



THE SOCIETAS TRUST

Primary Academy

## Staff Wellbeing Policy

Date of Policy	2025
Reviewed and Agreed by	The Directors' Board
Review Date	2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2025
Next Review Date	Spring 2026

## Statement of Intent

The Societas Trust (“the Trust”) is committed to protecting the health, safety and emotional wellbeing of all stakeholders and endeavours to provide a safe and healthy environment. The Trust adopts a whole systems approach to wellbeing, implementing strategies that support wellbeing and inclusion, teaching and learning practices that promote resilience. It recognises that in supporting the mental health of the pupils and family communities it is essential to provide mental health training and support for the staff employed by the Trust. This in turn will improve the learning and outcomes for the pupils.

Preventing stress is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of all staff employed by the Trust and is a key priority in the training and development and various initiatives to promote resilience and deliver a culture of staff wellbeing.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the Trust and staff members at each setting in supporting wellbeing and promoting good mental health and offers some advice to employees on how to deal with mental health issues and prevent stress.

## Objectives

*The Trust aims to:*

- a. Promote Wellbeing as integral to all Trust activities*
- b. Consider both the physical and mental wellbeing of staff*
- c. Provide information and interventions where staff are better able to cope with Stress*
- d. Provide a safe healthy environment*
- e. Encourage a healthy lifestyle*
- f. Support those with disabilities and health conditions to remain at work*
- g. Ensures the ethos reflects the commitment of considering wellbeing through the management of workload*
- h. Foster positive employee morale and happy motivated staff*
- i. Provide opportunities for staff to engage in activities and initiatives that support mental health and wellbeing*
- j. Create an environment where staff feel listened to and valued*
- k. Tackle the causes of work-related mental health problems*
- l. Develop skills and encourage CPD to enhance staff job satisfaction*

## The Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Employment Relations Act 1999
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- DfE (2018) Workload reduction toolkit

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- GDPR Data Protection
- Supporting Staff Attendance
- Staff Discipline Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

## Roles and Responsibilities

### **The Trust is responsible for:**

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy
- Ensuring staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and monitored
- Ensuring that all school policies are considered for workload impact
- Ensuring the Trust wide ethos reflects its commitment to reducing workload and creating a working environment that is focused, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing
- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the school, promoting stress as a serious issue to be tackled rather than a weakness.
- Informing Governors and Headteachers of any relevant decisions that have been made on managing staff stress and promoting wellbeing
- Putting measures in place to support Headteachers' wellbeing
- Ensuring that Headteachers put measures in place to support staff wellbeing
- Actively trying to eliminate stressors in school e.g. by considering the format and quantity of information it requests from the Senior Leadership Team and other staff

- Ensuring Trust Monitoring visits are strategic, focused and reflective of the monitoring plan, and being clear with staff ahead of any visit about the focus of the visit and information required
- Establish a Wellbeing Steering Group and Working Party to address mental health issues (See the Inclusion and Wellbeing Steering Group Terms of Reference)
- Recognising mental health issues and appointing a Mental Health and Wellbeing Governor who will oversee managing and supporting staff mental health in liaison with the Wellbeing Representative from the Wellbeing Group.

#### **The Mental Health and Wellbeing Governor is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that the Trust Wellbeing objectives are cascaded within each setting
- Ensuring that the school's strategic plan includes objectives linked to improving, supporting and responding to the mental health of staff
- Ensuring a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing is embedded within leadership practice, the curriculum, the school's values and ethos and the social and physical environment
- Ensuring that there are "mental health and wellbeing representatives" within school, who have access or are part of the Trust Wellbeing Group
- Ensure that there are effective links with local mental health support in liaison with the above group
- Work with the headteacher to ensure that there is adequate training in place to support staff wellbeing
- To ensure that a Stress Risk Assessment (Appendix 3) is undertaken when appropriate, evaluated and any recommendations actioned - these should be used when an employee flags up that they are experiencing work related stress and are intended to be a tool that identifies what triggers the stress and help establish what the individual can do to manage the stress.

