OFG Education

Wellbeing Policy

Parkside House School

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1

This policy sets out the framework for our organisation to provide an environment that promotes and positively supports mental health and wellbeing for our colleagues and those we work with. The policy also aims to ensure those who are experiencing mental health and well-being challenges to be supported and treated with respect, confidentiality and without discrimination.

1.2

This Policy applies to everyone in Outcomes First Group regardless of role or status. It applies to all job applicants, contractors, agency workers, bank workers, consultants, directors and all colleagues who have a contract of employment with any company within OFG.

1.3

OFG recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked and improving an employees' ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improvements in individuals and organisational performance.

1.4

OFG has a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure so far as is reasonably practical the health, safety and welfare of its employees and those who may be affected by OFG'S operations. This extends to taking reasonable care to ensure that health is not put at risk through excessive and sustained levels of stress from work activities, i.e. to treat workplace stress like any other health hazard. Additional responsibilities are outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

1.5

The Policy does not give contractual rights to individual colleagues and OFG reserves the right to alter any of its terms at any time.

1.6

Implementation: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that our teams are aware of and understand this Policy and any subsequent revisions. It is the responsibility of all individuals to ensure that they have read and understood the contents of this Policy.

1.7

Should during any Wellbeing review your Line Manager feel or believe there is a risk of harm to yourself or anyone else, we have a duty of care and responsibility as a Company to contact the appropriate emergency services.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Word / Term	Definition
Wellbeing	The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.
Neurodiversity	Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in how people's brains function, learn, process information, and interact with the world. It recognises that neurological differences are a normal part of human diversity and may include autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, Tourette syndrome, and other neurodevelopmental differences
Mental Health	Refers to a person's emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how individuals think, feel and behave, as well as how they might handle stress and pressure, relate to others and make decisions.
Physical Health	The condition of your body. This includes whether you have an illness, injury or a health condition.

3.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to describe OFG's commitment to the wellbeing of our colleagues in its broadest sense and setting out how we will fulfil the legal obligations. OFG recognises that wellbeing is multifaceted and includes physical, mental, social, occupational and financial wellbeing. We are committed to creating a supportive environment that promotes positive wellbeing across all of these areas.

3.1

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Raise awareness and provide guidance on issues relating to health and wellbeing in recognition of OFG's role in positively supporting employee health.
- Encourage the adoption of a proactive approach to prevent and minimise the risks associated with poor health and wellbeing within the workplace.
- Help promote a culture of health within OFG.
- Create a supportive environment that enables colleagues to be proactive in supporting their own health and wellbeing.
- Support an improvement in the engagement for colleagues to discuss their wellbeing without discrimination.

3.2

Our mental health may change over time, just like our physical health does. The purpose of this Policy is to normalise talking about and paying attention to mental health. We advocate managers to create a localised safe space to talk openly on matters, managers can then let you know what we can do to support you, and to give you information of where you can go for further help.

3.3

The policy, procedures and processes identified within this Policy are applied to all colleagues irrespective of age, ethnicity, gender, marital or civil partnership status, nationality, offending history, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, social status, trade union membership or working patterns.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

4.1

It is the responsibility of the Group to;

- Listen to you if you tell us about your mental health concerns
- Keep information about your mental health confidential
- Help all our colleagues to be more aware about mental health
- Treat any issues of bullying and harassment in relation to mental health issues seriously – see our Bullying & Harassment Policy.
- Provide Mental Health First Aiders in local settings to support with advocacy and support around mental health issues.

4.2

It is the responsibility of each Line Manager to;

- Ensure they are aware of this Policy and understand their own behavior and be able to recognise concerns within their teams.
- Liaise with the HR advice team from the start for advice where colleagues raise concerns around their wellbeing.
- Be encouraged to be aware of and attend training, should there be any specific training provided by the Company, in order to best utilise the resources available to support any colleagues that raise concerns.
- Support colleagues if they are experiencing mental health issues, consider implementing wellbeing plans for colleagues where appropriate. Where additional support beyond this may be required, Line Managers to liaise with the HR advice team to consider options including occupational health.
- Treat colleagues with respect, not making judgements or assumptions about anyone because they have raised a mental health issue
- Respond to concerns raised swiftly and ensure they follow this Policy and notify the appropriate department(s) in accordance with this policy.
- Create a safe space for colleagues to share their mental health concerns and provide support, e.g. at the start of line management supervisions.
- Be aware of Mental Health First Aid support available locally and across the group, and signpost accordingly to colleagues.
- Be aware of and access for their teams to other support resources, and reflective practice groups facilitated by clinical colleagues

4.3

It is the responsibility of each colleague to;

- Ensure that they are aware of and understand this Policy and all of its contents and understand their own behaviour and how this may impact on others.
- Support in creating a respectful and productive work environment.
- Look out for each other, be aware of signs of stress, burnout or other wellbeing issues amongst colleagues and offer support or signpost when necessary.
- Participate in wellbeing programs offered by Outcomes First Group, such as mental health workshops, team-building events, resource sharing, reflective practice groups facilitated by clinical teams.
- Be proactive in seeking support if experiencing mental health or physical wellbeing challenges.

