WIMBLEDON CHASE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Empowering individuals to thrive and contribute positively in a diverse and ever-changing world

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

September 2026

At Wimbledon Chase Primary School, policies are designed to ensure that the child is at the centre of all our decision making. All staff are aware that whole school and class systems are established to ensure that ever child is able to share and express their concerns in a safe and confidential manner. We constantly strive to ensure that all children know their worries and views will be taken seriously by all staff and that every child w be treated with respect.

WIMBLEDON CHASE PRIMARY SCHOOL



STAFF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

1. Introduction

> "In schools where all feel that they belong, there is a common language and shared set of practices. Entering into these schools is a warm and welcoming experience."
> *Place and Belonging in School: Why It Matters Today* (Riley et al., 2020)

At Wimbledon Chase, we want our school to be a warm and welcoming place for all who are part of our community. We recognise that staff are our most important resource. We want everyone to feel valued and respected, to feel that they belong, and to experience our school as a safe, caring and psychologically supportive place to work. We want our children to be happy, safe and secure learners, and recognise that the wellbeing of our staff is central to creating the relationships, consistency and care that enable children to flourish.

We recognise the emotional and relational demands of working in education and the importance of psychological safety, positive professional relationships and a strong sense of belonging. Our trauma-informed relational approach supports staff to feel confident and well equipped to respond to the emotional, pastoral and mental health needs of pupils, while recognising the importance of protecting their own wellbeing. Training, reflection, consultation and emotional containment provide opportunities for staff to process and manage the demands of their roles.

At Wimbledon Chase, we recognise that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and that, at times, anyone may need additional support. Mental health is everyone's responsibility, and we all have a role to play in creating a culture where people feel able to talk, seek help and support one another without stigma or judgement. Through this policy, we set out our commitment to promoting and protecting staff mental health and wellbeing, providing clear pathways to appropriate support, and keeping wellbeing at the heart of our school development and practice.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- **Promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of all staff**, recognising the demands and pressures associated with working in education.
- **Create a psychologically safe, supportive and inclusive workplace** where staff feel a sense of belonging, can speak openly about mental health and wellbeing, and have access to positive professional relationships and appropriate support.

- **Embed a trauma-informed relational approach** that supports staff wellbeing and builds confidence in responding to the emotional, pastoral and relational needs of pupils.
- **Build staff capacity and resilience** through appropriate training, professional development, reflection, consultation and emotional containment, enabling staff to manage the demands of their roles effectively.
- **Provide clear pathways to support**, ensuring staff know how and where to access appropriate internal and external wellbeing and mental health services, including timely signposting to specialist support when required.
- **Ensure staff mental health and wellbeing remain a strategic priority**, informed by staff voice, evidence and research, and continuously developed through engagement with cluster, borough, regional, national and global practice.

3. Definition of Mental Health, Wellbeing and Resilience

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of good mental health and wellbeing; "*...a state of well-being in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community*"

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from the disappointments and difficulties we all experience. It is the ability to build protective factors in our lives which promote and protect our emotional wellbeing when faced with knockbacks and unexpected changes

At Wimbledon Chase we may use the term Social, Emotional and Mental Health and its acronym - SEMH - to refer to all aspects of mental health.

4. Wimbledon Chase as a RIghts Respecting School

As a Rights Respecting School all adults have a duty to uphold Children's Rights as defined by the United Nations. These rights are the basis of our approach to supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of our pupils and so in turn our staff. These articles are of particular relevance:

Article 3 - The best interests of the child
Article 4 - The implementation of the convention
Article 28 - The right to education
Article 29 - The right to the goals of education
Article 31 - The right to leisure, play and culture

5. Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles

The Wimbledon Chase Values of Kindness and Respect, Inclusivity and Equality, Positivity and Safety are promoted through every aspect of school life and it is on these we base our principles of wellbeing and mental health.

As a staff we feel that these principles are important for good mental health and wellbeing and we encourage all to embrace them.

Kindness

Understand the importance of treating people as we would want to be treated ourselves - with kindness, tolerance and compassion

Respect

Respect how staff members may want to manage their own mental health providing this doesn't impact on the safeguarding of our pupils or staff - wellbeing does not look the

same for everyone

Equality
Have an equal right to wellbeing in the workplace

Inclusivity
Feel a part of the decisions which affect them and be free from discrimination

Positivity
Be mindful of the language used to talk about mental health at all times

Safety
Be encouraged to look after our own wellbeing and that of others, communicating our needs when we need support and noticing when others may too



6. Staff Mental Health Team

At Wimbledon Chase we want all staff to understand that wellbeing and good mental health is for everyone to be aware of and for everyone to promote. However some members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. They have been trained by external providers to support staff who need help with managing their mental health. These members of staff include:

Caroline Gibbins - Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead
Theodora Theodoratou- Governor Responsible for SEMH
Tia Fortescue - School Business Manager and Office Manager
Charlotte Stewart- Inclusion Manager and SENDCo
Donna Newell - Deputy Head and Phase 2 Lead
Caroline Burnett - Deputy Headteacher and Midday Supervisor Lead
Nikki Adamson – Assistant Headteacher, Mental Health Lead and Phase 3 Lead
Jo Ruffle - Assistant Headteacher, EYFS (Phase 1)Lead
Sian Dotchin - Parent Support Advisor and Staff Risk Assessment Lead

7.Wellbeing, Workload Reduction and Work-Life Balance

Staff wellbeing is intrinsically linked to workload and work-life balance. The school will monitor, consult, review and revise workload and other stressors indicated by staff as far as is possible within a business case. We use reputable audits and frameworks such as the DfE Workload Reduction Toolkit and the Anna Freud Centre's Toolkit amongst others,

to guide us in this. **Appendix A** lists actions taken in consultation with staff to reduce workload and enhance work-life balance, at the point of writing and reviewing this policy.

We adhere to a communication protocol with no expectation for emails to be read or responded to between 6:30pm and 7:00am the next day or at weekends. Similarly Staff should not be contacting parents via phone or email beyond 6pm. We know that by protecting staff time outside of working hours and actively managing workload pressures, we create a more sustainable, productive and positive working environment where staff can thrive both professionally and personally.

8. Graduated Response to Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

At Wimbledon Chase we recognise that Mental Health and Wellbeing support does not look or feel the same for everyone. We also recognise that not everyone will need the same support at the same time. In order to meet differing needs, we have a graduated offer of support: universal; targeted and specialist. **Appendix B** gives examples of this approach as recommended by the Anna Freud Centre.

9.The Five Ways to Wellbeing - The Wimbledon Chase Way

At Wimbledon Chase we know that using an evidenced-based approach to achieve our aims and exemplify our values, gives confidence and validation to our practice. As such we use the New Economic Foundation's Five Ways To Wellbeing, endorsed by the NHS and the Anna Freud Centre, to structure school actions and suggestions based on our school values and wellbeing principles.

Our school actions and suggestions include, but are not limited to:

1. Connect

- Creating a small school feel within a large school
- Creating a shared mission, identity and sense of belonging
- Nurturing strong, supportive and reciprocal relationships within our teaching, office, site, subject and project teams
- Encouraging authentic and open communication within year group teams - share personal triggers, signs of overwhelm, coping strategies, as well as areas of strength, skill and where support can be offered
- Recognising and respecting that different people connect in different ways
- Providing regular whole school and cross-team opportunities to train and team build
- Facilitating structured supervision, restorative practice, mentoring and coaching programmes
- Encouraging whole school project and subject team collaboration
- Making time for meaningful conversations
- Encouraging collaboration with other schools in our cluster
- Encouraging and creating social spaces within the working week and outside of working hours
- Laughing with each other
- Celebrating our diverse cultures and heritages
- Organising regular social events, coffee mornings and afternoon teas

2. Be Active

- Encouraging active travel through Peddle My Bike Merton scheme
- Encouraging outdoor learning - Outdoor Classroom Programme
- Encourage a physical break at lunchtimes

3. Take Notice

- Looking out for personal signs of overwhelm
- Understand team dynamic theory and recognise when teams need support
- Taking notice of behavioural changes in colleagues
- Reflection spaces in meetings
- Supervision sessions
- Solution Circles
- Time to Pause for support staff
- Recognising achievements and celebrating small successes
- Appreciating our environment
- Regular wellbeing check-ins
- Promoting mindful moments
- Taking time to acknowledge progress

4. Keep Learning

- Thoughtful use of the appraisal system for peer to peer support
- Clear transparent career progression pathways communicated
- Professional development opportunities - for whole staff and bespoke packages - Research projects, Borough work, NPQs, Specialist Roles
- Skill-sharing sessions in meetings
- Career progression support
- Accessing further education - MAs and BAs are supported
- Encouraging new challenges
- Staff Book Swap Library

5. Give

- Opportunities to give back to colleagues - coffee mornings, random acts of kindness, social events
- Wider school community involvement
- Collaborative projects with other schools
- Supporting colleagues
- Time off to attend own children's events
- Extra and flexible cover time at busy times of year for individuals

10. Support Pathways

Internal Support

We want our staff members to know that they can seek support through:

- Headteacher, Phase Lead or the School Business Manager
- Any SLT member
- Their appraiser
- A trusted colleague who may advocate for them
- The wellbeing link governor
- Professional associations
- Union representatives
- Employee Assistance Programme

External Support

At Wimbledon Chase, we can facilitate access to:

- Employee Assistance Programme
- Occupational health services
- Professional counselling services
- Educational support partnerships
- Local wellbeing networks

- Professional supervision
- Specialist support services

Appendix C provides a list of external services that can be accessed for support
Appendix D provides our protocols for Crisis Support

11. Responsibilities

Beyond the Mental Health Team, all staff have responsibility with regard to staff wellbeing.

