



Ackworth Mill Dam School Staff Wellbeing Charter

September 2022

Introduction – Overview

Ackworth Mill Dam School, in conjunction with Waterton Academy Trust, is committed to the wellbeing of all our staff and ensuring that we promote a culture of well-being throughout all areas of school life. We recognise each individual as one person, with unique talents and gifts which are celebrated by all. This Well-being Charter is underpinned by our core values and recognition that staff are Ackworth Mill Dam School's greatest asset.

As an organisation, we understand the importance of prioritising the mental health, well-being, work-life balance and resilience of every member of our staff to benefit them on an individual, personal level, as an educational professional as well as an organisation.

It is understood by the Senior Leaders and the Governing Body that all staff have commitments outside their working lives which can also impact on wellbeing.

Developing this Charter with **all the staff, for all the staff**, ensures wellbeing is integrated and embedded into all practices and areas of school life, creating a positive environment where all staff feel the sense of value and belonging and promotes staff engagement, performance and achievement within our school family. All staff are treated fairly, equally and professionally at all times.

Rationale - Why is well-being a priority for Ackworth Mill Dam School?

At Ackworth Mill Dam School, we recognise that to work in an educational setting, we treat this responsibility as a vocation and so recognise that all staff go above and beyond for our

children and their families. As a result, we care about our staff immensely and the holistic support they require to lead a healthy life.

We want our staff to perform to the best of their ability, with increased productivity, engagement, resilience and job satisfaction each day; it is about all staff wanting to work at Ackworth Mill Dam.

When staff need support, we want our staff to feel valued and invested in, both professionally but within their personal life. In times of need or challenge, we want our staff to manage stress and/or anxiety better, therefore developing and leading healthier coping strategies.

If we have happy, healthy staff, we have happy, healthy children who feel proud to attend Ackworth Mill Dam School and make personal and academic progress throughout their time at our school.

Vision / Aims

We pride ourselves on the look and feel of our school. To achieve this, we:

- Embed sustainable well-being practices that positively impact on all staff
- Have engagement from all stakeholders – empowering all staff to proactively look after themselves.
- Have clear practices embedded to ensure all staff feel heard, valued and empowered to fulfil their role to the best of their ability and deliver a high-standard of education to our children; staff enjoy sustainable and fulfilling careers to lead an effective work-life balance which is maintained.
- Ensure that there is a sense of belonging to our school family.

Objectives of this Charter – What will it provide and what is its purpose?

This Charter is not just a document – it is our lived, daily practices which are consistently developed and evaluated for all staff, by all staff. To ensure this practice, the Charter is:

- Shared with all staff at regular times throughout the school year.
- Reviewed by the Senior Leaders, Governing Body and Well-being Working Party.
- Shared on our school website for all stakeholders to access which also demonstrates to the ‘outside world’ our commitment to our staff
- Available on our ‘Wellbeing Boards’ within staff communal areas and our ‘Staff Shared’ network Drive.
- Part of the induction process for all new staff, including long-term supply and students.
- Shared with Parents, via our school website, communication methods e.g. Newsletter and social media accounts as part of our marketing strategy.
- Shared with the Governing Body and Academy Trust at regular intervals, throughout the school year.
- Integrated into all policies, practices and procedures, where applicable and reviewed by the Senior Leaders regularly. It remains a key school development priority for the Senior Leaders and the school’s Mental Health & Well-Being Leader – Mrs Annable

Key People

- Senior Mental Health Lead/Headteacher – Miss Lauren Norton
- Mental Health First Aider/Senior Leader/SENDSCO – Mrs Sarah Annable
- Well-being Working Party:
 - Senior Mental Health Lead/Headteacher – Miss Lauren Norton
 - Mental Health First Aider/Senior Leader/SENDSCO – Mrs Sarah Annable
 - Jade Smith – Office Manager
 - Ashleigh Daley – Class Teacher
 - Wendy Burton – Learning Mentor
 - Kelly Rich – Teaching Assistant
 - Stephanie Field – Governor (TBC)

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Governing Body / Trustees:

- Be responsible for the implementation of this Charter
- Actively support the development of the Well-being culture within school, recognising and promoting the importance of prioritising staff mental, emotional and physical well-being
- Ensure all policies and practices are assessed for workload impact; consider implementation of practices to support staff well-being, such as flexible working patterns etc. where these will not be detrimental to the school
- Provide fair and consistent support for staff where needed
- Ensure this Charter is reviewed regularly to adapt to changing needs and legislative frameworks

Headteacher/ SLT:

