



# STAFF WELL-BEING POLICY TO INCLUDE STRESS MANAGEMENT

2023-2026

MAT Board Approval:	November 2020
Last Review:	October 2023
Review Date:	Autumn 2026
Member of Staff Responsible:	Mrs Claire Davies

## Our Vision

‘To Love, To Learn, To Serve’ sums up the DoWMAT’s vision for those who come together to create the MAT, enabling all to flourish both as individuals and in community with each other; living life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

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## Our Values



### To Love

The New Testament sums up the entire law as a call to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Galatians 5:14). The Bible teaches that we are only able to love because God first loved us (1 John 4:10). This love is expected to characterise the way in which the DoWMAT operates, makes decisions, builds relationships, and carries out its day-to-day business: each person putting the needs of others before their own, with a commitment to the flourishing of all. The exposition of love in 1 Corinthians 13 reminds us that love is patient, kind, forgiving, generous, humble, trusting, respectful, hopeful, resilient and enduring. Those who learn and work in the DoWMAT, and all who come into contact with it, can expect to experience that love in the way that they are treated.



### To Learn



The DoWMAT is a Christian learning community that is committed to enabling all to live a life of freedom and transformation as a result of the hope and wisdom that learning brings. Learning is at the heart of the Church of England’s vision for and commitment to education. Growing in wisdom is celebrated in the Bible and all are exhorted to listen, to seek guidance, to acquire knowledge and to learn discretion (Proverbs 1: 1-6), largely through human relationships and interactions. Jesus’ teaching, as summed up in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10), describes human beings who are learning to live a life that is characterised by humility, compassion, mercy, righteousness and peace. The learning that takes place within the DoWMAT is expected to be recognisably rooted in these godly characteristics and focused upon enabling the holistic development of people who are made in the image of God.

### To Serve

Service and servant leadership, was a striking feature of the way in which Jesus lived his life. The example he gave to his disciples in washing their feet (John 13:1-17) provides us with a role model for the way in which we should seek to live in community with others. Putting the needs of others before our own, supporting people in their growth and development as holistic human beings, enabling people’s gifts and talents to come to the fore as a result of our service to them are all defining characteristics of the way in which the DoWMAT operates. In serving others and meeting their needs through generosity of spirit, we manifest God’s grace and love for others (1 Peter 4:8-11).



These core values underpin all aspects of our Trust as we strive to make a positive difference to the lives of all DoWMAT pupils whilst they are at school and in later life. Through these values, we can be sure our community is one of hope; a place of transformation and trust, where all are treated with respect and dignity.

**OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALS | COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS | STRONG SYSTEMS | CONFIDENT LEARNERS**

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## STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees.

Preventing stress is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of the Trust's academy staff, which remains a key priority. In light of this, the Trust understands the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause our employees to become stressed.

The Mental Health Foundation defines stress as, *our body's response to pressure. Many different situations or life events can cause stress. It is often triggered when we experience something new or unexpected that threatens our sense of self or when we feel we have little control over a situation.*

*We all deal with stress differently. Our ability to cope can depend on our genetics, early life events, personality and social and economic circumstances.*

*When we encounter stress, our body produces stress hormones that trigger a fight or flight response and activate our immune system. This helps us respond quickly to dangerous situations.*

*Sometimes, this stress response can be helpful. It can help us push through fear or pain so we can run a marathon or deliver a speech, for example. Our stress hormones usually return to normal quickly once the stressful event is over, and there won't be any lasting effects.*

*However, too much stress can cause adverse effects. It can leave us in a permanent stage of fight or flight, leaving us overwhelmed or unable to cope. Long term, this can affect our physical and mental health.*

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of each academy and their staff members in supporting wellbeing and promoting mental health, and to advise employees on how to deal with mental health issues and prevent stress.

### 1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

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

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Absence Policy
- Induction of New Staff Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Local Academy Board** is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the academy – promoting stress as a serious issue rather than a weakness.
- Consulting the Headteacher on managing staff stress and promoting wellbeing.
- Supporting the Headteacher in putting measures in place to support staff wellbeing.
- Actively trying to eliminate stressors in the academy, e.g. by considering the format and quantity of information it requests from the Headteacher / SLT and reducing the number of LAB meetings to a minimum.
- Working with the Headteacher to ensure monitoring visits are strategic, focussed and manageable.
- Ensuring all committee meetings are purposeful, focussed, structured and relevant to the academy development priorities, sticking to set timescales and not over-running.
- Developing an annual schedule of work and ensuring work is not duplicated between meetings of committees and the full Local Academy Board.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Creating a positive and supportive atmosphere throughout the academy.
- Implementing CPD which equips staff with the tools needed to effectively manage stress.
- Developing a sensitive performance management process that is linked to clear, up-to-date, manageable job specifications.

- Including all staff in the academy's decision-making processes, where possible.
- Organising extra support for staff at times of increased stress, e.g. during Ofsted inspections.
- Encouraging staff to take advantage of any initiatives introduced to promote wellbeing and effective working.
- Ensuring that all academy policies that affect staff wellbeing are properly adhered to and reviewed.
- Authorising any staff absences, as well as granting extended leave in exceptional circumstances.
- Monitoring employees' workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring they are not overworked, and providing regular updates regarding absence to the Local Academy Board whilst maintaining staff confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Policy.
- Regularly communicating with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
- Conducting and implementing the recommendations of risk assessments, considering the causes of stress.
- Ensuring all staff have read and understood this policy.
- Organising thorough inductions for new employees, which explain the academy's policies / code of conduct and ensure new members of staff have received all the relevant information they require, including the procedures for raising concerns about wellbeing.
- Monitoring all staff absences and reporting this information to the DoWMAT Central Team, as appropriate.

