Staff wellbeing, psychological safety And stress management policy

Promoting Wellbeing at Work Through Values, Leadership, & Mental Health

OUR VISION

Our vision is to provide pupils with the confidence, skills and ambition to achieve a successful and productive life. We aim to ensure they leave the school with a 'new day, new opportunity' ethos and are capable of becoming positive members of their communities. To do this, we have 3 principles that underpin our policies, practices and everything we do:

- Everyone can learn, achieve and has the potential to be successful
- Positive relationships are key to success and are underpinned by mutual trust, respect and caring for one another

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Executive Headteacher's Foreword

At White Trees Independent School, we believe exceptional schools are built by exceptional people.

Whilst our primary purpose is to improve the lives and outcomes of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and complex vulnerabilities, we recognise that we can only achieve this by investing in the wellbeing, development and happiness of our staff.

Working within specialist education is both incredibly rewarding and emotionally demanding. Every day our staff support children who may have experienced trauma, disrupted education, adverse childhood experiences, mental ill-health and significant barriers to learning. This work requires compassion, resilience, expertise and unwavering commitment.

As leaders, we therefore have an equally important responsibility to care for those who care for our pupils.

At White Trees, staff wellbeing is not viewed as an isolated initiative or a collection of wellbeing events. It is a strategic priority that underpins our culture, leadership practices, safeguarding arrangements and school improvement planning.

Our ethos of **Belong, Achieve and Thrive** applies equally to our pupils and our staff.

We are committed to creating an environment where every colleague:

- feels welcomed, respected and valued;
- has opportunities to develop professionally;
- feels psychologically safe to speak openly;
- receives high-quality supervision and support;
- is recognised and celebrated for their contribution;
- has access to appropriate wellbeing services when needed;
- can achieve a healthy balance between professional commitment and personal wellbeing.

This policy reflects our commitment to creating a culture where staff wellbeing is embedded within every aspect of school life and where leaders actively work to reduce unnecessary workload, promote positive relationships and ensure colleagues have access to meaningful support.

By investing in our people, we strengthen our ability to provide outstanding education, safeguarding and care for every pupil.

Our ambition is simple:

To ensure every member of the White Trees family feels that they truly **belong**, has every opportunity to **achieve**, and is fully supported to **thrive**.

White Trees Vision and Values

Our vision is to provide every pupil with the confidence, skills and ambition to achieve a successful, fulfilling and productive life. We strive to ensure that every young person leaves White Trees with a **"New Day, New Opportunity"** mindset, equipped with the resilience, confidence and independence to become active and positive members of their communities.

We recognise that achieving outstanding outcomes for our pupils begins with investing in the wellbeing, development and success of our staff.

Our organisational culture is built around our shared values of **Belong, Achieve and Thrive**, which underpin every aspect of school life.

Belong

We believe that everyone should experience a genuine sense of belonging within the White Trees community.

For our staff this means:

- feeling welcomed and valued;
- working within supportive teams;
- having positive relationships built on trust and mutual respect;
- feeling listened to through meaningful Staff Voice opportunities;
- having leaders who are visible, approachable and compassionate.

Achieve

We believe every member of staff should be empowered to continually develop their knowledge, skills and confidence.

We invest in our colleagues through:

- high-quality induction;
- coaching and mentoring;
- Learning Development Academy programmes;
- professional supervision;
- leadership development;
- continuous professional development;
- opportunities for career progression.

Thrive

We want every colleague to flourish professionally and personally throughout their career at White Trees.

We therefore promote:

- sustainable workloads;
- psychological safety;
- positive wellbeing;
- work-life balance;
- recognition and celebration;
- access to professional support;
- opportunities to reflect, recover and grow.

These values shape every leadership decision and underpin the implementation of this policy.

Our Wellbeing Strategy

Our Commitment

At White Trees Independent School, we recognise that the wellbeing of our staff is fundamental to achieving positive outcomes for pupils. We understand that a healthy, motivated and supported workforce is better equipped to deliver outstanding education, build meaningful relationships and maintain the highest standards of safeguarding.

Staff wellbeing is therefore recognised as a strategic priority and is embedded within our leadership practice, quality assurance processes and organisational culture.

Working within specialist SEND and SEMH education presents unique opportunities and challenges. Our staff work with pupils who may have experienced trauma, adverse childhood experiences, disrupted education, mental health difficulties and complex safeguarding concerns. Whilst this work is immensely rewarding, it also requires emotional resilience, reflective practice and access to appropriate support.

White Trees is committed to creating an environment where every colleague feels respected, valued, supported and empowered to flourish both professionally and personally.

Our wellbeing strategy is designed to ensure that every member of staff has the opportunity to **Belong, Achieve and Thrive**.

