

Frederick Bremer School



Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy January 2022

Person Responsible	Fenella Hewitt
Review Frequency	Annually
Policy First Issued	February 2022
Last Reviewed	16 th March 2022
Agreed by LT on	16 th March 2022
Does this policy need to be ratified by Governors?	Yes
If yes, which committee	SIP committee
Ratified by Governors on	16 th March 2022
This policy is communicated by the following means	Information Hub, School Website



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Policy draft 2, amendments and additions made to sections 3, 4 and 8

Ratified



Frederick Bremer School – Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

1.Aims

This policy aims to:

- Support staff in understanding mental health and wellbeing in school
- Support the wellbeing of all staff to avoid negative impact on their mental and physical health
- Provide a supportive work environment for all staff that promotes and encourages good mental health
- Acknowledge the differing needs of staff with regards to mental health and wellbeing, and how these change
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities
- Help staff with any specific mental health or wellbeing issues they experience
- Ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims

2.Rationale

At Frederick Bremer we strive to maintain a culture based on our motto, ‘humans first, professionals second’. A motto that is lived and breathed into the foundations of the school community and thus has staff wellbeing at the heart. We work to create a happy and safe work environment. We aim to enhance the emotional wellbeing of our staff which in turn cascades out to students, families and into the wider community. Frederick Bremer aims to achieve staff wellbeing through the 3-tiered support outlined in the Anna Freud 5 steps framework.

The school utilizes a wide range of support mechanisms, specialist, targeted and universal which is audited, mapped and impact evaluated through regular stakeholder feedback. Please see the table below which outlines examples of the 3 tiers of support.



3. Understanding wellbeing

Frederick Bremer understands that staff wellbeing is based on a culture of trust and empathy but that staff also need to fully understand mental health and wellbeing in order not to confuse it with normal work-related operational issues. We ensure that staff know how to access support, this initially takes place through line management. We also



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prioritize helping our staff understand wellbeing by teaching them to recognise the significance of self-care. We develop our own wellbeing bulletins which are sent out monthly and intend to raise awareness and understanding. We use staff CPD days to promote and educate our staff on wellbeing as well as providing respite and social opportunities where possible. Staff are actively encouraged to feel comfortable sharing their mental health issues with line managers through the open culture of communication. We understand that we must listen to our staff members in order to understand their wellbeing and ensure that staff voice is represented strategically and can impact change. We achieve this through a number of staff wellbeing surveys including the annual Anna Freud staff wellbeing measurement toolkit. We also take staff feedback on events such as CPDs, Drop Down Days, behaviour systems and various consultations on topics relevant to all stakeholders. We endeavor to present a response and act accordingly making reasonable adjustments where possible. We recognize that natural tensions exist between staff wellbeing and workload, this policy works in conjunction with our staff code of conduct, sickness policy, flexible hours policy and working from home policy so that we are constantly balancing staff wellbeing with meeting the demands of the job recognising that both of these issues are important.

4. Promoting wellbeing at all times

Support and managing workload

At Frederick Bremer our work to promote staff wellbeing is ongoing. Good staff wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do. We are clear that the impact of this can be;

- Staff feeling valued, supported and invested in
- Positive impact on pupils, including improved educational outcomes, as both staff and children and young people are more engaged
- Increased productivity of staff members
- Reduced absences from work in relation to sickness (both short term and long term)
- Staff being able to manage stress better and develop healthier coping strategies
- Improved job satisfaction, which can support retention

Frederick Bremer commits to an annual audit of staff wellbeing; the annual wellbeing staff surveys will largely construct this report but middle managers and SLT will also give feedback to Governors on key issues raised to termly. Frederick Bremer puts a wide range of support systems in place to encourage staff wellbeing and minimize/relieve workload. Wellbeing underpins operational and strategic planning. The list below is not exhaustive but exemplifies strategies we employ all year round to promote staff wellbeing:

- The line management agenda at Frederick Bremer is proactively used to manage staff wellbeing and evaluate workload and wellbeing, 'How is your workload' is a regular item on the agenda, line management takes place fortnightly as a minimum.
- Deadlines always communicated well in advance, and are strategically managed to avoid overloading, training days strategically placed across the year and staff teaching load is reviewed annually
- Drop Down Days adapted to ensure staff retain their PPA or are given free periods
- The calendar is always workload assessed. Meetings scheduled so there is not more than one per week and meetings are removed if not required.
- Administrative work delegated to appropriate support staff, large support staff body and teams
- Outsourced large site team to reduce pressure on staff
- Access to the Headteacher and SLT is extremely strong
- Full and sustained use of cover supervisors to reduce cover undertaken by staff.
- Staff questionnaires and consultations considering staff feedback and acting upon this where appropriate and manageable
- 1:1 meetings HOD with HT during timetabling process



