



HEARTS ACADEMY TRUST

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

Approved:	November 2021
To be reviewed:	November 2024
Version	1.3 updated 12 March 2024

HEARTS Academy Trust is committed to providing a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all within a values led context, where everyone feels valued and grows in confidence and independence.

We promote **HAPPINESS** through a creative, exciting and practical curriculum, which generates a love of, and interest in, learning and a resilience and hope which supports us through challenging times.

Great value is placed on pupils' self **ESTEEM** which is developed through a positive and motivated attitude to learning, a healthy lifestyle, good social skills, self-discipline and a positive self-image.

We promote the highest standards of **ACHIEVEMENT** in all areas of the curriculum and help all pupils to fulfil their potential regardless of gender, race or ability.

We foster **RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY** for all by establishing good relations between the school, home and community. Pupils are taught respect for themselves, others and the environment. They are also taught to take full responsibility for their own choices and responsibility for themselves and their community.

We encourage **TRUTH** and honesty in all aspects of school life – relationships, work and the curriculum and learn to trust and accept others' individuality and uniqueness.

We develop **SPIRITUALITY and SERVICE** so that calm, quiet, reflective times which support deep thought are part of school life and beauty is appreciated. We promote a service culture that reflects our duty to support and show compassion to all members of the community and not just ourselves.



*Children at the HEART*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

HEARTS Academy Trust believes that the Mental Health and Wellbeing of our staff is key to organisational success and sustainability. The trust is committed to:

- Developing a trust/school ethos that drives positive mental health outcomes, being mindful of the impact of employee's workload that any initiatives may create
- Promoting an open culture around mental health by increasing awareness, challenging stigma and empowering employees as champions and role models
- Increase organisational confidence and capability, through the trust counsellor and school Mental Health First Aid Champions trained in all aspects of mental health, mental health literacy and opportunities to learn.
- Providing mental health tools and support

## 2. AIM

The aim of this policy is for HEARTS to establish, promote and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all employees through workplace practices, and encourage employees to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing. This policy aims;

- To build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that supports mental health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination (including harassment/bullying).
- To increase employee knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours.
- To reduce stigma around mental health in the workplace.
- To facilitate employees' active participation in a range of initiatives that support mental health and wellbeing.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The following responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:

**Trustees** have overall responsibility for the introduction and review of this policy and its approval with the advice and support from the HEARTS CEO and the legal/ HR advisors.

**School workload and wellbeing committees** have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the policy

**Heads of School/ local advisory boards** have responsibility to follow and adhere to the policy and apply it in their school.

**School leaders have a responsibility to**

- ensure that all workers are made aware of this policy
- actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals
- manage the implementation and review of this policy.

#### **All employees are encouraged to:**

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from school and trust leaders where required
- Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing HEARTS.
- Support fellow employees in their awareness of this policy
- Support and contribute to HEARTS aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all employees.
- Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health
- Take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace.

#### **4. SUPPPORT STRUCTURE**

##### **Trust counsellor (and trust senior mental health lead, SMHL)**

Our trust counsellor and SMHL is part of the leadership group that forms the SEMH strategic group. She also co-ordinates the student counsellors, mental health first aid champions and work load and well-being groups.

As the trust counsellor she undertakes all assessments for every referral to the trust's mental health team as well as managing her own case load of therapeutic support.

Clinical supervision is also provided to all EYFS and DSL staff termly by the trust counsellor.

The trust counsellor is required to be a member of an appropriate governing body and adhere to their ethical guidelines.

##### **School senior mental health leads**

Each school has its own qualified senior mental lead (SMHL). As SMHLs, the team are responsible for the development and implementation of a whole school approach to positive mental health and well-being.

##### **Student counsellors**

HEARTS Academy Trust offers placements to student counsellors when they are fit to practice. The trust SMHLs work in collaboration with the student's college or university to co-ordinate all placements. Student counsellors undertake face to face therapeutic support for pupils, parents and staff for a minimum of one academic year.

##### **Mental Health First Aid Champions**

Mental health first aid is the help offered to someone developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health issue or a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves. A Mental Health First Aid Champion (MHFAC) is an employee who has been formally accredited to administer mental health first aid in their workplace, by attending and passing an assessment in a mental health first aid course that has been delivered by an accredited mental health first aid instructor.

- Each school is to have an adult and youth MHFAC (ideally not the same person)
- The MHFAC is trained to provide a confidential environment, give appropriate support and signpost to other available services.
- The MHFAC will be able to;
  - be called away from their normal duties at short notice if required
  - maintain confidentiality as appropriate
  - listen non-judgmentally

The MHFAC is the first responder in cases where an employee needs mental health support.

