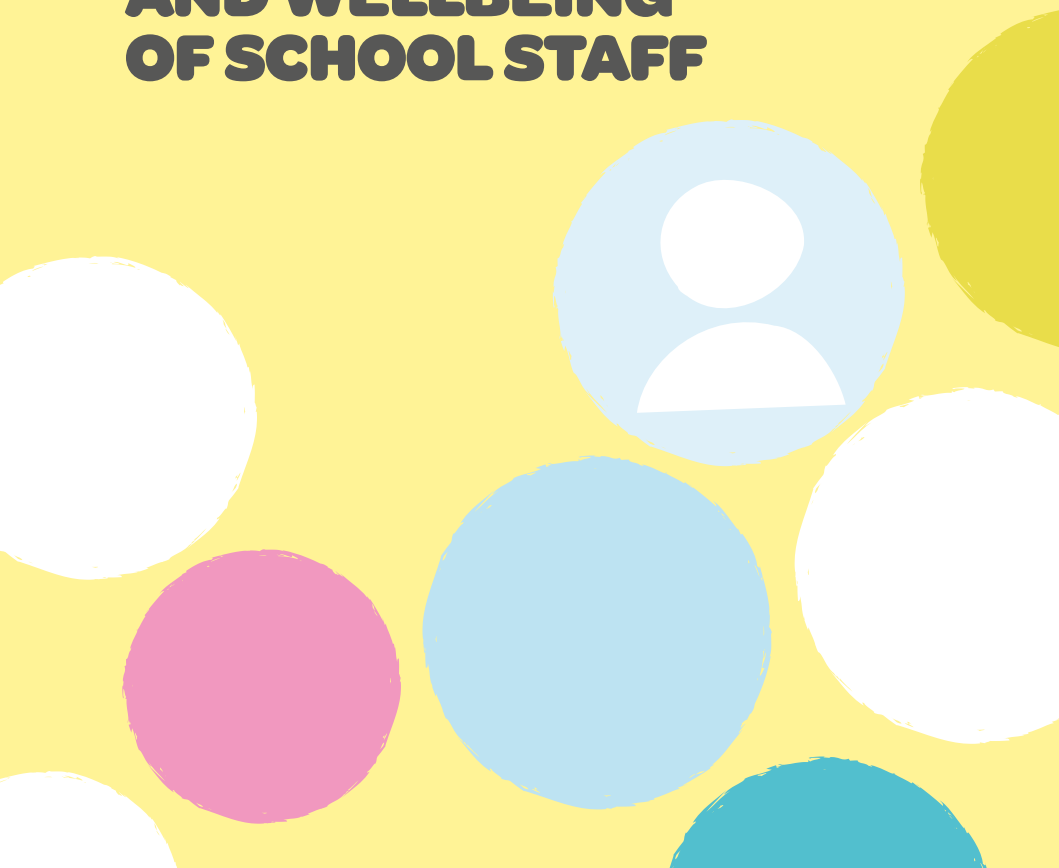
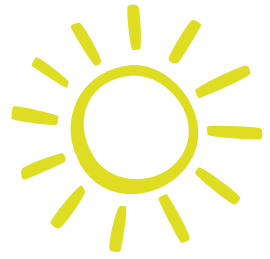




SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF SCHOOL STAFF





WE ALL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH, JUST AS WE ALL HAVE PHYSICAL HEALTH.

Yet often mental health is not talked about openly like physical health.

SAMH want to remove the barriers to talking about mental health and believe that in doing so children, young people and adults will seek help more easily and at a time when they need it most.

SAMH believes in creating healthy workplaces that have a positive culture and enable everyone to thrive. Like all workplaces the wellbeing of all school staff is important.

Working in a school can be extremely rewarding, but it is also demanding both physically and emotionally. Busy workloads, including supporting pupils with emotional and behavioural needs, can lead to additional pressures; so it's really important to take time to maintain your own wellbeing.