Strategic Aims

Our wellbeing strategy aims to:

- promote a positive organisational culture built upon trust, respect and collaboration;
- ensure staff wellbeing is considered in every leadership decision;
- create psychologically safe environments where colleagues feel confident raising concerns without fear of judgement;
- minimise unnecessary workload through effective planning and leadership;
- provide meaningful opportunities for professional development and career progression;
- promote resilience whilst recognising that seeking support is a strength;
- ensure staff have access to timely and appropriate wellbeing support;
- reduce work-related stress and prevent burnout wherever possible;
- improve staff retention, attendance and professional satisfaction;
- strengthen safeguarding by supporting the adults who care for our pupils.

The White Trees Wellbeing Framework

Our wellbeing framework is built around five interconnected pillars.

Leadership

Leaders create the conditions for staff wellbeing through visible, compassionate and values-driven leadership.

Leaders are expected to:

- lead with empathy and integrity;

- maintain approachable and supportive relationships;
- communicate openly and honestly;
- actively seek staff feedback;
- recognise achievements regularly;
- promote positive work-life balance;
- respond promptly to wellbeing concerns;
- ensure workloads remain proportionate wherever reasonably practicable.

Staff wellbeing forms part of leadership meetings, school improvement planning and quality assurance activity throughout the academic year.

Professional Support

White Trees provides a comprehensive programme of professional support to ensure staff feel equipped, confident and valued.

This includes:

- structured induction programmes;
- coaching and mentoring;
- continuous professional development;
- access to the Learning Development Academy;
- leadership development programmes;
- annual appraisal;
- professional supervision every term;
- reflective practice opportunities;
- safeguarding debriefs following significant incidents.

Leaders recognise that investing in staff development contributes directly to professional confidence, resilience and long-term wellbeing.

Emotional Wellbeing

White Trees provides a range of proactive wellbeing support designed to promote positive mental health and emotional resilience.

Support includes:

- access to a confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP);
- Occupational Health referrals where appropriate;
- wellbeing conversations with line managers;
- access to external counselling services through the EAP;
- signposting to specialist agencies;
- phased returns following periods of ill health;
- reasonable workplace adjustments where appropriate.
- Access to private GP's.

Support is available at all stages and staff are encouraged to seek help early.

Recognition and Belonging

We believe that recognising the commitment and achievements of our staff is essential in creating a culture where colleagues feel valued.

Each White Trees site is allocated an annual **Staff Wellbeing Budget**.

This budget enables Deputy Heads and leadership teams at each site to organise initiatives which recognise staff contributions and promote positive morale.

Examples include:

- wellbeing breakfasts;
- celebration lunches;
- seasonal events;
- team-building activities;
- appreciation awards;
- thank-you gifts;
- refreshments during busy periods;
- wellbeing resources;
- social events;
- staff shout outs;
- health promotion activities.

Staff are encouraged to celebrate one another's successes, recognising that appreciation strengthens relationships and contributes to a positive organisational culture.

Staff Voice

We believe that staff are best placed to influence the continued improvement of our organisation.

White Trees actively seeks staff feedback through:

- annual wellbeing surveys;
- supervision discussions;
- appraisal meetings;
- leadership drop-in sessions;
- anonymous feedback opportunities;
- quality assurance activities.

Leaders carefully consider this feedback and use it to inform future decision-making, ensuring that staff wellbeing remains responsive to the needs of colleagues.

Our Wellbeing Offer

Every member of staff has access to:

- A confidential Employee Assistance Programme available 24 hours a day.
- Formal professional supervision every term with a member of the Leadership Team.
- Annual performance appraisal and professional development planning.
- A dedicated Staff Wellbeing Budget at each school site.

- Occupational Health referrals where appropriate.
- Learning Development Academy training.
- Staff wellbeing events throughout the year.
- Opportunities for flexible support and reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Recognition and reward initiatives.
- Safeguarding debriefs following significant incidents.
- Reflective practice opportunities.
- Leadership coaching where appropriate.
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Measuring the Impact of Our Wellbeing Strategy

White Trees is committed to continually evaluating the effectiveness of its wellbeing strategy.

Leaders monitor:

- staff wellbeing survey outcomes;
- sickness absence data;
- stress-related absence trends;
- staff turnover;
- recruitment and retention data;
- exit interviews;
- supervision themes;
- Occupational Health referrals;
- Employee Assistance Programme usage data (where anonymised information is available);
- appraisal outcomes;
- quality assurance visits;
- governor monitoring activities.

The findings are reviewed by senior leaders and governors and inform future strategic planning, ensuring our wellbeing provision continues to evolve and meet the needs of our workforce.

Success Measures

The success of this strategy will be evidenced through:

- improved staff retention;
- reduced stress-related absence;
- high levels of staff engagement;
- positive wellbeing survey outcomes;
- strong recruitment and retention;
- positive staff feedback;
- effective safeguarding culture;
- sustained high-quality teaching and learning;
- improved organisational resilience;
- a workplace where colleagues genuinely feel they belong, achieve and thrive.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear framework for promoting staff wellbeing, protecting psychological safety and preventing work-related stress across White Trees Independent School.

