




The Federation of Cherry Oak, Victoria School and Victoria College

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Date accepted by Governors: 9th June 2022
Signed: 
Martin Carpenter – Buildings, Health & Safety Committee
Date for Review: June 2024

INTRODUCTION

Promoting and protecting the mental wellbeing of our employees and wider Federation community is important to us. Mental ill health affects physical health, social wellbeing and productivity and is associated with many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society.

Many factors can influence the mental wellbeing of our employees, students and their families and so understanding and addressing these can have a wide range of benefits, both for individuals and the setting.

Positive mental wellbeing is relevant to all employees, students and the families that we support and everyone can contribute to improved mental wellbeing at work.

Important aspects of mental health and wellbeing include:-

- providing information and raising awareness,
- developing management skills to deal with the issues around mental health and stress,
- providing a supportive environment,
- offering assistance, advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health crisis,
- positively supporting those returning to the setting after a period of absence related to mental health

POLICY STATEMENT

The Federation is committed to the protection and promotion of the mental health and wellbeing of all its staff, students and their families. We will continuously strive to improve the mental health environment and culture of the organisation by identifying, eliminating, or minimising all harmful processes, procedures and behaviours that may cause psychological harm or illness.

In addition, we will promote an open culture of raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing across the Federation by providing information through our websites, during staff training and regular updates, return to work interviews and through signposting to appropriate support mechanisms. For our students and their families, this will be offered through curriculum rich experiences and signposting to relevant support agencies and workshops in the locality, or beyond.

We continually strive, as far as is reasonably practicable, to promote mental health throughout the organisation by establishing and maintaining processes that enhance mental health and wellbeing.

The Federation has established a Mental health & Wellbeing Strategy Group that will focus on ensuring that positive strategies for promoting mental health are established and evaluated throughout the year. This cross-Federation group is made up of trained Mental Health First Aiders, who are qualified to signpost and support with a range of issues that staff, students or their families may experience. The group meets frequently throughout the year and will engage all members of the community to seek feedback and help to shape the offer.

OUR AIM

To provide an environment that promotes and supports the mental health and wellbeing of all.

SCOPE

Mental Health difficulties and stress can affect anyone, regardless of their role within the setting. This policy applies equally to all employees, students and their families where a need has been identified.

This policy will be supported by other relevant policies and procedures, including health and safety policies, e.g. the Managing Attendance Policy, Stress Risk assessments, Bullying and Harassment, Code of Conduct.

This policy will comply with Health and Safety legislation and best practice guidelines. The Federation has also committed to improving mental health and wellbeing by signing up to the [Department for Education Wellbeing Charter](#). This is a public declaration of support for, and set of commitments to, the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in education.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

To develop a supportive culture, address factors that may negatively affect mental wellbeing and to develop coping/management skills.

- Reduce discrimination and stigma of mental health and wellbeing by increasing awareness and understanding.
- Share information on and increase the Federation's awareness of positive mental wellbeing.
- Include information about the mental health policy in key documents, including the staff induction programme and new student packs.
- Provide opportunities for everyone in the Federation to look after their mental wellbeing; for example, through training and awareness, physical activities, stress reducing activities and social events.
- Provide systems that encourage predictable working hours, reasonable workloads and flexible working practices where appropriate.
- Ensure that clearly defined objectives and responsibilities are set and provide good management support, appropriate training and adequate resources for all.
- Manage conflict effectively and ensure the Federation is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination at all levels.
- Ensure a physical environment that is supportive of mental health and wellbeing.
- Provide training for designated staff in the early identification, causes and appropriate management of mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, stress and change management.

To provide support for those experiencing mental health difficulties.

- Ensure individuals suffering from mental health difficulties are treated fairly and consistently.
- Positively support those who have been absent from the site with periods of stress, anxiety or related mental health concerns.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of the support that can be offered through the Federation's Mental Health First Aiders, Human Resources, the Employee Assistance Programme or alternatively their own GP or a counsellor.

- Treat all matters relating to individuals and their mental health problems in the strictest confidence and share on a 'need to know' basis, only with consent from the individual concerned, unless there is a serious risk to their or others' life.
- Support will be offered in a variety of ways, which will best support the person. For example, this could be a 'listening ear' or a referral and signposting to other services for targeted support. The Mental Health First Aider will always abide by confidentiality, except where a serious safeguarding concern is raised, which needs to be passed on.
- The most successful support is always achieved in true partnership and collegiately. Therefore, the Mental Health First Aider will always act in the best interests of the person seeking support and keep an open dialogue.
- The Mental Health First Aiders are available for support across the Federation and sites. Therefore, staff, students and families are able to make contact with any member of the team, regardless of their base site. This may be useful where the person feels that they want to talk to someone who doesn't work within the same building.

Communication

- Those within the Federation will be made aware of the mental health and wellbeing policy and the facilities available, through email and the intranet.
- Frequent communications will be shared with all members of the Federation community in regards to updates of mental health and wellbeing support and planned changes to the provision.
- The Federation will support the community through offering regular training and awareness sessions, which will raise the profile of wellbeing and mental health support in all settings.
- The group will be aware of different types of communication required for all stakeholders, including students. Therefore, any communication will be suitable for the target audience (e.g. symbol support).

Review and monitoring

- The Federation will seek the views of all those who are participating in any of the mental health and wellbeing activities across the settings.
- Data from staff and student surveys will be reviewed and used to develop strategies across the federation that will support the concerns identified in the surveys.
- The human resources department will be responsible for reviewing the mental wellbeing policy and for monitoring how effectively the policy meets its aims and objectives.
- The Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy group will review their remit and work on an annual basis and the group will ensure that the team is reflective of the diverse workforce and wider community.
- The policy will be reviewed annually from implementation and ratified by the Governing Body/Board of Trustees.



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