TIPS FOR FEELING MENTALLY HEALTHY AT SCHOOL

- If your workload is becoming unmanageable, and is affecting your mental health, share your concerns with your line manager or a trusted colleague and explore what support could be offered. Similarly, support your colleagues and feel able to ask “are you ok?”
- Sometimes feelings can be lost in emails or the tone misinterpreted; so where possible speak to colleagues verbally. This means you can both clearly communicate what you really need to say.
- It is important to stop and enjoy your lunch. Consider getting outside for some fresh air, and wherever possible, set a specific time to leave work.
- Help set up a Staff Wellbeing Group with after school activities (e.g. Wellbeing Wednesdays with Pilates classes, badminton, or staff social outings).
- Don't overcommit yourself by taking on too many responsibilities. Look carefully at your workload and see what is manageable in the time that you have.
- Challenging behaviour in the classroom can affect how you feel physically and mentally. Share concerns with a colleague or manager, observe other staff strategies or seek training to help.
- Remember, when you are feeling stressed, it can be hard to manage work. Where possible, speak to senior management, so they can help you identify what it is that's making you stressed, and help make changes to remove some of the pressure.
- Getting the right work-life balance can be hard but, where possible, try and separate out home and work. Try to wind down from work, and especially before bedtime.
- Find out what you can about your Employee Assistance Programmes. These services are often free and are there to be accessed when staff need them most.



HELPING SENIOR MANAGERS CREATE A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT AT SCHOOL

Good mental health at work and good management go together. Here are some ideas for the school management team:

- Check in daily with staff and ask “how are you?”. Enable an “open door” policy where staff feel listened to, supported and valued.
- To ensure staff feel supported at work, consider having some staff trained as Mental Health First Aiders.
- Recognise the strengths in your team, as well as what triggers them.
- Be genuine when giving feedback and ensure that the whole team are acknowledged in their efforts.
- Consider sending out a Staff Wellbeing Survey to find out how your staff are feeling at work. Provide opportunities to suggest ways to improve their wellbeing and reduce stress.
- Encourage staff to set up Staff Wellbeing Groups and, where possible, let group leaders be staff, not leaders. Allow the Wellbeing Leader to organise wellbeing activities and events, and encourage everyone to contribute ideas.
- Provide wellbeing books and resources in the school library or staff room.



HELPING SENIOR MANAGERS CREATE A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT AT WORK/CONTD

- A Wellbeing Wall can display information on healthy living, support services and fun suggestions. Display information on your Employee Assistance Programmes, and encourage staff to use it when needed.
- During Inset Days, allow staff time to relax and feel valued by organising wellbeing activities (e.g. yoga, walking, mindfulness, football or even baking).
- Make time to have fun as a team with after school events and nights out. Do ensure everyone is included and never exclude anyone due to the cost of an activity.
- Benevolent fund – create a staff fund that will pay for a card or flowers to be sent to staff who have been off long-term or suffered a bereavement.
- Allow staff to enjoy their breaks and lunch free from school work discussions and make the staff room healthy with fresh fruit and herbal teas.
- Recognise the need for work life balance when organising after school sessions.
- Create a positive work culture, where all staff treat each other with respect. Gossip and unwarranted criticism can severely impact on mental health and wellbeing and ultimately work performance. It should be challenged wherever possible. Similarly, perceived cliques should be discouraged so everyone feels included and valued.

USEFUL CONTACTS

SAMH

t: 0141 530 1000

e: enquire@samh.org.uk

w: samh.org.uk

Details of local SAMH services and information and sign-posting for people concerned about mental health.

Monday – Friday 9am – 4.45pm

Breathing Space

t: 0800 83 85 87 (Monday to Thursday, 6pm – 2am; Friday 6pm to Monday 6am)

w: breathingspace.scot

A free, confidential helpline for anyone feeling low, anxious or depressed.

Samaritans

w: samaritans.org.uk

Free, confidential listening service providing emotional support.

Be Mindful

w: bemindful.co.uk

Information about mindfulness and stress reduction courses

Education Support Partnership

t: 0800 562 561 (helpline)

w: educationsupportpartnership.org.uk

Acas Scotland

t: 0300 123 1100

w: acas.org.uk

Advice and guidance on employment relations



for Scotland's mental health

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