

**Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School
Mental health and Well being**

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Agreed by staff and Governors - Autumn term 2022
Review date - Autumn term 2025

Introduction

At Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School the mental, emotional and physical well-being of all staff and pupils is extremely important. We believe that emotional well-being can be experienced when a person feels good about themselves and enjoys positive relationships with those around them. We acknowledge that at times, when a person may be feeling anxious or under pressure, that it is difficult to remain in a positive frame of mind.

At Grand Avenue we endeavour to support our staff and pupils by being aware of demands that may lead to stress, the early warning signs that someone may be experiencing stress and the symptoms of stress.

We acknowledge that stress is a natural and normal psychological and physiological reaction to challenge and change. Whilst a certain amount of stress can be beneficial there can be times when the negative effects of stress are experienced. We understand that there may be times when a person cannot cope with too many demands or experiences perceived pressure.

Aims of policy

This policy sets out the procedures and systems in place to:

- show the commitment to well-being in the school environment
- raise awareness of the importance of well-being
- ensure confidentiality is respected
- outline the support available to members of our school community
- minimise the negative effects of stress that may occur for our staff and pupils

The school believes that good well-being management for staff in a demanding environment has many benefits, including;

- increased performance
- increased job satisfaction
- retention of good staff
- decrease in staff absence

The school also believes that supporting our pupils in a demanding environment is crucial to well-being, academic progress, motivation, learning, relationships and enjoyment of time at school.

Responsibility of the school

The school attempts to prevent, identify, manage and remove negative stress and has adopted a whole school approach to the management of stress in the school environment. School leaders will be careful, thoughtful and sensitive in monitoring stress levels for all members of the school community.

The school acknowledges that negative stress can occur due to too many demands or when strategies for coping may not be effective.

It is also acknowledged that the source of stress may be due to a variety of reasons such as medical, social, or psychological issues or due to personal circumstances and that support may be beyond the scope of leaders and managers in school.

Responsibility of staff

Staff are required to;

Treat all members of the school community with consideration and respect

Adopt a healthy lifestyle including, sleep, exercise and nutrition

Alert a senior member of staff if work related or personal issues are having a negative impact on well-being or causing stress

Alert a member of senior staff if a pupil is showing signs of stress or anxiety

Our senior staff have the responsibility to create a positive working environment which contributes to good employee health and well-being. This includes management style and creating an atmosphere where staff feel safe and supported in discussing or addressing health and well-being concerns in school. Staff need to feel confident that senior staff will listen to their views and address concerns in a confidential understanding environment. Senior staff will 'check in' regularly with their team, formally or informally, to see how staff are coping with workload and offer support if needed.

Common causes of stress in the school setting- individual

An inconsistent approach to recruitment and promotion

Poor job descriptions

Break down in effective communication

Poor leadership

Communication with parents

Behaviour of children

Workload

Common causes of stress in the school setting- pupils

Friendship issues

Home learning

Tests

Forgetting equipment eg swimming kit

Transition

Signs and Symptoms of stress

At a school level - Examples include:

High levels of staff turnover

High levels of absenteeism

Negative discussions in staffroom

Break down in effective communication

High incidences of bullying or violence

At an individual level – Examples include :

Lackluster performance

Hostile behaviour towards colleagues or pupils
Depression
Tiredness
Withdrawn
Crying
Difficulties in relationships with colleagues or pupils
Low self esteem
High absence rate
Headaches

Pupils – Examples include:

Difficulty making and maintaining friendships
Withdrawn
Over reaction to small events
Wanting to spend time with adults
Poor behaviour
Fighting
Lack of academic progress
Poor attendance

Well-being – A whole school approach

The school takes advice from the Health and Safety policy on stress management published by the local authority. The school endeavours to create a workplace where colleagues feel valued, consulted and informed with regards to their role. This is achieved through:

- Linking all school initiatives and activities to our core purpose of Enjoying Learning- Exceeding Expectations.
- A preventative approach towards potentially stressful demands eg reasonable deadlines, monitoring workload
- Staff being thanked for their work and recognised when they have gone 'above and beyond'
- Effective lines of communication organised and used eg email, regular meetings
- The School Development Plan being created in conjunction with staff with consideration being given to training needs and resources required
- The Staff Discipline policy having due regard to stress being a contributing factor to concerns
- A consistent approach to recruitment and promotion being upheld
- Listening carefully to staff who disclose that they are suffering from the negative impact of stress, who are then treated fairly, sensitively and in confidence.
- Staff being signposted to professional support to combat the underlying causes of stress
- Induction for all new members of staff
- Ensuring staff are supported by a senior leader regarding any concerns with pupil discipline or relationships with parents
- The school making full use of appraisal systems to identify any personal or organisational development needs.
- Using expertise from professionals
- Support from Governors
- Training for staff in Mental Health First aid

Any instance of concern will be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality. The senior leaders will make efforts to reduce or eliminate the source of the stress, and provide support to minimise any harmful effects and hasten recovery. Our school fosters a culture of vigilance in support for all.

