



Castleford Academy Trust

Wellbeing Charter

Working together to achieve excellence for all

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What is wellbeing?

In 2021, the Department for Education launched 'The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter'. All state-funded schools, academies, and colleges have been invited to sign up to the charter to show a shared commitment to protect, promote, and enhance the wellbeing of all staff.

Wellbeing at work can be defined as 'creating an environment to promote a state of contentment that allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential, for the benefit of themselves and their organisation' – The Chartered Institute of Professional Development, (CIPD).

As a Trust, we pride ourselves on our commitment to staff wellbeing through our vision of 'Working together to achieve excellence for all'. We are proud to have signed up to the DfE Wellbeing Charter. This document highlights the ways in which the Trust will meet the aims of the charter and, the commitment of the Trust, to the wellbeing of all staff.

Our Commitment

Here at Castleford Academy Trust, we are committed to placing staff wellbeing and mental health at the heart of our decision making. We will encourage staff to make positive choices for their own wellbeing and create an environment where staff feel supported throughout their career.

The DfE's Wellbeing Charter.

The DfE believe that everyone working in education can have the opportunity to enjoy the highest possible standard of wellbeing and mental health. In order to achieve this, through their wellbeing charter, the DfE have committed to a set of aims:

- 1. 'Design-in' wellbeing.**
- 2. Measure and respond to changes in staff wellbeing.**
- 3. Support the sector to drive down unnecessary workload.**
- 4. Ensure DfE guidance meets user needs.**
- 5. Champion flexible working and diversity.**
- 6. Break down stigma around mental health.**
- 7. Embed wellbeing in training and professional development.**
- 8. Improve access to mental health and wellbeing resources.**
- 9. Review progress made towards commitments.**

Ofsted have also recognised their role in protecting and enhancing mental health and have committed to:

1. Ensure that inspectors take staff wellbeing into account in coming to their judgements and monitor this through quality assurance
2. Review whether the framework is having inadvertent impacts on staff wellbeing (for example, in creating unnecessary workload) and take steps to alleviate issues.
3. Continue to clarify that we do not expect providers to create documentation for inspection, to try to reduce administrative workload.

By signing up to the DfE Wellbeing charter, the Trust have made the following organisational commitments:

1. Prioritise Staff Mental health.

We will:

- Tackle mental health stigma within the organisation, promoting an open and understanding culture.
- Give the same consideration and support to mental health as physical health, including in the management of staff absence.
- Fulfil our legal duty to control the risks associated with work-related stress in the education setting so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Channel support to individuals whose role is known to have a significant emotional component.
This might take the form of peer support, supervision, and/or counselling.
- Ensure that staff understand the real benefits that sensitive pastoral support can have, while also recognising where their limits are as non-specialists. We will therefore ensure there are opportunities to increase joint working in support of pupils, as well as routes to refer for specialist support.

We will achieve this by:

- Promoting a positive and friendly working environment where staff are valued and recognised for their contribution, hard work and commitment;
- Creating an environment where mental health is discussed openly and where staff are encouraged to seek help and support;
- Providing staff access to mental health services, through SAS Wellbeing;
- Use the Managing Attendance Policy to support staff through effective and timely return to work meetings and wellbeing meetings;
- Where appropriate refer staff to counselling, occupational health, develop individual risk assessments and return to work plans (for long term absence);
- Offering support to staff going through the menopause through implementing our Menopause Policy.

2. Give staff the support they need to take responsibility for their own and other people's wellbeing.

We will achieve this by:

- Appointing a mental health lead in each academy;
- Training staff to be qualified mental health first aiders;
- Promoting healthy lifestyles and exercise among staff to improve employee wellness e.g., fitness suite access, provide wellbeing activities;
- Encourage staff to participate and lead wellness activities for everyone to become involved.
- Provide access to on-line courses through National College;
- Respond to wellbeing surveys to assess the wellbeing of staff;
- Discuss wellbeing as part of performance management.