- Use available resources such as our Employee Assistance Programme, Mental Health First Aiders, counselling services or other resources as listed in clause 11.
- Maintain confidentiality when a colleague shares a personal wellbeing concern, unless there is a risk of harm where we would then need to follow our Safeguarding Policy.

4.4

It is the responsibility of HR to;

- Ensure this policy is maintained and updated regularly and is available to all colleagues via Share Point.
- Escalate incidents referred to HR that concern a risk of harm to any colleague.
- Ensure managers dealing with cases of mental health or physical health address these swiftly and support in protecting any vulnerable individual.
- Support services to access other support that may be helpful, such as supporting post critical incidents policy and resources.

4.5

If you feel that you are experiencing a mental health problem, we encourage you to talk to your GP about it as soon as you can, so you can start accessing support.

If managers need advice, they should contact the People Services team on 0333 015 6292 or email peopleadvice@ofgl.co.uk

5.0 NEURODIVERSITY

5.1

We will promote an inclusive environment for neurodiversity in our organisation. As part of this, we will provide appropriate workplace support to any of our colleagues who are neurodivergent.

5.2

Some examples of neurodevelopmental conditions (either diagnosed or self-identified) that may be experienced by colleagues and fall within the scope of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- autism, which affects a person's perception of the world and their interaction with others
- dyslexia, which can cause difficulties with how a person processes language and has an impact on their reading, writing, spelling, memory, etc
- dyspraxia, which can affect a person's physical and mental co-ordination
- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which can cause inattention, impulsiveness and hyperactivity.

Although we recognise that neurodivergence can mean challenges for affected individuals in the workplaces, we will also focus on the strengths that are brought to the workplace.

5.3

Although at OFG we consider difference, we also recognise these as disabilities and as such under our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we will make reasonable adjustments for colleagues who have a disability. This applies where they experience a substantial disadvantage within the workplace, in comparison to non-disabled employees.

For more information on our general approach towards disability at work, please refer to our Equality and Diversity Policy and Access to Work Policy.

You will not be treated unfairly or suffer any other form of detriment at work due to your neurodivergence. You will be given the same opportunities as other colleagues and will not be refused employment, overlooked for promotion and training opportunities or denied any other workplace benefits due to your neurodivergence.

5.4

We recognise that many neurodevelopmental conditions can affect individuals in very different ways. We will make sure that any support we give is right for you by talking to you about it first. We will not adopt a "one size fits all" approach, nor will we stereotype individuals based on common characteristics associated with their neurodivergence.

5.5

Some examples of workplace adjustments that may be considered (with professional advice and guidance from medical experts) to remove disadvantages faces by neurodivergent colleagues include, but are not limited to: (Please note that the below are to be in discussion with your line manager to balance support and the needs of the business):

Amending working duties (Please also refer to the Flexible Working Policy)

Offering flexible working arrangements

- Redesigning the workplace/workstation (Please refer to the Display Screen Equipment workstation guidance and checklist)

- Providing visible instructions next to office equipment and machinery, such as photocopiers
- Allowing colleagues to use equipment which supports them within the workplace
- Providing colleagues with lockers and name labels to help them organise their work and equipment
- Providing a mentor/buddy to colleagues when learning new tasks
- Allocating work areas with more natural light.
- Adaptation to training and learning resources, to support with engagement/learning

If there are other adjustments that are not in the list above that you feel would benefit you, please discuss with you line manager, who can speak to HR for additional support and information as appropriate, in ensuring the adjustments are right for you.

5.6

In some cases with consent we may seek further advice from our occupational health partner or your GP/specialist who can provide useful advice and support for colleagues and managers.

From time to time, we also may support or signpost you to complete an Access to Work application which is provided by the government to provide reasonable adjustments to support accessing your employment.