Promoting well-being for adults strategies include:

INSET -identification, prevention and management of occupational stress and the promotion of well-being are included in the school's INSET programme.

Appraisal – the appraisal systems allow for work load to be discussed and evaluated for mutually agreed workloads and targets. See Appraisal policy for further details.

Praise from colleagues and senior leaders – Senior leaders ensure staff are valued and praised in a variety of ways eg letter from chair of governors, Awesome colleague of the month, notices in staff meeting, being verbally thanked for their work.

Risk assessments – are used to identify areas in which employees health and safety may be vulnerable and provide a means to introduce control measures. See Health and Safety policy for further details.

Communication – weekly staff meetings, departmental meeting and year group meetings are established to ensure effective communication. Minutes of meetings are circulated via email. Email is used in a way to ensure relevant communication is effective. A weekly newsletter is circulated to all staff.(Avenews)

It is acknowledged that staff manage their time in different ways. Communication via email or whatsapp is not expected to be answered after 5.30pm or over weekends.

Expectations of staff – are discussed and made clear to staff – see Staff handbook for further details. Policies are reviewed and shared with staff on a regular basis eg marking

Workload re-allocation or redeployment being considered- an individual may discuss workload with the headteacher or line manager with a view to temporary or permanent relief.

Mentoring/coaching- these approaches are used to assist employees in fostering strengths and to strengthen areas for development.

Induction – all new members of staff are assigned a buddy and/or mentor. Newly qualified teachers are placed alongside more experienced staff. See Induction policy for further details

Role of SLT – an acceptance and understanding that personal experiences may effect wellbeing and school life.

Specialist advice- employees are made aware of how to access specialist support, for example, occupational health, counselling services eg posters in school, RBK website

Return to work – procedures followed to ensure staff returning to school after a period of absence are supported

Social events – a variety of social events for all staff are regularly organised throughout the year and include a weekly staff choir

Discretionary leave policy – this clear policy is used to discuss any absence rates causing concern

Emails – staff are not expected to reply to emails outside of normal working hours

Developing good practice – the school takes advice from qualified professionals and endeavours to share good practice observed in other schools and develop provision eg part of SEMH cluster

Peer Supervision – Is available for all staff

Reflective Space - Is available for all staff and is provided by the MHST

Mental Health First Aider

Staff mental health and wellbeing champions

Promoting well-being for pupils – strategies include:

PSHE curriculum – well-being, a healthy lifestyle, resilience and coping with stress form part of the PSHE programme of study

PE curriculum – the programme of study is comprehensive with two sessions of PE timetabled each week.

Transition – procedures and systems are in place to support pupils at every transitional stage, eg starting in Nursery or Reception, moving year group, starting mid-year.

Pastoral support – staff make pastoral support a priority and ensure pupils are listened to and supported when necessary eg worry boxes, weekly drop in well-being session, encourage self-referral to ELSA

Trusted adult – all pupils are encouraged to nominate a trusted adult in school to whom they would go to if they needed support.

ELSA – members of staff are trained to support pupils with their well-being

Young Carers- identifying and supporting pupils who may be young carers. The children can attend a drop in club weekly

Counselling – a trained counsellor visits school weekly for pupil support

Mentoring- vulnerable pupils are allocated a teacher mentor and have timetabled one to one support weekly.

Home learning- clear policy, information and guidance are available. The school ensures that Home Learning is not the cause of anxiety for families. See Home Learning policy for further details

Daily mile – all pupils are given the opportunity to take part in a daily mile activity to boost well-being

Statutory testing – pupils are supported and advised on a healthy approach to tests

Intervention programmes – Specific well-being programmes are led by qualified staff eg CBT, Friends, Cool Connections.

Healthy eating – advice is given to parents and pupils with regards to eating a healthy packed lunch. The school provides healthy hot meals. Fruit is available to all pupils daily. Pupils are asked to bring in a water bottle for use during the day, water fountains are also available.

Parent workshops- provided to advise parents in supporting the well-being of their child eg sleep, e-safety, anxiety, ERSA

Behaviour support - a consistent approach to supporting pupils to make the right choices with regards to behaviour, eg GRAND rules, perfect apology, Zones of Regulation. See Behaviour policy for further details.

Return to school – procedures in place to ensure pupils returning to school after a period of absence are supported.