If assistance is required from a MHFAC they can be contacted through all communication mediums in current use including face to face or via the line manager/HoS. Contact information will be advertised across the trust and in each school. More information can be provided by the senior mental health lead (trust counsellor) following an initial meeting the MHFAC may arrange a follow up consultation if required.

The responsibility of the MHFAC is to provide mental health first aid within their workplace as needed, at their level of competence and training. If required, the MHFAC will escalate and document any matters if required in a prompt and appropriate fashion. They will be required to complete available refresher training as directed/required and attend termly MHFAC meetings, and additional meetings if appropriate.

MHFAC will also be required to undertake clinical supervision provided by the trust counsellor when appropriate. Where risk to life has occurred, clinical supervision MUST occur within 24 hours.

If a MHFAC has any concerns or requires support and guidance they can seek information from a fellow first aider or senior mental health lead.

Records of consultations are stored on the MHFAC's computer. However, identities remain anonymous and absent from personnel files.

## **5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RISK TO LIFE**

HEARTS recognises that respecting the privacy of information relating to individuals who have received mental health first aid or may be experiencing a mental health problem or a mental health crisis at work is of high importance.

All MHFAC are obligated to treat all matters sensitively and privately in accordance with HEARTS confidentiality protocols. However, if there is an urgent risk to life identified, emergency services should be contacted immediately. Assistance from appropriate colleagues (i.e., school buddy, first aider, MHFAC, trust counsellor, HoS, DSL) may be sought, if required.

If there is a risk to life (suicidal) and the person is under 18 their emergency contact must also be notified.

If the person has a weapon contact the police phoning 999, also inform them the person is suicidal. Do not place yourself in danger.

Where risk to life has occurred clinical supervision with the trust counsellor MUST occur within 24 hours.

## **6. WITHDRAWAL**

HEARTS recognise that being a MHFAC, workload, personal and professional issues may have a significant impact on the capacity or mental health of the MHFAC. The MHFAC should discuss any difficulties with

their HoS and senior mental health lead. Support will be offered which may include a sabbatical from the role.

### **Lifestyle choices**

There are some really simple things employees can do to make themselves feel fit and well. HEARTS has devised a list of hints and tips to promote wellbeing in the workplace and at home.

**Take the time** - It's easy to become so immersed in stressful situations that you can't afford the time or the personal space to stand back and re-evaluate your objectives in life and how you can achieve them.

Take the time to ask yourself some questions and make sure you're doing the right things to achieve your goals.

**Keep active** - Exercise is a proven way to keep fit and well. Exercise will make you feel better instantly through the release of uplifting chemicals into your body. Even just half an hour's brisk walk every other day can make all the difference. Keep active.

**Eat well** - A balanced diet is the key to good health. People under stress tend to over and under eat, or slip into the habit of rushed inadequate meals. Research shows direct links between what we eat and how we feel.

**Sleep well** - Apart from making you feel tired and run down, not getting enough sleep makes you more prone to health problems. Aim for a good night's sleep every night. ff

**Relax** - Relaxation is one of the most effective ways of promoting wellness. Make sure you take time out of your day to relax.

**Drink sensibly** - Even though it might make us feel good in the short term, alcohol is a depressant drug.

**Keep in touch** - It is important to maintain relationships at home and at work. Relationships have a huge impact on how we feel on a daily basis.

## **7. COMMITMENT TO WORK LIFE BALANCE**

The trust is committed to improving employees' work life balance and their well-being;

### **Unmeasured working time**

Where employees, such as the leadership team, are contracted to work unmeasured time, the trust undertakes to ensure that the schools'/trusts' requirements and expectations are reasonable.

### **Employment policies and practice**

The trust undertakes to adopt and apply the appropriate policies in respect of 'family friendly' employment, including consideration of part time working, flexible working patterns etc. where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the school. This extends to the trust adopting policies and providing clear guidance on time off for public or Trade Union duties, or for personal reasons (see Leave of Absence Policy).

## **Individual and team workloads**

The trust ensures that school timetables reflect a fair and reasonable balance of work between different employees. The trust will ensure that new and emerging priorities are discussed with the employees affected and that ways of managing the implications for individual workloads are addressed.

## **Planning and policies**

The trust ensures that preparing documentation should be no more elaborate than is necessary and consistent with its purpose

## **Meetings**

The trust ensures that patterns of meetings are appropriate to the requirements of the whole school, faculties and departments etc. and that they are agreed in advance and that the pattern is adhered to. Leaders convening meetings should specify a target finishing time and adhere to it. Outcomes from meetings will be clear and concise.

## **Administration**

Work has been delegated to appropriate support staff and systems will be regularly reviewed. Requests for information, statistics, policies and similar will be assessed for their importance and benefit to the school and where possible will be collated by support staff.

## **Individual support and training**

Individual support, including confidential counselling with the trust counsellor, student counsellors and MHFAC's is made available to employees so that they may raise concerns about problems and difficulties, which affect them either in their work or their family/personal life.

