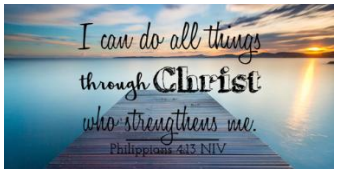
LDST
Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

OUR TRUST PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
Let peace, friendship and love grow in our schools.
Send the Holy Spirit to give
excellence to our learning,
love to our actions and
joy to our worship.
Guide us to help others,
so that we may all
Learn, Love and Achieve, Together with Jesus.
Amen



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This policy was created by staff across LDST schools:

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Why mental health and wellbeing is important

LDST's commitment to staff is to ensure that the health and welfare of our workforce is at the heart of the working arrangements of the Trust, because every individual has a right to:

- Mental, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing
- Experience personal achievement and fulfilment in their role

At LDST, we believe that the good mental health and wellbeing of our staff is vital to organisational success and sustainability and are committed to developing and implementing a Trust-wide approach to mental health and well-being. Our employees are our greatest asset, and we are determined to promote a positive mental health and emotional wellbeing strategy and supportive environment where our staff feel valued, able to flourish and equipped to support the children and young people that they work with.

A healthy, happy workforce means we can:

- improve staff morale and performance
- better support our children to learn and succeed
- reduce sickness absence and staff turnover
- improve productivity
- enhance our reputation as an employer who cares

Definition of Mental Health and Well-Being

The World Health Organisation defines good mental health as: "A state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community."

Mental health and wellbeing are therefore not just the absence of mental health problems. We want our staff to:

- Enjoy working in a safe, open, and supportive workplace environment and culture that supports mental health, overall wellbeing and prevents discrimination
- Be aware of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours
- Help us reduce the stigma around depression and anxiety in the workplace
- Feel supported during times of personal or work stress
- Maintain a healthy work life balance
- Have opportunities to engage in initiatives that support mental health and wellbeing
- Feel confident and empowered to talk about their problems to colleagues and or managers as appropriate
- Have positive and healthy relationships at work

Our commitment

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter

In line with our vision, values and strategic aims, promoting health and well-being is a core aim across LDST schools, and is an integral part of our Trust's drive to improve outcomes for all of our children. We will endeavour to work within the DFE Charter for staff well-being in order to make the workplace a mutually supportive environment where good work relationships thrive, and will:

- Prioritise staff mental health
- Give staff the support they need to take responsibility for their own and other people's wellbeing
- Give managers access to the tools and resources they need to support the wellbeing of those they line manage
- Establish a clear communications policy
- Give staff a voice in decision-making
- Drive down unnecessary workload
- Champion flexible working and diversity
- Create a good behaviour culture
- Support staff to progress in their careers
- Protect leader wellbeing and mental health
- Hold ourselves accountable, including by measuring staff wellbeing

Achieving a positive Trust wide Mental Health and Well Being policy

The LDST Strategic Mental Health and Well-Being Team consists of staff from all our schools and has been established to ensure that we engage with staff in order to identify ways in which the Trust and its schools can better support mental health and wellbeing both generically within the workplace and through more targeted support for individuals. We have also engaged with staff via the annual staff survey and from this we are developing a greater insight into the needs and requirements of our workforce which has fed into the development of this policy.

We intend to continue our efforts to engage with the whole staff team and with individuals on a one-on-one basis in the ways outlined above and via the routine channels of communications that already exist in our schools. The feedback from our staff will always drive the Trust's actions and efforts to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

The Strategic Team have worked collaboratively to identify some of the more practical actions that will be implemented within the scope of this policy.

- **What can we do to build a happy, healthy workforce?**
- Embedding mental health in our induction and training to ensure our staff are given information on how best to manage mental health and what support is available
- Raising the profile of mental health by opening talking about positive mental health in team meetings, and whole Trust days
- Making the most of internal communications
- Encourage staff to engage with the spiritual /church support available
- Ensure staff know about spiritual guidance available

- **What can we do to improve communication?**

We aim to develop a culture of openness whereby the whole of the staff team feels empowered to talk about mental health and suggest ideas as to how LDST can support this even further. It is important that Leaders routinely take stock of individuals' wellbeing and mental health to help assess the impact of current approaches and plan further improvements to enhance morale

We will do this through:

- 1:1 meeting to provide regular opportunities to discuss with staff how they're feeling and what might be impacting on their mental wellbeing.
- Ensuring tasks are issued in a timely manner
- Gathering staff voice through questionnaires and forums
- Agreeing expectations on email correspondence, that respects working hours
    - No emails sent between 6pm – 8am
    - Emali banner on all signatures
- Opportunities for informal meetings 'Cuppa and chat'
- Identifying a designated person to talk to before talking to headteacher
- Setting out a termly/annual meeting schedule
- Encouraging staff to book or plan activities after work to promote a positive Work/life balance
- Setting out expectations in an open and transparent way
- A termly LDST staff meeting
- A termly staff meeting focused on wellbeing

