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WELLBEING POLICY



High Close School

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Introduction

High Close School and Barnardo's place the wellbeing of their staff and service-users at the forefront of everything they do. We believe the promotion of positive social, physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing for all is paramount to a healthy and happy working/educational environment.

We encourage our staff to lead by example, especially when it comes to highlighting within their practice the equality, diversity and inclusion of others, and most of all respect. We believe in honest and open approaches to ensure a high standard of professional development of our staff and these approaches to be reflected on how we educate our young people, to promote change, resilience, growth and confidence.

High Close School aims to work with the staff and young people to promote healthy and positive wellbeing. When it comes to our young people, safeguarding them from all harm and educating them on how to keep themselves safe, plays a big role in promoting their mental health and wellbeing. We want them to feel safe which will allow them, in turn, to feel emotionally well. Hence, the following legislation and guidance is applicable and important to consider when it comes to supporting everyone's wellbeing:

Equality Act 2010

Counselling in Schools: a blueprint for the future 2016

Mental Health and Behaviours in School 2018

Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing

Education Staff Wellbeing Charter 2021

Children Act 2004

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Equality Act 2010

Education Act 2011

Preventing and tackling bullying

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Most of High Close Schools existing policies, documents and guidance take into account the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing, for both young people and staff. This policy underpins all policies and procedures currently implemented at High Close School. Some of the policies that should be read in conjunction with this policy are:

High Close School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

High Close School Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

High Close School Complaints Procedure

Unit Handbooks (Residential & Day Pupils)

High Close School Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships

High Close School Online Safety Policy

High Close School Countering Bullying Policy

High Close Health and Safety Policy

High Close School Privacy Policy

High Close School [Staff Benefits and Wellbeing](#)

High Close School Participation and Empowering Young People

High Close School Teacher's Pay Policy

High Close School Staff Code of Conduct

High Close School Rota's, Staffing and Additional Hours

High Close School Staff Disciplinary, Grievance and Whistleblowing

High Close School has been working tirelessly to continue promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all during this, the recovery phase of the coronavirus pandemic as things return to a new normal. The ripple effects of the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions have had a significant impact on the lives of people worldwide.

We are also in the midst of a soaring cost of living crisis which is leaving people financially vulnerable with many making the choice between heating and eating this Winter.

Ethos

High Close School believes in following an open and honest approach with all their staff and young people, where they all feel safe, appreciated and respected. It is important that everyone feels involved and heard (especially their wishes, feelings and views), which in turn would support in implementing supportive decisions/strategies when it comes to their safety, welfare and positive wellbeing, to promote healthy development.

We aim for everyone to feel safe and confident in sharing any concerns they may have and feel certain that this will be dealt with respectfully and with their best interest at heart. Staff and young people have many forums/avenues where they can share their thoughts, concerns and feelings, i.e. supervisions, team meetings, young people's meetings, key-working, independent visitors, etc.

High Close School has many support systems in place to promote young people's wellbeing which are accessible on a daily basis, and staff are encouraged to access these to best support the young people they work with. This includes a High Close Therapy Provision which is accessible via a referrals process and also for ad hoc advice/discussion. We have also used remote learning for education, keyworking and meetings during periods of closure or other times young people have not been

able to access face to face provision to ensure young people's needs are met even during difficult times. All young people have a link or key worker who takes time to form a trusting relationship with them and spends individual time offering support.

High Close School has also been focusing on staff wellbeing and has various opportunities for staff through a variety of mediums. SLT strive to ensure that staff are aware of all the supports currently in place and other supports that are accessible to them throughout their employment. Managers ensure that wellbeing and Equality Diversity and Inclusion is discussed in team meetings and supervisions and are open to hearing how we can promote this further and support our staff. Opportunities for learning and development, as well as inclusion in decision-making and support forums are shared with all staff and they are provided equal opportunities to be involved in these.

Definitions, Purpose and Aim of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and young people know that mental health and wellbeing is taken seriously, where one of our goals is the de-stigmatisation of poor mental health, and another aim is to ensure everyone has the knowledge that there are support systems in place to promote everyone's wellbeing. High Close School and Barnardo's will continue providing an array of such systems that are accessible to all. We all know that our roles can be emotionally draining, especially when we are dealing with serious safeguarding concerns and young people's challenging behaviours, as well as the pressures on keeping a high standard of care, recording and education. Through promoting wellbeing for our staff, we can ensure that all staff complete their duties to the best of their abilities, feel resilient in their varied challenging roles and so providing the utmost care to our young people.

The aim of this policy is to promote a setting where everyone can reach their full potential, in an environment where everyone feels valued and included, which is free from any discrimination, whilst promoting their safety and development. Everyone has the right to feel safe, be supported in accessing and learning healthy ways of coping whilst experiencing and feeling healthy and positive in mind and body.

How we Promote Wellbeing

High Close School, as a Barnardo's project, works within the Barnardo's Basis and Values, where we have incorporated these into our [Mission and Ethos Statement](#). Our young people all have differing Special Educational Needs, as well as a range of Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Due to these needs, they are considered more vulnerable and the importance of promoting their wellbeing increases.

High Close School supports young people's wellbeing by:

- Providing opportunities to participate in decision making (such as school council)
- Celebrating achievements (academic and non-academic), talents and abilities
- Including their contribution in activities and learning groups
- Providing an environment of belonging where they feel safe
- Encourage positive relationships with their peers and staff, and learning how to maintain and repair these relationships in a safe and healthy manner
- Providing access to support systems that meet their needs
- Promoting independence, developing a sense of right and wrong, and developing resilience
- Providing opportunities to self-reflect, learn and adopt safer coping strategies
- Teaching them how to adapt to change
- The safe recruitment of staff whom will act as positive role models

High Close School is dedicated in ensuring that staff's emotional, mental health and physical and mental wellbeing needs are met and they feel supported. It is the responsibility of staff to communicate with their line managers any such needs and it is their line manager's responsibility to then support their staff by risk assessing and in conjunction with the individual and identifying any reasonable adjustments that might need to be applied in conjunction with the staff member. Such adjustments are unique to each staff member based on their needs, and managers will ensure they do their best to support their staff.

There are a number of reasons why staff morale and wellbeing can decrease and affect their quality of work. Some of these reasons can be the following:

- Poor physical health
- Disabilities, accident and illness
- Financial difficulties

- Experience of abuse, discrimination, harassment and bullying
- Stressful life event or trauma
- Peer/colleague relationships
- Bereavement
- Acting as a carer
- Emotional and physical demands of the job
- Menopause
- Young people's behaviour
- Negative interactions with parents/carers
- High workload
- Lack of professional learning and development opportunities
- Poor communication
- Changes – when these are excessive
- Working environment, i.e., noise, lighting, equipment they have access to, unsafe working conditions, etc.
- Lack of appreciation, trust and respect
- Remote learning/blended learning expectations

High Close School recognises that all of the above reasons can occur or be present in staff's lives and that is why we ensure to promote staffs' wellbeing by:

- Offering an array of support systems and strategies (long and short term) where their individual needs are recognised and met with a safe and non-judgemental approach
- Access to supervisions/link meetings/learning walks and informal discussions with their line managers
- Recognising and celebrating their successes, unique talents and skills, to support their confidence in carrying out their roles effectively
- Offering opportunities for development (Continuing Professional Development - CPD), both professionally and personally, i.e. through training, promotion opportunities
- Feeling valued and heard; providing opportunities to take part in decision-making via surveys, forums, team meetings
- Recognition of work-life balance
- Regular reviews of staff's mental health and wellbeing, on an individual basis or as a group if appropriate
- Offering time to reflect
- Ensuring open and honest communication is upheld at all times, and staff remain informed of any changes, especially relevant to their roles and working environment

It is important to mention how High Close School considers the mental health and wellbeing of parents/carers, and through working in partnership, we can all provide the best care for young people and always strive for consistent approaches. We understand that families play a key role when it comes to emotional wellbeing and we ensure that parents/carers wellbeing is supported by:

- Having access to our Family Resource Team throughout the year (including school holidays)
- Regular communication with staff, before and after weekends and holidays, and during the week
- Their opinions are heard, valued and responded to, as well as being included in decisions made regarding their young people, within school and by external agencies.
- Making sure they feel welcomed and respected
- Recognising their contribution to their young people's healthy development and education
- Providing opportunities where they feel able and comfortable to seek support, as and when needed
- Recognising and acknowledging their strengths
- Challenging them appropriately and respectfully and working together with a solution focussed expectation
- Providing them with clear expectations of their responsibilities when it comes to working with High Close School
- Signposting to appropriate agencies, they may wish to utilise for support

Our Senior Leadership Team ensure that all young people's and staff's needs regarding mental health and wellbeing are met appropriately, following the policies and procedures in place. The designated lead for mental health and wellbeing is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and through development of this role is working to ensure a holistic and whole school ongoing approach to the promotion of good mental health and wellbeing across the school. This is in line with the Department for Education and Department of Health and Social care's green paper [Promoting Children and Young People's mental health provision](#)

They work in partnership with all line managers to support a whole school approach on the matter and they make sure that:

- All staff receive regular training, mandatory and optional, to promote professional and personal development
- Our policies and procedures are kept up to date
- Staff are included in decision making processes, where applicable

- The creation of a mentally healthy school is promoted, where the wellbeing of everyone is crucial, and ensures standards are applied across the school
- They respond to young people's and staffs needs
- They bring in appropriate support (external or internal), where needed, for staff and young people
- Surveys are used for the collection of data on how everyone is feeling, to track trends around job satisfaction, to build evidence into policy making and what more can be implemented to support everyone's wellbeing
- Staff are kept informed of helpful reading and resources to promote mental health and wellbeing, not just for staff but young people too, through research
- Achievements are celebrated to boost morale and work ethic
- Provide constructive feedback to staff respectfully and challenge them appropriately
- Promote self-identification of difficulties/things that may contribute to lower wellbeing and encourage a solution-based approach (i.e., encourage email communication inside working hours: Staff have the option of streaming emails to their phones but are advised to turn instant notifications off to protect off duty times and Staff are not expected to read or reply to emails outside working hours)
- Recognition day awarded each year on staff birthday
- Have standard agenda items on supervision agendas and team meeting agendas around wellbeing
- Promotion of the DfE education staff wellbeing charter

Sources of Support and Resources

Barnardo's and High Close School offer an array of support systems, which are all in place to help their staff achieve, keep them informed and focus on their wellbeing. Just some of these supports which can be found through High Close School and [Inside.Barnardos](#) and on Workplace are:

- Employee Assistance Programme [EAP](#) - A confidential service supporting the health and wellbeing of staff, offering immediate access to support where staff can talk through any concerns they may have and seek advice. Staff can access counselling services for an array of areas they might need support with, i.e., anxiety, stress, financial and legal advice, etc. EAP's 24-hour telephone number is: 08000305182 or staff can email

counsellingadvice@healthassured.co.uk The Health Assured EAP for Barnardo's can be accessed via the above links and can also be accessed via an app on your mobile phone or tablet. Just download the 'My Healthy Advantage' app for free.

- Through the EAP or by referral through line managers/HR, staff can be referred to Occupational Health for assessments where staff can get advice for managing various health issues at work, potentially leading to reasonable adjustments to be implemented, to ensure a healthy relationship between your health and your work.
- Staff are offered to complete a [Wellness Action Plan](#) (WAP) with their line manager. This is a person-centred tool to help you monitor and manage your own mental health and any distressing symptoms and set up a structure for discussing this with your manager. The WAP focuses on staff's ability to recognise their own triggers and solutions.
- Many of our staff's roles include long periods of time spent in front of computer screens. To ensure appropriate supports are in place, staff are expected to complete a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) risk assessment annually. Staff can also claim back expenses for glasses and eye examinations in some circumstances – please see [Eyesight testing and spectacles policy](#) for more details
- Staff can access [Mindfulness Information](#) on Office 365 and staff were offered the opportunity to complete the .B Mindfulness course
- Staff can always turn to their line managers or line manager's manager (if more applicable) for support, or to share ideas on how we can implement additional supports for staff at High Close School to promote wellbeing further. Staff can also attend the half-termly wellbeing committee to share their views on a whole school approach to the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing
- [Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub](#) where staff can access training on trauma, adversity and mental health
- [Accessibility Passport](#) - Access support for staff and volunteers who may have a disability, impairment, or mental or physical health condition.

- [Taking Time Off](#) - Access support and information on Barnardo's policies regarding taking time off work and your employee entitlements e.g. for parental leave, training or bereavement.
- [Benefits](#) - Access benefits that might suit your needs, i.e., cycle-to-work scheme, health cash plans and many more.
- Staff forums - Access a number of national and local forums who work with Barnardo's to ensure progression of organisational understanding and competence in equality, diversity and inclusion at a national and local level. They provide a support network for workers who belong to the identity represented by the forum.
- [The BU](#) - Access learning opportunities, through a diverse and broad range of informal learning activities, formal courses and qualifications.

Staff can also access an unlimited number of supports and resources from external agencies. Some of these are:

- Local People Team
- UNISON/other trade union representatives
- Expolink
- [NHS](#) website
- [World Health Organisation](#) website
- [Mind](#) - Mental Health Charity
- [Mental Health At Work](#) - Shout is a 24/7 text service, you can go to if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.