

Creating Tomorrow Trust
Isebrook School
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy



ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT:

Purpose

This policy sets out the approach that Creating Tomorrow Partnership, as the employer, takes to promote positive mental health and wellbeing of team members.

Our aim is to ensure that promoting positive mental health and wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do, all stakeholders are supported, and that Creating Tomorrow Partnership is an employer of choice.

It is intended that this policy underpins the approach to all policies, and as such is the underlying ethos to everything we do at Creating Tomorrow Partnership.

Complied by: CEO	Date: Apr 25
Committee: Trust Board	Date agreed by Trustees:
Review Cycle: Annually	Review Date: Apr 26

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1. Intent and Aims

Our Trust values:

This policy aims to promote and embed Creating Tomorrow's Core Values of Respect, Inclusion, Community, and Empowerment.

The core values define how we expect everyone (students and our teams) to conduct themselves on a day-to-day basis and act as a guide to promote everyone's mental health and wellbeing through safe and positive behaviours.

Relationships are at the heart of everything we do, and positive relationships are a strong indicator of positive mental health and wellbeing. Through building positive relationships, we are all more readily available. At Creating Tomorrow we consider:

- Relationship with self
- Relationship with others
- Relationship with the curriculum

We believe that all behaviour communicates a need. Our overall aim is to enable everyone to feel safe and ready to engage in their day-to-day activities so that they can be successful, confident and responsible.

At Creating Tomorrow, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all; our trust teams (including trustees, governors, volunteers and agency staff), students, and families. We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable, and at times anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's responsibility.

Our School values:

At Isebrook, we believe every student deserves the chance to be their very best. Our vision is to champion each child, helping them become confident, capable, and successful in their own way, ready for adulthood and for life, whatever their future pathway.

We are committed to empowering every student, ensuring they are **valued**, have a **voice**, and **feel valuable**, while supporting them to:

- Grow in confidence and independence
- Develop essential life and social skills

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- Discover their talents, aspirations, and interests
- Prepare for a happy, fulfilling, and meaningful future

Our Core Values—Compassion • Respect • Responsibility • Achievement—guide everything we do. They shape our relationships, learning, and community, creating a school where every student is supported, celebrated, and inspired to thrive.

At the heart of our vision is our commitment to help all students champion themselves, feel empowered, and thrive in ways that are right for them.

We believe that all staff, along with the school's governors, play a vital role in creating a supportive and nurturing environment in our school. Fostering relationships with students and families.

In our Trust we:

Provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment based on trusting relationships to:

- Enable everyone to understand and manage their emotions and feelings
- Enable everyone to feel comfortable in sharing any concerns or worries
- Enable everyone to form and maintain healthy relationships
- Enable everyone to develop self-esteem and self-worth
- Enable everyone to feel confident and celebrate their individuality
- Enable everyone to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

Therefore, we believe that the good mental health and wellbeing of our team is vital to organisational success and sustainability. We also know that in order for our team to support the ongoing mental health of our learners, it is essential that we support our workforce in the same way.

A healthy, happy workforce means we can:

- Improve staff morale and performance
- Better support our children to learn and succeed
- Reduce sickness absence, presenteeism and staff turnover
- Enhance our reputation as an employer who cares

As a Trust we are committed to the following principles:

- Promoting wellbeing for all
- Tackling the causes of work-related mental health problems
- Supporting colleagues who are experiencing mental health problems

Within policy paperwork, if the policy may affect staff wellbeing, it will contain the statement:

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We can all be affected by poor physical and mental health at times during our lives and it is important the appropriate support is available in a timely manner.

Health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility and we encourage an open and honest culture whereby anyone can discuss any issues they may have.