The school recognises that staff wellbeing is fundamental to maintaining high standards of education, safeguarding, leadership and professional practice. A healthy, motivated and supported workforce is essential in enabling pupils to receive the highest quality provision and achieve positive outcomes.

This policy aims to:

- promote a positive organisational culture where staff feel valued, respected and supported;
- prevent work-related stress by proactively identifying and reducing workplace pressures;
- ensure leaders understand and fulfil their responsibilities for promoting staff wellbeing;
- provide staff with access to timely, confidential and appropriate wellbeing support;
- encourage early identification and intervention where concerns arise;
- ensure staff are able to work within psychologically safe environments where they feel confident to raise concerns;
- support staff through periods of organisational change, professional challenge or personal difficulty;
- ensure compliance with current health and safety legislation and regulatory expectations;
- contribute to the recruitment, retention and development of a highly skilled workforce;
- strengthen safeguarding by ensuring staff remain emotionally and professionally equipped to support pupils effectively.

Staff wellbeing is recognised as a shared responsibility across the organisation and is embedded within leadership practice, quality assurance, school improvement planning and governance.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals working on behalf of White Trees Independent School, including:

- permanent employees;
- part-time employees;
- agency staff;
- volunteers;
- contractors working regularly within school;
- governors and trustees when undertaking school duties;
- visitors engaged in long-term work with the school.

The principles contained within this policy apply across every White Trees site and to all departments, regardless of role or seniority.

The policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Staff handbook;
- Equality & Diversity Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy;

Staff Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing refers to the overall physical, emotional, psychological, social and professional health of employees. It encompasses how individuals feel about their work, their relationships, workload, sense of purpose and ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

White Trees recognises that wellbeing is influenced by both workplace and personal factors and seeks to create an environment where staff are supported to thrive.

Work-Related Stress

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related stress as:

"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them."

Pressure can often be positive and motivating; however, where pressures become excessive, prolonged or unmanaged they may negatively affect an individual's health, wellbeing and performance.

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is the belief that individuals can express concerns, seek support, ask questions, admit mistakes and contribute ideas without fear of embarrassment, ridicule or negative consequences.

At White Trees, leaders actively promote psychologically safe working environments where open communication, professional curiosity and constructive challenge are encouraged

Burnout

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental and physical exhaustion resulting from prolonged or excessive workplace stress.

Common characteristics include:

- emotional exhaustion;
- reduced motivation;
- decreased professional confidence;
- reduced effectiveness;
- feelings of detachment;
- persistent fatigue.

Burnout develops gradually and requires early identification and supportive intervention.

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue refers to the emotional and physical exhaustion that may occur following prolonged exposure to supporting individuals who have experienced trauma, distress or significant adversity.

Working within specialist SEND and SEMH education increases the potential for compassion fatigue due to the nature of the pupils we support.

White Trees recognises compassion fatigue as an occupational risk and actively promotes reflective practice, supervision and wellbeing support to reduce its impact.

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Secondary traumatic stress occurs when professionals experience symptoms associated with exposure to another person's traumatic experiences.

This may arise through safeguarding work, disclosures, serious incidents or prolonged exposure to highly distressing situations.

Leaders recognise the importance of debriefing, supervision and access to professional support following significant safeguarding events.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

White Trees is committed to meeting all statutory duties relating to staff health, safety and wellbeing.

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Employment Rights Act 1996;
- Working Time Regulations 1998;
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981;
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013, where applicable;
- The Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2014 (as amended);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition);
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards for Work-Related Stress;
- Current Ofsted inspection expectations.

White Trees also has regard to recognised best practice guidance published by:

- the Health and Safety Executive;
- the Department for Education;
- Education Support;
- the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).
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Independent School Standards

White Trees recognises that promoting staff wellbeing contributes directly to compliance with the Independent School Standards.

In particular, this policy supports:

Part 3 – Welfare, Health and Safety

by ensuring:

- staff are supported to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively;
- suitable health and safety arrangements are maintained;
- appropriate risk assessments consider psychosocial as well as physical risks;
- leaders maintain safe working environments.

Part 8 – Quality of Leadership and Management

This policy supports leaders in demonstrating that they:

- actively promote the wellbeing of staff and pupils;
- implement policies effectively;
- monitor impact through quality assurance;
- continually improve practice through evaluation and review.
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Current Ofsted Expectations

White Trees recognises that effective leadership includes creating a culture in which staff are supported to deliver high-quality education sustainably.

Inspectors may consider evidence relating to:

- staff workload;
- professional development;
- leadership visibility;
- staff retention;
- safeguarding culture;
- staff wellbeing;
- organisational culture;
- workload management;
- leadership decision-making.
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Although staff wellbeing is not judged as a discrete inspection area, it forms an important indicator of effective leadership and management.

Leaders at White Trees therefore consider staff wellbeing when making strategic, operational and organisational decisions.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards

White Trees adopts the Health and Safety Executive's six Management Standards for work-related stress as the framework for identifying, assessing and managing workplace stress.

