St Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School
Headteacher: Mrs S Pearson
Assistant Headteachers: Mrs R Turvey & Miss E Cave

Staff Wellbeing Strategy

November 2026

St Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School
Headteacher: Miss S Robinson
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs S Pearson

Statement of Intent and Rationale

Our Vision and Aims

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you." (Joshua 1:9)

In our family, we have the courage to embody Jesus' love for us. We put others' needs above our own. We act with integrity and respect. And when others fall short of our expectations, we support them to atone and extend our forgiveness. In doing this, we prepare children to live life in all its fullness: its joys and celebrations, its sorrows and struggles.

Jesus embodies the love and compassion of God for each person, and Christians are called to follow him in this, and to join with others in demonstrating it. He paid special attention to the disadvantaged and excluded. The worth of each child compels us to strive to fulfil all children's God-given potential, with special consideration given to those who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Therefore, through this policy, we aim to facilitate a workplace where all employees feel valued and loved, so that when difficulties arise, they are empowered to move through these, and take courage from the support of their colleagues and the practices and ethos of the school.

Core Policy Values:

<u>Love</u>

Jesus embodies the love and compassion of God for each person, and Christians are called to follow him in this. In our family, love impels us to:

- put others' needs above our own;
- act with humility and without entitlement;
- support those experiencing suffering and sadness – in our community and beyond.

"Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Corinthians 16:14)

<u>Respect</u>

We seek to model to children an ethos of living well together. The flourishing of pupils goes hand in hand with the flourishing of the wider school community: staff, families, governors and friends of the school. Just as Jesus respected people by taking the time to care for them, we endeavour to:

- take time to understand the significant theological concepts within Christianity, and celebrate the Christian faith;
- foster deep respect for other cultures, faiths and traditions;
- think critically about our beliefs and actions;
- provide an inclusive environment where special provision is afforded to those with disabilities or special educational needs; and
- challenge inequality.

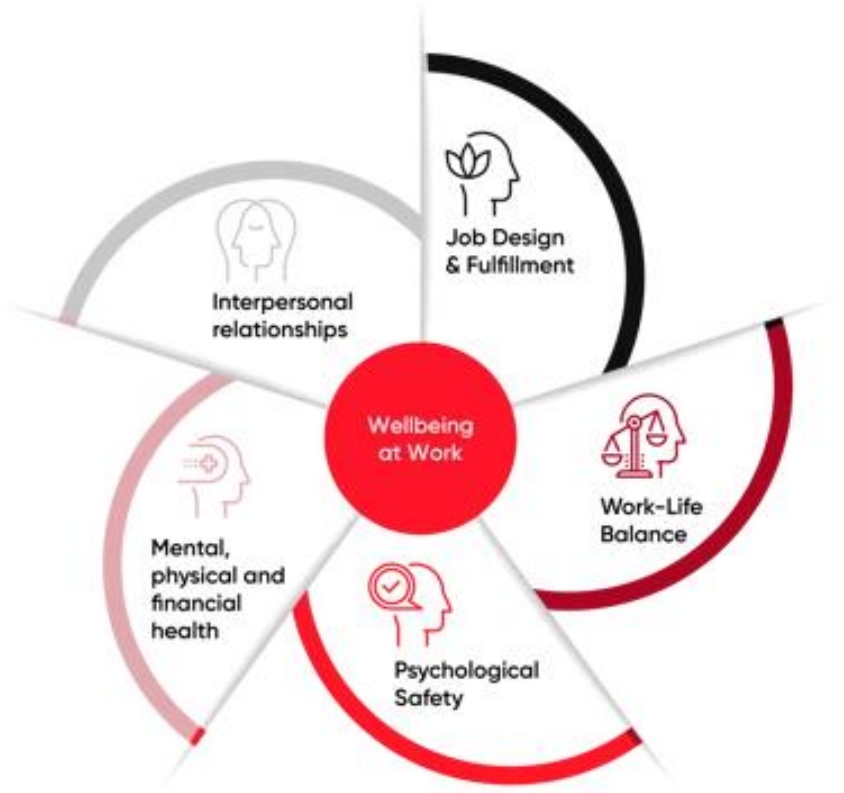
"Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them." (Matthew 7:12)

A Culture of Wellbeing

Employee wellbeing is a term often conflated with 'wellness', for example, all the material 'niceties' that employers offer to make it easier for employees to nurture their physical, mental and (increasingly often) financial health. Whilst yoga classes, mindfulness app subscriptions, fresh fruit in the office and subsidised memberships can be generous and valuable practices, as a Christian organisation we recognise that material offerings are far removed from the core of workplace wellbeing.

