Plymouth CAST Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy

Last Update: September 2022 (version 3.0)

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
2.0	February 2021	CEO	All Plymouth CAST employees	To give due attention to staff wellbeing in the Trust
3.0	July 2022	Human Resources	All Plymouth CAST employees	Policy Review

Approvals

This policy requires the following approvals:

Board	SEL	CEO	Date Approval	Version	Date for Review
☐	☐	☐	26th Feb 2021	2.0	February 2022
☑	☑	☑	22nd July 2022	3.0	September 2023

National/Local Policy

This policy must not be changed, it is a CAST/National Policy

Position with the Unions

Does the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement?	
☑ ~~Yes~~	☐ No

If yes, the policy status is:		
☑ ~~Consulted and Approved~~	☐ Consulted and Not Approved	☐ Awaiting Consultation

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Position	Date	Version
All CAST Central employees, CAST Headteachers, CAST Directors, JCC	March 2020	1.0
All CAST Central employees, CAST Headteachers, CAST Directors, JCC	March 2021	2.0
All CAST Central employees, CAST Headteachers, CAST Directors, JCC	September 2022	3.0

Contents

1. Vision and Values

1.1. Plymouth CAST is a multi-academy trust of Catholic schools which is part of the mission of the Catholic Church dedicated to human flourishing and the building of a kingdom of peace, truth and justice. The Trust is to be conducted in all aspects in accordance with canon law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and at all times to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

1.2. Our vision and values are derived from our identity as a Catholic Trust. Central to our vision is the dignity of the human person, especially the most vulnerable. Our academies are dedicated to providing an education and formation where all our pupils and young people flourish in a safe, nurturing, enriching environment. All governors in our academies are expected to be familiar with the vision, mission, values and principles of the Trust and not in any way to undermine them. They should support and promote the vision and conduct themselves at all times in school and on school business according to the vision and principles of the Trust

1.3. Plymouth CAST expects all its employees to recognise their obligations to each school within the Multi-Academy Trust, the public, pupils and other employees and to provide consistently high standards of education and performance at all times and in accordance with Plymouth CAST's vision, mission and principles.

2. Introduction

2.1. Although a range of terminology is used to describe the concept of Emotional Health and Wellbeing the key issue is that emotional well-being is fundamental to the development of a healthy and successful community. At Plymouth CAST, we are committed to creating an emotionally healthy environment which develops the social and emotional competencies of all members of our school community.

2.2. Our ethos is a caring one which develops respect, self-esteem and gives a voice for all. To allow our pupils to flourish in safe, happy and stimulating environments and leave us with the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and aspirations, to make the world a better place, inspired by the Gospel.

2.3. We recognise that our employees are a very valuable resource and the Trust is committed to producing a caring and supportive environment which is conducive to the welfare of all staff and which enables them to develop and contribute to their full potential. We promote a supportive and inclusive ethos.

3. Definition

3.1. Emotional Health and Wellbeing involves the identification and acknowledgement of feelings, the consideration of feelings when deciding how to act in order to get what is needed from the situation and from life to the mutual benefit of all.

3.2. For the purpose of this document the generic term of emotional health and well-being is used throughout and will encompass the following:

- Emotional literacy
- Emotional intelligence
- Social and emotional competences
- Wellbeing and recognition schemes
- Personal competencies/ development
- Resilience factors
- Promoting positive mental health

3.3. "Emotional Health and Wellbeing takes account of everyone's feelings so that we can all work together in a safe and happy environment where we all thrive"

4. Aims

4.1. We will work together as one Trust, one family of schools, a community inspired by a vision for excellence. We commit ourselves to deepen our mission and raise standards in order to provide an excellent Catholic education for every child in our care. All employees should be accountable for their role, these high expectations may cause pressure, but not stress. Employees are responsible for their own wellbeing.

4.2. Our principles, derived from our vision and values will support us to achieve our aim:

- Dignity of the individual
- Preferential option for the most vulnerable
- High standards
- Accountability
- Good stewardship
- Unity
- Alignment
- Objectivity
- Openness
- Integrity

5. Equal Opportunities

5.1. This policy must always be applied fairly and in accordance with employment law and Plymouth CAST Equal Opportunities Policy.

