



# Staff Wellbeing and Welfare Policy

## Key document details

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## **Section 1 - Staff Wellbeing**

### **Statement of Intent**

Steel River Academy Trust wants to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise that staff wellbeing is important to pupil achievement and the school's performance.

All Steel River schools are committed to making sure that this Staff Wellbeing & Welfare Policy is implemented so that each individual is able to cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of personal challenges.

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a Trust ethos which supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

### **Aims of the policy**

We aim to:

- Develop a healthy, motivated workforce who can deliver a high standard of education to pupils
- Help ensure that our schools promote the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health
- Recognise that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness and to agree on flexible working practices where possible without damaging opportunities for pupils to succeed
- Communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly
- Respond sensitively to external pressure which affect the lives of staff members
- Provide staff with training to deal positively with stressful incidents, and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies via training
- Improve staff development, co-operation, and teamwork by creating effective leaders
- Make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work-related health and wellbeing issues
- Identify and understand what wellbeing at work means to the Staff of Steel River Academy Trust and to ensure that those things remain a focus for Leadership.

### **Creating a successful Workforce**

Through the use of questionnaires, discussions with staff and whole staff and team meetings, we have identified what is important to our employees in creating and sustaining a stable and successful workforce.

The elements identified below are the key characteristics that we believe are needed to succeed and all schools within the academy trust will strive to create an environment for all our staff that fulfils these important elements.

## Steel River Academy Trust – Characteristics of a successful Workforce



### Strategies to support the wellbeing of staff

The Trust has adopted a range of strategies to assess, support and improve the wellbeing of academy staff, including:

- A structured and well-planned programme of CPD to support staff in fulfilling their roles effectively and to invest in their continuous development. Training is tailored not only to meet school/trust priorities, but to meet the needs of individual staff.
- Annual worklife balance INSET sessions
- Annual staff questionnaires with issues addressed in a timely manner
- 1:1 wellbeing session with headteacher/phase leader
- Staff have access to online therapy sessions and support packages funded by the Trust
- Access to the Trust Counsellor at times of personal need
- Coaching and mentoring (both external and internal) for individual staff

- Strong networks across the Trust to support individuals and share best practice
- Investing in effective resources including technology to support teaching and learning and reduce the burden on staff
- High staffing levels and small classes where possible
- Flexible working arrangements around PPA time and some P D Days
- Dedicated leadership time for planning, monitoring and reviews
- Central staff to support with wider issues involving families and community (Trust counsellor, Education and Welfare Officer, Early Help/Family worker)
- Staff wellbeing provision is collated and monitored and reviewed annually.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **The Trustees/Governors at Steel River Academy Trust will:**

- Take overall responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring that staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance
- Adopt the appropriate policies in respect of 'family friendly' employment, including consideration of part-time working, flexible working patterns etc., where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the school
- Ensure that clear procedures are in place that will minimise the levels of stress caused to staff when following formal procedures such as the SRAT Disciplinary and Capability Policies
- Provide a range of strategies for involving staff in the school decision making process
- Review the demands of staff, and seek practical solutions wherever possible
- Adopt a process to monitor staff wellbeing via various routes including regular wellbeing questionnaires and staff absences

### **The Headteacher will:**

- Ensure that all staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance and lead by example in this regard
- Encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. They will be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and will act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises
- Support the governing body in ensuring that strategies are implemented to effectively manage and, where necessary, reduce employee stress.
- Adopt school policies and provide clear guidance regarding time-off for public or trade union duties, or for personal reasons. For further information refer to the school's Leave of Absence Policy
- Ensure that there are clear lines of communication between staff and Leadership with regards to all areas of school life

- Create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns and seek support in all aspects of their role
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and trained in-line with the school's priorities and offered opportunities for development
- Actively promote new and innovative ways of reducing workload while not impacting pupil achievement and the school's performance
- Monitor and review any measures that are planned, and assess their effectiveness
- Appoint a Mental Health and Wellbeing co-ordinator who is responsible for ensuring that the good health and wellbeing of all staff members is supported, promoted and valued by the school.
- Ensure that clear policies, procedures and actions are in place and are followed at all times

**Staff members will:**

- Make themselves aware of the school's staffing policies on Capability, Bullying and Harassment, Code of Conduct, Staff Attendance/Sickness etc.
- Assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or their colleagues
- Ask their Line Manager for help or support if required. This includes understanding that a good relationship requires communication from both parties and so it's important that issues are raised at the earliest possible moment so that effective strategies can be put in place to manage workloads
- Identify opportunities for development and take advantage of those offered by the school
- Apply for requests for leave of absence in advance and be honest about sickness absence leave
- Be encouraged to share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the school at formal meetings and directly with their Line Manager
- Be encouraged to respond to requests for completion of staff questionnaires so that all staff feedback can be included which will help form plans
- Follow the school's policies and procedures for raising concerns and refrain from 'negative gossiping' which may lead to low morale and misinterpretation of information/events
- Contribute to establishing and maintaining a positive climate across school

## **Section 2 - Staff Welfare**

### **Guidelines on Allowable Expenses and Occasions**

The Department of Education (DE) has directed that the Board of Trustees for Academy Trusts should agree a policy for Welfare/Hospitality related areas. Such expenditure must be necessary, appropriate to the occasion, represent an effective use of school funds and be of a reasonable amount.

Expenditure on hospitality and related areas must be directly related to, or associated with, the active conduct of official school business. When the school spends public money on hospitality or related areas, the occasion must, in the best judgement of the Trustees, produce a clear benefit for the school.

When determining whether such expenditure will produce a benefit for the school the Trustees must evaluate the importance of the event in terms of the costs involved, the availability of funds and any alternatives that would effectively serve the same purpose.

### **Statement of Intent**

At Steel River Academy Trust, Leaders, Governors and Trustees recognise the importance of developing a highly motivated and effective workforce. In order to achieve this, staff need to feel valued and know that their wellbeing is a priority, building a culture of trust and confidence.

A highly valued and motivated workforce, results in a real sense of togetherness within the team, low levels of staff absence, higher retention rates along with increased productivity and engagement, resulting in improved outcomes for children. We believe that staff wellbeing (including staff welfare) should be a Trust priority and any costs incurred to achieve this will be offset by the savings made from a highly valued and motivated team.

The Academy Trust will dedicate an allocated amount of each school's budget towards staff welfare. The use of this fund will align with the Academies financial handbook, seek approval from the Trust's external auditors, be fully transparent, free from extravagance and provided on school premises using in house facilities where possible.

### **Staff Welfare Budget**

Each school within Steel River Academy Trust will be permitted to set a staff welfare budget up to the following limits:

Group 1 school - £1000 per annum

Group 2 school - £1300 per annum

Group 3 school - £1500 per annum

Group 4 school - £1750 per annum

**Permissible uses of staff welfare fund**

- Tea and coffee (including milk and sugar)
- Light catering for staff training
- End of year celebration event in a modest venue
- Occasional staff room refreshments (e.g., biscuits)

**Non permissible uses of staff welfare fund**

- floral tributes
- small gifts or other tokens of appreciation for events such as birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, retirement, or farewell gatherings
- Bonus payments to staff at any level
- Purchase of any alcoholic beverages