The Governing Body will:

- Prioritise staff mental health and wellbeing in strategic planning understanding the business case
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated to staff wellbeing
- Monitor the implementation of the wellbeing policy
- Review wellbeing data and trends
- Appoint a wellbeing link governor
- Ensure policies support work-life balance
- Review staff workload impact assessments
- Monitor staff absence patterns
- Ensure compliance with equality legislation
- Review risk assessments related to staff wellbeing
- Consider wellbeing impact when making strategic decisions
- Ensure adequate training and support is provided both for themselves and staff
- Monitor budget allocation for wellbeing initiatives
- Review annual staff survey results

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Model good practice in wellbeing management
- Implement the wellbeing policy consistently
- Promote an open-door policy
- Conduct regular wellbeing check-ins with staff
- Act swiftly to support those with mental health needs
- Monitor staff workload
- Ensure clear communication channels
- Provide regular supervision and support
- Respond promptly to wellbeing concerns
- Facilitate access to external support services
- Arrange appropriate training and development
- Maintain confidentiality
- Create supportive return-to-work processes
- Monitor work patterns and encourage breaks
- Support flexible working requests where possible
- Ensure fair distribution of workload
- Protect PPA time
- Manage email expectations outside working hours
- Arrange cover for staff wellbeing appointments
- Coordinate with occupational health services

All staff will:

- Be aware of and take responsibility for their own wellbeing
- Be aware of self-care and wellbeing initiatives
- Be aware of support systems and access support when needed
- Understand that work-life balance is important
- Attend relevant wellbeing training
- Respect colleagues' wellbeing
- Follow absence reporting procedures
- Contribute to a professional, positive and supportive work environment
- Follow email protocols
- Take breaks in the working day
- Share workload concerns appropriately
- Be aware of supervision opportunities
- Follow school policies
- Manage workload effectively

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually by the Governing Body
- Updated based on staff feedback
- Monitored for effectiveness through specific metrics
- Adapted to meet emerging needs
- Benchmarked against best practices

We will monitor:

- Staff wellbeing surveys
- Absence rates and patterns
- Staff retention rates
- Engagement with wellbeing initiatives
- Work-life balance indicators
- Professional development participation

13. Links with other policies:

Equality and Diversity Policy
Equalities Statement

14. Legislation and guidance

This policy was written with regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018

School Development Area Leader: Nikki Adamson
Linked Governor: Theodora Theodoratou
Signed: Caroline Gibbins
Date: September 2026
Review date: September 2028

Appendix A

Staff Wellbeing and Workload Reduction Practices

Actions to improve Wellbeing and Workload Reduction
Teaching and Learning, planning and curriculum ★ "Improve and replace" principle for new initiatives ★ Key dates and leadership expectations eg monitoring cycles, assessment cycles, assemblies etc communicated on Staff Handbook at start of term,

- ★ Weekly timetable circulated week in advance, alongside key dates 2-3 weeks in advance.
- ★ 3hrs PPA for FT CT - ½ hour more than statutory
- ★ Joint PPA for all year groups
- ★ Music specialist
- ★ PE specialist for some classes
- ★ PE Sports Leader
- ★ French specialist
- ★ Planning rationalised - Progression Grids, MTPs set up - only adaptation needed.
- ★ DIrected time adhered to and meetings allocated within allowance
- ★ Daily planning in form of slides with teaching notes on front slide - bullet points
- ★ Monitoring cycle - manageable expectations for CTs
- ★ Quality schemes of work that specify the sequence of key knowledge, deliberate practice to develop skills, a clear progression model introduced for Computing, PE, Art, DT, RE and Geography.
- ★ ED Shed and TTS have been subscribed which do not need to be marked
- ★ Bulk copying and preparation delegated to office or TA where possible
- ★ No pointless requesting or completing of lesson plans.
- ★ Displays only need to be changed once a term, not once a half-term
- ★ Working walls in classrooms rather than published best piece
- ★ No 'all/most/some' learning objectives or creation of different worksheets for different abilities.

Assessment, Feedback and Reporting to parents

- ★ Three data collection points not one per half-term
- ★ Directed time given for Report Writing, Transition Handovers, IESP Meetings, Moderation
- ★ Tracking progress meetings require no paperwork from CTs
- ★ Tracking Progress meetings given outside of PPA
- ★ Assessment by exception.
- ★ Feedback and Marking policy is principle rather than procedure driven
- ★ Verbal feedback encouraged as best practice
- ★ Light touch marking is encouraged
- ★ Staff not expected to attend Share My Learning
- ★ Refining of End of Year Report - significantly reduced over the last few years
- ★ Parents need to book to see teacher through the office
- ★ Emails from parents to teachers sent to the office are forwarded to SLT to triage

Relationships and Behaviour

- ★ No complicated reward system or behaviour system - teachers can run their own whole class rewards
- ★ Streamlined approach to maintaining relationships with children and presentation of behaviours - consistency expected so that all staff and children know the routine.
- ★ Script and training provided for behaviour redirection
- ★ SLT run lunch duties and UPS teachers no longer asked to
- ★ Assemblies reinforce behaviours and values
- ★ Professional Detachment Training

Professional Development

- ★ Appraisal cycle no paperwork - completed in meeting.
- ★ Observations or "pop-ins"are only a part of monitoring and appraisal cycle. No paperwork expected.
- ★ There is no pressure to 'put on a show' in lessons: a culture of typicality is reinforced by no lesson gradings.
- ★ The number of lesson observations per year has been reduced.
- ★ Opportunities for Solution Circles for Phase/Year Teams
- ★ Peer to peer support models - lesson study

Other

- ★ Member of SLT responsible for staff workload and wellbeing.
- ★ Employee Assistance Programme.
- ★ Wellbeing Working Party
- ★ Regular wellbeing coffee mornings - fresh coffee and pastries served by SLT.
- ★ Staff BBQs and end of term celebrations
- ★ External mental health trained SLT
- ★ Mentoring for individual members of staff
- ★ Supervision offered to all from SLT or from EWP/Mental Health
- ★ Flexible paid parent leave for own children's appointments or school events
- ★ Attendance at funerals and graduations is always agreed to.
- ★ We use management information systems to ensure that teachers are not required to collect money or reply slips.
- ★ Food is provided at parents' evenings
- ★ Flu jabs are offered yearly
- ★ Staff are trusted to leave school when they wish to - no culture of having to stay late to be seen or getting in early to be seen
- ★ Flowers to very ill staff.
- ★ Staff break duties are scheduled so that they don't run into PPA
- ★ There is no expectation for staff to answer out of hours emails (before 7am and after 6:30pm)

Appendix B

Graduated Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

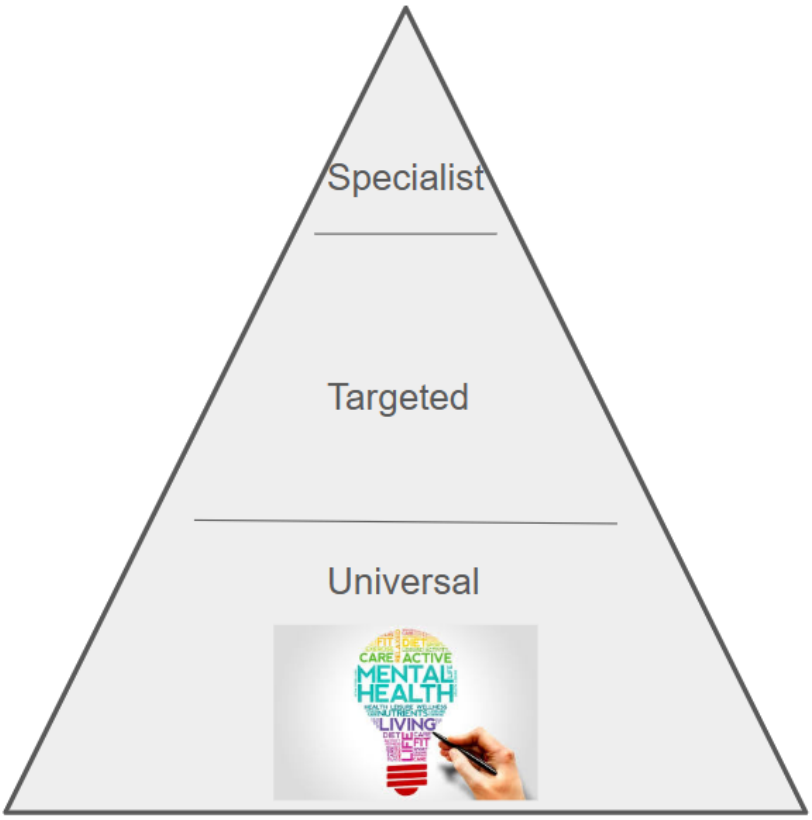
The examples below are indicative of the type of support Wimbledon Chase can offer - it is not limited to this.