6. Rationale - Why is Emotional Health and Well Being important?

6.1. Social and emotional competencies underpin almost every aspect of successful communities, whether this be a small group, whole school or across the Trust. Communities that promote emotional health and wellbeing generate positive environments and ones in which everybody feels valued, motivated, confident, supported and able to contribute. Where individuals have good social and emotional skills within an environment that is supportive to emotional health and

wellbeing they will be motivated and equipped to:

- Form and sustain strong personal and professional relationships;
- Deal with and resolve conflict effectively and fairly;
- Solve problems with others or by themselves;
- Manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger and anxiety;
- Be able to promote calm and optimistic states that promote the achievement of goals;
- Recover from setbacks and persist in the face of difficulties;
- Cooperate with others in professional and social settings;
- Compete fairly and win and lose with dignity and respect for competitors;
- Recognise and assertively stand up for their rights and the rights of others;
- Understand and value the differences and commonalities between people, respecting the right of others to have beliefs and values different from their own.

6.2. Emotional Health and Wellbeing also promotes school success and achievement in a number of ways:

- Staff Confidence and Development
- Improved morale.
- Lower absenteeism.
- Better recruitment level.
- Positive and effective relationships with pupils.

7. Staff Emotional Health and Wellbeing support systems

7.1. The Trust accepts that working in Education is both exciting and demanding. Teachers and other school staff take all the demands placed upon them with an exceptional sense of personal commitment but acknowledge that such responsibility can exacerbate any problems they may be having. Common mental health issues arise from a range of life events and can trigger mental health problems, including stress and depression. For this reason, our trust takes very seriously the need to safeguard the health and welfare of all our staff. Particular attention is paid to the assessment of work-related stress in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

7.2. The ways each school aims to support all staff:

- Curricular planning time (PPA) within the school week, working alongside colleagues where possible, which allows for a wider range of discussion around school related issues Whole school training events, including Safeguarding and Health and Safety to raise awareness of key guidance

- Ongoing CPD programme through staff meetings on aspects of school development

- Access to appropriate external training to support the fulfilment of specific roles

- Involving staff in decision making, such as curriculum development, class structure, when appropriate

- Providing information and opportunities for discussion around proposed changes

- Consultation on training and support needs through regular review;

- Allocation of a mentor, Induction training and information for new staff;

- Providing additional support at times of particular stress, change and/or difficulty including providing information about and access to supportive services;

- Having an "open door" access for all members of staff and standing items on SLT agendas that allow time for discussions regarding staff in need of support

- Maintain contact with staff when they are absent for long periods and carry out "return to work" interviews with designated member of SLT to ensure they can manage their workload

- Providing opportunities for staff to socialise and relax together, including the appointment of a designated "social events" coordinator.

- Work with local CAST cluster to share best practice on well-being and provide social events

- Considering flexible working requests and working to accommodate individual needs wherever possible whilst considering the needs of the organisation

- Effective and constructive appraisal processes, with clear support and feedback to aid improvement

- Undertaking a stress risk assessment (RA22) for staff to identified as needing additional support and if deemed appropriate, referral to Occupational Health

8. Definition of Stress

8.1. The Health & Safety Executive defines stress as being "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them". However, it is important that the difference between "pressure" and "stress" be acknowledged: pressure does not necessarily give rise to stress and pressure can sometimes motivate. Whilst acknowledging that pressure and stress may also be caused by a range of issues external to the workplace, the trust's prime responsibility is to address work related stress. In order to fulfil its commitment, the school will:

- Identify potential hazards or circumstances which might contribute to inappropriate levels of work-related stress and conduct risk assessments to eliminate or control the risks from such stress. These circumstances and risk assessments will then be kept under review

- Consult with relevant union representatives when appropriate and other stakeholders on issues relating to staff wellbeing

- Increase awareness and understanding of stress related issues and the importance of general good health and wellbeing through identification, prevention, control and subsequent monitoring of causes of stress at work including where appropriate training and health promotion

- Provide ongoing training for all staff in good management practices appropriate to this policy

- Provide a confidential counselling service for staff whose wellbeing is adversely affected by stress.

- Ensure roles are clarified, so employees are aware of the expectations.