We believe that wellbeing is a complex concept, encompassing all the physical, psychological, social and financial aspects of working life. Together, and if done right, these allow people to perform to their fullest potential, thriving inside and outside the workplace. At St Mary Magdalene CE Primary, we endeavour to embody five key pillars of employee wellbeing. The remainder of this policy seeks to exemplify the action we take to embody and uphold these principles.

Figure 1: The 5 Pillars of Employee Wellbeing



Principle 1: Job Design and Fulfilment

This principle considers important individual role-related variables rather than focusing on the wider workplace culture, for example how are employees' job roles structured, and how do people feel about them? This includes the extent to which employees experience fulfilment from their jobs, how fairly they feel compensated for it, and whether they're able to comfortably cope with their job demands.

Leaders consider staff workload in all decision-making. Education, especially teaching, carries with it a high workload because of the nature of the role. However, leaders in the school have taken action to reduce this as far as is possible by:

Reducing Workload		
Planning • The curriculum is sequentially planned across subjects and year groups. It is clear to staff what should be taught and when. • Wider curriculum planning to be is supported by subject leads and can be used year on year.	**Line Manager Support** • Six-weekly 1:1 line management meeting where goals, training and support are discussed/offered. • Open door approach so staff are aware that they can speak to line managers at any time.	**Targeted Support** • Stress risk assessments written for staff experiencing stress. • Targeted support plans for staff who are struggling.
Marking Policy • No requirement for teachers to provide extensive written comments on every piece of work. • Whole class feedback for English, and in wider curriculum subjects. • Coding system in Maths. • Focus on live marking where possible	**Display Policy** • Minimal displays are required – instead frames are used to reduce time burden.	**Remuneration for additional responsibilities** • Additional payments awarded to staff for taking on leadership responsibilities beyond their pay grade.
Assessment Data • Minimal data entries. • Summative data for RWM only collected three times per year. • Once per unit data for wider curriculum subjects	**Policy Changes** • SLT decisions always consider impact of any changes on staff workload.	**Parental Communication** • Parents/carers do not have access to staff personal emails or via communication apps: queries are routed through the office.

An important part of job design, is providing opportunities for progression and professional development. Therefore, leaders provide the following:

Progression and Professional Development		
Early Career Teachers • Member of leadership team responsible for overseeing support and provision for students and ECTs • Dedicated mentor for each ECT • Additional non-contact time • Weekly meetings to facilitate instructional coaching/offer support. • Time and cover to attend ECT forums/training	**New Staff** • Comprehensive induction process for new staff • Meetings facilitated with all leaders. • Time allocated as part of directed time to complete induction.	**National Accreditation** Access to external, national programmes, fully funded by the school, with time and cover provided for face-to-face days, e.g.: • NASENCO • NPQs • Masters Modules
Deliberate Professional Empowerment • Each staff members' DPE is planned and tailored specifically to career stage, and individual goals.	**Leadership** • We develop leadership positions at all levels: internal opportunities offered to support career progression i.e.,	**Flexible, Online Training** • Access to National College for all staff to access training on a wide range of educational programmes, issues,

• Career stage DPE is delivered as part of directed time.	leadership opportunities, initial teacher training.	focussed as part of TIPs/career DPE
Specialist Programmes • Behaviour management programme • Subject leadership development programme • English Network Meetings • EYFS Network Meetings • Cornerstones of Headship	**Latest Research** • Leaders ensure that the latest research is used to shape DPE programmes. • The school invest in up to date, recommended educational & leadership development books for staff to access.	**Performance Management** • Targets are tailored to individual needs and development through TIPs set twice per half term. • Overarching targets set in a culture of 'everyone getting better' - and are NOT data driven. • Regular meetings with line manager so that staff are aware of their progress and next steps.

Principle 2: Work-Life Balance

Work-Life Balance, although often an outcome of other job and culture variables, is closely associated with the experience of employee wellbeing. As a person-facing organisation, hybrid and remote working is rarely possible, however leaders do provide opportunities for this wherever possible, for example through:

- teacher PPA time can be taken at home and used flexibly to suit circumstances and needs;
- 1x Parents' Evening per term;
- wherever possible, staff are supported in their requests for reduced/part time working;
- flexible arrangements/compassionate leave given to support staff facing difficult circumstances;
- flexible arrangements for staff caring for family members;
- weekly or bi-weekly management time provided for those with additional responsibilities;
- weekly additional PPA time for Early Career Teachers;
- subject leaders can request additional time once per half term;
- staff are routinely only required to attend a whole staff meeting once every three weeks: this time is devoted to teaching and learning;
- there is no expectation for staff to answer emails outside school hours;
- return to work meetings following absences longer than 3 days – support offered/discussed;
- phased return to work for staff after long term absences;
- referrals to occupational health;
- paid KIT time offered to staff on MAT leave.