- Provide a safe and healthy environment for all staff at work where everyone is treated fairly and equally
- Provide regular opportunities to collect, listen to and respond to staff voice
- Encourage all staff to take responsibility for their own well-being and have access to regular health and well-being training, support and resources
- Support staff to carry out their roles effectively, ensuring they have the necessary skills and training; ensure there are clear lines of communication
- Work with the Governing Body to ensure strategies are effective in risk assessing work-stress and monitoring work-load and implement necessary support mechanisms
- Create a culture of openness where there are opportunities to discuss concerns, where any problems or needs are quickly identified, and support is given. Stress and mental health issues are not seen as weaknesses. Clear procedures are followed to support staff during absence or returning to work

Well-being Lead/Team:

- Provide feedback and regularly support the reviewing of this Charter to the Headteacher and the Governing Body.
- Be a varied representation of the staff body, from all different role and responsibilities.
- Support with the collection, listening and responding to staff voice to make any necessary improvements of adaptations.

- Provide support and guidance to colleagues who may be experiencing difficulties, either professionally or personally, signposting to the relevant agencies or Senior Leaders.
- Play an active, professional part in school life, sharing their ideas, views and feelings
- Where possible and able, as a role model, take responsibility for their own well-being, engaging in training, support and resources that may be relevant to them; they will seek support or help if required, recognise the importance of good communication from both parties. Raise any concerns or issues at the earliest possible moment to enable effective support to be engaged.

Staff:

- Make themselves aware of the Staff Well-being Charter and other relevant school policies.
- Take responsibilities for their own well-being, engaging in training, support and resources that may be relevant to them; they will seek support or help if required, recognise the importance of good communication from both parties. Raise any concerns or issues at the earliest possible moment to enable effective support to be engaged.
- Play an active, professional part in school life, sharing their ideas, views and feelings
- Support their own and colleague's well-being by respecting the health and safety requirements in the workplace

Appendix

Legislation / Duty of Care:

This Charter is informed by a number of related strategies and guidance, as well as a number of legal requirements, including the school's duty of care to all its staff.

This Charter can be viewed alongside policies including, but not limited to:

- Trust Code of Conduct
- Ackworth Mill Dam School Staff Handbook
- Health & Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Absence Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Legislation that will be considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, including, but not exclusively:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Equality Act 2010
- Working Time regulations
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Stress Risk Assessment
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>
- <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/supporting-staff-wellbeing-in-schools/>



Staff Well-Being Charter

This pledge promotes, supports and guarantees the well-being of all our staff through:

1. Charter Principles:

- Our school has signed up to the DFE Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, as a shared commitment to protect, promote and enhance the wellbeing of all our staff.
- All staff entering the teaching profession, as Early Career Teachers, are provided with a high-quality and personalised induction period, led by an experienced Mentor on the Senior Leadership Team. Other colleagues new to Ackworth Mill Dam School, also receive an introductory mentor as part of their induction process.
- The school has a dedicated Wellbeing Working Group which is led by the Mental Health Lead and supported by a range of staff across all roles, including teaching, senior leaders, cleaning staff, admin staff and lunchtime supervisors. This group helps mould and develop the wellbeing of staff, including how approaches, for example, mindfulness, can be used.
- Staff workload and wellbeing form a continual part of the Academy Improvement Plan and are reviewed in conjunction with the Governing Body.
- Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and refined to take into consideration impact of workload and staff wellbeing.

2. Culture and Ethos:

- This Charter is shared with all staff and is a lived approach to school life at Ackworth Mill Dam School.
- Our Safeguarding Leads receive termly external supervision from a coaching specialist.
- Sharing positive feedback and news is embedded within the school's communication approach to staff – demonstrating gratitude for all is a key strength. Relevant meeting notes and information are also shared with all staff to help make sure that everyone receives the same messages, so that they are included and engaged in all activities at the school.
- Staff voice is collected regularly and is coordinated by the Staff Wellbeing Working Party. Next steps, feedback and considerations are then acted upon by Senior Leaders.
- We purchase our Staff Absence Insurance from Schools Advisory Service (SAS) and as part of this, we buy and use their Wellbeing Services, for our staff, which offers them access to:
 - Physiotherapy
 - Counselling & Mindfulness
 - Weight Management
 - Nurse Support Service
 - Menopause Service
 - Leadership Wellbeing Support
 - GP Phone & Video Consultation
 - Cancer & Chronic Illness Support
 - Private Medical Operations

- Our Academy Trust provides an additional route for all colleagues to access high quality, independent and professional counselling. Staff are also able to meet with Occupational Health to address individual health concerns to ensure our school can make adequate reasonable adjustments.
- School Leaders' provide regular small acts of gratitude and recognition to all staff to ensure everyone feels valued. These are certainly not 'tokenistic' and can include gifts at specific times of year, staff buffets and much more!
- Senior Leaders model good working practices by discouraging perfectionism and not allowing over working to be normalised.
- Staff can come to Senior Leaders and/or other colleagues to seek support and guidance, with regular 'check ins' or 'catch ups' planned, as necessary.
- Times and opportunities for socialising out of school hours take place and are encouraged.
- Senior Leaders value hobbies and interests of staff and actively encourage and support this, for example, being a member of a choir or football team.