6.0 PHYSICAL HEALTH

6.1
We will promote a supportive framework to ensure our colleagues' physical health whilst in the workplace.

6.2
Common examples of physical conditions that may be experienced by employees and fall within the scope of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Persistent Migraines and Headaches
- Abdominal pain
- Allergies
- Skin Disorders
- Coughs & Respiratory infections
- Persistent Back and Joint issues

Should colleagues notice these symptoms and they are impacting a colleagues performance, they should seek medical advice and make their Line Manager aware.

6.3 Menopause and Perimenopause Support
OFG recognises that menopause and perimenopause can affect physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing and may impact an individual's experience at work. Colleagues experiencing symptoms will be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect. Where appropriate, reasonable workplace adjustments and support measures will be considered to help colleagues remain healthy, safe and effective in their role.

6.4
We actively encourage our colleagues to consider their physical health and provide opportunities to improve this through our enhanced benefits scheme with access to discounted gym membership, cycle to work, dental insurance and critical illness cover and many more please visit your VISTA benefits page.
From time to time, we also may support or signpost you to complete an Access to Work application which is provided by the government to provide reasonable adjustments to support accessing your employment.

7.0 MENTAL HEALTH

We will promote a supportive framework to ensure our colleagues' mental health whilst in the workplace.

7.1

Mental health encompasses a wide range of conditions and experiences that affect how a person thinks, feels and behaves. We promote a supportive framework for all colleagues experiencing mental health concerns.

7.2 Supporting Colleagues Working with Vulnerable Children and Young People

OFG recognises that colleagues working with children and young people, particularly those with complex needs, trauma backgrounds or behaviours that challenge, may experience emotional impact as part of their role. This may include stress, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma or emotional exhaustion. We are committed to supporting colleagues through access to appropriate wellbeing resources, reflective practice opportunities, management support, Mental Health First Aiders, Employee Assistance Programmes and other support services where required. Colleagues are encouraged to discuss any concerns affecting their wellbeing with their line manager or another appropriate source of support at the earliest opportunity.

7.3

Some examples of mental health needs that may be experienced by colleagues and fall within the scope of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Stress/Burnout
- Anxiety Disorders
- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Excessive use of Alcohol and/or Drug use outside of work (Please refer to the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Polices for inappropriate use of drug and alcohol during work)

We actively encourage our colleagues to consider their mental health and provide opportunities to improve this through our enhanced benefits scheme and many more please visit your VISTA benefits page.

7.4

When experiencing Mental health difficulties, colleagues are encouraged to reach out to a trusted colleague, manager, Mental Health First Aider, or HR representative. Outcomes First Group have a team of trained Mental Health First Aiders who are on hand to have supportive discussions and signpost as appropriate. If you are not sure who your Mental Health First Aiders are please reach out to line managers or HR who can signpost to you or alternatively look for a wall poster on site with this information included.

7.5

Colleagues are encouraged to approach discussions about their mental health and wellbeing with their line managers. Line managers should make time to complete wellbeing action plans to

support preventative mental health measures in the workplace. Please note that Mental Health First Aiders can support in approaching your manager if this is something that is a barrier for you in seeking support.

7.6

Colleagues suffering from stress should let their line manager know as soon as possible. The line manager should sit down with the colleague and complete the stress management risk assessment to support preventive health measures in the workplace.

7.7 Digital Wellbeing and Work-Life Balance

OFG recognises the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life. While there may be occasions when colleagues choose to work outside their normal hours, we encourage individuals to establish healthy boundaries and take appropriate time to rest and recharge.
Colleagues should not feel under pressure to routinely respond to emails, messages or telephone calls outside of their normal working hours unless this is part of their role or there is an agreed operational requirement. Line managers should lead by example and promote a culture that supports work-life balance, reasonable workloads and healthy use of digital communication.

7.8 Financial Wellbeing

OFG recognises that financial wellbeing can have a significant impact on an individual's overall health, wellbeing and work performance. Colleagues are encouraged to access the financial wellbeing support, benefits, discounts and resources available through VISTA and other employee support programmes. Information about available support will be communicated regularly to colleagues.

8.0 WELLBEING SUPPORT FOLLOWING A COLLEAGUE BREAVEMENT

8.1
OFG recognises when a colleague passes away it is important to support the situation with sensitivity and provide support to both those directly impacted as well as the wider team.

8.2
Employees may ask to be considered for up to 2 days paid leave in line with OFG's compassionate leave and special leave policy.

8.3
Our Employee Assistance Program offer grief counselling and support. We also have our Clinical team who are on hand to support colleagues struggling with the loss of a colleague.
Our Mental health First Aid team may also be able to offer support at this time, both locally and across the group.

