



Westfield Nursery School Positive Mental Health Policy

Vision

At Westfield Nursery we aim to deliver against our vision 'Inspired beginnings; outstanding futures'.

Principles

Westfield Nursery School places a high value on maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees and it recognises its duty of care extends to mental health as well as physical health at work.

It is committed to providing a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and well-being of all its employees.

Westfield Nursery School is committed to implementing a positive mental health policy for all employees throughout the organisation. This includes improving the organisational environment through effective and sensitive management, enabling individuals to cope successfully with the demands and pressures of work, and providing support for employees whose health and well-being are affected by stress.

Aims

- Establish promote and maintain a culture of consultation, participation and open communication throughout the organisation.
- Raise the awareness of staff about mental health conditions.
- Provide opportunities for employees to maintain and promote their health and well-being.
- Manage workplace pressures.
- Undertake annual Performance Management reviews with each member of staff to ensure that the work role and tasks match the relevant job descriptions, and to ensure that job descriptions are up to date.

Well- Being Charter

Our commitment to positive mental health is shown in our well-being charter. This sets out what well-being is, why well-being is so important and principles of supporting positive well-being in children and adults. Linked to the well-being charter each staff member has received a well-being toolkit with strategies to support their well-being. A poster about supporting well-being has been shared with each class. There are well-being checklist posters displayed in staff toilets.

The Well- Being Charter also has sections on

- Anxiety
- Attachment
- Bereavement
- Covid-19
- Mindfulness
- Trauma

Types of Mental Health Conditions

Addictive Behaviours

Reference <https://addictionsuk.com/addictive-behaviour/>

An addictive behaviour is a behaviour, or a stimulus related to a behaviour, that is both rewarding and reinforcing and is associated with the development of an addiction. People can spend the majority of time engaging in the behaviour, thinking about or arranging to engage in the behaviour, or recovering from the effects, becoming dependent on the

behaviour as a way to cope with emotions and to “feel normal”. People may continue despite physical and/or mental harm; neglecting work, school, or family to engage in the behaviour more often. People may also minimise or hide the extent of the problem.

Anticipatory Anxiousness

Reference <https://www.healthline.com/health/anticipatory-anxiety>

Anticipatory anxiety describes fear and worry around bad things that *could* happen. It can happen in a lot of different contexts, but it commonly focuses on things you can't predict or control. This may be experienced around but not exclusive to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Anxiety Disorders

Reference <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder/>

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild or severe.

Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life. E.g. in relation to a medical test or job interview. During times like these, feeling anxious can be perfectly normal.

But some people find it hard to control their worries. Their feelings of anxiety are more constant and can often affect their daily lives.

Anxiety is the main symptom of several conditions, including:

- panic disorder
- phobias
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- social anxiety disorder (social phobia)
- generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).

Bi-polar

Reference <https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Bipolar-disorder/>

People with bipolar disorder have episodes of:

- depression – feeling very low and lethargic
- mania – feeling very high and overactive

Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD)

Reference <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/body-dysmorphia/>

Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), or body dysmorphia, where a person spends a lot of time worrying about flaws in their appearance, these flaws are often unnoticeable to others.

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

Reference <https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/borderline-personality-disorder/>

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a disorder of mood and how a person interacts with others. A sufferer will differ significantly from an average person in terms of how he or she thinks, perceives, feels or relates to others.

Depression

Reference <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-depression/>

Most people go through periods of feeling down, but when you're depressed you feel persistently sad for weeks or months, rather than just a few days. Symptoms vary widely for example lasting feelings of unhappiness and hopelessness, to losing interest in the things you used to enjoy and feeling very tearful.

Eating Disorders

Reference <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/eating-disorders/>

An eating disorder is when you have an unhealthy attitude to food, which can take over your life and make you ill. It can involve eating too much or too little, or becoming obsessed with your weight and body shape.

Stress

Reference <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/understanding-stress/>
The Health and Safety Executive has defined stress as 'the reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them. It arises when they worry, they can no longer cope'. (1999) (*Annual Report HSE 1999*)

In its positive manifestation stress can act as a motivational and enabling force, in its negative format however stress becomes harmful and disabling and therefore a potential cause of physical and mental illness.

Pressures can arise from an individual's personal life as well as from work and people vary in their capacity and ability to cope with different types of pressure. Some individuals will recognise that their health is affected and will seek help; others will not recognise or acknowledge that they are stressed although it may be apparent to their manager and work colleagues. Although stress is not an illness, there is evidence that stress can lead to mental and physical ill health.

All work has its pressures. We all vary in our capacity to cope with different types of pressure. Some pressure, even when high, can be motivating and a challenge. Pressures that we can respond to effectively are likely to lead to job satisfaction. However, pressures at a level we cannot cope with, even in some cases too little pressure or challenge, are likely to result in stress for the individual.

It is in the interests of all to recognise the possible signs of stress. These may be:

- Persistent or recurrent moods anger, irritability, detachment, worry, depression, guilt, and sadness.
- Physical sensations/effects aches and pains, raised heart rate, increased sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, skin or sleep disorders.
- Changed behaviours difficulty concentrating or remembering things, unable to switch off, loss of creativity, making more errors, double checking everything, increasing use of substances.
- When stress is experienced over long periods other signs can develop, for example, high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, anxiety, long-term depression.
- Poor work performance less output, lower quality, poor decision making.
- Relationships at work conflict between colleagues, poor relationships with children/parents.
- Staff attitude and behaviour loss of motivation or commitment, poor timekeeping.

Strategies for dealing with aspects of poor mental health

Nursery

We will

- Encourage staff to use the well-being charter and toolkit as a point of reference
- Listen to staff if they want to talk
- Signpost to support services e.g. Bedfordshire's well-being service
<https://bedfordshirewellbeingservice.nhs.uk/> .
- Act with sensitivity.
- Provide information on the policy and where possible help individuals to overcome their problems before job performance is affected.
- Incorporate well-being time into staff development e.g. well-being session on INSET day
- Arrange staff/ team events e.g. quiz, meal
- Support staff training e.g. 'Well-being for Education' (Covid-19) by DfE for SENDCo and senior practitioner (November 2020)

Employees

- All individuals should recognise the importance of training and development as a means of developing competence and well-being in the job.
- Individuals should take an active part in determining their own training needs in conjunction with the person responsible for his/her performance management.
- If individuals believe that they are suffering from any mental ill-health they may wish to talk to a senior staff member.
- Individuals should seek support from their GP and/ or a professional body e.g. self-refer to the well-being service.

Integration with Other Policies

Recruitment and Selection

- The full range of tasks and demands of the job are set out clearly in the job description and person specification and are discussed in the interview process. Areas of potential pressure should be identified.
- All references must seek information about candidates' sickness and absence records for the previous two years and must comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- For posts where it is recognised that a higher than normal level of pressure and stress exists, candidate's tolerance to stress should become a more important factor in the selection process.

Induction

- All employees receive induction into their jobs. Starting a new job can be a stressful time and a planned induction should help eliminate any concerns.
- Within the induction programme, the well-being charter will be discussed.

Attendance Management

As part of professional review meetings with staff, absences may be discussed with the staff member, and underlying reasons identified.

Training and Development

The identification of appropriate training activities should be agreed at the beginning of a new post and reviewed no less than annually in line with the Performance Management Process.

Implementation, Monitoring, Audit and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring adherence and effectiveness of this policy and for reporting annually to the Governing Body.

Conclusion

This policy will support the understanding of mental health and ways to support this.

Reviewed November 2020

To be reviewed November 2021