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- Senior staff model good wellbeing and self-care
- Concerted effort not to send work e-mails after 5.00pm or on weekends unless there is a specific demand necessary
- Onsite IT support to uphold a productive physical environment
- The school site and design is light and open creating a healthy physical environment
- There is a wellbeing area in the staff room and a staff garden area
- The table below audits the specialist, targeted and universal support in place. This is a live document which changes and evolves in response to need but is exemplary of our practice
- Support staff and SLT mental health and wellbeing leads
- Parents evening and virtual evenings can be delivered at home

Specialist support	Targeted support	Universal support
Employee assistance program	Staff star nominations weekly - shout out in briefing and gift	Staff wellbeing policy
Supervision (currently arranging this)	Wellbeing bulletin including guidance and advice on mental health.	Line management meetings and drop ins
Referrals to OHT and personalized plans for individual staff members	Early finish in aid of staff appreciation	Staff CPD
Support staff and SLT mental health and wellbeing leads	Regular staff socials (meet new staff, christmas etc)	Acts of kindness and charity community outreach work - food bank, Annual MacMillan coffee morning
	SLT serve and provide all staff a cooked breakfast	'High challenge. Low threat' ethos 'Humans first, professionals second'.
	Staff raffle prizes at christmas	Staff wellbeing and mental health lead

5. Role of all staff

The Senior leadership team and Governing body recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff in school enjoy a reasonable balance between their working life and the demands of home, family and other interests and commitments. An acceptable work-life balance will be different for each employee and will be different at different times in careers. It is not in the interest of either the school or the individual member of staff to work to the detriment of his/her health. Excessive work without rest and recreation is not conducive to efficient or effective working. Staff well-being is important in maintaining a positive atmosphere in the workplace. At Frederick Bremer we recognise that employees are not obliged to work in school beyond their contracted hours, although teachers are expected to complete preparation, planning and assessment beyond the school day. In order for our staff to be at their most effective they need to have a healthy work-life balance in order to:

- Attract and re-train the caliber of staff needed for an outstanding education system.
- Retain a motivated workforce, with high morale, able to deliver a high-quality education for our students.



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- To improve team work, staff development and co-operation by effectively distributing leadership and creating new leaders.
- To recognise that excessive hours of work can reduce staff effectiveness.
- To recognise that improving workplace communication has a positive outcome for the whole school workforce
- The staff expectations below are reiterated through briefings, meetings, induction and support plans and staff CPD.
- In order to achieve this, staff are expected to:
 - Treat each other with empathy and respect
 - Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
 - Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
 - Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
 - Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
 - Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
 - Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

5.1. Role of line managers

Frederick Bremer recognises that the role of the line manager is critical in upholding staff wellbeing. Line management meetings take place formally each week in order to provide the time and space they require.

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern. The first question of any line management meeting is 'How Are You'.
- Provide a non-judgmental and confidential support system to their staff, the conversations between a line manager and employee are minuted at their joint discretion ensuring a sense of trust and support.
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance.
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation

5.2. Role of senior staff

Fenella Hewitt is the Senior leadership person responsible for staff wellbeing. Fenella Hewitt is trained as the designated mental health lead for staff wellbeing.

Senior staff are expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Manage a non-judgmental and confidential support system for staff
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions



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wherever possible

- Make sure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Organize extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspection
- Provide training and supervision that promotes wellbeing.

5.3 Role of the Governing Body

Michelle Hegarty is the named link Governor responsible for staff wellbeing. Michelle Hegarty is also the Head of Safeguarding and Schools Services for a charity that provides counseling and psychotherapy to children and young people in school and a forensic psychotherapist bringing her wider skill set to support the wellbeing of staff in school. The School uses Governors to lend their expertise to the school in a variety of ways which support staff development and wellbeing, for example, Governor led staff training - 'Community response to the Pandemic' Nov 2021.

The role of the Wellbeing Governor is to ensure staff wellbeing remains on the whole school agenda, and to provide a link between the School and the Governing Body. The Wellbeing Governor is able to exercise a non-biased evaluation of staff wellbeing that is not influenced by the day-to-day operational running of the School.

The Governing Body is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the headteacher
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

6. Specific wellbeing issues

At Frederick Bremer we recognise that each member of staff is an individual and aim to respond to different needs accordingly. The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives. Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. The school will conduct annual staff wellbeing surveys and respond accordingly to the responses on both a personal and whole school level. This could be through:

- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis, covering or moving their duties, making adaptations to their working environment where helpful or appropriate.
- Arranging external support, such as counseling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritize
- At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.
- Frederick Bremer's values include a culture of 'high challenge, low threat' to further encourage staff wellbeing.



7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by Fenella Hewitt, Deputy Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by SIP committee

8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Appraisal policy
- Behaviour policy
- Capability procedure
- Staff code of conduct
- Trauma Informed policy
- Flexible working policy
- Working from home policy
- Equalities policy

Ratified