The Trustees of Creating Tomorrow take the health and wellbeing of all employees seriously and are committed to supporting our staff. The Trustees ensure that support for staff is available through:

- Effective line management
- Commitment to ensuring an appropriate and balanced workload
- Supportive and professional working environments
- Employee support programs
 - Education Support: telephone number 08000 562561 or website www.educationsupport.org.uk

2. Definitions

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

Positive mental health and wellbeing is not just the absence of mental health difficulties. We want our teams to:

- Enjoy working in a safe, open and supportive workplace environment and culture that supports mental health, overall wellbeing and prevents discrimination
- Be aware of issues and behaviours that can affect mental health and wellbeing
- Help us reduce the stigma around difficulties with mental health and wellbeing in the workplace
- Feel supported during times of personal or work stress
- Maintain a healthy work life balance
- Have opportunities to engage in initiatives that support mental health and wellbeing
- Feel confident and empowered to talk about their problems to colleagues and or managers as appropriate
- Have positive and healthy relationships at work

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3. Roles and Responsibilities

Supporting activities that enable good mental health and wellbeing in the workplace is the responsibility of all employees.

Creating Tomorrow will look to all line managers within the Trust to manage their teams in a manner which is not detrimental to mental health and which, at its best, can positively promote mental health and wellbeing.

All colleagues should strive to achieve a healthy work life balance by regularly taking uninterrupted lunch breaks, refraining from sending work-related emails out of hours, taking annual leave and resting after busy periods, with senior leaders leading by example. Weekend and evening emails should be kept to a minimum and only sent where it is absolutely necessary for the smooth running of the Trust, or where there is an urgent reason for doing so.

All employees have a responsibility to promote a positive working environment that aims to help them and their colleagues to feel included, supported and empowered to talk about mental health openly and without judgement.

Employees are responsible for their own mental health and wellbeing, and accessing support when they need it, and raising any concerns with their line manager.

There are specially trained colleagues across the Trust who are designated Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs). These are outlined in Appendix B. The role of the MHFA is to:

- Approach, assess and assist individuals in crisis or in need of support
- Listen and communicate non-judgmentally
- Give support and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage other support

4. Engaging with Colleagues

We recognise that we do not always 'get it right', and therefore it is vital that we identify ways in which the Trust and the college / schools can better support mental health and wellbeing both generically within the workplace and more targeted support for individuals.

Trust Activities:

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To date, we have engaged with teams via the Trust questionnaires to develop a greater insight into the needs and requirements of our workforce, which has fed into the development and review of this policy. We are working to develop a culture of openness whereby the all of the Creating Tomorrow team feel empowered to talk about mental health and put forward ideas as to how the Trust can support this even further.

We intend to continue our efforts to engage with the whole staff team and with individuals on a one-on-one basis through formal and informal meetings, and via the routine channels of communications that already exist in our settings (team meetings, 1:1 meetings, Senior Leadership Meetings, performance management meetings, well-being groups etc). The feedback from our staff will always drive the Trust's actions and efforts to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Isebrook School Activities:

At Isebrook School, our core purpose is to help create happy and successful adults. Our vision is that all students become confident individuals, responsible citizens and successful learners and we know this vision can only be achieved through the skill and commitment of a happy staff body. We recognise that good mental health and wellbeing is important for our staff and support this in a number of ways:-

- Wellbeing Wednesdays
- Trained Mental Health First Aiders
- Staff wellbeing groups including a neurodiverse group
- Communication and feedback from staff around our ways of working, policies and practice
- Access to a comprehensive and independent Employee Assist programme through Education Support
- Staff debriefs and follow ups

5. Awareness Raising

In many workplaces, mental health is the elephant in the room. Too often, employees are wary of talking to their manager and therefore problems can spiral. Creating Tomorrow aims to raise awareness of mental health by embedding the subject into induction procedures and training (all leaders will have Mental Health First Aid training) and celebrating key dates in the mental health calendar.

Specific members of our team may require additional support to manage their roles and responsibilities:

- **Senior leaders:** By the nature of their role, have a large responsibility, and therefore built into the Trust Improvement Strategy is wellbeing support for individuals. Either through the approaches used, or via access to individual support such as supervision or coaching (both professional and pure coaching)

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- **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs):** DSLs manage difficult situations and often work in challenging contexts, therefore access to supervision is vital. Creating Tomorrow is committed to ensuring supervision is available, either through internal channels, or externally
- **Specialist practitioners (e.g. ELSA, Occupational Therapist):** Due to their professional roles, some individuals receive external supervision. Creating Tomorrow is committed to supporting colleagues to continue to access professional supervision

The Trust is developing an intranet and will utilise this to distribute useful training material and information campaigns.