Leaders will consider the following areas during quality assurance, supervision and stress risk assessments.

Demands

Ensuring workloads, working patterns, staffing levels and working environments remain reasonable and appropriately resourced.

Control

Providing staff with appropriate autonomy, involvement in decision-making and opportunities to influence how their work is undertaken.

Support

Ensuring staff receive appropriate encouragement, supervision, resources, professional development and wellbeing support.

Relationships

Promoting respectful professional relationships and addressing conflict, bullying, harassment or discrimination promptly and fairly.

Role

Ensuring staff understand their responsibilities, reporting lines and professional expectations through clear job descriptions, induction and supervision.

Change

Managing organisational change openly, fairly and transparently, ensuring staff receive timely communication, consultation and appropriate support throughout periods of transition.

Leadership Commitment

At White Trees Independent School, staff wellbeing is a leadership responsibility and a strategic priority. We recognise that the culture established by leaders has a direct impact upon staff wellbeing, professional satisfaction, safeguarding and, ultimately, the outcomes achieved by our pupils.

Every leader is expected to demonstrate compassion, integrity, professionalism and accountability in creating an environment where colleagues feel respected, valued and supported.

We believe that staff wellbeing is not the responsibility of one individual or department; it is embedded throughout every level of leadership and forms part of our daily practice, decision-making and school improvement planning.

Leaders will actively seek opportunities to reduce unnecessary workload, recognise achievement, celebrate success and provide timely support whenever concerns arise.

Our leadership approach is founded upon the belief that when staff thrive, pupils thrive.

White Trees Leadership Wellbeing Pledge

Leaders at White Trees commit to:

- leading with compassion, honesty and integrity;
- treating every member of staff with dignity, fairness and respect;

- creating psychologically safe working environments where colleagues feel confident to speak openly;
- ensuring staff wellbeing remains a standing item within leadership discussions;
- actively monitoring workload and responding appropriately to concerns;
- celebrating success and recognising exceptional contributions;
- promoting healthy work-life balance wherever operationally possible;
- ensuring colleagues receive meaningful professional supervision and development;
- encouraging early intervention before difficulties escalate;
- continually reviewing wellbeing provision to ensure it remains effective and responsive.

Roles and Responsibilities

Promoting staff wellbeing is a shared responsibility. Every individual has a role to play in creating and maintaining a positive working environment.

Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that White Trees fulfils its statutory duties relating to staff health, safety and wellbeing.

Governors will:

- approve and review this policy annually;
- receive regular reports regarding staff wellbeing;
- monitor trends relating to staff attendance, retention and wellbeing;
- seek assurance that leaders are effectively implementing the school's wellbeing strategy;
- ensure sufficient resources are allocated to wellbeing initiatives;
- provide constructive challenge and support to senior leaders;
- monitor the impact of wellbeing initiatives through governance visits and quality assurance.

Governors recognise that staff wellbeing contributes directly to effective safeguarding, school improvement and positive pupil outcomes.

Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher has overall strategic responsibility for staff wellbeing across White Trees Independent School.

The Executive Headteacher will:

- champion a culture where staff wellbeing is recognised as a strategic priority;
- ensure sufficient resources are available to implement this policy;
- embed wellbeing within the School Improvement Plan and Quality Assurance Auditing;
- ensure leaders receive appropriate training to support staff wellbeing;
- promote visible and compassionate leadership across all sites;
- monitor wellbeing through leadership reports, surveys and quality assurance activities;
- ensure each White Trees site receives an annual Staff Wellbeing Budget;
- review trends relating to sickness absence, staff retention, recruitment and Employee Assistance Programme usage where anonymised information is available;
- ensure this policy remains compliant with legislation and best practice.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the operational implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher will:

- promote positive staff wellbeing across all school sites;
- ensure leadership decisions consider the impact upon staff workload and wellbeing;
- monitor the effectiveness of wellbeing initiatives;
- oversee professional supervision arrangements;
- ensure leaders complete wellbeing conversations where required;
- support managers in responding to staff concerns;
- ensure appropriate referrals are made to Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance Programme where necessary;
- report wellbeing themes to the Executive Headteacher and Governors.

Heads of Department and Senior Leaders

Heads of Department and Senior Leaders play a significant role in creating positive working environments.

They will:

- model positive leadership behaviours;
- monitor workload within their teams;
- provide regular guidance and support;
- encourage collaborative working;
- recognise achievements;
- ensure staff receive opportunities for professional development;
- identify emerging wellbeing concerns;
- respond promptly to issues affecting staff morale;
- contribute to the school's quality assurance processes relating to wellbeing.

Deputy Headteachers

Deputy Headteachers have day-to-day responsibility for promoting wellbeing within their individual school sites.

