

# The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter

The education staff wellbeing charter is a declaration of support for, and a set of commitments, to the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in education.

The charter:

- was created by the education sector to highlight staff wellbeing in the education sector
- is a tool for schools and colleges to create and publicly commit to their own wellbeing strategies
- is a declaration to protect, promote and enhance the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in state education
- includes commitments on education staff wellbeing by DfE and Ofsted
- sets out principles of shared understanding on the meaning and importance of wellbeing and everyone's roles and responsibilities
- sends a message to everyone working in schools and colleges that their wellbeing and mental health matters
- aims to improve wellbeing in schools and colleges by encouraging debate and accountability



**Although Early years providers can't sign up to the charter Jack and Jill are going to make use of the principles and commitments detailed below.**

***Jack and Jill commits to placing wellbeing and mental health at the heart of our decision making.***

*We will support staff to make positive choices for their own wellbeing and encourage a collegiate culture across and between all roles in the school or college. Specifically, we commit to develop a long-term strategy for improving staff wellbeing that will:*

## **1 Prioritise staff mental health**

We will tackle mental health stigma promoting an open and understanding culture. We will give the same consideration and support to mental health as physical health and fulfil our legal duty to control the risks associated with work-related stress in the education setting so far as is reasonably practical.

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

We will empower staff to take ownership of their own wellbeing and look out for the wellbeing of others. This will include ensuring that all staff are familiar with the different dimensions of wellbeing, including mental health, financial wellbeing and physical wellbeing. We will ensure that staff know how to access appropriate guidance, support and tools, and that their use is encouraged throughout the organisation.

## **3 Give leaders 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.

## **4 Give staff a voice in decision-making**

We will strive to improve the ways in which the voice of staff is included in the decision-making process across the setting

## **5 Drive down unnecessary workload**

We will work proactively to drive down unnecessary workload, making use of available tools

## **6 Champion diversity**

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

## **7 Create a positive behaviour culture**

We will work with staff, children and parents to maintain and implement our positive behaviour policy. We will have a shared understanding of how positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded.

## **8 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.

## **9 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.

# Principles of Shared Understanding

1. **Jack and Jill recognises that Wellbeing is subjective (but it can be measured)** Jack and Jill recognises wellbeing as a sense of 'how we are doing' that includes, but is not limited to: our physical health, our mental health, and the quality of our social relationships. Wellbeing can therefore be described as a state of total health that is not merely the absence of disease or illness.
2. **Jack and Jill recognises that Wellbeing has multiple benefits** and that the wellbeing of staff is something that should be promoted, protected and enhanced for its own sake. In addition, the whole of the early years sector needs to attract and retain high-quality staff. Improving the wellbeing of staff, including by creating supportive cultures, is a crucial means of increasing and safeguarding workforce supply in the long-term. Wellbeing is not the only factor involved in recruitment and retention, but it is recognised that improving wellbeing in the sector can help to both increase the chance of keeping current talent, and heighten the appeal of the sector to new talent in the long-term.
3. **Jack and Jill recognises that Wellbeing is holistic** The wellbeing of individuals is affected by many interrelated factors. This means that levels of low or high wellbeing are rarely due to just one factor, and that the issue should be looked at holistically. Equally, there are many critical factors outside of the workplace that are beyond the scope of this charter, and outside the influence of Jack and Jill. It sets out five main drivers of wellbeing in the workplace, some of which overlap.
  - a. **Health:** Including mental and physical health. In education, there is often a focus on stress caused by excessive workload (especially hours worked) and lack of recovery time. Importantly, pupils and students can also present with highly complex emotional needs, including mental and physical health issues. This can directly impact the health of those who support them.
  - b. **Security:** Including working conditions, safety, bullying and harassment, and financial security. Equality and diversity are of particular importance here, especially where a member of staff has protected characteristics that they feel make them vulnerable to discrimination.

- c. **Environment:** This is a broad category that in education can cover both:
  - i. *The organisational environment:* including the physical environment and systems.
  - ii. *The policy environment:* including the policies of the government of the day, and public perceptions of the status of the profession.
  
- d. **Relationships:** In particular, the degree of support and respect an individual has from immediate colleagues, line managers and leadership. It can also include relationships with parents.
  
- e. **Purpose:** In particular, high-quality job design. For staff, this can mean:
  - i. the right type of work for the individual.
  - ii. a sense of 'belonging' – including shared organisational goals and vision
  - iii. the opportunity to develop and demonstrate competence, and progress in their career
  - iv. an appropriate degree of autonomy.

**4. Jack and Jill recognises that Wellbeing is a shared responsibility** We recognise that the responsibility for wellbeing and mental health must be shared across the entire education system. There is no single panacea or golden bullet to improving wellbeing. It must be a long-term and concerted effort from people across the system, each fulfilling their responsibilities.