3. **Organisational Structure**

- Ackworth Mill Dam School prides itself on robust timetabling and calendar organisation. Yearly, termly and weekly timetables and/or diaries are established to advance to ensure a smooth transition and working day for all staff.
- All staff receive the necessary and appropriate coaching, training and support via internal school colleagues and Trust Central Team members. Whenever any issues or concerns are identified early, Leaders strive to support colleagues to ensure they receive all the necessary support and guidance.
- The school has a flexible and effective Leave of Absence Policy. The school leaders recognise the value of ensuring staff receive the necessary and appropriate release time related to their personal life. The Headteacher values the time staff require to attend family or personal events, often relating to their children and encourages this attendance, whenever possible.
- Our school staff room is a clean, vibrant and minimalistic space for staff and does not feature any work-related information or displays. Our staff toilets include toiletries and personal care items for everyone to use.
- Ackworth Mill Dam School Leaders' have a commitment and desire to provide all staff with ongoing and high quality continual professional development opportunities and training, as part of their role. The school and Academy Trust also provide purposeful and relevant wellbeing CPD training to maintain our commitment to all colleagues both personally and professionally.
- The Performance Management & Teacher Appraisal process at Ackworth Mill Dam School is underpinned by a clear rationale. A person is not to be appraised. However, our work in school is subject to appraisal because as a community of professionals, we have elected to serve our local community through teaching pupils. In appraising our work, we are seeking to even better the service we offer – to identify, celebrate and further build on areas of strength and growth to identify and develop our areas of our practice.
- Our school is well-resourced and staff can access resources effectively. Where resources are missing, Senior Leaders consider these requests and make every financial endeavour to put these in place.
- Formal applications for sabbaticals are considered and supported, as required, by the school and the Academy Trust.

- Staff are encouraged to take their PPA time at home.
- Ackworth Mill Dam School is a member of the Academy Trust Wellbeing Working Party.

4. **Seeking Support**

- We have an 'open door policy', which empowers staff to have valued, honest and open conversations.
- All staff know how to access both wellbeing/mental health support and professionals support (for specific aspects of work).
- Our Headteacher has completed Senior Mental Health Training via the DFE grant and quality assured provider, Leeds Beckett University (Carnegie School of Education). The Learning Mentor is also a trained Mental Health First Aider (MHFA England).
- When staff are absent, return to work meetings take place to ensure all necessary next steps and reasonable adjustments are considered. If required, liaison with the Academy Trust HR and Occupational Health is provided.
- As detailed above, staff have access to external counselling via the Academy Trust but also can access a range of services from our Staff Absence Insurance from Schools Advisory Service (SAS) Wellbeing Services.

5. **Workload and Work-life Balance**

Workload and lack of work-life balance is cited as the main reason teachers leave the profession and at Ackworth Mill Dam School we are passionate about tackling this issue, head on! We are passionate that if any unnecessary work can be eliminated, then it must; if it is not having an impact, then it must not happen.

- Senior Leaders' have, and continue, to use the DFE Workload Reduction Toolkits to review and implement necessary changes to all aspects of school life, including data, marking & feedback, planning and simple operational arrangements and routines for the day to day running of our school. All necessary updates to policies and procedures take place, accordingly, to reflect changes to workload
- Staff Meetings are only held when required and balanced around key events such as Parents' Evenings. School Leaders' value the time of teaching staff and do not waste this with unnecessary meetings.
- Annual and termly reports for all children reflect DFE statutory requirements but are designed to be manageable for staff.
- Leaders' are committed to all staff receiving their 'protected time', whether this is their PPA allocation, Early Career release time, subject leader release time as well as dedicated time for leaders when working on strategic actions.
- The Headteacher's email signature states: *'Regardless of the time or day I sent this email to you, there is no expectation for you to read or respond to my email outside of your normal working hours, during annual leave or on days you are not contracted to work.'* Emailing and communication out of school hours is kept to a minimum and valued by Leaders. Leaders also value the individual's right to work out of school hours to fit around their family life and external commitments. Leaders will not add the unnecessary burden of dictating staff cannot take their laptops home or email out of hours, for example. Leaders believe that to adopt a dictatorship approach adds any additional stress and anxiety to a member of staff, which is not required.