Responsibility and ownership - pupils are given opportunities to show leadership skills and be part of decision making. Eg monitors, champions, Mini GASPA, school council. The school also promotes an ownership of learning approach in all lessons.

Mental Health Ambassadors – A team of children across the school from year 2 to year 6 are given the opportunity to become a Mental Health Ambassador. These pupils work closely with the ELSA staff to raise awareness of the importance of good mental health. Eg assemblies

Using expertise – programmes delivered for children with an identified specific need following advice from psychologist

MHST – we have an Education Wellbeing Practitioner once a week, who works with parents and groups of children. We also have the services of two creative therapists every other half term, who do individual and group work with the children.

Monitoring and evaluating well-being

There is a collective responsibility for all staff to monitor wellbeing and stress levels. Our commitment and approach to employment and work life balance ensures that all members of the school community are supported with compassion and understanding. It is acknowledged that staff well-being is pivotal to pupil well-being and success. The senior leaders will monitor and evaluate the well-being of the school using the criteria set out below.

The number of excluded pupils
Racist, violent, sexist and bullying incidents reported
Amount of budget allocated to wellbeing or stress management
Staff absences due to sickness
Staff turnover
Accuracy of job descriptions
Adherence to recruitment and appointment of staff procedures
The number of parental complaints received
Surveys

Advice regarding stress and well-being

Staff

Staff who feel they are suffering from occupational or personal stress are advised to speak with their line manager. A meeting with the head teacher will be arranged to discuss the sources of work related stress, agree a plan to minimise these factors and support the promotion of well-being. This plan will be monitored and evaluated. The member of staff will be supported by colleagues and referred to outside agencies if this is thought to be beneficial. RBK provide a number of services which can be accessed eg Occupational health, Counselling

Pupils

Pupils who feel they are suffering from stress are advised to contact a trusted adult, this may be by talking, through a classroom based 'worry box' or our ELSA red letterbox. The adult will then talk through and agree the next steps of support for example; ELSA, wellbeing drop-in clinic, one-to-one counselling, meeting with parents. Adults in school will ensure the pupil has opportunities to discuss their concerns with a view to advising on strategies to promote well-being.

Concluding statement

We aim for an atmosphere of confidence and a staff team who respect and support each other. Grand Avenue Primary school is fully inclusive with an ethos of mutual respect and understanding. We appoint line managers who promote well-being and have the skills to spot the signs of stress and intervene in a supportive manner. We endeavour to create an emotionally healthy school where all feel valued and safe.

Useful sources for staff seeking help or advice

RBK counselling service 0208 547 5160

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-mental-health>

Free Resources from Mind on how to handle mental health issues and create a healthy, productive working environment. They've also put together a **guide to promoting wellbeing and tackle work related mental health issues**.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/useful-resources/>

https://www.mind.org.uk/media/428496/Resource3_HowToPromoteWellBeingFINAL.pdf

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/employer-resources/wellness-action-plan-download/>

Staff may also find Mindfulness Apps helpful eg Headspace, Calm, 3minute mindfulness

Well-being and mental health after the COVID -19 pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic was unprecedented; none of us had experienced this before so we don't know what the exact impact will be. Every child and family will react differently. It is important to remember that for most pupils, lockdown will have also brought experiences which may have had a positive impact on their mental well-being. For example, some children and young people may have enjoyed having more time and sharing new experiences with family. Some may have established new routines that work better for them and some may have felt less pressure from tests, exams and academic success. Others may have developed new skills such as building resilience, problem-solving abilities and new coping strategies.

However, the pandemic will have affected mental well-being in various negative ways. As well as the short-term impact, there may be long-term consequences for mental health. Possible negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the mental well-being of children and young people include:

- **Loss:** of seeing friends and family; of routines; of goals/milestones, such as exams; of rituals such as end of year activities or exams; of school life; of normal life and activities.
- **Friendships:** lack of socialisation; loss of self-worth gained from peer groups; missing friends; difficulties maintaining friendships remotely; loss of social rewards and social identity.
- **Anxiety, fear and confusion:** fear about future uncertainty; fear of future school closures; confusion about new rules; anxiety about illness and hygiene.
- **Disrupted sleep patterns:** causing loss of concentration and affecting mood.
- **Family experiences:** abuse; conflict; stress; financial issues; coping with mental health issues of adults; increased caring responsibilities.
- **School:** worries about missing learning and falling behind; loss of routines; academic worries due to school closures or exam cancellations; lack of access to trusted adults.
- **Bereavement and illness:** coping with the illness or death of family, friends and loved ones.

See also the following websites for advice and support

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/young-people/information-and-advice/emotional-health-service/resource-hub>