



Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for Staff

School: Newark Primary School

Date of Issue: Draft - October 2025

Date of Next Review: Annually

1. Introduction

Newark Primary School is committed to promoting and protecting the mental health and wellbeing of all its staff. We recognise the unique challenges of working in a school environment and the profound impact that our staff's wellbeing has on the entire school community. This policy is an extension of our school's core values—Nurture, Enjoyment, Welcoming, Ambition, Respect and Kindness—and is designed to create a culture of support, transparency and care.

This policy is based on the principles of trauma-informed practice and acknowledges the widespread impact of trauma on both students and staff. We are committed to fostering an environment that prevents further harm and supports healing and recovery. This document should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies including those related to relationships, health and safety, attendance management and equality.

2. Alignment with Wider Rights and Best Practice

This policy is informed by and supports wider rights and best practice frameworks, which reinforce a culture of respect, voice, and care.

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): Recognising that the wellbeing of staff directly impacts their capacity to uphold children's rights, this policy supports the implementation of the UNCRC by fostering a safe and supportive working environment. This is particularly relevant to:
 - Article 3 (Best Interests of the Child): Ensuring staff are well-supported to make decisions that prioritise the child's best interests.
 - Article 12 (Respect for the Views of the Child): Promoting a staff culture where listening and respectful communication are modelled, which is essential for upholding a child's right to be heard.
- Equality Act 2010: We ensure that all wellbeing provisions are accessible and non-discriminatory, acknowledging the need for reasonable adjustments and targeted support for staff with protected characteristics, which includes pregnancy and maternity, and could apply to menopausal symptoms.

3. Alignment with Inverclyde Council Policy

This policy is developed in alignment with Inverclyde Council's broader commitment to becoming a trauma-informed and responsive local authority. Our school's approach to staff wellbeing directly supports the council's strategic aim to embed trauma-informed practices across all services. We will actively participate in and promote council-led initiatives including:



- Inverclyde's Trauma-Informed Practice Training: Ensuring all staff have access to and complete the required levels of trauma-informed and trauma-skilled training as set out by the local authority.
- Adoption of Council Resources: Utilising the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and other health and wellbeing resources provided by Inverclyde Council.
- Collaborative Practice: Working with the local authority and other Inverclyde schools to share best practices and support a consistent high-quality approach to staff wellbeing across the authority.

4. Proactive and Preventative Measures – Menopause and Perimenopause

We are committed to creating a supportive and open environment for staff experiencing menopause or perimenopause. This includes:

- Awareness and Training: Providing awareness sessions for all staff including line managers to reduce stigma and increase understanding of the potential physical and mental health impacts of menopausal symptoms
- Confidential Conversation: Encouraging staff to discuss any challenges confidentially with their line manager ensuring support is tailored to individual needs.

5. Foundational Principles

This policy is built upon the following core principles of trauma-informed practice:

- Safety: We will strive to ensure that staff members feel physically and emotionally safe at work. This includes creating a "no shouting, no shaming" culture and providing dedicated, quiet spaces for staff to de-escalate and take breaks.
- Trustworthiness: We will maintain clear, consistent, and transparent communication regarding all policies and procedures. Leadership will model professional and trustworthy behaviour.
- Choice: Staff will be given a voice in decisions that affect their work and professional development. We will provide options where possible and encourage a collaborative approach to problem-solving.
- Collaboration: We will work with staff as partners in developing and implementing solutions. This includes co-producing this policy and regularly seeking feedback.
- Empowerment: We will support staff to feel capable, competent and in control of their professional lives recognising and valuing their unique skills and contributions.

We will actively promote a "What's happened to you?" mind-set - shifting from a deficit-based perspective to a trauma-informed lens when a staff member or student is struggling

6. Proactive and Preventative Measures

- Trauma-Informed Training: The school will provide mandatory, comprehensive training for all staff. This training will cover the prevalence and impact of trauma (e.g. ACEs), the signs of vicarious trauma and burnout and strategies for self-regulation and co-regulation.



- **Supportive Leadership:** Senior leaders will lead by example modelling a healthy work-life balance. This includes taking regular breaks, avoiding non-essential communication outside of working hours and visibly practicing self-care.
- **Workload Management:** We will provide clear job descriptions and regular appraisals to reduce stress and ambiguity. We are committed to managing workload effectively to prevent burnout.
- **Reflective Supervision:** We will implement a regular schedule for reflective supervision to provide a confidential non-judgmental space where staff can discuss challenging cases and the emotional impact of their work. This is a crucial element for addressing and preventing vicarious trauma.

7. Responsive Support

- **Confidential Support and Resources:** The school will provide clear and accessible information on confidential support services including the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). We will also designate and train staff to serve as confidential Wellbeing Champions, who can act as a first point of contact for colleagues.
- **Flexible Absence Management:** Mental health will be treated with the same seriousness as physical health. Staff can take time off when needed without fear of reprisal. A supportive and collaborative return-to-work process is established for those returning from a mental health-related absence.
- **Crisis Response Plan:** The school has a clear, proactive plan to support staff following a critical incident, bereavement and safe guarding concerns. This plan includes immediate debriefing and access to counselling.

8. Collaboration, Communication and Review

- **Co-Production and Feedback:** This policy was developed in collaboration with staff, and its effectiveness will be regularly reviewed. Staff will be consulted through surveys and feedback mechanisms.
- **Open Communication:** We will maintain clear channels for staff to raise concerns about their wellbeing without fear of judgment.
- **Review Process:** This is a live document that will be reviewed annually by the senior leadership team in consultation with staff to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

Appendix: Staff Wellbeing Resources

Education Support (Scotland): The only UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of education staff Helpline: 08000 562 561

Breathing Space (Scotland): A free, confidential phone line for anyone in Scotland feeling low, anxious, or depressed. Helpline: 0800 83 85 87

Samaritans: A 24/7 helpline for confidential support. Helpline: 116 123

Local Inverclyde Resources: Inverclyde Life

Wellbeing Planning Tool: 0131 565 3200 or altformats@nes.sct.nhs.uk