They will:

- lead by example and promote a positive working culture;
- undertake formal professional supervision with staff every term;
- complete wellbeing conversations as required;
- monitor workload and staff morale;
- oversee implementation of the site's Staff Wellbeing Budget;
- organise and promote wellbeing initiatives throughout the academic year;
- encourage participation in Staff supervisions;
- ensure staff are aware of the support available through the Employee Assistance Programme;

- refer staff to additional support where appropriate;
- complete staff safe concerns where relevant, requesting support
- maintain confidential records relating to wellbeing support.

Line Managers

Line Managers have a duty to identify concerns at the earliest possible stage.

They will:

- maintain regular communication with staff;
- undertake supportive wellbeing conversations;
- monitor attendance and workload;
- recognise signs of stress, burnout or compassion fatigue;
- complete staff safe concerns where relevant, requesting support
- implement agreed support plans;
- facilitate reasonable workplace adjustments where appropriate;
- maintain appropriate contact during sickness absence;
- support phased returns to work.

Learning Development Academy

The Learning Development Academy contributes significantly to staff wellbeing by providing high-quality professional development that supports confidence, resilience and career progression.

The Academy will provide opportunities for staff to develop knowledge and skills in areas including:

- trauma-informed practice;
- emotional resilience;
- behaviour as communication;
- safeguarding;
- reflective practice;
- leadership development;
- managing professional boundaries;
- mental health awareness;
- effective workload management.

Wellbeing Team

The Wellbeing Team coordinates the implementation of the school's wellbeing strategy.

The team will:

- organise wellbeing initiatives throughout the year;
- promote positive staff engagement;
- review wellbeing survey outcomes;
- support recognition events;
- advise leaders on emerging wellbeing themes;

- contribute to continuous improvement.

All Employees

Every employee contributes to creating a healthy workplace.

Staff are expected to:

- take reasonable care of their own health and wellbeing;
- support colleagues respectfully;
- attend professional supervision;
- engage positively with wellbeing initiatives;
- raise concerns early where support may be required;
- contribute to a culture built upon trust, respect and professionalism;
- participate in training relevant to wellbeing and safeguarding;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

White Trees encourages all staff to seek support at the earliest opportunity and recognises that asking for help is a positive and responsible action.

Wellbeing is Everyone's Responsibility

Creating a healthy workplace is a collective responsibility.

By working together, maintaining positive relationships and living our values of **Belong, Achieve and Thrive**, we create an environment where colleagues feel valued, pupils receive exceptional support and our whole school community flourishes.

Preventing Work-Related Stress

White Trees Independent School is committed to creating a working environment where staff wellbeing is actively promoted and work-related stress is prevented wherever reasonably practicable.

We recognise that stress cannot always be eliminated; however, through effective leadership, supportive relationships and proactive intervention, many workplace stressors can be significantly reduced.

Rather than responding only when colleagues become unwell, White Trees adopts a preventative approach which focuses on promoting positive mental health, professional resilience and sustainable working practices.

The school adopts the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards as the foundation for preventing work-related stress.

Leadership and Culture

The strongest protective factor against workplace stress is positive leadership.

Leaders across White Trees will:

- maintain a visible and approachable presence within school;
- build positive professional relationships based on trust and mutual respect;
- communicate openly and honestly;

- encourage collaborative working;
- seek regular feedback from staff;
- promote psychological safety;
- address concerns promptly and fairly;
- celebrate achievements and recognise success;
- encourage staff to maintain healthy work-life boundaries;
- demonstrate compassion and empathy when supporting colleagues.

Leaders recognise that the culture they create directly influences staff wellbeing and organisational resilience.

Workload Management

White Trees is committed to ensuring workloads remain manageable, purposeful and proportionate.

Whilst recognising that working within specialist education can at times require flexibility, leaders will continually review workload expectations to remove unnecessary pressure wherever possible.

Leaders will:

- regularly review staffing capacity;
- ensure duties are distributed fairly;
- monitor meeting schedules and avoid unnecessary meetings;
- reduce duplication of paperwork;
- streamline administrative processes;
- ensure planning and assessment expectations remain proportionate;
- provide realistic timescales for completing work;
- review school improvement priorities to avoid excessive competing demands;
- encourage staff to prioritise workload with support from line managers.

Where workload concerns are identified, leaders will work collaboratively with staff to identify practical solutions.

Professional Supervision

Professional supervision forms a central part of White Trees' wellbeing strategy.

Every member of staff will receive a formal supervision meeting with a member of the Leadership Team at least once every term.

Professional supervision provides protected time for colleagues to discuss:

- workload;
- wellbeing;
- professional achievements;
- safeguarding concerns;
- emotional impact of the role;
- professional development;
- career aspirations;
- support required.

Supervision is intended to be supportive rather than performance focused and provides an opportunity for early intervention where concerns arise.

Additional supervision may be arranged following significant incidents or where staff require further support.

Staff Wellbeing Budgets

White Trees is committed to recognising and celebrating the dedication of its staff.

Each school site is allocated an annual **Staff Wellbeing Budget**.

The budget is managed by the Deputy Headteacher and may be used to develop initiatives that promote staff wellbeing, strengthen relationships and recognise achievement.

Examples include:

- wellbeing breakfasts and lunches;
- appreciation events;
- seasonal celebrations;
- team-building activities;
- wellbeing resources;
- refreshments during demanding periods;
- social events;
- recognition awards;
- health promotion activities;
- staff appreciation gifts.

The Wellbeing Budget enables each site to respond flexibly to the needs of its staff whilst promoting a positive working environment.

Recognition and Reward

Recognising success contributes positively to morale, motivation and staff wellbeing.

White Trees is committed to ensuring colleagues feel appreciated for the contribution they make to the lives of our pupils.

Recognition may include:

- verbal appreciation;
- celebration within team meetings;
- staff recognition awards;
- appreciation events;
- certificates and acknowledgements;
- opportunities for professional development;
- leadership recognition;
- wellbeing initiatives funded through site wellbeing budgets.

We believe that recognition should be authentic, meaningful and embedded within everyday leadership practice.

Learning Development Academy

The White Trees Learning Development Academy plays a significant role in promoting staff confidence, competence and wellbeing.

Professional development opportunities include:

- trauma-informed practice;
- behaviour that communicates need;
- safeguarding;
- emotional resilience;
- restorative approaches;
- reflective practice;
- leadership development;
- managing stress;
- mental health awareness;
- workload management;
- professional boundaries.

We believe that investing in professional development contributes directly to confidence, resilience and long-term wellbeing.

Psychological Safety

White Trees is committed to creating psychologically safe workplaces.

Staff should feel able to:

- ask questions;
- seek advice;
- raise concerns;
- admit mistakes;
- request support;
- respectfully challenge practice;
- contribute ideas;
- discuss wellbeing openly.

Leaders will respond respectfully and constructively, recognising that psychologically safe environments promote innovation, learning and continuous improvement.

Bullying, harassment, discrimination or behaviours that undermine psychological safety will not be tolerated and will be addressed in accordance with school policies.

Trauma-Informed Working

Working with pupils who have experienced trauma, adversity and complex needs can place additional emotional demands upon staff.

White Trees therefore promotes trauma-informed leadership by:

- providing regular reflective practice;
- encouraging professional supervision;
- offering safeguarding debriefs following significant incidents;
- promoting restorative approaches;
- ensuring staff have access to wellbeing support;
- recognising the emotional impact of safeguarding work.

Leaders understand that supporting colleagues emotionally is an essential part of safeguarding practice.

Preventing Compassion Fatigue and Burnout

Leaders remain alert to the potential impact of:

- compassion fatigue;
- secondary traumatic stress;
- burnout;
- emotional exhaustion;
- cumulative workplace pressures.

Where concerns are identified, leaders may implement additional support, including:

- increased supervision;
- temporary workload adjustments;
- wellbeing action plans;
- referral to the Employee Assistance Programme;
- Occupational Health referrals;
- mentoring or coaching;
- additional leadership support.

Early intervention is encouraged to prevent concerns from escalating.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

White Trees provides all employees with access to a confidential **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**.

The EAP offers 24-hour confidential advice and support covering:

- emotional wellbeing;
- counselling;
- anxiety and stress;
- family concerns;
- financial advice;
- legal advice;
- bereavement;
- relationship difficulties;

- workplace issues.

Staff may self-refer at any time.

Where appropriate, managers may also recommend or facilitate referral following discussion with the employee.

Information regarding the EAP is provided during induction, reinforced during supervision and regularly promoted through staff communications.

A Culture of Early Intervention

White Trees encourages colleagues to seek support as early as possible.

We recognise that asking for help demonstrates professionalism and self-awareness rather than weakness.

By identifying concerns early and responding compassionately, we aim to prevent small challenges becoming significant barriers to staff wellbeing.

Through our values of **Belong, Achieve and Thrive**, we remain committed to creating a workplace where every colleague feels supported, respected and able to flourish.

Identifying Concerns and Supporting Staff

White Trees Independent School is committed to creating a culture where staff feel confident seeking support at the earliest opportunity.

Leaders understand that work-related stress rarely develops suddenly and is often preceded by changes in behaviour, wellbeing or performance. Early identification enables timely intervention, helping to prevent concerns from escalating and reducing the likelihood of prolonged absence.

Supportive conversations will always take precedence over assumptions, with leaders adopting a compassionate, solution-focused approach.

Recognising the Signs of Stress

Managers, colleagues and employees should remain aware of the potential indicators of work-related stress, burnout or declining wellbeing.

Signs may include, but are not limited to:

Physical Indicators

- persistent tiredness or fatigue;
- headaches or migraines;
- sleep disturbance;
- frequent minor illnesses;
- changes in appetite;
- muscular tension;
- increased sickness absence.

Emotional Indicators

- anxiety;
- irritability;

- reduced confidence;
- emotional withdrawal;
- tearfulness;
- feeling overwhelmed;
- reduced resilience;
- low mood.