8.4
OFG will offer a space for colleagues to express their condolences, such as through a condolence card, memory book or an online memorial. Alternatively, if the deceased has a nominated cause the colleagues may make a donation. This will be arranged at a local level.

8.5
Line managers need to set clear expectations that colleagues should be respectful of others' grieving processes. Not all colleagues will grieve in the same way, so a culture of empathy is crucial.

8.6
In line with the needs of the business and the requests of the family and where possible OFG may send company representatives to any memorial services – please note this will be a
selected group not all colleagues from one team this will be managed case by case and within the needs of the business.

8.7
If others would like to attend the funeral, it would be good to enable them to contribute in another way, e.g. writing a card, sending flowers or a gift.

8.8
If the bereavement is sudden and/or unexpected and potentially impactful on the whole school community – please consider the supporting colleagues post critical incident policy and
associated resources.

9.0 LEAVE FOR PERSONAL/DOMESTIC REASONS

9.1

OFG recognises that Domestic abuse can have a devastating and long-term impact on the victim and looks to support them wherever possible.

9.2

Employees who are victims of domestic abuse may be granted up to 10 days paid per year safe leave for reasons including but not limited to:

- Attending medical appointments and counselling
- Attending legal proceedings
- Seeking safe housing
- Visiting legal advisors or support agencies for re-housing or re-organising childcare, or for other relevant appointments.
- Matters as a result of family violence.

9.3

Safe leave may be taken as a block of up to 10 days or as intermittent periods of absence, based on the needs of the specific person. Please refer to the Special Leave Policy for further information.

9.4

OFG may request supporting documentation, such as from healthcare professionals, the police and/or the relevant support agencies as appropriate.

9.5

Requests for safe leave and any information relating to the individual will be handled in the strictest confidence and retained securely in line with GDPR requirements.

10.0 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

10.1

Occupational Health (OH) is an essential part of any business, aiming to protect colleagues' health and ensure that the workplace is safe, supportive, and conducive to both physical and mental wellbeing. By addressing both immediate and long-term health concerns, occupational health helps maintain a productive workforce, reduces absenteeism, and ensures compliance with health and safety regulations.

10.2

On occasions your Line Manager may ask you to complete an OH referral to support us to identify and evaluate potential risks that may affect you within the workplace.

10.3

Occupational health plays a critical role in supporting employees who have been absent due to illness or injury, helping them return to work safely and with the appropriate accommodation. Occupational Health services can provide rehabilitation plans, adjust workloads, and ensure that the workplace is suitable for employees recovering from injuries or illnesses.

11.0 USEFUL LINKS & DOCUMENTS & EXTERNAL SOURCES

If you feel that you are experiencing any struggles, we encourage you to talk to your GP about it as soon as you can, so you can start accessing support.

Remember we have a colleague support program (EAP), which gives you access to a 24/7 colleague helpline – 0330 174 3654. Rest assured this is a completely confidential, independent helpline which is free to access.

If managers need advice, they should contact ER Services on peopleadvice@ofgl.co.uk.
External Sources:

- Access to Work - https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work
- MIND www.mind.org.uk 0300 123 3393
- Remploy www.remploy.co.uk/mentalhealth 0300 456 8114
- Samaritans - Offer emotional support 24 hours a day, in full confidence. www.samaritans.org Call 116 123 - it's free.
- Able Futures - Their fast, flexible, and confidential service is available to you for free. Apply online, email hello@able-futures.co.uk or give them a call 0800 321 3137 (Freephone, 8am to 10:30pm, Monday to Friday). They won't tell us or anyone that you've been in touch.
- Occupational Health – this can be sourced through your Line Manager, Senior Leadership (where appropriate) or the HR Advice team.
- Victim Support - Sexual harassment - Victim Support or via phone on 0808 1689 111
- NHS Support - Help after rape and sexual assault - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- Crimestoppers - Sexual harassment | Crimestoppers (crimestoppers-uk.org) – or call on 0800 555 111 • ACAS
- Hub of Hope: https://hubofhope.co.uk
- Physical Health: Private Medical Insurance (zestbenefits.com) • Vista Benefits: Vista Discounts (zestbenefits.com)
- MIND – have some great resources.
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline- call: 0808 2000 247
- How to support someone who feels suicidal PDF, 20 pages, 605KB

12.0 ASSOCIATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

- Wellbeing Action Plan
- Mental Health Information for Depression
- Mental Health Information for Anxiety
- Post Incident Support Policy
- Access to Work Policy
- Attendance Management Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Special Leave Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy