



Special Partnership Trust



# STAFF SUPPORT AND WELL-BEING POLICY

Date Last Reviewed: November 2024

Review Date: November 2026



Special Partnership Trust

## Staff Support & Well-being Policy

*This policy needs to be read in conjunction with our staff attendance policy, performance management policy, CPD strategy and Trust Recruitment, retention and reward strategy.*

### Introduction

The Special Partnership Trust (SPT) is committed to providing a working environment and management practices that prioritises the health and well-being of all employees. Our People Strategy, which underpins the Trust's strategic aims, reflects our commitment to putting people first. We believe that while staff should strive for excellence, they must also take responsibility for their own well-being. We are committed to cultivating a culture of cooperation, trust, and mutual respect, where every individual is treated with dignity and fairness, enabling them to perform at their best. Recognising that work-related stress can adversely affect well-being, we aim to identify and address its various forms through this policy.

The Staff Support & Well-being Policy outlines our approach to promoting staff wellbeing by:

- Creating a supportive working environment where potential work related stressors are understood and mitigated as far as practically possible through good management practices, effective HR policies and staff development.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby staff feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work effectiveness as a means of reducing stress and that of their colleagues.
- Using mentors to help support and provide advice for all staff in the school providing up to date training for our well-being mentors/champions.
- Providing staff with refreshments, such as coffee and tea.
- Providing a comfortable area within the school where staff can take their allocated breaks with the expectation that staff breaks will not be compromised whenever possible.
- Ensuring our attendance policy recognises the needs of our staff and their unforeseen circumstances e.g. family friendly approach.
- Identifying in each of our schools a staff well-being champion /team/mentor to address the development of well-being initiatives.
- Collating the views of our collective staff to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy identifying where improvements can be made.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive.

### Well-being Strategy

The SPT recognises its 'duty of care' towards employees, as mandated by legislation and case law, to safeguard both physical and psychological well-being. To achieve this, we have adopted:



- The attendance management policy and procedure which provides a framework with clear milestones enabling the school to effectively manage attendance; and
- The health and safety policy which provides a framework for, and measurement of, safe places of work; and
- The staff wellbeing policy which focuses on the School's obligations to supporting staff's health and wellbeing.

All staff must be aware of these policies and their roles in maintaining a healthy workplace.

Understanding Absence Causes:

**Health and lifestyle factors:** Issues such as genuine illness, lifestyle choices and overall health.

**Workplace factors:** Concerns related to working patterns, health and safety concerns and relationships at work.

**Attitudinal and stress factors:** Job satisfaction, career satisfaction, stress levels and organisational commitment/'culture'.

**Domestic and relationship factors:** Personal circumstances affecting work such as family responsibilities and financial stress.

#### Preventative Actions

We will focus on preventative measures, including:

- health promotion initiatives
- flexible working arrangements where feasible
- enhancements to the physical working environment
- job design improvements
- career management through performance reviews
- monitoring workloads and working hours
- consulting staff on health-related work issues.

#### Commitment to Well-being

Promoting staff well-being is crucial for the SPT. By understanding and addressing workplace factors, we can enhance individual and organisational health.

Our commitment includes:

- Conducting risk assessments to identify potential well-being issues
- Collaborating with external agencies for additional support as required
- Raising awareness of well-being practices
- Providing managers with resources to address staff concerns
- Ensuring no expectation for staff to engage in work related communication outside of working hours except in emergencies
- Offering confidential health assessments and access to wellness programs
- Supporting participation in social events to foster community
- Conducting annual anonymous surveys to gather insights for future strategies.



## Promoting Positive Mental Health

One of our primary concerns in promoting staff well-being is to encourage positive mental health. To achieve this we recognise the need for proactive measures to reduce workplace stress. The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as being “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”. It is crucial to differentiate between “pressure” and “stress”; while pressure can motivate, excessive pressure can lead to stress. Although external factors can contribute to stress, the Trust is committed to addressing work-related stress.