All staff members are responsible for:

- Being able to recognise the early signs of stress or mental health issues in themselves and their colleagues.
- Supporting co-workers if they become stressed, which may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
- Maintaining a personal healthy work-life balance.
- Promoting a positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the academy.

- Being open to discussing stress.
- Reporting honestly about their wellbeing and any incidents of stress, e.g. being overworked.
- Where possible, asking for help when they feel under pressure or stressed.
- Attending events and training opportunities which promote wellbeing and health.
- Not acting in a manner which endangers themselves or others.

### 3. IDENTIFYING WARNING SIGNS

The academy recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and become stressed by different situations and stimuli throughout their working lives. Because of this, it is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues stress.

The following sources of stress can often be attributed to work:

- Overworking or undertaking work that does not match the employee's skills and abilities.
- Fear of change and trying to cope with change, e.g. advancements in technology.
- Insufficient workload or not being able to use skills.
- Lack of job security.
- Poor relationships with colleagues and a lack of involvement.
- Harassment or bullying.
- Crisis management.
- Not having a long-term plan in place.

The academy recognises that home and personal lives can also prove stressful for staff; bereavement, separation, financial and family problems make people more vulnerable to stress at work. It is common that a combination of stress at home and work can make people particularly stressed.

The academy will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy workplace.

The academy has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress.

All members of staff will be aware of the warning signs that can indicate that a person may be having trouble managing stress.

All members of staff will look out for the following indicators when identifying stress in themselves or others:

#### Behavioural indicators

Difficulty sleeping  
Changes in eating habits  
Increased smoking or drinking  
Isolation from friends and family

#### Physical indicators

Tiredness  
Indigestion and nausea  
Headaches  
Aching muscles  
Heart palpitations

#### Mental indicators

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

#### Emotional indicators

Anger or irritability  
Anxiety  
Hypersensitivity  
Feeling drained and lethargic

## 4. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT STAFF

To positively impact levels of stress in the academy, the Headteacher and Local Academy Board will consider a wide range of actions, led by the Headteacher, which may include:

- Leading by example and encouraging staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a full life outside of work.



- Making the most of using INSET days to build relationships, as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier.
- Assisting with work by helping to manage employees' workloads.
- Reaching out to staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. bereavement, allowing sufficient time off and supporting them when they return to work.

Measuring staff wellbeing and identify workload issues by:

- Commissioning staff surveys on an annual basis and organising structured conversations about workload with staff.
- Considering the workload impact of new initiatives / working practices.
- Addressing identified workload issues in a sensible, timely manner.
- Adopting return to work practices which promote a positive, caring strategy for staff who are returning to work following sick leave.

The academy will ensure wellbeing is promoted and stress is prevented through good management practices, including the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures.
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure the right candidates are recruited.
- CPD procedures to ensure all members of staff have the necessary skills and abilities to undertake the duties required.
- Promotion and reward procedures.
- Performance management procedures.
- Capability and absence management – return to work procedures will ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.
- Suitable adaptations for disability.
- Harassment and anti-bullying resources.
- Flexible working arrangements, in line with the Flexible Working HR guidance.

In addition, Mental Health and Wellbeing Support for School Leaders is available through Val Turner at Apples of Silver, to include;

- Day Retreat for Senior Leaders at Apples of Silver in Hereford for a maximum of 8 people per session to be booked through The Education Team.
- Confidential one-to-one surgery conversations of 30 minutes or 60 minutes appointment slots are available, to be held at the Diocesan office in Lowesmoor, or online to be booked directly with Val Turner.
- INSET sessions to be held either in school or at Apples of Silver in Hereford for half day or full day sessions are available to be booked through The Education Team.
- Confidential on-going Senior Leader Support to be booked directly with Val Turner.

Val can be contacted by email: [therealvalmark@gmail.com](mailto:therealvalmark@gmail.com) Apples of Silver, 2 River Meadows, Hampton Park Road, Hereford, HR1 1TB.

## 5. SELF-MANAGEMENT

Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they are feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.

Staff are encouraged to take action to manage their own stress, these actions will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity and any negative feelings, exercise will also help to clear thoughts and deal with problems more calmly.
- Managing their workload and establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life.
- Prioritising work, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference.
- Taking advantage of the wellbeing initiatives and support offered by the academy.

## 6. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any concerns arising with regard to work stress, unmanageable workloads or general well-being should be notified to the Headteacher immediately.

All cases will be treated with confidentiality.

Where problems with wellbeing arise, the necessary support and appropriate actions will be considered. This may include support from HR advisers and/or external services, e.g. occupational health.

The academy will continue to support staff when external services are involved.

Support will be provided to staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances outside of the workplace. The academy will direct staff to support, both internal and external, and consider a plan of work and duties that can be managed differently during challenging periods.

Support for staff who are experiencing challenging circumstances within the academy will be provided following the procedures outlined in the Grievance Policy.

## **7. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

It is responsibility of DoWMAT Board of Directors to review this policy on a regular basis.

*Ref: October2020*

*Reviewed by TB: October 2023*