

The Lotus Academy Trust



Supporting children to find opportunities in every difficulty

The Damara School



Specialist SEMH Independent School

Pupil and staff well-being policy

Approved by: Trust Board

Initial Ratification: October 2020

Review: Sept 2022; Sept 2024

Next review due by: September 2026

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Support the wellbeing of all pupils and staff to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health
- Provide a supportive work environment for all pupils and staff
- Acknowledge the needs of pupils and staff, and how these change over time
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities
- Help pupils and staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- Ensure that pupils and staff understand their role in working towards the above aims

Pupil Well-being

2. Developing a Positive school culture

Pupil voice

The school provides opportunities for pupils to voice their opinions, or make choices, so they feel more in control. We support pupils overcome this by:

- Offering pupils a limited choice between 2 options for approaching a task in class, making safe behaviour choices, etc
- Giving pupils the opportunity to express their opinions in class discussions, meet and greet, whole-school decisions, etc

Sense of belonging

The school uses every opportunity to support pupils to mix with their peers. Emotional connection and friendship is crucial for the positive mental health of our pupils. Opportunities include assemblies, meet and greet, learning in areas such as Exploration of my Imagination, trips and visits, break and lunch times.

The headteacher and tutor are mentors to the pupils and support them in:

- Learning to socialise
- Discussing any concerns
- Making friends outside of the immediate classroom environment

Independence

Pupils are encouraged to work and socialise independently. While this may be intermittent with scaffolded support, the pupil should learn not to feel as though he/she must constantly rely on others.

Celebrating achievement

The school celebrates all achievement regardless of how big or small it may be.

- Daily celebrations include meeting all personal targets (earn hot chocolate or milkshake for break the next day), completing all classwork for the day (earn afternoon 'Wow time' and a slice of rocky road)
- weekly celebrations include meeting all personal targets for the week (earn special hot chocolate), celebration assembly (attendance, attainment and progress)
- termly celebrations include attendance, academic, progress and community awards, trips and visits

The school also celebrates achievement for activities such as:

- ambassadorial activities such as tour guide, assistant chef, assistant in undertaking Lateral Flow Tests
- Speaking and listening activities such as delivering presentations, demonstrations, supporting peers in their learning
- Outside of school achievement such as participating in sports matches, skills and interests, etc

We use both formal and informal methods to reward every success. Formal recognition involves for example a certificate in assembly or accomplishment of achieving personal targets using target sheets. Informal recognition is celebrated through a number of ways such as staff verbally congratulating pupils for a personal achievement during meet and greet, break or lunch times, assemblies, in corridors, in classes, etc.

3. Managing emotions independently

All pupils complete an 'All about me survey' on induction. This highlights what makes them happy. Staff uses this information to offer 'wow time' choices, distract from poor behaviour choices, etc.

Through scripting and mindful 'speak', staff encourage pupils to make the safe choices so as to not lose their rewards for the day.

Pupils are encouraged to 'forget about what happened before and focus on the now' to discourage behaviours such as blame, holding grudges, etc.

Staff Well-being

1. Promoting wellbeing at all times

We will monitor and improve the wellbeing of staff throughout the school year through 'open door' discussions, peer support, mindfulness sessions, termly surveys and staff voice. Any staff wellbeing actions will be included the School Information and Development Plan (SIDP).

Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff kitchen or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Role of line managers

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- Monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that led to their resignation

Role of senior staff

Senior staff are expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Make sure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes are made
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Establish a clear policy on out-of-school hours working, including on when it is and isn't reasonable for staff to respond to communications, and provide clear guidance to all stakeholders
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services, and make sure that there are clear routes in place to escalate a concern in order to access further support
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections

Role of the Trustees and governing board

The Trustees and governing board is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the CEO/Head of School
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

2. Managing specific wellbeing issues

The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives.

Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:

- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise

At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the CEO/Head of School. At every review, it will be approved by a full Trust Board meeting

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Appraisal policy
- Behaviour policy
- Capability procedure
- Staff code of conduct
- Staff handbook