## Policy Objectives

The policy aims are to:

- provide advice and information about minimising risks to health;
- educate staff about the causes, effects and management of stress.

To achieve these objectives line managers will:

- Carry out risk assessments to identify health and wellbeing issues related to work.
- Implement appropriate control measures to minimise risks to health and well-being.
- Monitor and audit arrangements in an effort to improve the quality of the working environment.
- Raise awareness of the causes, signs and symptoms of stress and stress related illness, and of the ways in which the school supports individuals.
- Ensure they are equipped to respond to staff well-being concerns.
- Educate employees in techniques for recognising and coping with potentially stressful situations.
- Provide information about appropriate welfare services to all employees, including the availability of any employee assistance programmes.

The following have been identified as appropriate measures of employee performance and well-being for the purposes of managing health and well-being:

- Absences will be recorded and monitored for data analysis in accordance to the staff attendance policy.
- Exit questionnaires will be used and followed up with appropriate line management exit interviews when staff leave employment.
- Use of Occupational Health and counselling services will be monitored without breaching confidentiality.

## Wellbeing Responsibilities

Headteachers/Senior Managers are responsible for ensuring:

- Engaging line managers at all levels in the importance of managing staff well-being.
- Allocating appropriate resources to enable line managers to deliver the agreed strategy proactively, including (where appropriate) the use of occupational health referrals for expert opinion.
- Actively implementation principles and behaviours that contribute to positive staff well-being.
- being attentive to employees’ personal circumstances and offering additional support where appropriate to members of staff experiencing risks to their wellbeing which derive from outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation.



- Ensuring each school has a bereavement policy and bereavement co-ordinator which informs practice/protocols within the school.
- Facilitating effective communication between managers and staff especially during organisational changes that may increase stress.
- Maintaining a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Headteachers/Senior Managers will:

- Seek assistance from the HR Manager for stress risk assessments when necessary ensuring reasonable measures are implemented based on recommendations.
- Ensuring that employees are consulted with over aspects of their employment that may cause stress or impact on their health and well-being when changes affecting them are planned.
- Provide appropriate training and resources for staff to carry out their duties.
- Offer development opportunities aligned with the Absence Management Strategy.
- Ensure workloads are realistic and manageable, monitoring working hours and encouraging breaks as required by legislation.
- Familiarise themselves with the impact of bullying and harassment and ensure that employees are aware that this is not tolerated in the workplace.
- Recognise that personal circumstances may temporarily affect work performance and treat discussions about personal issues with confidentiality, only disclosing information with the employees consent.

Line Managers will:

- Adhere to the management principles set out in school/trust policies and procedures.
- Treat team members with consideration, promoting a culture of mutual respect and addressing unacceptable behaviour promptly.
- Ensure there is good communication within their team and that there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns.
- Regularly check in with team members, offering praise and encouragement.
- Encourage participation in well-being initiatives and activities organised by the school/Trust.

Employees will:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety at work and collaborate with the SLT to reduce stress.
- Avoid causing health and wellbeing issues for colleagues.
- Proactively identify and communicate any health and wellbeing concerns whether work-related, or due to external factors;
- Treat colleagues and others with fairness, consideration and respect.
- Co-operate with the Trusts efforts to implement the Staff Support and Well-being Policy.
- Take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing to the best of their ability.

Human Resources will:

- Provide guidance on best practices in relation to human resource management, developing policies and procedures as required
  - Collate management information to measure its performance in relation to absence/stress management and employee wellbeing such as: Sickness absence data
  - Staff turnover and exit interviews
  - Referrals to OH
  - Numbers of grievance cases
- Gather staff feedback on the effectiveness of the Trust Well-being Policy through surveys and engagement meetings.

**This policy links to:**

- OH referral process.
- Absence Management Policy
- Family Friendly Policy including Maternity, Flexible working
- Trust CPD Strategy
- Trust Recruitment, Retention and Reward Strategy
- Performance Management Policy

The Staff Support and Well-being Policy will be reviewed every 2 years, taking into account all relevant collected data as outlined in this policy.