Each establishment within the Trust has Mental Health Leaders whose role is to promote healthy minds by:

- Leading and working with other colleagues to coordinate team activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- Providing advice, support and signposting
- Organising training and updates

6. Positive Working Relationships

As a Trust we will take positive action to make the workplace a mutually supportive environment where good work relationships thrive.

We will:

- Promote a culture of teamwork, collaboration and information-sharing
- Promote positive behaviours to avoid conflict and ensure fairness
- Ensure robust policies promoting anti-bullying, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination are in place and well publicised
- Offer mentoring and coaching sessions with buddy systems for new starters to help them gain confidence and develop new skills
- Celebrate the successes of teams and individuals in a variety of ways
- Encourage cross partnership networking professionally through the organisation, teams and opportunities

7. Providing Support

We recognise that many difficulties with mental health or wellbeing can be supported within the Trust, or with advice from external professionals. However, some colleagues may need more intensive support, and

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there are a range of mental health professionals and organisations that are available within our Trust alongside our Mental Health First Aiders.

Sources of other relevant support include:

- Education Support UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff in schools and colleges (www.educationsupport.org.uk)
- Occupational Health (please speak to a senior leader who can advise you)
- Counselling services (e.g. via your GP)
- NHS Mental Health Services
- MIND
- Samaritans
- Hub of Hope (online / mobile access to directory of services based upon your location) <https://hubofhope.co.uk/>

Through informal and formal contact (e.g. 1:1 catch-up / meetings, performance management, supervision), Line Managers will routinely take stock of individuals' wellbeing and mental health to help assess the impact of current approaches and plan further improvements to enhance morale.

Regular 1:1 meetings are encouraged across the Trust as they have significant benefits for employers and employees. They give line managers opportunities to speak regularly with their team members about how they're doing and explore with them what might be impacting on their mental wellbeing. Whilst 1:1s are not always possible due to schedules and working times, clear and regular lines of communication are essential, especially for those working in isolation, for example regular telephone catch ups

8. Recruitment

Supporting mental health starts with getting the right person for the job. If there's a mismatch between a new recruit and our workplace, or their skills and abilities do not lead to supporting the Trust's vision, it can lead to intense stress. As a Trust we will always be realistic about the role in interviews and be careful to select people not only on their skills and competencies, but also their potential and attributes.

Recruitment decisions should always be based on whether candidates have the necessary qualifications and competence for the job, without making assumptions about health or disability. If there are concerns about whether health or disability will affect their ability to do the job, recruitment managers should assess these with the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments.

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The Equality Act (2010) states it is unlawful for employers to ask questions about health (including mental health) before making a job offer, however there are ways to support candidates to disclose any concerns they may have to help ensure they have equal access to job opportunities and are offered the support they need without discrimination.

We will state clearly that reasonable adjustments are available – for the interview and the role itself – so applicants understand why disclosure might be beneficial.

Candidates applying for a job may be worried about sharing information about their mental health; anxious that disclosing may lead to them being rejected, or that the interviewer will view them in a negative light. Therefore, it is important that as a Trust, we provide a fair and unbiased recruitment process. We will ensure people can disclose confidentially and that any information about health or disability is kept separate from the application form, so the recruitment panel does not see it.

We will make it clear in adverts and interviews that the Trust values staff mental health, as this sends a signal that disclosure will not lead to discrimination. The following statement will be used routinely in our recruitment:

Isebrook School is committed to promoting and protecting the physical and mental health of all our team.

9. Induction

Delivering an effective induction programme is essential. Starting a new role can feel unsettling, and if employees aren't given the right guidance and expectations, it can destroy their confidence and trigger existing, or generate new, mental health difficulties. At induction, we will make sure we provide information about what support is available for colleagues to look after their mental health and wellbeing.

10. Responding to a Disclosure

If a mental health disclosure is made by a team member, it is imperative that line managers have an early conversation about the person's needs. Managers should find a safe, quiet place to talk to the individual about their needs so that the right level of support can be arranged, including necessary reasonable adjustments.

