

Employee Emotional Health & Wellbeing Policy

Statement of Intent and Background

Briarwood School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all employees. Preventing and reducing stress is a key priority in maintaining staff wellbeing and ensuring the best possible outcomes for our pupils. We recognise that personal stress, whether arising inside or outside work, can affect an individual's wellbeing and their ability to work effectively.

We adopt the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health as:

"A state of mind in which an individual is able to realise his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."

Briarwood aligns with the DfE Education Staff Wellbeing Charter (2023) and related guidance on workload, mental health and behaviour. We are committed to reducing unnecessary workload, prioritising wellbeing in decision-making, and ensuring staff can access appropriate support, supervision and professional services. Public Health England and DfE guidance identify schools as key protective environments for emotional wellbeing; this policy sets out how Briarwood fulfils that role for staff.

We recognise that:

- The school has a responsibility for the wellbeing of all staff.
- Good wellbeing is central to staff effectiveness, retention and pupil outcomes.
- A healthy work–life balance helps staff manage professional and personal commitments.
- The governing body has a statutory duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees at work.

Ethos

Staff wellbeing is central to the success and sustainability of Briarwood. We aim to create a compassionate, open culture in which colleagues feel valued, listened to and able to ask for help. Our wellbeing offer is summarised in the Briarwood Wellbeing Brochure (Appendix 1), which outlines what staff can expect from the school and how they can access support.

We recognise two key elements of good mental health:

- Feeling good – experiencing positive emotions such as enjoyment, safety and connection.
- Functioning well – managing daily responsibilities, maintaining positive relationships and having a clear sense of purpose at work.

Aims of the Policy

Through this policy, Briarwood aims to:

- Develop a healthy, motivated workforce capable of delivering high-quality education.
- Promote and prioritise the emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of all staff.
- Recognise and actively reduce excessive workload, supporting flexible working where possible.
- Support a positive work–life balance and communicate wellbeing information clearly and regularly.
- Respond sensitively to external pressures or personal challenges affecting staff.
- Provide training, strategies and resources to help staff manage stress and high-pressure situations.

- Strengthen collaboration, morale and leadership that models empathy and care.
- Ensure all staff know what support is available and how to access help for stress, wellbeing or work-related health concerns.

For information on emotional wellbeing support for pupils, please see the Behaviour and Pastoral Policy.

Legal and Policy Framework

This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- DfE Education Staff Wellbeing Charter (2023)
- DfE guidance: Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff
- DfE Workload Reduction Toolkit (updated 2022)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2022)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (DfE, 2023)

This policy also operates in conjunction with key Briarwood policies and procedures, including:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Managing staff absence and supporting attendance Policy
- Induction of New Staff Policy
- Data Protection and GDPR Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Capability Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Code of Conduct

Roles and responsibilities

Promoting and protecting staff wellbeing is a shared responsibility. The following roles have specific duties in implementing this policy:

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure staff wellbeing is a strategic priority and is reflected in the School Development Plan.
- Appoint a named governor with responsibility for mental health and wellbeing.
- Monitor staff wellbeing through relevant data, including staff surveys, absence trends and exit information.
- Ensure policies and initiatives are impact-assessed for workload and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure monitoring activities by governors are proportionate, purposeful and clearly communicated to staff.

- Provide appropriate challenge and support to the Executive Headteacher regarding staff wellbeing and workload, including their own wellbeing.

The Executive Headteacher will:

- Champion a culture in which staff wellbeing is prioritised, model healthy working practices, and promote an open, supportive ethos.
- Implement whole-school approaches to reducing workload and supporting emotional health, including those set out in the Wellbeing Brochure and PAM Wellness Portal.
- Ensure that return-to-work procedures, reasonable adjustments and stress risk assessments are used appropriately to support staff.
- Work with HR and Heads of School to maintain links with occupational health, employee assistance programmes and external supervision providers.
- Monitor patterns of staff absence and identified stress-related concerns, and report anonymised trends to the governing body.
- Authorise wellbeing-related leave, including wellbeing days, in line with policy and operational need.

The Head of Inclusion will:

- Lead the whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing for pupils and staff, embedding trauma-informed and sensory-aware practice across all sites.
- Coordinate the annual staff wellbeing survey, analyse results, and disseminate key findings and actions to ELT, Heads of School and the governing body.
- Chair or coordinate the termly Staff Wellbeing Forum and ensure agreed actions are tracked and reported.
- Maintain and update the Staff Wellbeing Action Plan, ensuring that interventions are resourced, time-bound and evaluated.
- Coordinate access to therapeutic and clinical support for staff, including supervision and debriefing (e.g. via the Bridge Foundation and other providers).
- Provide, or commission, training and coaching on emotional wellbeing, stress management and resilience for staff and line managers.
- Act as the strategic link to external professionals supporting staff mental health, including occupational health, Educational Psychologists and other specialist services.

Heads of School will:

- Monitor the wellbeing of staff in their teams through regular check-ins, informal supervision and open communication.
- Identify early signs of stress or mental health difficulty and initiate timely support, including adjustments, supervision or referral to the Head of Inclusion, HR or occupational health where appropriate.
- Implement reasonable adjustments, workload adaptations and flexible approaches within their departments, in line with this policy.
- Promote a culture of compassion, mutual support and workload transparency within their teams.
- Ensure behaviour and medical response systems are used consistently to reduce unnecessary stress on staff.
- Support the organisation of team debriefs and ensure staff involved in significant incidents are offered debriefing and follow-up.
- Gather and represent staff voice at leadership meetings and feed back outcomes to their teams.

Wellbeing Ambassadors will:

- Represent their school or site on the whole-school Staff Wellbeing Forum, actively contributing to discussions and feeding back outcomes to colleagues.
- Promote staff voice on wellbeing matters, gathering views and suggestions from their school to inform whole-school actions.
- Set up, maintain and promote the community pantry and other food-based initiatives (e.g. staff breakfast club), including monitoring stock and liaising with the Head of School regarding resourcing.
- Keep wellbeing noticeboards up to date with accurate information, signposting and contact details for internal and external support.
- Organise at least one termly wellbeing event for their school (e.g. staff socials, wellbeing activities, staff bingo), and support whole-school wellbeing events.
- Encourage staff to complete the annual staff wellbeing survey and participate in other feedback mechanisms.
- Contribute to the ongoing review and promotion of the Briarwood Wellbeing Brochure and related wellbeing offers.
- Undertake Mental Health First Aider training and provide initial support and signposting to colleagues, within the limits of their role and training.

All Staff will:

- Take reasonable steps to look after their own wellbeing, including seeking support early where concerns arise.
- Be alert to signs of stress or mental ill health in themselves and colleagues, and raise concerns with an appropriate leader, Wellbeing Ambassador, MHFA or HR.
- Engage with supervision, debriefing, clinical support and wellbeing initiatives offered by the school where appropriate.
- Contribute constructively to wellbeing forums, surveys and feedback processes.
- Support colleagues and foster a culture of kindness, respect and inclusion.
- Follow agreed protocols for behaviour management, communication, medical support and reporting, in order to reduce avoidable stress and increase predictability.
- Use workload and planning expectations appropriately, including directed and non-directed time, and discuss pressures with their line manager at an early stage.

Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) will:

- Act as an accessible point of contact for staff experiencing emotional distress or emerging mental health difficulties.
- Offer non-judgemental listening, reassurance and initial support, and signpost staff to appropriate internal or external services.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality, while working within safeguarding and confidentiality boundaries.
- Promote awareness of mental health and wellbeing across the school community.
- Attend required training and refresher sessions to maintain their MHFA knowledge and confidence.

Actions to support new staff

- All staff will be given a school orientation by the Head of School or line manager.
- All new staff will receive a staff induction programme. This will continue to include all important policies, or their location, and will include this policy on health and wellbeing.

- All staff will be made to feel welcome and given as much support as required.
- All staff will be assigned a buddy on their first day
- At the end of the first week of employment, new staff will have a review with a senior member of staff.
- All new staff will have a 3-month review interview with their Line Manager. Additional reviews may be scheduled at 6-months and/or a year.

Directed and Non-Directed Time for Teachers

To support staff wellbeing and reduce workload, Briarwood School offers all teachers and FE lecturers a weekly allocation (equivalent to 1 day) of **directed and non-directed time in place of the standard PPA half-day**. This is a key part of our commitment to sustainable workload and recognising the complexity of our setting.

This protected time is designed to give teachers structured space within the working week to manage their core responsibilities without relying excessively on out-of-hours work.

Purpose

Directed and non-directed time enables staff to:

- Plan and prepare teaching and learning, including adaptation for individual needs and EHCP outcomes.
- Prepare and update assessment information, reports and learning maps.
- Review and refine classroom environments and resources in line with the Briarwood Standard.
- Reflect on practice, respond to observations and plan next steps for pupils.
- Complete essential professional tasks such as parent communication, Sleuth/CPOMS entries and curriculum paperwork.

Directed Time

Directed time is time when teachers may be required to undertake specific duties as directed by the Executive Headteacher or Heads of School, in line with national teacher terms and conditions. This may include:

- Staff, phase or curriculum meetings.
- CPD and supervision sessions.
- Moderation, assessment or planning meetings.
- Statutory training and compliance activities.

Use of directed time should be purposeful, scheduled with reasonable notice, and focussed on improving teaching, learning and/or staff wellbeing. It will be planned and reviewed through the annual calendar and the Teachers' Handbook.

Non-Directed Time

Non-directed time is protected time within the school week which teachers manage themselves in order to fulfil their professional responsibilities. During this time, teachers may:

- Work in classrooms or shared spaces to plan, assess or prepare resources.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues on planning, moderation or curriculum development.
- Work off-site where agreed, in line with the expectations set out in the Teachers' Handbook.

Non-directed time is not routinely used for cover, additional duties or meetings, except in exceptional circumstances and with clear communication.

Expectations and Guidance

- The overall pattern of directed and non-directed time will be outlined annually in the Teachers' Handbook, including example timetables, meeting schedules and key deadlines.
- Teachers are expected to use this time to prioritise high-impact professional tasks and to manage workload proactively.
- Line managers will discuss the effective use of directed and non-directed time during supervision and performance management conversations, and will work with staff to address pinch points across the year.
- PPA/allocated non-contact time will not be used for routine or prolonged cover, except where unavoidable and in line with national guidance.

This enhanced structure for planning and professional time is a core element of Briarwood's workload and wellbeing offer and should be considered alongside the wider measures described in the Reducing Workload Commitments section of this policy.

Understanding stress and mental health

The school recognises that some level of pressure is inherent in education and can be positive, helping staff to stay motivated and productive. Stress occurs when that pressure becomes excessive or prolonged and an individual feels unable to cope. While stress itself is not an illness, if it is sustained it can lead to physical and mental health difficulties.

Mental health is understood as a spectrum that all staff move along over time. Factors inside and outside work can influence this. The school acknowledges that personal circumstances (e.g. bereavement, illness, financial pressures or family breakdown) can interact with workplace demands and increase vulnerability to stress.

Leaders and staff are expected to recognise that:

- People experience and respond to pressure differently.
- The same situation may be manageable for one person and overwhelming for another.
- Early identification and open conversation about stress are key to preventing more serious difficulties.

Recognising Warning Signs

All staff have a role in being alert to possible early signs of stress or emerging mental health difficulties in themselves and colleagues. Indicators may include changes in:

- **Behaviour** – withdrawal from others, tearfulness, irritability, avoidance of tasks, increased use of alcohol, nicotine or other coping behaviours.
- **Physical presentation** – tiredness, frequent headaches, aches and pains, changes in appetite or sleep.
- **Thinking and emotions** – reduced concentration, indecision, feeling overwhelmed, low confidence, anxiety, feeling unable to cope.
- **Work patterns** – increased mistakes, lower productivity, difficulty meeting deadlines, working

excessively long hours, changes in punctuality or attendance.

The presence of these signs does not automatically mean a person is unwell, but they are prompts for a supportive conversation, not for judgement. Staff are encouraged to notice patterns over time and to speak to a trusted colleague or line manager if they are concerned.

A Staff Wellbeing Flowchart (Appendix 3) sets out a simple route for staff who have a wellbeing concern – whether work-related or not – including who to talk to, how to access financial or emotional support, and possible next steps (e.g. supervision, HR advice, Occupational Health, PAM/EAP, GP).

Actions to Support Staff Wellbeing

The school will take a proactive, whole-school approach to preventing and responding to stress, informed by the DfE Workload Reduction Toolkit and national guidance.

Whole-School and Leadership Actions

Senior leaders will:

- Regularly review workload expectations (including data, assessment, planning and meetings) and make changes where practices are not proportionate or purposeful.
- Use staff surveys, wellbeing forums and feedback to identify pressure points across the year and adjust calendars, deadlines or processes where possible.
- Ensure staff have access to wellbeing resources and services, including external supervision, PAM / EAP, clinical debriefing and Occupational Health where appropriate.
- Plan staff development, monitoring and improvement activity with clear notice, clear focus and a realistic view of staff workload.

Line Management Actions

Line managers (e.g. Heads of School, team leaders, class teachers) will:

- Hold regular check-ins and supervision conversations that include discussion of workload and wellbeing.
- Notice and respond to early signs of stress, offering informal support in the first instance and agreeing practical adjustments where needed.
- Use tools such as stress risk assessments and Occupational Health referrals for staff whose wellbeing is significantly affected.
- Ensure staff involved in significant behavioural or medical incidents are offered timely debriefing and follow-up support.

Staff Self-Management and Support

All staff are encouraged to:

- Use the Staff Wellbeing Flowchart (Appendix 3) to identify who to speak to and what support may be available.
- Raise concerns about workload or stress early with their line manager, Wellbeing Ambassador, Mental Health First Aider or HR.
- Make use of supervision, debriefing, PAM / EAP, GP and other services where appropriate.
- Take regular breaks in line with working time regulations and use directed and non-directed time to

manage workload realistically.

Staff who raise a wellbeing concern or disclose stress or mental health difficulties will be treated fairly and sensitively. They will not be disadvantaged for seeking help. Further detail about support, meetings and return-to-work processes is set out in the Procedures for Handling Wellbeing Concerns section of this policy.

Wellbeing Day

Briarwood School offers all staff the opportunity to take one Wellbeing Day per academic year as part of our commitment to supporting emotional health and promoting a sustainable work-life balance.

Key Information:

- Eligibility: Available to staff who have successfully completed their probation period.
- Notice: Requests must be submitted at least two weeks in advance via the usual leave of absence procedure.
- Fairness: Wellbeing Days are approved on a first-come, first-served basis to ensure operational needs are met.
- Capacity: Due to staffing levels, not all requests for the same day can be accommodated — are asked to propose three alternative dates to prevent this.
- Purpose: The Wellbeing Day is a proactive measure to help staff rest, recharge, or focus on personal wellbeing. It is not intended to replace sick leave or annual leave.

We believe this offer reinforces our core value of caring for those who care for our pupils.

Reducing Workload Commitments

Briarwood School is committed to ensuring that staff workload is reasonable, sustainable and focused on improving outcomes for pupils. In line with the DfE Workload Reduction Toolkit and the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, we will regularly review internal processes to remove unnecessary tasks and bureaucracy.

As a school we will:

- Review and simplify assessment, marking and data collection so they are proportionate, purposeful and not duplicative, including the use of scheduled assessment weeks and annual Learning Map reviews to reduce ad hoc demands.
- Share and centrally store planning and curriculum resources, including “ready to use” schemes of work, to reduce individual planning burden and support consistent curriculum delivery.
- Streamline behaviour, medical and incident recording systems so that staff can record efficiently and avoid double entry.
- Protect non-contact, directed and non-directed time so it is used for high-impact professional tasks rather than routine cover.
- Plan calendars, meetings and deadlines with workload in mind, avoiding unnecessary bunching of tasks and giving reasonable notice for key activities and CPD.
- Strengthen staff voice through surveys, wellbeing forums, drop-in sessions and workload discussions, and operate a clear “you said – we did” approach so staff can see how feedback leads to change.
- Support emotional wellbeing through access to clinical supervision and debriefing where appropriate, visible wellbeing information in staff areas, and clear signposting to support such as PAM/EAP and

other services.

- Support physical health by promoting relevant health offers (e.g. vaccinations where appropriate) and wellbeing initiatives, and by ensuring that health and safety and risk assessment processes take account of staff wellbeing.

These commitments sit alongside the wider whole-school wellbeing offer set out in the Briarwood Wellbeing Charter (Appendix 1) and are monitored through staff surveys, absence data, supervision feedback and governing body oversight.

Procedures for Handling Wellbeing Concerns

These procedures apply to all staff, whether concerns arise from work-related pressures, personal circumstances, financial worries or a combination of factors. They should be read alongside the Staff Wellbeing Flowchart (Appendix 2).

1. Raising a Concern

Staff are encouraged to raise wellbeing concerns at an early stage. Concerns might relate to:

- Stress, anxiety or low mood
- Workload or role expectations
- Trauma or emotional impact of incidents
- Physical health issues affecting work
- Financial or personal difficulties that are impacting on work

A staff member may:

- Speak to their line manager or Head of School
- Speak directly to the Head of Inclusion, Executive Headteacher, HR, Wellbeing Ambassador or Mental Health First Aider
- Use external support routes such as PAM / Employee Assistance Programme, GP or counselling, Bridge Foundation Sessions

Where a staff member is worried about a colleague, they should encourage the colleague to seek support and, if still concerned, discuss this with an appropriate leader (e.g. Head of School, Head of Inclusion) while respecting confidentiality as far as possible.

Concerns about bullying, harassment or conduct will be managed under the appropriate policies (e.g. Bullying and Harassment Policy, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy) in addition to this wellbeing policy.

2. Initial Response

The first response to a wellbeing concern will be supportive, non-judgemental and solution-focused. The person receiving the concern (usually the line manager or Head of School) will:

- Listen and clarify the main issues, including any immediate risks.
- Reassure the staff member that seeking help is positive and will not in itself lead to negative consequences.
- Consider whether any immediate adjustments are required (e.g. temporary changes to duties, deadlines, environment or support).

- Agree short-term actions and a review date.
- Signpost to appropriate internal and external support (e.g. PAM/EAP, GP, supervision, MHFA, HR advice).

Where the concern relates to a specific incident (e.g. medical or behavioural event), the staff member will be offered a debrief and follow-up support.

3. Ongoing Support, Risk Assessment and Occupational Health

If difficulties are significant, persistent or worsening, the line manager / Head of School will work with the staff member, Head of Inclusion and HR (as appropriate) to:

- Complete a stress risk assessment, identifying key pressures and protective measures.
- Implement and monitor further workplace adjustments where reasonably practicable.
- Consider a referral to Occupational Health for independent advice on fitness to work, adjustments and any recommended support.
- Liaise with HR where there may be implications for duties, hours, or reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Recommendations from Occupational Health and stress risk assessments will be discussed with the staff member and implemented wherever reasonably possible.

4. Absence Due to Stress or Mental Ill Health

Where a staff member is absent from work due to stress or mental ill health, the school will treat this in the same way as any other health-related absence, in line with the Managing Absence and Supporting Attendance Policy, while recognising the particular sensitivities involved.

The school will:

- Maintain appropriate and sensitive contact with the staff member during their absence, normally via the line manager or HR, agreeing the frequency and format of contact.
- Provide information about support services (e.g. PAM/EAP, Occupational Health, GP, Bridge Foundation) and encourage the staff member to access these as needed.
- Consider an Occupational Health referral where absence is prolonged or recurrent, or where fitness for work and adjustments need to be clarified.

5. Return to Work

When a staff member is ready to return to work following stress- or mental health-related absence, a return-to-work meeting will be arranged with the Head of School or line manager, with HR or the Head of Inclusion involved where appropriate. This meeting will:

- Review the reasons for absence and any relevant medical or Occupational Health advice.
- Discuss how the staff member is feeling about returning and any concerns they may have.
- Agree any reasonable adjustments (e.g. phased return, temporary changes to duties or timetable, additional supervision or support).
- Update or complete a stress risk assessment, where indicated.

- Agree how progress and wellbeing will be reviewed (e.g. check-in meetings over an agreed period).

Adjustments and support will be kept under review and may be stepped up or reduced depending on how the staff member is managing.

6. Confidentiality and Protection from Detriment

Information about a staff member's wellbeing will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis, in line with the Data Protection and GDPR Policy. Heads of School may need to share relevant information with the Head of Inclusion, HR or Executive Headteacher to coordinate support and meet legal obligations.

Staff who raise wellbeing concerns, seek help for stress or mental health issues, or support a colleague to do so will not be treated less favourably or disadvantaged as a result. Any concerns about victimisation, discrimination or unfair treatment will be taken seriously and may be addressed through the appropriate HR or grievance procedures.

Wellbeing approach

Staff will have access to training, supervision and signposting to approaches and resources that support their emotional health and wellbeing, with the aim of fostering teamwork, shared responsibility and solidarity.

Briarwood's staff wellbeing support is organised as a graduated model, moving from universal whole-school provision to increasingly targeted and individualised support:

Level 1 – Universal Whole-School Support

Available to all staff to promote a positive culture and normalise conversations about wellbeing.

This includes:

- A clear Wellbeing Charter / Wellbeing Brochure and visible leadership commitment to staff wellbeing.
- Information about national and external support (e.g. Education Support, other helplines).
- Action for Happiness and other wellbeing materials displayed in staff areas.
- A library of wellbeing resources, posters and leaflets.
- Routine signposting to internal and external support (e.g. PAM / EAP, GP, counselling).
- Regular staff wellbeing surveys and feedback opportunities to inform whole-school actions.
- A comprehensive CPD offer, including whole-school training and team-building activities that support professional confidence and connection.
- Whole-school social events and activities that encourage staff to connect and support each other.
- Debriefing for individuals following significant incidents.
- 1:1 meetings with Heads of Schools and line managers.

Level 2 – Targeted Support

Enhanced support for staff or groups who may be exposed to higher levels of emotional demand or specific pressures in their role.

This includes:

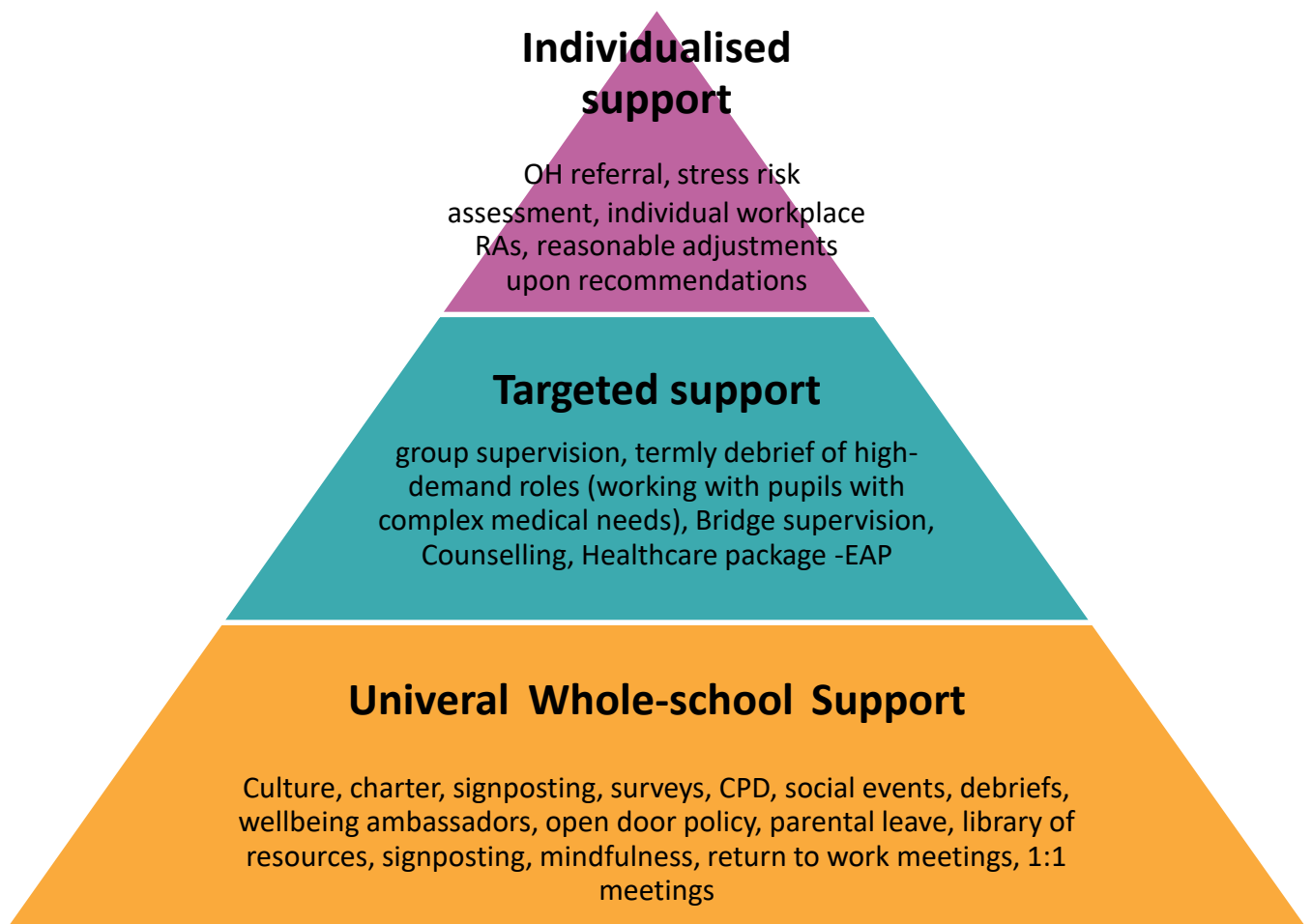
- Supervision and reflective sessions facilitated by trained staff for identified roles or teams.
- Termly debriefing sessions for staff working with complex medical needs or challenging behaviour.
- Ongoing clinical supervision for Response Team members and other key staff where appropriate.
- Targeted wellbeing or mindfulness programmes delivered by appropriately trained staff.
- Specific wellbeing initiatives for groups of staff (e.g. new staff, ECTs, leaders, staff returning from leave).

Level 3 – Individualised and Specialist Support

Support tailored to the needs of individual staff members who are experiencing significant stress, emotional impact or health difficulties.

This includes:

- Occupational Health referrals used as a supportive measure, with recommendations implemented wherever reasonably practicable.
- Stress risk assessments for staff experiencing significant or sustained pressure, leading to agreed workplace adjustments and follow-up.
- Individual workplace risk assessments and tailored support for staff with ongoing medical conditions or particular vulnerabilities.
- Personalised return-to-work plans following stress-, mental health- or health-related absence.



Monitoring and Assessment

The impact of this policy and the wider wellbeing offer will be monitored regularly. The Head of Inclusion, working with the Executive Headteacher, HR and the wellbeing committee of the governing body, will collate and review information from:

- Staff wellbeing and workload questionnaires/surveys
- Staff absence data, including patterns of stress- or mental health-related absence
- Themes from supervision and appraisal where workload or wellbeing issues are raised (anonymised)
- Occupational Health referrals and stress risk assessments (reported in anonymised form)
- Exit interviews and leavers' feedback, where available
- Feedback from the Staff Wellbeing Forum / Wellbeing Ambassadors and termly debrief sessions

This information will be used to:

- Update and review the Staff Wellbeing Action Plan
- Identify trends, pressure points and areas for improvement
- Inform decisions about workload, systems and support offers
- Provide regular reports to the Executive Leadership Team and governing body

Procedures for handling issues of wellbeing

- The Executive Leadership Team (Executive Headteacher, Head of Education & Skills, Head of Inclusion & Provision, Head of Operations) will encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns.
- The Executive and Senior Leadership Teams will be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.
- Where additional, professional advice is required, the school has contacts with Occupational Health Professionals and Human Resource experts and these avenues should be utilised.
- Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the confidential counselling service available. This service provides staff with serious concerns to obtain advice and support outside of the workplace.
- The school will provide support to any employees facing high-levels of stress in the workplace, as well as other work-related issues which are having/have the potential to have negative impacts on the staff member's health and wellbeing. The various options for dealing with such issues should be discussed with staff members where appropriate. In some cases, this may include external support such as the Education Support Partnership helpline or support from other relevant bodies.
- During this time, the school will ensure that at all times the staff member's privacy and dignity is respected. This means maintaining confidentiality, upholding the employee's rights and dealing with the employee with tact and sensitivity.
- All staff have access to external supervision through the Bridge Foundation.

References

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Appendix 1

Champion Health

The Employee Assistance Programme is a free service for staff to get support with work or personal issues. As part of this service we use the Champion Health App. It's a high-quality service with robust clinical standards and governance.

What you can expect from the app

- A simple, direct route to the 24/7 Assistance Programme and helpline
- A wide range of mental, physical, and financial wellbeing resources
- Real-time insights and tailored recommendations
- A user-friendly interface that makes accessing support easier than ever

Here's how to get started:

Head to: <https://app.championhealth.co.uk/code>

Enter your organisation code which is: BCC2024

Select "Sign Up"

Create your account and follow the verification instructions

Complete your health assessment for a bespoke experience and you're ready to explore.

If you prefer to use a mobile phone application, you can search for the Champion Health App on both iOS and Android.

Thrive

Thrive is a free app available to all staff which is dedicated to supporting your mental wellbeing including personal therapy, relaxation and mindfulness techniques. Scan the QR code to access the app. You will also need the access code – A94N7.



Appendix 2 - STAFF WELLBEING FLOWCHART – RECOGNISING WARNING SIGNS AND RESPONDING TO STRESS

1. NOTICE

You notice **changes** in yourself or a colleague, for example:

- Behaviour: withdrawing, tearful, more irritable, avoiding others, working very late.
- Physical: frequent headaches, tiredness, aches and pains, change in appetite or sleep.
- Thinking/emotions: feeling overwhelmed, anxious, low, unable to make decisions or concentrate.
- Work patterns: more mistakes, missed deadlines, difficulty coping with usual tasks, changes in attendance or punctuality.



2. ASK: IS THIS AN EMERGENCY?

Examples of emergency / urgent risk:

- The person talks about wanting to die, self-harm or harming someone else.
- The person appears very distressed and unable to keep themselves safe.
- There is an immediate safeguarding concern.

→ If YES (emergency / immediate risk):

- Contact a senior leader / Designated Safeguarding Lead **immediately**.
- If there is immediate danger, follow emergency procedures (e.g. 999 / crisis support).
- Record concerns in line with safeguarding procedures.

← **END** of emergency pathway.

→ If NO (not an emergency but you are concerned):



3. CHECK IN

- If it is **yourself**:
 - Notice the pattern over days or weeks, not just one bad day.
 - Ask yourself: *Is this starting to affect my work, home life or health?*
- If it is a **colleague**:
 - Choose a calm moment and gently check in:

“I’ve noticed you don’t seem yourself lately – how are you doing?”

- Listen without judging or trying to “fix” everything.



4. DECIDE: CAN SIMPLE SELF-CARE ADJUSTMENTS HELP FIRST?

Examples of simple adjustments:

- Taking regular breaks and eating/drinking properly during the day.
- Using directed / non-directed time realistically rather than working very late.
- Talking to a trusted colleague, friend or family member.
- Using strategies that usually help you (exercise, relaxation, sleep routine, hobbies).

→ If YES (mild / early signs, self-care likely to help):

- Put specific self-care actions in place for the next **1–2 weeks**.
- Monitor how you feel.
- If things do not improve, or get worse, move to **Step 5**.

← **END** Temporary self-care pathway (continue to monitor).

→ If NO (signs are persisting, worsening, or affecting work):



5. TALK TO SOMEONE IN SCHOOL

Choose **at least one** of the following:

- Your **line manager / Head of School**

- **Head of Inclusion**
- **A Wellbeing Ambassador**
- **A Mental Health First Aider (MHFA)**
- **HR** (for confidential advice)

Share:

- What has changed (feelings, behaviour, work).
- How long it has been going on.
- What you have already tried.
- Any particular pressures (work-related or outside school).



6. AGREE NEXT STEPS

Possible next steps may include:

- Short-term workload adjustments (e.g. deadlines, duties, meeting expectations).
- Changes to environment or timetable where possible.
- Access to **supervision, debriefing or mentoring**.
- Signposting to **PAM / EAP**, GP, counselling or other external support.
- Completing a **stress risk assessment**.
- Considering **Occupational Health** referral if difficulties are significant or ongoing.

Line managers should:

- Record agreed actions and review date.
- Check in at the agreed time to see if things are improving.



7. REVIEW

After the agreed review period:

➔ **If things have improved:**

- Continue with helpful strategies.
- Keep communication open with your line manager.

➔ **If concerns remain or have worsened:**

- Update your line manager / Head of School / Head of Inclusion.
- Consider further adjustments, Occupational Health referral, or medical advice via your GP.
- Where needed, link to absence and return-to-work procedures in the Staff Attendance and Absence Policy.

Wellbeing Ambassadors

Each site has a dedicated Wellbeing Ambassador who is a first point of contact for staff. They hold drop-in sessions for you to seek support and advice. They may also provide signposting to other services and suggestions of useful resources and strategies to support healthy wellbeing. All Wellbeing Ambassadors are Mental Health First Aid trained. Please also see the Mental Health First Aid poster for other members of staff who are trained. Wellbeing ambassadors also plan fun staff events throughout the year. See the Wellbeing Ambassador Poster for details of your site's Wellbeing Ambassador.

The Bridge Foundation – Staff Wellbeing Support

Individual staff wellbeing sessions are available in blocks, a session each week for a set period of time, in school hours, to support wellbeing and maintain resilience, offering a safe and confidential space to offload and discuss your work-related wellbeing concerns. This may be after a significant incident or due to an ongoing source of stress. It may also involve signposting to other services and suggestions of strategies that might be helpful. **To access these sessions please speak to your Head of School.**

Staff Debriefs

Debriefs are an opportunity to discuss incidents and challenging situations that have or may cause distress and creates a positive and structured opportunity to reflect on experiences, identify and unpack stress reactions that result from these situations and discuss and develop coping mechanisms and strategies to build up resilience. Debriefs are not just for big incidents, they can also be for smaller recurring situations that are having an impact on your wellbeing and can be requested at any time.

If you would like a debrief please talk to your Head of School or a member of the Pastoral Support Team.

Employee Assistance Programme

The Employee Assistance Programme is a free service for staff to get support with work or personal issues. We use the Champion Health App. Here's how to get started:

1. Head to: <https://app.championhealth.co.uk/code>
2. Enter your organisation code which is: **BCC2024**
3. Select "Sign Up"
4. Create your account and follow the verification instructions
5. Complete your health assessment for a bespoke experience

If you prefer to use a mobile phone application, you can search for the Champion Health App on both iOS and Android.

Support for Education Professionals

- ✓ Telephone counselling
 - ✓ Advice on work-life balance
 - ✓ Mental Health support
 - ✓ Practical activities guide to reducing stress i.e. breathing techniques
 - ✓ Job-specific wellbeing knowledge and support.
 - ✓ Call free on 08000 562 561
- www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/

Thrive

Thrive is a free app available to all staff which is dedicated to supporting your mental wellbeing including personal therapy, relaxation and mindfulness techniques. Scan the QR code to access the app. You will also need the access code – A94N7.



Getting to Work

- Cycle to work scheme
- Employees can save between 25% and 42% on bikes
- Bike repair service information
- Cycling events
- Map information and route support
- <https://betterbybike.info>



Appraisal, Coaching & CPD

All staff receive a supportive appraisal which focuses on development. We are implementing a coaching culture and staff receive an additional 3 coaching meetings per year to support their development. We have a huge CPD offer – please refer to the staff CPD and career development brochure. All staff have the opportunity to gain qualification and promotion. No staff are subject to performance related pay. Staff receive a day off work for achieving their twilight training hours.

Workload support

Briarwood is committed to reviewing and removing unnecessary workload and has signed up to the DfE Workload Reduction Toolkit. Teachers receive the legal 10% PPA entitlement, plus an additional 10% non-contact time, meaning they receive a full day to complete the expectations of a teacher. We ensure continuous schemes of work and resources to support preparation time. We work hard to ensure assessment expectations are reasonable and consideration is given to times of increased assessment. There is an assessment week which allows off timetable assessment time during the school day. In lieu of teachers' meetings, additional assessment time is also provided at various times in the year.

Environment

Staff rooms are available on all sites with comfortable areas to have a break and reset. Tea, Coffee and milk are provided free of charge for all staff. Staff are able to have a breakfast before work free of charge if needed and there is an emergency lunch cupboard which is kept well stocked for anyone that hasn't managed to sort their lunch for that day for whatever reason. Hygiene products are provided free of charge in staff toilets. There are books, puzzles, staff information and shout out boards supporting a relaxing environment.

Staff Support

In addition to all the support mentioned, staff can have an additional 1:1 meeting with their head of school 3 times per year. We offer a free flu vaccination each year and we proactively manage absence with return to work meetings and Occupational Health appointments. Staff that need it will be supported with a medical or stress risk assessment. All staff receive a paid wellbeing day off work each year of their choice. If staff complete their twilight training, they also receive another day off of their choice. The staff website has a wealth of information including booking time off and reading policies.

Communication

We value staff voice and there are several ways staff can give their opinion across the year including the wellbeing survey, termly polls, through the wellbeing ambassadors and the wellbeing meetings, bulletin, class and department meetings. We hold weekly meetings to allow good dissemination of information. Bulletin handouts are available via email, printed and on the staff section of the website. The electronic display boards display key information. We hold specific events to consider staff feedback and have developed a culture canvas. We promote open door leadership where there is always a leader available.