Principle 3: Psychological Safety

Psychological Safety is all about how employees assess the quality of the psychosocial work environment, i.e. the intangible things you can't see. This includes the extent to which people feel free to speak up, challenge norms and decisions, show vulnerability and express their authentic selves. Psychological safety is a fundamental foundation closely intertwined with trust that provides the basis for a culture of wellbeing.

Leaders at St Mary Magdalene CE Primary recognise the SCARF Framework and actively look for ways to replenish the five aspects: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness and fairness.

St Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School
Headteacher: Miss S Robinson
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs S Pearson

The SCARF model



This memorable framework from Dr. David Rock helps communicators recall the five key domains of psychological safety. When these pillars may be threatened, we should anticipate an instinctively avoidant response – and look for ways to soften the impact.

	Threatened by...	Replenished by...
Status	Embarrassment, feeling singled out, pointed or surprising feedback, competence being questioned	Mutual respect, separating the work from the person, public acknowledgement, job security
Certainty	Constantly shifting plans, unseen forces at work, unclear goals, major 'known unknowns', fuzzy strategy	Clear strategies, timelines and deliverables, steady expectations, sense of the bigger picture
Autonomy	Micromanaging, process over outcome, 'only one right way to do it', questions & challenge unwelcome	Empowered teams, collaborative decision-making, flexibility in acceptable approaches, playing to unique strengths
Relatedness	Impersonal demands, faceless bureaucracy, 'computer says no', disconnected leadership	Genuine human connections, putting a face to the ask, doing things for and with others, team culture
Fairness	Arbitary application of standards, capricious rule changes, reneging on agreement, unjust rewards	Rules that make sense, giving and taking, transparency, and consistent treatment for everyone

BiteSize Learning

Examples of how this is lived out at St Mary Magdalene CE Primary are :

STATUS

Culture of Recognition: weekly thank you cards from SLT recognising staff contributions and termly MAT nominations for Above and Beyond' Award.

CERTAINTY

Culture of Organisation

Staff kept informed through emails & a shared staff calendar with overview of academy key dates i.e., parents evening, data collection, DPE, INSET.

AUTONOMY

Consultation

Regular staff voice

Staff consulted on school development plan.

RELATEDNESS

Culture of Love

Staff should expect to give and recieve support form others linked to the school value of 'love'.

FAIRNESS

Quality Assurance

No extended lesson observations (except for ECTs/students, as required by DFE/University)

No lesson gradings

Feedback is focussed on development, support to improve is always signposted/offered.

Principle 4: Mental, Physical and Financial Health

Mental, Physical and Financial Health captures the 'wellness' piece of the wider wellbeing puzzle, i.e. the initiatives and offerings in place encouraging self-care behaviours and a wider culture of awareness. Leaders recognise that, these efforts aren't simply isolated perks, but rather integrated into the wider fabric and culture of the school. At St Mary Magdalene, the following programmes and support are offered:

Wellbeing		
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) • External 24-hour helpline (also for immediate family members) for advice on finance, family, legal matters, bereavement, stress and much more. Tel: 0800 028 0199 (24/7)	**Daily Refreshments** • Free tea, coffee & milk • Subsidised school meals	**Mindfulness/Spirituality** • Daily acts of collective worship contribute to mindfulness and spirituality. • Dedicated spaces for staff who wish to pray during the school day
Access to Counselling • MAT funded online via Employee Assistance Programme. • School funded face-to-face through CASY	**Mental Health Support** • Internal Mental Health Lead – available for advice and signposting • External support through EAP/Access to My Healthy Advantage App	**Governor Monitoring** • Lead governor for wellbeing regularly checks in with staff. • Regular reporting at governor level on the wellbeing of staff.
Staff Rest Room • High quality area for staff only with kitchen facilities (including coffee machine), TV and comfortable seating to offer respite.	**Wider School Life** Opportunities to become involved with the wider life of the school: • Staff running clubs • Fitness events e.g., Parkrun • Discos • Church events • Remembrance parades Residentials	**Behaviour Management** • Clear behaviour management policy, incorporating routine support from SLT for high level behaviours. • SLT analyse behaviour logs weekly and target support for staff struggling with behaviour management.

Principle 5: Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal Relationships acknowledges the basic human need to feel connected to others, cared about and part of a wider community. Social connections at work are important for experience day-to-day fun and job satisfaction, but also in times of hardship by providing a social support network individuals can draw on for resilience. Besides bonding with peers, close interpersonal relationships are particularly important between employees and people managers. Leaders recognise this and offer staff social events such as 'Mexican Evenings'. The staffroom provides a space in school where staff are encouraged to gather to build and develop strong working relationships with colleagues.

Monitoring and Review

The impact of this policy is measured annually using the 'Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Survey' and the 'Utrecht Engagement Scale'.

In line with the outcomes of these surveys, the policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher in conjunction with the Governing Body. Any changes made to this policy are communicated to all members of staff.