## **Sharing resources and planning**

Subject leader experts in maths, English, reading, phonics and the curriculum as well as EYFS and SEND specialists who have worked across HEARTS and in other contexts lead planning, collaboratively write plans and support with the delivery of the lessons. During PPA sessions, teachers and curriculum, learning assessment leads (CLALs) will speak at length about summative and formative assessment and adapting resources and planning to meet the needs of their class. Year groups will often collaborate during these sessions, remotely, or due to the location of the schools, in person. This can include: moderation, sharing and adapting resources, analysing assessment, team teaching and modelling, coaching and mentoring and feedback.

## **8. AVAILABLE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AT HEARTS**

All employees and volunteers (including trustees and LAB members) of HEARTS Academy Trust have access to support for mental health issues with the trust counsellor, MHFAC and student counsellors. Referrals to outside agencies can be made on behalf of the employee seeking support.



## 9. SUPPORT AT HEARTS

- Performance reviews will offer the opportunity with their reviewers, any concerns which they may have about their workload or ability to balance work with other aspects of their life.
- Line management system in place for support
- Termly clinical supervision for EYFS staff (meeting statutory requirements)
- Termly clinical supervision for DSLs (in addition to termly group supervision)
- Regular briefing to all employees
- Regular professional development sessions to support all employees
- The trust is very supportive of PPA time and employees support this
- Administrative staff to support workforce
- Effective timing of inset days
- Staff questionnaires
- Consultative staff meetings

## **10. EMPLOYEE VOICE/QUESTIONNAIRE**

The trust carries out an annual workforce questionnaire which focuses on working conditions, covering issues such as the working environment in classrooms and on the school site. It also focuses on the more specific demands of roles, covering issues such as:

- Workload pressures
- Support from colleagues and Leadership
- Availability of training and development opportunities. The questionnaires use a range of statements to address these issues. Employees are asked to say how far they agree with the statements.

### **Follow-up actions**

Once the questionnaires have been collated, trust leaders will:

- Calculate the average score for each question
- Write a report/action plan highlighting the areas of good and bad feedback
- Arrange a meeting to discuss findings of the report
- Report findings to Trustees/LABs

### **Implementing changes**

Information from the report and the meeting helps trust leaders to create an action plan for the whole school and individual employees. These plans may focus on smaller changes, such as improving communication with Leadership or encouraging employees to prioritise work, or longer-term priorities such as developing the school building. The trust ensures that the questionnaire bring about continuous school improvement and increase the quality of mental health of all employees.

## **11. COMMUNICATION**

HEARTS will ensure that;

- all employees receive a copy of this policy
- employees are empowered to actively contribute and provide feedback
- employees are notified of all changes

## **12. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The trust will review this policy and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout all schools.

## HEARTS Academy Trust mental health triage and effective support

<p><b><u>Level 1 universal support</u></b></p> <p><b><u>All staff able to support</u></b></p> <p>Friendship issues</p> <p>Self-esteem</p> <p>Confidence</p> <p>Parental separation</p> <p>Bereavement</p> <p>Young carers</p> <p>ASD</p> <p>Bullying</p> <p>Low mood</p> <p>Low level anxiety</p> <p>Poverty</p>
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<p><b><u>Level 2 additional support</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Additional support from MHFAC's Learning Mentors, student counsellors, family solutions, trust counsellor</u></b></p> <p>Parental mental health issues</p> <p>Alcohol and substance misuse</p> <p>CP and CIN</p> <p>Depression</p> <p>Trauma or crisis (such as house fire, car accident etc)</p> <p>Domestic violence</p> <p>Chronic illness</p> <p>Life limiting conditions</p> <p>Adoption and foster care</p> <p>Suicide</p> <p>All of level 1</p>
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<p><b><u>Level 3 intensive support</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Intensive support from trust counsellor, EWMHS, post adoption, outreach therapeutic services</u></b></p> <p>Abuse</p> <p>Attachment issues</p> <p>Eating disorders</p> <p>OCD</p> <p>Self-harming</p> <p>School refusal</p> <p>All of level 2</p>
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<p><b><u>Level 4 specialist support</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Specialist support from Psychiatrists, rapid response, crisis team, Tavistock, GOSH trauma centre.</u></b></p> <p>Psychosis</p> <p>BPD</p> <p>Personality disorders</p> <p>All of level 3</p>
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# HEARTS WORKLOAD AND WELLBEING CHARTER



Trust Senior Mental Health Lead is:

Kerry Westbrook

Our school Mental Health First Aid Champions are:

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The Chair of our schools workload and wellbeing committee is:

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## CULTURE

Our values of *happiness, self-esteem, achievement, respect and responsibility, truth and service* are fundamental to this charter. If we follow and live these, our working environment and workload will be a priority for all staff. We expect:

- staff to be **Honest** with line managers when they are struggling;
- Leaders to be **Responsible** and act and speak out when they feel staff workload is unreasonable;
- all staff to look out for their colleagues and **Support** each other when times are busy, and
- leaders to listen to staff's workload concerns.