- Ensure that all staff are aware of, and have details, to be able to access the Trust's Employee Assistance Program (see appendix 3)

8.2. The following indicators have been identified by the Health and Safety Executive as appropriate measures of employee performance and wellbeing for the purposes of managing health & wellbeing:

- Absences will be recorded and monitored for developing patterns and return to work meetings will be held in a timely manner in an effort to support employees and maintain good levels of attendance.

- Anonymous questionnaires may be used, where appropriate in order to seek staff opinions on matters relating to wellbeing

9. Stress Risk Assessments

9.1. The Trust is obliged to assess the nature and scale of risk to the health of its staff in order to implement appropriate preventative and protective steps. The policy recognises that staff tolerance thresholds differ and that non-work factors may play a part in determining an individual's response. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that staff share with the school/trust any relevant information which might impact upon their ability to cope with reasonable pressures at work, including issues such as disability etc. All information is treated confidentially and will only be shared in accordance with the wishes of the individual. Where appropriate a stress risk assessment will be carried out by an employee's line manager in an effort to identify key stressors and seek to identify mitigating factors.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

10.1. **The Role and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors, as the employer**

- Promote the Trust's Vision, Values and Mission

- Support the wellbeing of the Senior Executive Leadership Team

- Develop a communication protocol for communication across the Trust

- Effective and clear communication to senior leaders

- Provide an annual staff survey to assess wellbeing across the Trust

- Complete annual appraisal of the CEO and an interim review

- Produce and regularly review the Health and Safety Policy for all Schools within the Trust. This policy will reflect the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 by outlining arrangements to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and others affected by the organisation

- Promote high levels of health and well-being and recognise the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors through risk assessment, in line with the Health and Safety Executive's management standards.

10.2.   The Role of Senior Leadership of the Trust

- Promote the Trust's Vision, Values and Mission

- Support the wellbeing of the Central employees and Headteachers/Executive Headteachers

- Complete appraisals for Central employees and Headteachers

- Promote positive relationships between schools and individuals.

- Provision of appropriate training opportunities to enable staff to recognise and manage their own stress and seek support if needed.

- Clear signposting to appropriate support agencies such as counselling services **Appendix 3**, health professionals and union representatives

- Active promotion of the principles and behaviours which promote positive staff wellbeing

- Being alert to the personal circumstances of staff and offering additional support where appropriate to members of staff experiencing risks to their wellbeing, including those derived from outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation

- Ensuring effective communication between management and staff, particularly in circumstances where there are organisational and /or procedural changes which can give rise to increased levels of stress in the workplace.

- Regular revision of job descriptions to ensure workloads are manageable and realistic

- Creating and maintaining an environment which ensure that bullying, harassment and discrimination are not tolerated in the school

- Complete regular risk assessments for employee wellbeing

- Provide a pupil welfare policy, which will indirectly support employee wellbeing when dealing with difficult situations.

- Ensure all employees have a sense of purpose and direction.

- Undertake staff surveys to gauge employee engagement and staff morale and well being. Ensure results of these surveys are reviewed and findings are acted on where appropriate. Feedback and actions will be communicated to all staff.

- Involve staff through the consultation (formal and informal) of Trust wide changes and where appropriate, seek staff view.

- Utilise Trust wide strategies for employee rewards and recognition

- Engage various stakeholders in a Wellbeing sub committee.

11. **The Role of the Headteachers and SLT in Promoting Emotional Health and Wellbeing for School Based Employees**

- Promotion of the Trust's Vision, Values and Mission

- Provision of appropriate training opportunities to enable staff to recognise and manage their own stress and seek support if needed.

- Clear signposting to appropriate support agencies such as counselling services **Appendix 3**, health professionals and union representatives

- Active promotion of the principles and behaviours which promote positive staff wellbeing

- Being alert to the personal circumstances of staff and offering additional support where appropriate to members of staff experiencing risks to their wellbeing, including those derived from outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation

- Ensuring effective communication between management and staff, particularly in circumstances where there are organisational and /or procedural changes which can give rise to increased levels of stress in the workplace.

