Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

(including Menopause Policy)

Approved by:	Penny Harris (Director) Jane Cox (Director)	**Date:** 1st September 2026
Last reviewed on:	1st September 2025	
Next review due by:	1st September 2027	

All policies are generated and reviewed with an awareness of equality and diversity in relation to pupils, staff and visitors. All policies are generated and reviewed placing safeguarding and well-being at the heart of all that we do.

1. Aims

On Track Education believes that all staff should have the opportunity to enjoy the highest possible standard of wellbeing and mental health.

This policy aims to ensure that the company promotes and maintains the wellbeing of all staff through workplace practices, and encourages staff to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

Our staff are a precious resource: valuing them, and their wellbeing and mental health, is a duty we all share. Not only is this a good thing itself, it is critical in recruiting and retaining high quality education staff now and in the future.

2. Organisational Commitments

We commit to develop a long-term strategy for improving staff wellbeing that will:

Prioritise staff mental health

We will:

- tackle mental health stigma within the organisation, promoting an open and understanding culture.
- give the same consideration and support to mental health as physical health, including in the management of staff absence.
- fulfil our legal duty to control the risks associated with work-related stress in the education setting so far as is reasonably practicable.
- channel support to individuals whose role is known to have a significant emotional component. This might take the form of peer support and/or counselling.
- ensure that staff understand the real benefits that sensitive team support can have, while also recognising where their limits are as non-specialists. We will therefore ensure there are opportunities to increase joint working in support of pupils, as well as routes to refer for specialist support.

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.

Give managers 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.

Establish clear communications guidelines

We will provide clear guidance to all stakeholders (internal and external) on remote and out-of-school hours working, including when it is and is not reasonable to expect staff to respond to queries. This should not necessarily include preventing staff from accessing email at 'unsociable' hours if it suits them personally.

Give staff a voice in decision-making

We will constantly strive to improve the ways in which the voice of staff is included in the decision-making process across the school. In particular, we will proactively seek to draw upon the experience of those with mental health issues and/or of discrimination, ensuring that they are able to share their experience confidently and safely.

Drive down unnecessary workload

We will work proactively to drive down unnecessary workload, making use of available tools (such as the Workload Reduction Toolkit for schools).

Champion flexible working and diversity

We will work to create a supportive culture around flexible working, balancing the needs of individuals and the school. We will agree an approach that not only recognises employees' legal right to request flexible working but acknowledges that for some staff working flexibly can be a key means of protecting and enhancing their personal wellbeing.

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

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.

Protect leader wellbeing and mental health

We will ensure that we protect leader mental health. This should include access to confidential counselling and/or coaching where appropriate.

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. Further, we will work with staff and relevant stakeholders to agree an approach to organisational accountability on our commitments, giving due consideration to workload.

3. Principles of Shared Understanding

Wellbeing is subjective (but it can be measured)

We recognise wellbeing as a sense of 'how we are doing' that includes, but is not limited to, our physical and 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. While wellbeing is itself subjective, we recognise that there are indicators that can and should be measured.

Wellbeing has multiple benefits

We recognise that the wellbeing of these people is something that should be promoted, protected and enhanced for its own sake.

We need to attract and retain high-quality staff. Improving the wellbeing of staff, including by creating a supportive culture, 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 can help to both increase the chance of keeping current talent, and heighten the appeal to new talent in the long-term.

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. We recognise that not all such factors are unique to staff in education settings. Equally, there are many critical factors outside of the workplace (like access to key services) that are beyond the scope of our remit. There are many evidence-based frameworks that aim to capture the drivers of staff wellbeing inside the workplace. The Department for Education used the following evidence-based model from What Works Wellbeing as a reference point during its engagement with the expert advisory group. It sets out five main drivers of wellbeing in the workplace, some of which overlap.

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.

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.

Environment: This is a broad category that in education can cover both: a) The organisational environment: including the physical environment (school or college facilities) and systems (such as the availability and efficaciousness of flexible working arrangements). This may also include the degree to which a member of staff identifies with organisational values. b) The policy environment: including the policies of the government of the day, and public perceptions of the status of the profession.

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.

Purpose: In particular, high-quality job design. For staff, this can mean:

- the right type of work for the individual.
- a sense of 'belonging' – including shared organisational goals and vision.
- the opportunity to develop and demonstrate competence, and progress in their career.
- an appropriate degree of autonomy

Wellbeing is a shared responsibility

We recognise that the responsibility for wellbeing and mental health must be shared across all stakeholders including the DfE, our organisation as an employer, our governance and senior leadership teams and every individual. 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. Staff should play an active role in influencing their culture, including in challenging policies and practices that threaten their own or others' wellbeing.

Employee Assistance Programme

All employees have access to an employee assistance programme through BUPA which provides confidential, impartial advice and support 24/7.
BUPA can be accessed on freephone: 0800 269 616, www.bupa.co.uk/eaponline
Our account number is 1607462.

Open Wellbeing Surgeries are also available to all employees. These are online sessions where employees can offload, reflect and explore in a safe and supportive environment on a 1:1 basis with a trained professional.

Roles and responsibilities

Everyone is encouraged to:

- understand this policy and seek clarification if required
- consider this policy at all times while at work
- support a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all
- take reasonable care of your own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health
- take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people

Leaders and managers have a responsibility to:

- ensure that all workers are made aware of this policy
- actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its aims

Annex 1 – Menopause Policy

1. Aims

The purpose of this policy is to assist with creating an open and menopause friendly workplace where managers and those experiencing menopause feel comfortable discussing any issues associated with this, and to ensure the necessary help is known about and offered to those affected.

We aim to normalise conversations about menopause in the workplace and remove any stigma. Menopause should not be a taboo subject. We encourage employees to have discussions about the menopause and be supportive of each other.

2. What is the menopause?

Menopause is when your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. It usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55, although it can sometimes happen earlier. This can last between 4 - 8 years. Menopause can have a big impact on your life and work for a number of years.

Medical factors that can bring about premature menopause

- Women who have had treatment, chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- Chromosome disorders such as Turner's syndrome, autoimmune diseases and certain infections such as TB, malaria or the mumps.
- Transgender colleagues who choose not to have hormonal transition.
- Surgery where ovaries are removed due to medical conditions
- Women undergoing treatment for endometriosis or infertility

3. Effects of the menopause

Physical symptoms of the menopause can include:

- Trouble sleeping
- Extreme fatigue
- Hot flushes
- Joint pains
- Headaches
- Poor concentration/brain fog
- Dry mouth/bleeding gums
- Dry eyes
- Heart palpitations
- Heavy/irregular periods
- Dry itchy skin
- Change in body shape/weight gain
- Urinary problems

Emotional and behavioural impacts of the menopause can include:

- Low mood or depression
- Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Mood swings
- Irritability

- Problems with memory
- Loss of confidence
- Lack of motivation

It is also commonly acknowledged that Hormone Replacement Therapy medication, which is often prescribed for menopause, can have side effects which cause problems at work. These include nausea, headaches and leg cramps.

4. Communication

It is important that, as an employee, you prioritise your personal health and wellbeing. If you are struggling with any aspect of your role because of symptoms associated with the menopause, you should tell your manager, who will treat the matter with complete confidence. So that we can give you the best support possible, we encourage you to be open and honest in these conversations. Alternatively, your manager may talk to you if they notice a change in your behaviour or performance.

We understand that you may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with your manager. If this is the case, we encourage you to talk to another senior member of staff, the HR Manager or contact our Employee Assistance Programme with BUPA, on freephone: 0800 269 616, www.bupa.co.uk/eaponline
Our account number is 1607462.

During any discussions, your manager will consider your individual situation and evaluate if any adjustments can be made. Your individual needs will be addressed sensitively and confidentiality will be maintained.

Managers will also arrange follow up sessions to review the effectiveness of any adjustments put in place.

5. Making Adjustments to Your Role

To help you in your daily duties, your manager will explore making adjustments to your role or working environment with the aim of reducing the effect that the menopause is having on you. Risk assessments will be consulted to identify potential issues. We acknowledge that the menopause affects each individual in different ways so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with you first.

Examples of adjustments include:

- Allowing time to attend doctors' appointments to review medication
- Making sure that the working environment can be well ventilated and/or have fans in them
- Providing period products in toilets so staff can access them quickly if needed
- Enabling access to cold drinking water and toilet breaks when needed
- Offering regular check-in opportunities with a line manager/colleague in a location/time of their choice
- Offering organisational support/resources to help with 'brain fog'
- Enabling flexible working; please read our flexible working policy if you would like more details.

Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect.

6. Whole school approach to the menopause

- We will ensure that all levels of management are trained on the effects of menopause, how to hold discussions with employees who are experiencing menopause and about adjustments that can be made to an employee's role to remove or lessen any effects the employee is experiencing.
- We will offer staff CPD on the menopause to reduce shame/stigma/misunderstanding around the topic
- We will consider having a menopause support group in school for sharing experiences and strategies.