Behavioural Indicators

- increased lateness;
- reduced concentration;
- decline in performance;
- withdrawal from colleagues;
- reduced engagement;
- conflict with others;
- forgetting tasks;
- difficulty making decisions.
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The presence of one or more indicators does not necessarily mean an individual is experiencing work-related stress; however, they should prompt supportive discussion and, where appropriate, further assessment.

Wellbeing Conversations

Leaders are expected to promote open and supportive dialogue regarding wellbeing throughout the academic year.

Formal wellbeing discussions take place through:

- termly professional supervision;
- annual appraisal;
- return-to-work meetings;
- one-to-one meetings;
- informal wellbeing check-ins;
- support meetings following significant incidents.

Wellbeing conversations should focus on understanding the individual's experiences, identifying barriers and agreeing appropriate support rather than attributing blame or making assumptions.

Managers should create a confidential environment where staff feel able to discuss:

- workload;
- work-life balance;
- emotional wellbeing;
- safeguarding pressures;
- relationships at work;
- professional development;
- support required.

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Early Intervention

White Trees believes that early intervention is the most effective way of preventing stress-related illness.

Where concerns are identified, managers should consider:

- increasing the frequency of wellbeing conversations;
- providing additional professional supervision;
- reviewing workload and priorities;
- offering mentoring or coaching;
- agreeing temporary adjustments to duties where appropriate;
- signposting staff to the Employee Assistance Programme;
- referring to Occupational Health where appropriate;
- implementing an Individual Wellbeing Action Plan.

Support should always be proportionate to the needs of the individual and reviewed regularly.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

White Trees provides all employees with access to a confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

The programme offers professional support for:

- emotional wellbeing;
- counselling;
- stress and anxiety;
- financial advice;
- legal advice;
- family concerns;
- bereavement;
- relationship difficulties;
- workplace issues.

Employees may access the service independently at any time.

Where appropriate, line managers may encourage or facilitate referral following discussion with the employee.

Information regarding the EAP is promoted during induction, staff briefings, professional supervision and wellbeing communications to ensure colleagues remain aware of the support available.

Occupational Health Referrals

Occupational Health referrals may be considered where additional specialist advice would support an employee's health, wellbeing or ability to undertake their role safely.

Referrals may assist in identifying:

- reasonable adjustments;
- phased return recommendations;

- workplace adaptations;
- ongoing medical advice;
- fitness for work;
- rehabilitation plans.

Referrals will normally be discussed and agreed with the employee wherever possible.

Reasonable Adjustments

White Trees is committed to meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Where an employee has a disability or long-term health condition, reasonable adjustments will be considered to reduce any substantial disadvantage experienced in the workplace.

Examples may include:

- temporary workload adjustments;
- amended working arrangements where operationally feasible;
- flexible start or finish times where appropriate;
- additional supervision;
- altered duties;
- assistive equipment;
- environmental adaptations;
- phased return arrangements.

Each case will be considered individually, balancing the needs of the employee with the operational requirements of the school.

Managing Stress-Related Absence

Where an employee is absent due to stress or other wellbeing concerns, White Trees will maintain supportive and proportionate contact.

The purpose of maintaining contact is to:

- demonstrate care and concern;
- provide reassurance;
- discuss available support;
- keep staff informed of relevant developments;
- plan for an effective return to work.

Managers will avoid placing unnecessary pressure upon employees during periods of absence.

Return to Work

Following any period of stress-related absence, employees will be invited to attend a supportive Return-to-Work Meeting.

The meeting will explore:

- current wellbeing;
- any ongoing concerns;
- workplace factors contributing to absence;
- support required;

- reasonable adjustments;
- phased return arrangements where appropriate;
- review arrangements.

The aim is to support a sustainable return to work and minimise the likelihood of recurrence.

Support Following Critical Incidents

White Trees recognises that serious safeguarding incidents, assaults, bereavements and other traumatic events can have a significant emotional impact on staff.

Following such incidents, leaders may provide:

- immediate debriefing;
- additional professional supervision;
- welfare meetings;
- referral to the Employee Assistance Programme;
- Occupational Health referral;
- temporary workload adjustments;
- mentoring or coaching;
- additional leadership support.

Supporting staff following critical incidents is recognised as an essential element of maintaining a safe and effective safeguarding culture.

Confidentiality

All wellbeing discussions will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

Information will only be shared where:

- the employee has provided consent;
- there is a safeguarding concern;
- there is a legal obligation to share information;
- disclosure is necessary to protect the health, safety or wellbeing of the individual or others.

Records relating to wellbeing support will be managed in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR requirements.

Our Commitment

White Trees is committed to ensuring that no colleague feels they have to manage work-related stress alone.

By promoting early intervention, compassionate leadership and timely access to support, we aim to create an environment where colleagues feel safe, valued and empowered to seek help whenever it is needed.

Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Governance

Our Commitment to Continuous Improvement

White Trees Independent School is committed to continually reviewing and improving its approach to staff wellbeing.