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This is where good people management skills, plus basic empathy and common sense, are essential. Managers need to ensure they are seen as approachable and listen when a colleague asks for help. They should also be mindful of whether people would feel safe sharing their problem at work. Trained Mental Health First Aiders may be called upon if necessary to provide specific support.

11. Support if Unwell and Absent

Sometimes an employee may be so unwell they need time off work to recover. How well this is managed is key in shaping how well and how quickly people are able to return to work and get back to feeling healthy and able to work again.

With all cases of medium – long term sickness absence, but especially when a difficulty with mental health and wellbeing is identified a leader, or line manager, will undertake regular “check-ins”. The nature of these will be discussed with the individual so as to not make the situation worse, such as contact via text or email rather than a phone call, or meeting for coffee.

12. Support for Returning to Work

Effective return-to-work interviews can ensure difficulties with mental health are identified at an early stage before they get worse. However, to be effective, managers must understand how to use them to build trust and engagement. Before the interview, managers must always tell people what they can expect in advance and make it clear that the return-to-work interview is a supportive measure to help them make a successful and lasting return to the workplace and address any on-going health needs.

13. Workplace Adjustments

Workplace adjustments for mental health are often quite small, simple, practical and cost-effective changes. They could include anything from offering rooms for quiet work, to starting a buddy system. Often the change isn't physical, but about attitude, expectation or communication.

Employers have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments once they are aware that something about work is causing a problem for someone with a mental health condition.

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14. Building Mental Health Literacy

Building mental health literacy means boosting employees' knowledge and skills so they can better manage their own mental health and improve their ability to support that of others.

Ensuring all team members have a good understanding of mental health, and the factors that affect workplace wellbeing, is essential for building a healthy, happy and productive workforce.

As a Trust we will do this by:

- Embedding mental health in our induction and training and ensuring our staff are given information on how best to manage mental health and what support is available
- Raising the profile of mental health by openly talking about positive mental health in team meetings, performance management meetings, training days etc
- Making the most of internal communications and raising awareness through our intranet to myth bust, share factsheets, tips for managers, useful web links and FAQs etc
- Offering training to line managers where appropriate to ensure they are fully supported in their role.

15. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy and the arrangements to support mental health and wellbeing will be monitored by trustees and senior leaders through visits and agreed performance indicators including, but not limited to: questionnaires, attendance data, turnover data.

The policy will be reviewed annually and revised in line with feedback from consultation and as new members of staff are trained in Mental health first aid.

16. Links with other Policies and Procedures

This policy links to various policies and procedures, including:

- Curriculum
- Relationship (Behaviour)
- HR policies
- Staff Code of Conduct.

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Appendix A: New Economics Foundation Five Ways to Wellbeing

Resources can be found <https://health-in-mind.org.uk/resources/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>

Connect – Connecting with the people around us is a great way to remind ourselves that we're important and valued by others

Be active – We know that there's a link between staying active and positive mental health and wellbeing

Take notice – Taking notice of our thoughts, emotions and surroundings is a great way to stay present and pay attention to our needs

Keep learning – Learning new things is a good way to meet new people and boost our self confidence, which in turn improves our mental health and wellbeing.

Give to others – Research has found a link between doing good things and an increase in wellbeing

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Appendix B: Mental Health First Aiders

Trust Board Mental Health First Aider:

(support to Central Trust team)

Central Trust team Mental Health First Aiders:

Esther Bushell (Chief Operating officer)

Kay Matthews (HR Business Partner)

Kevin Latham (Chief Executive Officer)

Nicky Harris (Finance Assistant)

Isebrook School: Mental Health First Aider

Tracy Latham (Headteacher)

Sharon Taylor (Senior Welfare Manager)

Ryan Storey (Assistant Head)

Michelle Brett (Assistant Head)

Lynn Johnston (Inclusion Lead & SENCo)

Anthea Hayes (Family Support Worker)

Jade Mahoney (Thrive Practitioner)

Isebrook School: Mental Health at work

Julie Fellows Deputy Head Teacher

Siobhan Morris Assistant Head