and management of work-related stress are critical parts of the management function.
- 7.2. School leaders will try to create a working environment that avoids or reduces potential stressors. They will:
 - 7.2.1. Ensure effective communication about school performance, change and proposed developments. This recognises that the impact of change can be reduced if employees feel they have been adequately prepared for it.
 - 7.2.2. Establish reasonable workloads for individuals, giving consideration to their post, experience and their capabilities and establish fair and equitable workloads across employee groups.
 - 7.2.3. Ensure that work deadlines are reasonable and properly scheduled.
 - 7.2.4. Ensure that all employees are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

- 7.2.5. Create a school culture in which it is clear that bullying and harassment **will not be tolerated** and deal promptly with those who are accused of inappropriate behaviour (see Grievance Policy).
- 7.2.6. Take seriously employee concerns about inappropriate pupil behaviour and ensure procedures to support employees are in place.
- 7.2.7. Create a culture where all employees know they can raise concerns and their concerns will be treated seriously and sympathetically; and which avoids a blame culture.
- 7.2.8. Recognise that employees need to balance their work and home lives and responsibilities.
- 7.2.9. Treat all employees equitably.
- 7.3. Senior Leaders will:
 - 7.3.1. Ensure that employees are appropriately trained for the work they are required to undertake.
 - 7.3.2. Be prepared to review individual workloads and objectives and ensure that work-life balance issues are addressed.
 - 7.3.3. Consider flexible or part time working, where appropriate.

8. Stress Absence Procedure

- 8.1. There may be occasions where stress impacts so negatively on health that individuals take time off work. It is the senior management team's objective to minimise sickness absence, to provide support for employees and to plan and implement a structured return to work where this is desirable.
- 8.2. It is important that individuals in such circumstances seek immediate advice from their GP to facilitate as speedy a return to work as possible. Where the employee consents, the Occupational Health Adviser will be asked to provide a report, which will give the school guidance on the management of the problem in order to inform senior managers whether adjustments can or should be made to the individual's work. A senior manager will consider the circumstances of the employee's stress and will give consideration to an appropriate strategy for the individual to return to work, which may include:
 - 8.2.1. Adjustments to the individual's duties, workload or place of work where this can reasonably be achieved, either on a temporary or longer term basis, with consideration of any salary implications.
 - 8.2.2. An initial return to work on a part-time basis.
 - 8.2.3. The offer of a job at a lower level of responsibility with a correspondingly lower salary grade.

- 8.3. Where the circumstances leading to the employee's stress involves conflict with other employees, the appropriate senior manager will instigate an independent review to provide an objective analysis of the causes of the conflict and possible solutions. The Trust recognises its obligations to act in response to absences which result from work-related stress; to act supportively, but also to act speedily. In the event of the employee not wishing to reveal the cause of the illness to the School or not willing to be referred to the Occupational Health Adviser, a senior manager will remind the employee of the importance of this and will, where appropriate, consult with the employee's representative to better understand genuine reasons why an employee is not responding. However, if the School asks again for this information and the employee does not respond, the School would follow the sickness absence procedures.

9. [Sickness Absence Policy](#)

This policy operates in conjunction with the Sickness Absence Policy.