- Regular revision of job descriptions to ensure workloads are manageable and realistic

- Creating and maintaining an environment which ensure that bullying, harassment and discrimination are not tolerated in the school

- Maintain an open door policy for all members of staff

- Provide an A-Z guide of tasks throughout the school. This will provide clarity on the expectations and who is responsible for what.

- Wellbeing programme for individual schools, including local initiatives.

- Ensure appraisals are completed for all employees

- Engage with and implement Trust wide reward and recognition strategies

11.1. **The Role of all Staff in recognising and Promoting Emotional Health and Wellbeing**

All staff have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and be sensitive to situations which may cause stress for colleagues. Staff are required to cooperate with the SLT in any measures taken to reduce stress, including:

- Being proactive in identifying occasions when they may be suffering from stress or other mental health issues, either work-related, or due to external factors, and alert their line-manager, or other relevant member of staff, to these where appropriate.

- Taking advantage of opportunities for counselling and training when recommended, including referral to Occupational Health services

- Uphold and support the ethos and culture of the school and Trust, by maintaining positive relationships with all employees and a caring, respectful and productive environment.

11.2. The Trust has a statutory responsibility for the work-life balance of their Headteachers/Executive Headteachers. The Board of directors will be responsible for senior/executive leaders. The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher has the responsibility for ensuring that teachers and support staff achieve the same. Limiting unnecessary stress; working a reasonable number of hours and meeting the demands of the role, whilst maintaining a personal life, are essential to ensuring that our Headteachers can effectively fulfil the role in leading a school.

11.3. The senior leaders of the Trust will conduct a regular risk assessment on wellbeing concerns throughout the Trust. Concerns can be submitted confidentially, to be included in these meetings.

12. Other Policies

12.1. This policy should be viewed in conjunction with the following policies:

- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Health and Safety
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Absence Management
- Flexible Working

13.Review

13.1. The content of this policy and procedure may be subject to revision from time to time following consultation with the recognised trade unions.

13.2. History of changes

Date	Page	Details of the change	Agreed by
22/07/2022	8	10.1- Correction in name of the Senior Leadership team	SELT/JCC/Board of Directors
22/07/2022	9	10.2 Bullet Point 16- Changed 'Undertake staff surveys to gauge employee engagement and staff morale and wellbeing. Ensure results of these surveys are reviewed and findings are acted on where appropriate. Feedback and actions will be communicated to all staff'.	SELT/JCC/Board of Directors
22/07/2022	9	10.2 Bullet Point 19- Addition to cover the introduction of wellbeing sub committees 'Engage various stakeholders in a Wellbeing subcommittee'.	SELT/JCC/Board of Directors
22/07/2022	14	Appendix 2- Replace Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire with all MIND resources.	SELT/JCC/Board of Directors

Appendix 1- Definitions of Terms linked to Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Self-awareness

- Having an accurate and positive view of ourselves
- Having a sense of optimism about the world and about ourselves
- Understanding and Managing emotions
- Experiencing a wide range of emotions;
- Understanding the causes of emotions;
- Expressing our emotions appropriately;
- Managing our responses to our emotions effectively, for example, managing our anger and controlling our impulses;
- Knowing how to feel good more often and for longer;
- Using information about the emotions to plan and solve problems;
- Resilience – processing and bouncing back from difficult experiences.
- Empathy
- Recognising and respecting the feelings of others;
- Anticipating and predicting others' likely thoughts, feelings and perceptions;
- Being able to see things from another person's point of view and, where appropriate, modifying your own responses.

Motivation

- The ability to gain pleasure from learning;
- Being able to set goals and work towards them;
- The ability to persist when something is difficult overcoming barriers to learning such as boredom and frustration;
- The ability to recognise when to keep on trying or when to try something different;
- The ability to bounce back after a disappointment.

Social Skills

- Forming attachments with other people
- Being able to take an active part in a group;
- Being able to resolve differences with others
- Experiencing empathy for others
- Communicating and responding effectively to others
- Managing relationships effectively
- Being autonomous, independent and self-reliant.

Appendix 2- MIND Wellbeing Resources

MIND - Wellness Action Plan- Hybrid working

MIND Wellness action plan-Remote working

MIND Wellness action plan-Workplace

Appendix 3 - Employee Assistance Details