#### **The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- Creating a positive and supportive atmosphere in school
- Implementing CPD opportunities which equip staff with the tools needed to effectively manage stress
- Working with cross Trust groups to promote wellbeing and implement initiatives and encouraging staff to take part
- Developing a sensitive Performance Management process that is linked to clear job specifications
- Including relevant staff in the school's decision making process

- Organising extra support for staff at times of increased pressure where possible
- Ensuring that all policies that effect staff are adhered to and viewed
- Monitoring workload and supporting staff attendance in line with Trust policy
- Ensure that attempts for regular contact with staff who are absent for long periods of time takes place (delete if this is not usually the Headteacher)
- Ensuring staff take breaks, rest and annual leave in accordance with policy and legislative requirements
- Ensuring that Wellbeing Representatives (Including the Head Teacher if in this role) attend all necessary training on wellbeing to keep skills current
- Regularly communicating with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress
- Ensuring information about Stress and Wellbeing are incorporated into the Induction Policy
- Address issues before they escalate by implementing intervention measures.

**The Academy Business Manager / Deputy Headteacher / Other Role is responsible for:**

- Encouraging staff to attend training events that promote health and wellbeing
- Ensuring appropriate communication mediums are available to provide information
- Ensure that attempts for regular contact with staff who are absent for long periods of time takes place (delete if the Headteacher usually does this)
- Ensuring new members of staff have received the information including raising concerns about wellbeing
- Gathering data such as, sickness and absence data, staff turnover, referrals to Occupational Health and Counselling Service, grievance and harassment cases.

**Self-Management – Staff will:**

- Manage their own health and wellbeing to enable them to fully participate in work, this may be by:
  - Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity, clearing thoughts, being able to deal with issues more calmly

- Manage their workload by establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life
- Prioritise work where possible, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day, concentrating on tasks which produce the greatest impact
- Take advantage of the wellbeing initiatives and support offered by the Academy/Trust.
- Be able to recognise the early signs of stress or mental health issues in themselves and their colleagues
- Engage with management and colleagues to work together
- Collaborate and share ideas
- Promote a positive supportive atmosphere throughout school
- Be open to discuss stress
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and any incidents of stress, asking for help when they feel under pressure
- Take breaks, rest and annual leave in accordance with policy and legislative requirements
- Attend training opportunities or programmes which promote wellbeing and health.

### The Trust Wellbeing Group

The Trust has established a Wellbeing Group comprising membership from all the settings in the Trust, whose remit includes responsibility for the review of staff wellbeing and the oversight of various initiatives.

This includes the ongoing development of staff questionnaires and surveys and to ensure that regular audits of staff wellbeing are completed and evaluated, from which action plans and interventions are implemented to address highlighted needs. This will form part of a surveillance programme of staff health and wellbeing incorporating evaluation of general Stress Risk Assessments.

The Wellbeing Group share best practice and resources and have produced training material tailored to each academy and gathered a variety of information which is detailed in the Inset training, Induction and the delivery of an ongoing Wellbeing Programme to all Staff.

### Identifying Stress

The Trust has a legal requirement to actively respond when an employee displays symptoms of work-related stress in order to maintain a healthy workplace.

The Trust/Academy recognises that home and personal lives can also prove stressful for staff, e.g. bereavement, separation, financial and family problems can make people more vulnerable to stress at work. Training interventions will

help the member of staff with action plans to understand and manage the relationship with home and work stress.

It is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues stress.

In brief, these can be identified as follows although a more comprehensive analysis is provided within the wellbeing training programme:

### **Behavioural indicators**

- Difficulty Sleeping
- Changes in eating habits
- Increased smoking or drinking
- Isolation from friends or family

### **Physical indicators**

- Tiredness
- Indigestion and nausea
- Headaches
- Aching Muscles
- Heart Palpitations

### **Mental indicators**

- Indecisiveness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory loss
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Low self esteem

### **Emotional indicators**

- Anger or irritability
- Anxiety
- Hypersensitivity
- Feeling drained and lethargic

## **Support Information and Initiatives Provided by the Trust**

### **Policies and Communication:**

- Health and Safety Policy
- Recruitment and selection procedures to ensure the right candidates are appointed and given suitable training to embed them into the role
- CPD to ensure staff have the skills to support their career path relevant to their role

- Performance management
- Supporting Attendance
- Flexible Working arrangements
- Code of Conduct
- Stress Risk Assessments and Wellbeing Audits
- Wellbeing Meetings with Staff either by Wellbeing Representative in school or headteacher (Staff MOT)
- Make the most of team bonding; using INSET days to build relationships, as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier.