3. Give managers access to the tools and resources they need to support the wellbeing of those they line manage.

We will work to provide managers with tools, resources and training to support their staff. We will not, however, expect managers to provide professional wellbeing support for which they have no professional training, and will ensure that there are clear routes in place to escalate for further support.

We will achieve this by:

- Having a strong line management system and an open-door policy so that staff feel able to discuss their needs with leaders and line managers;
- Providing line managers with access to webinars regarding how to support staff with their mental health through National College.

4. Establish a clear communications policy.

We will provide clear guidance to all stakeholders (internal and external) on remote and out-of-school hours working, including when it is and isn't reasonable to expect staff to respond to queries. This should not necessarily include preventing staff from accessing email at 'unsociable' hours if it suits them personally.

We will achieve this by:

- Setting clear expectations regarding communication protocols;
- Set automatic replies during academy closure periods, but a time limit on emails is not implemented to allow staff to access their emails at unsociable times or closure periods if it suits them.
- Our guidance to staff:
- Think twice: does this need to be an additional email or could a quick phone call help?
- Avoid blanket emails to all staff, try to send to specific groups, or use the title to be clear who needs to read the email.
- Remember, while you may choose to work at this time to suit you, do not expect a reply outside of normal working hours.

5. Give staff a voice in decision-making.

We will constantly strive to improve the ways in which the voice of staff is included in the decision-making process across the academy. (This may also include engagement with key stakeholders, such as recognised trade unions and others). In particular, we will proactively seek to draw upon the experience of those with mental health issues and/or of discrimination, ensuring that they are able to share their experience confidently and safely.

We will achieve this by:

- Proactively gaining the views of staff;
- Completing regular staff surveys and share a 'you said we did' following feedback;
- Ensuring SLT has an open-door policy for all staff to discuss any concerns or share ideas;
- Implementing a strong line management structure designed to support every member of staff;
- Responding to staff suggestions to ensure an open and honest culture;
- Implement a meeting structure which allows staff voice and views to be fed back to leaders and managers;
- Ensuring that decisions are effectively communicated to staff;
- Providing regular updates to staff through headteacher emails, the CEO Newsletter is sent termly to all academies, with each academy adding news and agenda items;
- Conducting a consultation process with Trade Unions and staff about any significant or fundamental changes to policies.

6. Drive down unnecessary workload.

We will work proactively to drive down unnecessary workload, making use of available tools (such as the Workload Reduction Toolkit for schools).

We will achieve this by:

- Using current structures to proactively gain views of staff regarding their experience of workload and listen to their ideas on how workload can be reduced;
- Constantly reviewing the staffing structures in place to ensure they are fit for purpose;
- Review systems and processes to ensure they are streamlined and fit for purpose;
- Encourage shared planning within academies and across the Trust;
- Evaluate the impact of new initiatives to ensure they do not inadvertently increase unnecessary workload.

7. Champion flexible working and diversity.

We will work to create a supportive culture around flexible working. We will agree an approach that not only recognises employees 'legal right to request flexible working but acknowledges that for some staff working flexibly can be a key means of protecting and enhancing their personal wellbeing.

We will work to promote diversity – eliminating discrimination, and advancing equality of opportunity.

We will achieve this by:

- Further embed the Trust Flexible Working Policy;
- Ensure each academy within the Trust recognises the importance of work/ life balance and applies the Trust leave request policy in a fair and transparent manner;
- Continuing to promote Equality and Diversity through eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity;
- Completing all legal duties in regard to the Equalities Act;
- Ensuring all staff, including governors and trustees, complete equality and diversity training;
- Ensuring all teaching staff complete conscious and unconscious bias training.



8. Create a good behaviour culture.

We will work with staff and pupils to maintain and implement a school-wide behaviour policy. All staff and pupils will have a shared understanding of how good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded, and the sanctions that will be imposed if pupils misbehave. We will support staff to create calm, safe and disciplined environments, which allow teachers to teach and pupils to learn. Our approach will go hand-in-hand with understanding and supporting pupil mental health issues.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring each academy within the Trust has an effective behaviour policy that is shared with staff and pupils;
- Ensuring that the behaviour policy is applied consistently by all staff so that teachers can teach and pupils can learn;
- Providing continuous training and support to all staff on how to implement standards that create a safe and calm working environment;
- Work closely with external agencies to support pupils who are not able to meet the behaviour expectations within an academy.

