The LETTA Trust

Employee Well-being Policy

Approved and adopted on:	Spring 2025	**To be reviewed:**	Spring 2028
Reviewed by:	TB Resources	**Signed:**	

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1. Introduction

At the LETTA Trust we recognise the link between staff wellbeing, attendance, staff turnover and the quality of education for pupils and aim to balance the needs of team members and the Trust's educational and operational needs. We are committed to fostering a culture of cooperation, trust and mutual respect, where everyone can experience success at work.

The Employee Wellbeing Policy sets out:

- The Trust's commitment to employee health
- The responsibilities of leaders and others for maintaining psychological health and physical health
- Health promotion initiatives
- Communication and training on health issues
- The range of support available for the maintenance of mental health
- The Trust's commitment to handling individual issues

2. Responsibilities

The Trust Board

The Trust Board has a legal duty of care to employees to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The Trust Board will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.
In addition to reducing safety risks, we run our Trust in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health. We ensure that the demands of each job role is reasonable and have procedures in place to support employees experiencing mental ill health at work.
Trustees will:

- Take overall responsibility for implementing this policy
- Adopt appropriate policies in respect of flexible working arrangements and part-time working, etc. where this can be implemented without detriment to the quality of education
- Ensure clear procedures are in place that will minimise levels of stress caused to employees when following formal procedures such as the capability, disciplinary or sickness absence management procedures
- Ensure that employees' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- Look to provide information to employees about mental and physical health and healthy eating and promote relevant initiatives
- Seek to foster a mentally healthy culture, for example, by incorporating these principles into training for line managers to raise awareness of mental and physical health at work

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy in their school. They will ensure that staff members apply the policy consistently.

The Headteacher will:

- Create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns in a supportive environment
- Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in employees and promote sympathetic alertness to employees who show signs of being under stress
- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work-related stress or other mental-health problems
- Ensure that contact is maintained with staff while absent and that a return-to-work process is supportive of employees
- Carry out a risk assessment when concerns have been raised
- Consider solutions such as flexible working practices where possible and appropriate
- Ensure that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job requirements
- Make sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams
- Demonstrate commitment to supporting employees to implement strategies to help them maintain a healthy work-life balance
- Manage pressures which may affect employees, anticipate likely problems and take action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible
- Promote physical and mental health, including healthy eating through activities and initiatives and by providing information

Leaders (including line managers)

Leaders will put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee welfare. They must familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety Executive's stress management standards and use these to mitigate psychological risks in their teams. For example, leaders should ensure that employees understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support to do their job. Leaders must also familiarise themselves with the organisation's policies on diversity and tackling inappropriate behaviour to support employees, for example, on bullying and harassment issues.

In particular, leaders must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and well-being by:

- Creating reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns
- Paying attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in employees and promoting sympathetic alertness to employees who show signs of being under stress
- Following agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work-related stress or other mental-health problems

- Carrying out a risk assessment when concerns have been raised
- Seeking consent from the employee for a referral to see the Trust's Occupational Health practitioner if this is appropriate in the circumstances
- Attending regular training on health and wellbeing in schools
- Keeping employees in their team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect them
- Ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior leaders
- Ensuring that workstations are assessed to ensure that they are fit for purpose
- Promoting physical health through school initiatives, including healthy eating and encouraging employees to take a lunch break during the working day

Staff members

Staff members take responsibility for their health and well-being by adopting good health behaviours, for example, in relation to healthy eating, exercise, alcohol consumption and smoking. Staff must inform their line manager or team leader if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health.

Staff members will:

- Seek support when they think they are experiencing a problem at the earliest opportunity to ensure effective strategies can be put in place
- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves or others whilst in the workplace
- Ensure awareness of the Trust's policies and procedures relevant to employee well-being
- Assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or colleagues
- Treat colleagues and everyone they interact with during their work with consideration, respect and dignity
- If required, attend appointments with Occupational Health or medical appointments or examinations by a registered medical practitioner nominated by the Trust

3. Support mechanisms

Training and communications

Leaders and staff members will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change. Staff are aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, 1-1 meetings, electronic communications and other school-wide methods.