Anna Freud

Specialist Support
Employee Assistance Programmes
Crisis Support
Referrals to Occupational Support
Risk Assessments
Education Support Partnership

Targeted Support
Supervision
Training around Mental Health
Wellbeing Events
Risk Assessments for Individuals

Universal Support
Culture of no stigma around Mental Health
Staff Wellbeing Policy
Workload Reduction Measures
Dedicated staffroom
Open door policy for any concerns
Wellbeing Team
Staff training on Mental Health



Appendix B **Support Organisations**

Merton Mind Local mental health charity offering counselling and wellbeing support for adults and young people. Tel: 020 3759 5400 Email: info@mertonmind.org.uk

Off The Record - Merton Free counselling service for young people aged 11-25 in Merton. Tel: 020 8680 8899 Email: merton@talkofftherecord.org

South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust Provides comprehensive mental health services for Merton residents. Tel: 020 3513 5000 Email: communications@swlstg.nhs.uk

Wimbledon Guild Offers counselling, bereavement support, and wellbeing services for Merton residents. Tel: 020 8946 0735 Email: info@wimbledonguild.co.uk

One You Merton Health and wellbeing service offering lifestyle support and mental health guidance. Tel: 020 8973 3545 Email: oneyou.merton@nhs.net

Victim Support Merton Supports victims of crime including domestic abuse. Tel: 0808 168 9291 Email: londonsouthmerton@victimsupport.org.uk

MOAT Housing Mental Health Support Provides housing-related support for those with mental health needs. Tel: 0300 323 0011 Email: customer@moat.co.uk

Merton Adult Education Offers wellbeing courses and workshops for staff development. Tel: 020 8274 5222 Email: adult.education@merton.gov.uk

Women's Aid Merton Specialist domestic abuse support service for women and children. Tel: 020 7047 9601 Email: info@mertonwomensaid.org.uk

Merton Uplift NHS talking therapies service providing free psychological support. Tel: 020 3513 5888 Email: mertonuplift@nhs.net

Jigsaw4u Support for bereaved children and young people in Merton. Tel: 020 8687 1384 Email: info@jigsaw4u.org.uk

MAPS (Merton Autism and ADHD Support) Specialist support for families affected by autism and ADHD. Tel: 020 8288 0125 Email: admin@mertonmaps.org.uk

Age UK Merton Provides support and counselling services for older adults. Tel: 020 8648 5792 Email: info@ageukmerton.org.uk

Merton Mencap Supports people with learning disabilities and their families. Tel: 020 3963 0595 Email: info@mertonmencap.org.uk

Faith in Action Merton Provides practical and emotional support to homeless and vulnerable people. Tel: 020 8274 1090 Email: admin@faithinaction.org.uk

Appendix D
Crisis Support and Immediate Access

Recognising Crisis
We acknowledge that staff members may experience periods of crisis that require immediate support. Signs may include:

- Feeling unable to cope with daily tasks
- Experiencing severe emotional distress
- Having thoughts of self-harm
- Feeling isolated or overwhelmed
- Unable to continue working safely

Immediate Support Access
During working hours:

- Direct access to Mental Health First Aiders: All members of SLT
- Release from classroom duties (cover will be arranged)
- Wellbeing Lead: Nikki Adamson
- Inclusion Lead: Charlotte Stewart

Outside working hours:

- 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme: 0800 028 0199
- NHS Crisis Line: 111
- Samaritans: 116 123
- Education Support Partnership: 08000 562 561

Crisis Response Protocol

1. Immediate contact with designated first responder
2. Confidential assessment of needs in partnership with Occupational Health if appropriate
3. Appropriate support arranged
4. Follow-up plan established
5. Return to work support planned when appropriate

External Crisis Support

- Education Support Partnership: 08000 562 561
- Samaritans: 116 123
- NHS Crisis Line: 111
- Merton Mental Health Crisis Team: 0800 028 8000
- Local A&E: St George's Hospital, Tooting or St Helier, Sutton

Online Support Resources

- Wimbledon Chase Staff Wellbeing Portal: chase21
- Education Support Partnership website
- Mind.org.uk
- NHS Every Mind Matters