9. Support staff to progress in their careers.

We will ensure that staff are able to pursue professional development without adversely impacting their own or other people's workload. In schools, we will ensure that any professional development activity is aligned to the standard for teaching to the Standard for Teachers Professional Development.

We will achieve this by:

- Continuing to provide a well-structured system of performance management system that supports staff to develop the skills and knowledge they need to progress their careers;
- Providing all staff access to professional development via the National College, which allows staff to log and monitor self-directed professional development;
- Providing opportunities for collaborative working amongst both the Trust and wider establishments within our community;
- Providing leadership development programmes both through national accreditation (e.g., NPQs) and internal leadership development groups (e.g. aspiring senior/middle leader programmes);
- Develop links with external partners with education expertise e.g PiXL, CST;
- Giving ECTs access to the ECT Mentoring Programme through the Exchange Teaching Support Hub, with access to a mentor in your host academy;
- Utilising the Apprenticeship Levy, where appropriate.



10. Include a sub-strategy for protecting leader wellbeing and mental health

We will ensure that all those with strategic decision-making responsibility (including as appropriate governors and trustees) should collaborate to develop a sub strategy specifically for protecting leader mental health. This should include access to confidential counselling and/or coaching where needed.

We will achieve this by:

- Regularly checking on leaders' mental health and wellbeing.
- Offering opportunities, through line management to discuss mental health and wellbeing.
- Building in questions about well-being into performance management.

11. Hold ourselves accountable, including by measuring staff wellbeing.

We will measure the wellbeing of staff using recognised tools and metrics and be transparent about results. We will monitor trends over time, and act in response to changes. Further, we will work with staff and relevant stakeholders (this might include parents, recognised trade unions and others) to agree an approach to organisational accountability on our commitments, giving due consideration to workload.

We will achieve this by:

- Asking staff to complete short staff surveys regarding their mental health;
- Benchmark the outcomes of the surveys and respond accordingly;
- Taking part in external audits.

Trust Development Priorities

This wellbeing charter forms part of the Trust 'people strategy'. As a Trust, we will continue to develop one of our key objectives: to lead, develop and care for the people in our Trust. We will continue to be a community focussed organisation and aspire to be the employer of choice through developing strong partnerships, recruiting, retaining and developing a high calibre workforce.

As part of the development priorities, the Trust will:

- Continue to be outward facing, working in partnership with those both within and beyond the trust to build sustainable success through the passion, knowledge and aspirations of others;
- Recruit highly skilled staff and provide career progression pathways supported through a structured trust wide professional development strategy;
- Provide a range of staff development opportunities, partnerships and support to develop staff skills, talents and expertise, within their own academy, across the trust and across the wider education system;
- Continue to develop an HR service that is underpinned by evaluation, reflective practice and a desire, as an outstanding employer, to continually improve by embracing new developments to enhance the workforce and their effectiveness;
- Respect and value our workforce by providing all staff with a health and wellbeing offer which is proactive, preventative and provides high quality care and expertise;
- Continue to respect the equal rights, thoughts, feelings and ambitions of every member of our team. Respect the differences of others, promote equality, understanding and tolerance and fulfil our obligations under the equality act as an academy and as an employer;
- Value the opportunity to work openly together in achieving our individual and common goals and aspirations; value honesty and professionalism when facing and overcoming challenges.

Employee Benefits

For staff who work within the Trust, there are a range of employee benefits available:

- Free SAS service including access to a GP, physiotherapy, counselling and weight management services;
- Access to staff well-being activities;
- Voucher scheme through Discount for Teachers;
- Discounted rates on lettings facilities;
- Free access to National College CPD;
- Cycle to work scheme;
- Generous employee pension contribution;
- HR support at each academy.



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