## COMMUNICATION

There is no expectation that staff read or answer emails outside working hours. Trust policy says that emails that need a response should be responded to within 24 hours. Emails should be clear if a response is needed. **ONLY SLT TO USE 'REPLY ALL' BUTTON.** We want all staff to achieve a good work life balance and to this end we strongly advise staff not to have school email apps on their phones or tablets. All schools are required to present dates including PPA, events and meetings well in advance to staff through the staff room board and online diary and/or calendar. The Trust is committed to improve IT systems to help reduce workload.

## LESSON PLANNING

HEARTS Academy Trust has central planning and resourcing systems which support staff to reduce time in PPA devoted to writing plans. This leaves time and energy to discuss and think through how lessons will be taught, assessed and how pupils will be supported to retain information over time. Teachers in their ECT years or early stages are not expected to write lesson plans unless they are experienced subject experts, supported by senior colleagues or leaders and part of the planning team. Teachers will, of course, adapt plans for their pupils as needed. PPA time for all staff not on the leadership scale or equivalent is uninterrupted and guaranteed. In addition to PPA, all HEARTS teachers have an extra 10% non-contact time entitlement per week. This ensures that subject leaders and ECTs have adequate time each week to complete CPD or their subject leader responsibilities. HEARTS has collaborative termly planning sessions to write plans centrally and a termly curriculum week which all heads and subjects leaders are invited to. Ask your school leaders if you would like to attend and support with these plans.

## 80:20 MODEL

All teachers who plan, prepare and assess have this protected time. All teachers are entitled to 10% of time as part of PPA. During 2021/22 the trust allocated another 10% as part of the agreement to continue to focus on reducing workload. It is not additional PPA time but dedicated leadership time in a model that is pupil/standards focused.

*"90% of trust teachers said the model helped them to be a better teacher/leader and it had therefore benefitted their school"*

*"Teacher and staff well-being has improved significantly with the use of this model"*

*"Having the 80:20 model helped to allow me to model lessons, monitor my subject and support members of staff. This additional time drastically*

## REPORTS

Over the last 3 years, the format for pupil reports has been amended and content reduced. The current format ensure that key and statutory information is included but that long narrative isn't required. Staff feedback from this has been positive.

## DATA COLLECTION

Schools collect summative assessments in the form of standardised scores and teacher assessments (in writing) in KS1 and KS2 three times a year. In Foundation Stage, this is six times a year as we recognise that pupils may progress quicker during this stage.

Outcomes across our schools are on a 3-year upward trend and Trust schools are meeting or exceeding national standards in the vast majority of national measures.

*"96% of staff said that they were well supported by their colleagues."*

## INSPECTION

Inspection forms part of the accountability system for schools. However, staff are not required to produce information for Ofsted in any particular format. Nor do individual lessons form part of Ofsted's judgements on schools. Whilst we acknowledge that inspection can be stressful, schools that are functioning well, have an effective curriculum and safeguard pupils and staff should not need to do anything further during inspection. If leaders and teachers are familiar with the curriculum they teach, that pupils know and can do, what pupils have previously learned and what they will learn in the future there are no reasons to be concerned.

## RELATIONSHIPS

HEARTS Academy Trust recognises that working relationships can cause stress as can relationships in people's private lives. All leaders are encouraged to run a buddy system so that all staff have someone (other than their line manager or Head) to talk to. Staff should be encouraged to meet at least 3 times a week to idea share and support each other. Mental Health First Aid Champions are now in place in all schools and centrally. Staff also have access to the Trust's Senior Mental Health Lead (Kerry Westbrook), who is in schools every week. Where staff have concerns or are worried they should take these to their line manager and discuss next steps. Letting things go causes more stress.

*Kerry is available on: k.westbrook@heartsacademy.uk*

## MARKING AND FEEDBACK

There is no expectation for lengthy comments on pupils' work or positive acknowledgement that is recorded. Pupils are also trained to be able to mark and review their own work where appropriate. In key stage 1 and 2, teachers make use of whole class feedback forms to provide live feedback during lessons. Marking codes are also utilised to enable quick and efficient live marking. Comparative judgement systems are now reducing the need for detailed assessments and marking of long pieces of writing.

### YOU SAID WE DID...

Timed emails	Additional leadership time
Curriculum updates	Trust updates
2 week October half term	

*"89% of staff are happy to talk to their line manager"*

## HEARTS Academy Trust

*Happiness, Self-Esteem, Achievement, Respect & Responsibility, Truth, Spirituality & Service*

Updated January 2024