We recognise that promoting wellbeing is an ongoing process requiring regular evaluation, staff engagement and responsive leadership. Leaders will routinely evaluate the effectiveness of the school's wellbeing strategy to ensure it remains relevant, impactful and responsive to the needs of our workforce.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through quality assurance activities, leadership oversight and governance arrangements.

Monitoring Staff Wellbeing

Leaders will monitor staff wellbeing through a range of qualitative and quantitative measures.

These include:

Staff Wellbeing

- Annual Staff Wellbeing Survey.
- Staff Voice meetings.
- Professional supervision records.
- Wellbeing conversations.
- Staff feedback following wellbeing initiatives.
- Anonymous staff questionnaires.

Workforce Data

- Staff attendance.
- Stress-related sickness absence.
- Staff turnover.
- Recruitment and retention data.
- Exit interviews.
- Return-to-work outcomes.

Leadership Monitoring

- Site leadership reviews.
- Quality assurance visits.
- School Improvement Plan monitoring.
- Leadership Team discussions.
- Staff wellbeing action plans.

External Assurance

Where appropriate, leaders will consider:

- Governor monitoring visits.
- Independent quality assurance reviews.
- Feedback from external advisers.
- Occupational Health recommendations.
- Anonymised trends from the Employee Assistance Programme, where available.

The information gathered will inform future planning and support continuous improvement.

Quality Assurance

Staff wellbeing forms part of White Trees' annual Quality Assurance programme.

Quality Assurance activities will consider:

- implementation of this policy;
- effectiveness of supervision;
- staff workload;
- leadership visibility;
- professional development opportunities;
- implementation of Staff Voice actions;
- wellbeing initiatives delivered through site wellbeing budgets;
- safeguarding culture;
- organisational communication.

Leaders will identify strengths, areas for development and actions required to improve practice.

Findings will contribute to the annual School Improvement Plan and leadership priorities

Staff Wellbeing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To measure the success of our wellbeing strategy, White Trees will monitor a range of key indicators.

These may include:

- reduction in stress-related sickness absence;
- improved staff attendance;
- improved staff retention;
- positive wellbeing survey outcomes;
- participation in wellbeing initiatives;
- participation in professional supervision;
- staff satisfaction with leadership support;
- staff confidence in raising wellbeing concerns;
- reduced staff turnover;
- positive recruitment outcomes;
- increased engagement with professional development.

These measures provide assurance that wellbeing initiatives are having a positive impact across the organisation.

Governor Oversight

The Governing Body has strategic oversight of staff wellbeing and receives assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place to promote and protect staff welfare.

Governors will:

- review this policy annually;
- receive reports on staff wellbeing trends;
- monitor sickness absence and staff retention;

- consider outcomes from wellbeing surveys;
- monitor implementation of the school's wellbeing strategy;
- ensure sufficient resources are allocated to wellbeing initiatives;
- seek assurance that leadership decisions appropriately consider staff wellbeing;
- evaluate the effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements.

Governors recognise that effective staff wellbeing contributes directly to safeguarding, educational quality and positive pupil outcomes.

Annual Review of the Wellbeing Strategy

Each academic year, the Executive Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will undertake a strategic review of the school's wellbeing provision.

The review will evaluate:

- the effectiveness of current wellbeing initiatives;
- the impact of Staff Wellbeing Budgets;
- the quality of professional supervision;
- participation in Learning Development Academy training;
- staff feedback;
- organisational culture;
- leadership effectiveness;
- quality assurance findings;
- recommendations from governors.
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The outcomes of the review will inform priorities for the following academic year.

Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following White Trees policies and procedures:

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- staff handbook
- Grievance procedures;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Professional Supervision Guidance;
- Learning Development Academy Professional Development Framework;
- School Improvement Plan;
- Self-Evaluation Form.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where there are:

- significant legislative changes;
- updates to the Independent School Standards;

- revisions to statutory safeguarding guidance;
- changes to HSE guidance;
- organisational changes affecting staff wellbeing;
- recommendations arising from quality assurance activities or governance reviews.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the policy remains compliant, current and reflective of White Trees' values and practice.

White Trees Wellbeing

At White Trees Independent School, we believe that exceptional education begins with exceptional people.

We are committed to creating a workplace where every colleague:

- feels safe, respected and valued;
- is trusted and empowered to make a positive difference;
- has opportunities to learn, develop and progress;
- receives compassionate leadership and meaningful professional support;
- is encouraged to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life;
- has access to timely wellbeing support whenever needed;
- feels recognised for their commitment and achievements;
- contributes to a culture built upon kindness, collaboration and professionalism.

Through our shared values of **Belong, Achieve and Thrive**, we will continue to invest in our people, recognising that when our staff flourish, our pupils receive the highest quality education, care and safeguarding.

Staff wellbeing is not simply a policy at White Trees—it is a commitment that shapes our leadership, our culture and our future.

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