



## Working at Dinnington High School

The posts currently advertised have come about as we have had some staff get promotions to other schools – including within our Trust, we have some staff having to relocate as their partners have got jobs elsewhere – one even to New Zealand, and we have new opportunities as we take history, geography and MFL into Y9 for all students, and continue to expand our delivery of RE and Life. Our staff are a loyal and committed team, so we are sad to see these colleagues leave but look forward to welcoming new team members.

New staff tell us, we should shout about our Dinnington Way for Staff as they tell us this is not the norm in all work places:

- Compassionate leadership that has high expectations matched with high levels of support
- Well-being and mental health graduated response for staff in place\*
- An approach to improvement based on professional evaluation and development focussed on continual professional development
- Staff appraisal and performance management that is not based on high stakes approach to outcomes but on genuine professional improvement
- Opportunities for training and development
- Supported by a Trust that genuinely cares about students and staff.

We are also very proud that we have a good number of former students who return as members of staff. They tell us they have appreciated what staff have done for them at school and now want to give something back. It also tells us that they have had a positive experience at our school and want to continue to be part of it. We have also had staff who have left for pastures new in the past...and then returned.

Our staff appreciate the strong sense of team work, care for each other and mutual support. We value our teaching and support staff equally as this is a totally interdependent relationship.

## Graduated Response to Support Mental Health & Well-Being for DHS Staff\*

At DHS, we take personal responsibility for our own mental health & well-being while concurrently respecting & supporting each other's. We seek to minimise the burden we put on each other as well as asking for support in a timely way. We appreciate that doing our job well and efficiently helps our colleagues to do the same. We recognise that none of us fully knows what others are coping with beyond school and seek to ask questions rather than make assumptions.

### Phase & Focus

#### Phase One - Principles & Modus Operandi

Promote mutual kindness and respect so every member of the school community feels safe to be themselves, is held in positive regard, and is respected and valued. This informs leadership approaches and staff interactions.

Seek to positively promote team ethos and enhance morale

Take personal responsibility for one's own mental health seeking to take positive actions to maintain our individual fitness to work and communicate with key staff when we experience a problem

Ensure that in all our work, changes and developments, leaders consider the impact on work-load and thus well-being.

Provide a safe place to discuss mental ill-health and a safe place to seek support from peers and others as required.

Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.

If a member of staff's behaviour causes concern, consider if there is an underlying issue - asking questions rather than assuming, establishing if help or support are needed.

Colleagues seek not to take advantage of the school's flexibility and compassion to the detriment of other colleagues' workload and good will.

Supportive approach to attendance of staff, seeking to prevent absence, problem solve & referring to Occupational Health for advice when needed.

#### Phase Two - Small Actions to Support Well-Being

No unnecessary meetings, and efficient use of time in meetings. For example: Monday whole-staff briefing in a Sway; whole-staff meetings only called for training or essential purposes; dept time focused on collaborative planning & practice. Meetings cancelled if not needed.
Endeavour not to use all of the 1265 directed teaching hours thus increasing staff flexibility to choose where/when they work
Although we do not set limits to when staff choose to send emails, respect that out of normal working hours, staff can choose when they respond according to their personal situations
When introducing new policies, seek to reduce rather than increase workload; e.g., whole-class feedback
Seek not to use all of teachers' additional PPA for cover (0.5 hpwk)
Enable as many staff as possible (and mindful of any attendance issues that might have already put additional pressure on colleagues) to attend key family events; for example, first/last Sports Days, first day at new school, graduations, close family weddings through mutual staff support
Make reasonable adjustments not just for staff with disabilities but also for staff whose dependents have disabilities that may require additional care
Where possible, and when not to the detriment of students/colleagues/demands of particular roles, seek to respond positively to requests for part-time working
Endeavour to minimise teaching staff having to move between classrooms when fulfilling their teaching responsibilities
Use on-line forms wherever possible to collect and process information to promote efficiency for all involved
Ensure staff who have a protected characteristic (e.g. disability, LGBTQ+, age, race, religion, pregnancy) are not adversely affected and we seek to identify and address unconscious bias including within recruitment
Ensure staff who are at increased risk have individual risk assessments developed collaboratively
Seek to acknowledge staff going over and above in a range of ways: thanks on briefings, cards, treats, emails, etc
<b>Phase Three - Prevention is Better than Cure</b>
Ensure staff voice (through governors) explores staff well-being and SLT seek to respond to reasonable requests & improvements
Annual staff survey to identify pressures & possible solutions
Provide an on-line resource to enable staff to identify a range of tools & ideas to support mental health and well-being (still being developed)
Provide links to helpful well-being on-line support & apps on Staff Hub. NHS Mental health website: <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/">https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/</a>
A member of staff to complete DfE Mental Health Lead training to support SLT in identifying further improvements/refinements to ensure school stability and resilience
<b>Phase Four - Support when staff mental health or well-being has been affected or is at risk</b>
Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress.
Relevant leaders to listen and help identify simple and reasonable actions that could reverse the situation -referring on to LMs if unsuccessful
If a member of staff has a challenging incident - ensure there is time before the member of staff leaves site, to off-load and decompress. (Middle leaders to refer on to ESLT/SLT if required.)
Provide in-school higher-level supervision for staff who need greater support following incidents/disclosures etc
Signpost staff to support available beyond school; e.g., NHS - IAPT self-referrals for free talking therapies - <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies/">https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies/</a> (IAPT - Improving Access to Psychological Therapies.
Seek support and advice from Trust HR Officer if further support is required
<b>Phase Five - Support for staff when all in-school support is exhausted and mental ill-health or well-being will negatively impact on staff ability to fulfil their roles</b>
Consider if higher-level external supervision is required for staff in high-demand roles
Consider if school should pay for a course of counselling if all earlier methods of support have failed/external support cannot be accessed, and it is considered appropriate.