- **What can we do to improve workload and work-life balance?**

"My friends, consider yourselves fortunate when all kinds of trials come your way, for you know that when your faith succeeds in facing such trials, the result is the ability to endure".– James 1:2-4

- We will encourage all schools to identify workload issues by facilitating an anonymous staff Survey at agreed times in the year.
- We will encourage an annual review of policy and practice addressing the seven areas identified in the School reduction toolkit (11.10.2019)
- All schools we will commit to monitor, manage, and support wellbeing through workload and feedback findings to the Central Team
- Governors will be encouraged to provide support and challenge for school leaders regarding workload reduction and this will be an item on each full LGB meeting agenda
- Each school will create a whole school Mental Health and Wellbeing charter **https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter**
- Schools will endeavour to ensure meetings are kept to agreed timeframes

We know that when staff feel valued, it promotes a more positive work life balance and schools may choose to show their support for staff through, for example:

- 'Shout-out Boards'
- PPA at home
- Identified well-being buddies
- access to mental health first aiders
- More flexibility for PT staff

- Opportunity to have days off in lieu if staff consecutively run after-school clubs

- **What can we do to raise awareness of mental health and positive wellbeing strategies?**

- Schools should promote opportunities for staff participate in Mental Health training.
- Working with Trauma Informed Schools and accessing training.
- Whole School Events to raise mental awareness of Mental Health – 'Hello Yellow' for World Mental Health Day (10th October) and participation in Place 2 Be's - Children's Mental Health Week (7th-13th February)
- Trust Mental Health Newsletter to promote strategies and support routes for staff.
- Keep Mental Health high on the agenda for staff, parents and pupils and provide regular opportunities to talk about Mental Health with staff and pupils.
- Ensure that the school behaviour policy reflects positive wellbeing strategies.
- School Governor and Senior Leader named as Mental Health Leads / along with a range of staff identified as Champions to promote and keep mental health high on the agenda.
- School to record incidents pertinent to staff mental health in order to provide effective support where needed (CPOMS Staff Safe.)
- Staff to be aware of the support that can be offered through Occupational Health – with discussions surrounding this support forming part of 'Return to Work' interviews following a period of absence and staff support discussions.
- Schools and the LDST to work with the 'Mindful Employer Ten Steps.'
- Feedback from Mental Health Strategy Groups to be shared regularly with all staff across schools.
- Schools to work actively with external agencies to support pupil mental health such as Mental Health Support Teams.
- Encourage staff to identify 'High 5' list of other trusted staff members to talk to about mental health needs.

- **What can we do to promote positive working relationships and social connections?**

Promoting positive working relationships within and across our schools is pivotal to our commitment to being a family of schools that values collaboration. In order to do this, we foster a culture where all staff, regardless of job role feel valued, listened to and respected.

This will include:

- All schools committing to implementing the LDST Policy
- Ensuring open and honest communication within and across schools and the Trust
- Promoting positive behaviours and relationships with all members of staff which ensures fairness regardless of role
- Support from SLT and LDST, using strategies like mediation where possible
- Introducing a Buddy systems for new starters
- Building a culture of Teamwork across the trust, that all staff feel part of
- Ensuring staff are given time to talk to MHFA if/when necessary
- Living out the values of our Trust and showing our appreciation for all staff

We recognise how important it is for staff to connect socially and endeavour to create school and Trust-wide opportunities to do this, so that positive relationships can be

formed, interests can be shared, and appreciation shown. Central to this is the need for staff at all levels to get to know other schools in LDST. This could include:

- Regular social events
- Team building activities
- Opportunities to participate in LDST sporting/exercise events to encourage a healthy lifestyle
- Employee appreciation and well-being days
- Celebrate successes Trust wide – successes of individuals and schools – through an annual LDST awards.
- Buddy systems to help new starters to gain confidence and develop new skills

- **What can we do to celebrate success?**

Zephaniah 3:17: " The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."

- As a trust, value and celebrate the successes of our schools and colleagues through trust-wide and individual school-led initiatives.
- Acknowledge the importance of celebrating and sharing success across our trust to support our staff and promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Share successes across the trust through LDST subject leadership and management focus groups, social media posts and interactions and during visits and headteacher meetings with LDST leadership.
- As individual schools, we follow suggestions and feedback from our staff to implement initiatives and networks which are individually tailored to our staff. This may take the form of a good news display, a social media/network group, social events, etc. All staff will be given opportunities to make suggestions and give feedback on a regular basis.