The Headteacher will ensure that structures exist to give staff members regular feedback on their performance and for them to raise concerns.

Occupational health support

Leaders can seek advice from the Trust's occupational health practitioner on work-related stress. The occupational health practitioner delivers a comprehensive service designed to help people stay in work or to return to work after experiencing mental or physical health problems. This includes medical assessments of fitness for work following referrals from leaders or the HR manager, liaising with GPs and working with individuals to help them to retain employment.

The occupational health practitioner can aid in developing rehabilitation plans for employees returning to work after absences related to mental ill health and work with GPs and leaders on designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful.

A referral to the occupational health practitioner will be made if this is considered appropriate after a staff member's initial discussion with their line manager. Discussions between staff members and the occupational health practitioner are confidential. The staff member will receive a copy of the report. The occupational health practitioner will also provide a report with consent from the staff member to the school on fitness to work and any recommended adaptations to the working environment.

Mental health risk assessments

LETTA is committed to supporting good staff mental health. Line managers are trained to identify early warning signs of workplace stress and mental ill health, and a formal risk assessment process is implemented where concerns are raised. In line with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidelines, mental health risk assessments are carried out as required, for example:

- When employees report experiencing stress or mental ill health linked to work
- Following long-term sickness absence related to mental health

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

All staff members can access the Employee Assistance programme for free support and counselling relating to a range of area. The provider of the employee assistance service alerts the organisation's senior leaders to clusters or "hotspots" of psychological risk in the organisation, drawing on anonymised data provided by calls to its 24-hour helpline and information from face-to-face counselling with employees.

Counselling

Counselling can be provided where appropriate through the Trust's provider. This is a confidential, independent service using professionally qualified counsellors. Staff members can access the Counselling Service by contacting the Trust's HR manager hr@letta.org.uk

Mediation

A mediation service can be supportive to assist employees to return to normal working relationships. This could be accessed via the Counselling Service, ACAS or the Trust's HR Manager. Where this service is appropriate, it will be discussed with the staff members affected by the situation.

Other

Other measures available to support employees in maintaining good physical and mental health include:

- Special leave arrangements
- Opportunities to apply for flexible working
- Support for workers with disabilities
- The organisation's grievance policy
- A lifestyle management programme
- A stress management/handling pressure programme
- Procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example, bullying and harassment)
- Promoting the Cycle to Work Scheme
- Providing information on local gyms, classes and sports facilities
- Supporting mental and physical health through lunchtime and after-school activities and social events

4. Teacher workload research

Research by the Department for Education identified three key areas of concern related to excessive teacher workload. These are marking, assessment and related data input and planning, including making resources. LETTA Trust schools address these areas of concern in the following ways:

Marking

Marking and feedback in schools happens shoulder-to-shoulder with pupils during lesson time with short annotations in books as a memory aid.

Assessment and data input

Schools use a data tracking tool that requires minimum data entry and is a useful gaps analysis and planning aid for teachers.

Planning and creating resources

Schools have created central electronic storage banks where planning and resources are stored for other teachers to access and use. Teachers work together to plan and resource lessons.

We also recognise that in schools where staff have a strong sense of moral purpose and enjoy coming to work, their sense of well-being is better. As such, LETTA Trust schools are very much vision and values driven. Leaders ensure that building positive relationships in their teams is always a priority.

Working hours and workload protection

The Trust acknowledges its legal responsibility under the Working Time Regulations 1998, ensuring that employees do not exceed their maximum weekly working hours and receive their statutory rest breaks.

5. Related policies

The Trust takes its duty of care as an employer very seriously and a number of policies and procedures exist in relation to this duty. The employee well-being policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures. These include:

- Attendance and absence management policy
- Health and safety policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Flexible working policy
- Grievance procedure
- Appraisal policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Capability policy
- Pay policy
- Whistleblowing procedure
- Induction Policy

All policies are published on the LETTA Trust website and each school website. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.