#### Possible Management Interventions:

- Ensure that staff have a fair and reasonable workload, including policies on marking and planning
- Regularly monitoring working practices
- To reach out to staff during difficult points in their personal lives (e.g. bereavement, allowing sufficient time off and supporting them when they return to work)
- Arrange a meeting with all relevant members of staff in which the current working times, deadlines and practices will be discussed in addition to the performance management meetings
- Engage with staff by commissioning Staff Surveys in liaison with the Inclusion and Wellbeing Group and Wellbeing Group on a bi-annually – review and act on results producing a list of outcomes
- Review areas of work which have a negative effect on staff wellbeing.
- Be clear that there is no expectation for staff to access emails or work during evenings or weekends
- Ensure staff have regular breaks
- Act on results, by possibly producing an impact assessment matrix to highlight issues and discussing solutions across the wider trust
- Appointment and involvement of wellbeing governor at each academy
- All new members of staff will be provided with comprehensive induction and duties made clear
- Managers will promote a positive, caring strategy for staff who are returning to work following sick leave

#### Services and Advice:

- Employee Counselling
- Investigate other Employee Assistance Programmes
- Occupational Health Referral
- Eye Tests
- Mental Health Referrals



- Trade Union Membership
- Signposting

Other: (This will need updating with any initiatives not mentioned)

- Weight Management
- Menopause support / illness
- Mentoring – buddy-buddy system
- Guardian Angel System
- Sensory/Reflection Rooms
- Lunchtime/after school workouts
- Health Improvement Activities - Meditation, Yoga, Mindfulness
- Access to Training Courses, Workshops, lunchtime sessions
  - Health and Wellbeing –Coping Strategies
  - Stress Management –Stress Awareness Sessions
  - Resilience Training

#### Promotion of a Wellbeing Culture

- Trust Meetings – Staff Wellbeing to be on the Agenda of each meeting
- Staff Meetings – Staff Wellbeing to be on the Agenda of each meeting
- Staff Wellbeing Folder on Dropbox to share tips and best practice
- Open door policy
- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a full life outside of work.
- Encourage exercise
- Notice board staff room
- Wellbeing Activities
- Health and wellbeing newsletter
- Website

#### Response Actions

If any member of staff wishes to raise a concern about wellbeing, one of the staff members listed below will be notified.

The following members of staff will be designated as Mental Health and Wellbeing Representatives:

Your Mental Health and Wellbeing Representative(s) in school is/are:

- Name of Staff Member
- Name of staff member

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Representative will provide the member of staff with information about the support that is available to them; this includes

both within the school and outside resources. (See Induction Pack for List of Resources)

In some cases, such as those that directly impact day-to-day activities, confidentiality will not be guaranteed. If this is the case, then staff will be made aware of the situation.

- Where problems with wellbeing arise, the necessary support and appropriate actions will be considered. This may include assistance from HR or Occupational Health.
- The Trust/academy will continue to support staff when external services are involved.
- Where possible support will be provided to staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances outside of the workplace. The Academy will direct staff to support, both internal and external, and consider a plan of work and duties that can be managed differently during challenging periods.
- Support for staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances within the school will be provided following the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.

### **Evaluation of Wellbeing**

#### **Measurement of effectiveness**

- Sickness absence
- Levels of work-related stress
- Support Service Referrals
- Responses to Surveys
- Results of Risk Assessments

### **Monitoring and Review**

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Trust Policy Register Review by the Compliance and Training Manager in consultation with the CEO, DPO, Executive Board and Academy Business Managers. In addition, changes to legislation, national guidance, codes of practice or commissioner advice may trigger interim reviews. Any such changes will be approved accordingly and communicated to all Trade Unions and staff.

## **Appendix 1 – Useful Resources and Links**

### **Definition of Mental Health and Wellbeing**

“A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their potential, are able to cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and gaining satisfaction in making a contribution to their community.”

### **What Constitutes Wellbeing at work?**

- a. To feel recognised and valued
- b. Be listened to
- c. Feeling motivated
- d. Positive attitude
- e. Feeling innovative and proactive
- f. Feeling safe and secure at work
- g. Feeling that they can grow and have a career path
- h. Positive self-esteem and confidence
- i. Group belonging and being accepted and supported
- j. Job satisfaction

### **A good indication of the quality of our mental health can be shown by:**

- How we feel, think, and behave
- How we cope with the ups and downs of everyday life
- How we feel about ourselves and our life
- How we see ourselves and our future
- How we deal with negative things that happen in our life
- A high level of self-esteem and/or confidence

### **Individuals with good mental wellbeing are therefore able to:**

- Feel relatively confident in themselves and have positive self-esteem
- Feel and express a range of emotions
- Build and maintain good relationships with others
- Feel engaged with the world around them
- Live and work productively
- Cope with the stresses of daily life
- Adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty

### **Dimensions of Wellbeing**

- emotional
- financial
- social
- spiritual

- occupational
- physical
- intellectual
- environmental

**Things that affect an individual's mental health can include:**

- Genes and personality- some individuals are more likely to develop certain kind of mental health problems.
- Upbringing/socialisation - brings out personality traits and ways of thinking.
- Life circumstances - situations, events and changes that happen to us throughout our life, like illness, relationships, money worries and financial wellbeing, work and employment issues.
- Lifestyle choices - such as diet and exercise.
- Support - how individuals cope can also be affected by how well other parts of life are going and how well supported they feel.

**If an individual is experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviours can be an early warning sign of a problem:**

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your children or getting to work or school

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression)

Please follow the links below for training materials for mental health and wellbeing support:

[Every Mind Matters e-book](#)

[How to look after your mental health booklet](#)

[Mental Health Quiz](#)

[Mental Health Quiz ANSWERS](#)

[Self Care](#)

[Stress Container Activity Instructions](#)

[Mental Health Staff Support Poster](#)

[Occupational Health leaflet](#)

HSE management standards:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>

## **Appendix 2 - Menopause**

All women will experience the menopause at some point during their life. The menopause can also impact trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female.

Most of those who experience the menopause will do so between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some start experiencing symptoms much earlier. Often, symptoms last between four to eight years, but they can continue for longer.

Symptoms can include, but are not limited to, sleeplessness, hot flushes, memory loss or poor concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pains, depression and anxiety.

### **Open Conversations**

We encourage an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about the menopause. We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by the menopause in the workplace.

Anyone affected by the menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager or headteacher about their symptoms and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause them at work.

Such conversations should be treated sensitively and any information provided should be handled confidentially and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

### **Risk Assessment**

We will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those going through the menopause.

### **Support and Adjustments**

While many who go through the menopause will be able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms on their work.

If colleagues believe that they would benefit from adjustments or other support, they should speak to their line manager or Headteacher in the first instance.

Physical adjustments could include temperature control, provisions of electric fans or access to rest facilities. Depending on individual and school needs, adjustments such as flexible working, more frequent rest breaks or changes to work allocation may also be considered. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

We may refer you to Occupational Health to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting colleagues at work.

If colleagues need additional support, they also have access to our confidential employee assistance programme via the SAS app.

### Appendix 3 – Resources at the Setting

Refer to the library of resources available at the setting.

### Appendix 3 – Example Stress Work Assessment:

<b>EMPLOYEE:</b> <b>GROUP/SECTION/ACADEMY:</b> <b>ACTIVITY AND WORKPLACE: Stress Risk Assessment</b>			<b>NAME(S) OF ASSESSOR(S):</b>  <b>DATE OF ASSESSMENT:</b>			<b>LINE MANAGER'S NAME:</b>  <b>SIGNATURE: .....</b>	
No.	Potential Hazards	Who is affected?	A x B		C	Control Measures to Eliminate / Minimise the Risk	Further Action Required?
			Hazard Rating	Like- lihood	(AxB) Risk		
1.	<b>Role overload</b> , e.g. excessive workload, lack of training/support, lack of flexibility/control, unsociable hours, shift work, taking work home, unable to take holidays, unable to take lunch/breaks, cover for colleagues in addition to own work	Employees, volunteers, agency staff, management, service users				Jobs are well designed. Adequate resources are provided. Suitable employees with the correct skills for the job are employed. Induction is given, along with relevant information, instruction and supervision. Appropriate training needs are identified and given early on in the job. Employees understand the role and responsibilities of the job. Managers monitor workload. Employee discusses at regular intervals with manager workload before it becomes excessive.	
2.	<b>Role ambiguity</b> , e.g. – unspoken expectations, poor communication about the role, lack of information/rumours about changes taking place, changing work commitments/priorities	Employees, volunteers, agency staff, management, service users				Roles, with boundaries, are defined and agreed with the employee. Managers monitor workload and hold regular "one-to-one" meetings. Rumours are openly discussed by management and employees and clear information is provided. Managers agree work commitments and reprioritise with employees where necessary. Employees raise concerns before problems escalate.	



3.	<b>Poor management</b> , e.g. lack of policies, designing job description(s)/person specifications that are unmanageable/unachievable, poor communication, unrealistic demands, making assumptions about an employee and blaming the individual without checking facts	Employees, volunteers, agency staff, management, service users				Stress/Workplace Violence/Lone Working/Harassment & Bullying Policies in place. New and existing managers receive appropriate management training, experience and mentoring support. Relevant stress risk assessments are written. Job descriptions and person specifications are manageable/achievable. Council has a clear policy about harassment and bullying and acts swiftly to deal with these issues. Management fully investigate assumptions/claims before taking action.	For example, consult your H&S or HR Adviser where appropriate for further advice.
4.	<b>Verbal and physical abuse</b>	Employees, volunteers, agency staff, management, service users				Policy in place, distributed and communicated to those who deal with verbal abuse and physical assault. Managers carry out specific risk assessments for tasks and/or service users. Reporting systems in place to management & appropriate Health & Safety Adviser. Staff at risk identified and given appropriate training. Restraint policies in place. Post-incident support in place.	For example, possible modifications to physical working environment, e.g. more secure reception areas, calming décor.  Good communication systems, e.g. workplace violence poster, lone working and cash handling procedures.  Investigate access links with police, counselling, reviewing risk assessments and training issues etc.

5.	<b>Harassment &amp; bullying</b> , e.g. senior management failing to deal with this immediately, constant criticism, undermining, overruled/ignored/sidelined/ marginalised/ostracised, target of offensive language/jokes, target of unwanted sexual behaviour, threatened/shouted at, trivial fault-finding, subject to excessive monitoring,	Employees, volunteers, agency staff, management, service users				References for new employees are sought. Managers are made aware of the Harassment & Bullying Policy by HR. Staff are encouraged to keep records of incidents and report any concerns. Staff, if possible, inform the harasser that their behaviour is unacceptable.	
6.	<b>Environment</b> , equipment & facilities, e.g. noise, heat, temperature, humidity, lighting, canteen, toilets, unsafe machinery	Employees, volunteers, agency staff, management, service users				All noise, heat, temperature, humidity problems are resolved at source as quickly as possible. Adequate space is provided for working and storage of resources. Lighting is effective and appropriate to the work being carried out. All machinery is purchased with safety in mind and regularly maintained. Any faults are rectified immediately. DSE assessments are undertaken, where appropriate; flickering and glare issues are addressed.	
7.	<b>Responsibilities, demands</b> , lack of control/flexibility over job	Employees, volunteers, agency staff, management, service users				Roles and responsibilities are in keeping with the job.	

8.	<b>Personal problems</b> , e.g. bereavement, relationship breakdowns, illness/fatigue/depression, alcohol, drugs	Employees, volunteers, agency staff, management, service users				Employees where appropriate keep management or another relevant person informed of circumstances. Policies are in place to support staff where possible and management does have a degree of flexibility when supporting staff. Timely referrals are made to Occupational Health and/or Counselling as soon as possible. A stress risk assessment is carried out by the line manager and regular reviews, including workload, are held to assess the way forward.	
9.	<b>Change</b> , e.g. restructuring, redundancies, new projects, new management					The organisation provides employees with timely information to help them understand the reasons for proposed change. Adequate consultation takes place. Employees are aware of the probable changes to their jobs. Training to support any changes is given. Employees are aware of the timetable for change. Employees are given relevant support.	