- **What can we do to ensure staff have access to quality Professional Development?**

"Show me your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me. Proverbs 25: 4-5

- LDST has created a pathway of continuing professional development to enhance mental health and wellbeing, which can be accessed by schools to support career aspirations and develop staff knowledge
- Existing partnerships such as 'challenge partners' will be a model used to support mentoring across schools.
- LDST will seek to create a coaching model in line for all staff to access as appropriate

- **Recruitment**

Supporting mental health starts with getting the right person for the job. If there's a mismatch between a new employee and our workplace and vision, it can lead to intense stress. As a Trust we will always be realistic about the role in interviews and be careful to select people on their skills and competencies, or realistic potential.

LDST makes it clear in adverts and interviews that the Trust values staff mental health, as this sends a signal that disclosure will not lead to discrimination. The following statement will be used routinely in our recruitment:

'***As an employer we are committed to promoting and protecting the physical and mental health of all our staff.'***

We will state clearly that reasonable adjustments are available – for the interview and the job itself – so applicants understand why disclosure might be beneficial.

Someone applying for a job may be worried about sharing information about their mental health. They might be anxious their mental health problems will lead to them being rejected, or that the interviewer will view them in a negative light. Therefore, it is important that as a Trust, we provide a fair and unbiased recruitment process. We will ensure people can disclose confidentially and that any information about health or disability is kept separate from the application form, so the recruitment panel does not see it.

Recruitment decisions should always be based on whether candidates have the necessary qualifications and competence for the job, without making assumptions about health or disability. If there are concerns about whether health or disability will affect their ability to do the job, recruitment managers should assess these with the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Ensuring staff and managers have a good understanding of mental health, and the factors that affect workplace wellbeing, is essential for building a healthy, happy and productive workforce.

- **Responding to disclosure**

If a mental health disclosure is made by a member of staff, it is imperative that line managers have an early conversation about the person's needs. Managers should find a safe, quiet place to talk to the individual about their needs so that the right level of support can be arranged, including necessary adjustments.

Managers need to ensure they are seen as approachable and listen when staff ask for help. They should also be mindful of whether people would feel safe sharing their problem at work. Trained Mental Health First Aiders may be called upon if necessary to provide specific support.

- **Managing absences**

Sometimes an employee may be so unwell they need time off work to recover. How well this is managed is key in shaping how well and how quickly people can return to work and get back to feeling healthy and able to work again.

Effective return-to-work interviews can ensure mental health problems are identified at an early stage before they get worse. However, to be effective, managers must understand how to use them to build trust and engagement. Before the interview, managers must always tell people what they can expect in advance and make it clear that the return-to-work interview is a supportive way to help them make a successful and lasting return to the workplace and address any on-going health needs.

Workplace adjustments for mental health are often quite small, simple, practical and cost-effective changes. They could include anything from offering rooms for quiet work, to

starting a buddy system. Often the change isn't physical, but about attitude, expectation, or communication.

Employers have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments one they are aware that something about work is causing a problem for someone with a disability.

Roles and Responsibilities

Supporting activities that enable good mental health and wellbeing in the workplace is the responsibility of all employees. LDST encourages all employees to promote a positive working environment that aims to help them and their colleagues to feel included, supported and empowered to talk about mental health openly and without judgement. LDST will provide individuals with the support and training they need to fulfil these responsibilities, and to ensure that it remains culturally safe for staff to discuss, and debate, matters of wellbeing and mental health within the school or college

- **LDST as an Employer**

LDST has a duty to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. This includes their mental health and taking reasonable steps to prevent work-related stress. This duty is detailed in a range of legislation, including but not limited to:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 and
- The Control of Substances

- **The Local Governing Body**

Governors have a critical role to play in influencing the overall culture of the organisation – including ensuring that this results in a supportive environment for staff. As set out in the 'Governance Handbook', this means ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction, to ensure that all can understand their roles and expectations.

- **Leaders and Managers**

Senior leaders play a critical role in shaping the culture of a Trust and a school and have delegated responsibility for fulfilling the employer's legal commitments on health, safety, and welfare. It is important to emphasise that senior leaders are also employees whose wellbeing and mental health is of paramount importance, and firmly within the scope of this policy. Each school is encouraged to nominate a Senior Leader to attend the DFE Senior Mental health Lead Training,

LDST expects all senior leaders and line managers within the Trust to:

- Manage staff in a manner which is not detrimental to mental health and which, at its best, can positively promote mental health and wellbeing.
- Lead by example by striving to achieve a healthy work life balance, for example, by regularly taking uninterrupted lunch breaks, refraining from sending work-related emails out of hours, taking annual leave and resting after busy periods.

