

The *Active Learning* Trust

Employee Wellbeing Policy

First Introduced April 2019.

Employee Wellbeing Policy

1. Terms of Reference

1.1. For all employees employed by the Active Learning Trust.

1.2. Definitions:

“Headteacher” also refers to any other title used to identify the Headteacher or Principal, where appropriate, or other senior manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Headteacher.

“Line manager” also refers to any other title used to identify a direct supervisor or other senior manager.

2. Introduction

2.1. The Trust recognises its responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and understands that wellbeing and performance are linked.

2.2. The Trust is committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

2.3. This Employee Wellbeing Policy sets out the commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological and physical health, health promotion initiatives, communication and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of mental health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues. This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and it may be amended at any time subject to appropriate consultation.

2.4. The Trust recognises that work-related stress has a negative impact on employees’ wellbeing and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

2.5. The Trust is committed to balancing the needs of employees and school/Trust educational, business and operational needs.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. The Trust and Local Governing Bodies of Trust schools

- The Trust has a legal duty of care to employees to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The Trust will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals. For their part, every employee of the Trust has a duty of care to themselves and must play their part in personal wellbeing (see Section 3.4 below)
- In addition to reducing safety risks, we will operate the business in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are reasonable and having policies and

procedures in place to support employees experiencing mental ill health at work.

3.1.1. The Trust, working via Local Governing Bodies in schools will:

- Take overall responsibility for implementing this policy
- Adopt the appropriate policies in respect of ‘family friendly’ employment, including consideration of flexible working arrangements, part-time working, etc. where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the schools
- Ensure clear procedures are in place that will minimise levels of stress caused to employees when following formal procedures such as the capability, disciplinary or sickness absence management procedures
- Ensure that employees roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- Put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support
- Seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work
- Be mindful of, and supportive in, the wellbeing needs and the pressures of work in relation to the Headteacher him/herself.

3.2. The Headteacher

3.2.1. The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy to ensure that the policy is communicated to employees, and that it is applied consistently. In doing so they are entitled to expect the interest engagement and support of local governing bodies and the Trustees in constructively engaging with the staff wellbeing agenda.

3.2.2. The Headteacher will:

- Create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns, and enable employees to do so in a supportive environment
- Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in employees and promote sympathetic alertness to employees who show signs of being under stress
- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems
- Ensure that contact is maintained with staff while absence and that return-to-work procedures that are supportive of employees are operated in the workplace
- Carry out a risk assessments where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible
- Carefully plan and agree work-life balance solutions including flexible working practices where possible and appropriate

- Ensure that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications
- Make sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams
- Demonstrate commitment, via systems and practices in place in schools, to support employees maintaining a good work/life balance, and ensure that such practices are communicated to all employees
- Manage pressures which may affect employees, including the impact of workload pressures, and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible

3.3. Line managers

3.3.1. Line managers will put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee wellbeing. Managers will undertake staff wellbeing training when offered by the Trust and remain alert to the need to manage stress and mitigate psychological risks in their teams. For example, managers should ensure that employees understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support from managers and team members to do their job. Managers must also familiarise themselves with the organisation's policies on diversity and tackling inappropriate behaviour in order to support employees, for example on bullying and harassment issues.

3.3.2. In particular, line managers must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by:

- Creating reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns
- Paying attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in employees and promoting sympathetic alertness to employees who show signs of being under stress
- Following agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems
- Carrying out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible
- Seeking agreement from the employee for a referral to Occupational Health if this is required and/or appropriate in the circumstances
- Attending training provided on health and wellbeing in schools
- Keeping employees in the team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload
- Ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management
- Ensuring that work stations are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose
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3.4. Employees

3.4.1. Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, exercise, alcohol consumption and smoking) and informing the organisation if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee during discussions with managers or the occupational health service is treated in confidence.

3.4.2. Employees should:

- Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem at the earliest opportunity to ensure effective strategies can be implemented
- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves or others whilst in the workplace
- Ensure awareness of the Trust's policies and procedures relevant to employee wellbeing
- Assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or colleagues
- Treat colleagues and all other persons whom they interact with during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity and regardless of their level of seniority in the organisation. Ideally we can create cultures where people are mutually appreciative of the different roles in our schools and their associated pressures.
- If required, attend appointments with Occupational Health or other medical appointment/examination by a registered medical practitioner nominated by the school/Trust.

4. Support Mechanisms

4.1. Training and communications

4.1.1. Line managers and employees will discuss individual training needs as part of the appraisal/performance management interactions in order to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change. The organisation will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

4.1.2. All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications and organisation-wide methods. The organisation will consider special communication media during periods of organisational change.

4.2. Occupational health support

4.2.1. Line managers can contact the organisation's occupational health service for advice on managing issues regarding work-related stress and wellbeing. The occupational health provider delivers a comprehensive service designed to help employees stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing mental health problems. This includes preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals, liaising with GPs, and working with individuals to help them to retain employment.

- 4.2.2. Occupational health professionals can aid in developing rehabilitation plans for employees returning to work after absences related to mental ill health, and work with GPs and line managers on designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful.
- 4.2.3. A referral to the occupational health team will be made if this is considered appropriate after an employee's initial discussion with their line manager. Discussions between employees and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health team is likely to provide a report on the employee's fitness to work, and any recommended adaptations to the working environment, to the school/Trust.
- 4.3. Counselling & Employee assistance Services
- 4.3.1. The school/Trust will make appropriate provision for the offer of counselling or other employee assistance support in cases where this would appear to be a supportive act and including where that is a recommendation within an Occupational Health report or feedback.
- 4.4. Mediation
- 4.4.1. The school/Trust recognises that the appointment of a mediator could also be a supportive tool in helping to mediate in the arrangements to assist employees to return to normal working or working relationships. The provision of a mediator will be considered on a case by case basis and may be accessed via a counselling service, ACAS, or by appointing a mutually agreed work colleague to act in this respect.
- 4.5. Other
- Other measures available to support employees in maintaining health and wellbeing include:
- Procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment)
 - Special leave arrangements as set out in the Discretionary Leave of Absence Policy
 - Consideration of opportunities for flexible working
 - Support for workers with disabilities by referrals to the Access to Work service.
 - The organisation's Grievance Procedures

5. Relationship with other policies

This Employee Wellbeing Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering attendance and health, including policies on work-life balance, special leave, flexible working, the management of short and long-term absence, sick pay, bullying and harassment, violence at work, equal opportunities and employees training and development.

The Local Governing Bodies/Trust takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all employees and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty.

These include

- Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Stress Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Whistleblowing Procedure

All policies are freely available from each Trust school.