- **All employees**

Everyone at every level carries responsibility for their own self-care and personal decision-making, though that decision making can only ever make the best of the broader context. Individuals also have a clear responsibility to look out for the wellbeing of others. All LDST staff should play an active role in influencing their culture, including in challenging policies and practices that threaten their own or others' wellbeing.

LDST expects all employees

- To take positive steps to support their own well -being
- To access support when they need it and raise any concerns with their line manager.

- **Mental Health First Aiders**

There are specially trained members of staff within our schools who are designated Mental

Health First Aiders (MHFAs). The role of the MHFAs is to:

- Approach, assess and assist members of staff in crisis or in need of support
- Listen and communicate non-judgmentally
- Give support and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage other support

Appendix A

Actions for LDST	Actions for schools
Adopt and create own Mental health and Wellbeing Charter. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter	
CEO 1:1 meeting -HTs termly -pupils annually -staff annually	Identify a Mental health leader and access the DFE training
Provide Coaching CPD to develop a team of LDST Coaches	
Publish annual calendar with key dates	Plan regular 1:1 meeting with staff members to discuss well-being
Annual staff survey	Publish school schedule with deadlines, expectations and tasks clearly detailed Setting out a termly/annual meeting schedule
Introduce a Pastoral network	Annual well-being staff survey to include workload
	Annual review of policy and practice addressing the seven areas identified in the School reduction toolkit
Include Mental Health and Well-Being and Workload on the termly LGB work plan/agenda	
Ensure no email communication outside of working hours (unless urgent)	
Schools will endeavour to ensure meetings are kept to agreed timeframes	
Add a statement onto email signature regarding WORKING HOURS ***My working hours may not be the same as yours. Please feel free not to respond to this email until it is convenient and meets with your work commitments***.	
Provide a HT mentor for new Heads and those new to LDST	Plan cuppa and chat meetings for staff to socialise
Plan a termly LDST worship /staff meeting	Provide a buddy for new staff
LDST celebration page on the website – shout out to individuals	Plan a termly staff meeting focused on well-being
Use website and social media to promote national events Hello Yellow etc; Children's mental health week – and celebrate school involvement	Encourage staff to book activities after work
Termly Trust Mental Health Newsletter to promote strategies and support routes for staff.	Staffroom 'Shout-out' boards to celebrate individuals
Ensure all schools implement the LDST Policy	Implement the LDST Policy
Provide coaching and mediation training to leaders	Access to a MHFA in all schools through planned dedicated time
Continue to create Teams across the Trust	Opportunity to have days off in lieu if staff consecutively run after-school clubs: e.g., half a day if running a weekly club for a term
Regular letters to staff to show appreciation	Participate in National events – Hello Yellow etc; Children's mental health week
Offer employee appreciation days	Plan a regular collective worship well-being them
Annual LDST Awards evening to celebrate individual and school success	Include wellbeing in the Behaviour Policy – should this be a Trust policy?
Promote LDST social /sports groups	Identify a Mental health Governor
Broker an effective Employee contract (SAS/Employee Assist)	Identify Mental Health Champions
Promote the 5 stages to Mental Well Being	
	Ensure all staff know what policies and services there are to support their well-being
	Ensure Return to Work and Exit interviews are carried out to address any barriers or concerns
Ensure MHWB is on the EO agenda termly	Ensure all staff know how to access support

MHWB on HT Forum agenda termly and also on the DHT agenda	
In recruitment, make it clear that we value staff mental health, The following statement will be used routinely in our recruitment: '***As an employer we are committed to promoting and protecting the physical and mental health of all our staff'.***	

Appendix B:

NHS Five Stages to Mental Wellbeing

Evidence suggests there are 5 steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing. If you give them a try, you may feel happier, more positive and able to get the most from life.

Connect – connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.

Be active – you don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.

Keep learning – learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?

Give to others – even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.

Be mindful – be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

For more information see the NHS Moodzone page www.nhs. nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/



LDST Five Ways to Wellbeing - Poster.p

(Each school will have a copy of this attached poster, which should be printed and displayed to support staff wellbeing).

Review Schedule

Policy Author	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Policy Approver	Board of Directors
Current Policy Version	1.0
Policy Effective From	October 2022
Policy Review Date	By October 2025

Revision Schedule

Version	**Revisions**	**By whom**
1.0	Original document produced	CEO
	Reviewed with MHWB group in 2024/5	CEO