

DE LA SALLE COLLEGE



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING STAFF POLICY

"I HAVE SAID THESE THINGS TO YOU, THAT IN ME YOU MAY HAVE PEACE. IN THE WORLD YOU WILL HAVE TRIBULATIONS. BUT TAKE HEART; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD."

JOHN 16:33

Compiled by: The College Director	Last Reviewed: October 2024
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Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

Introduction

At De La Salle college, it is our duty to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of our staff, as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have steps in place to manage those factors that could harm staff members' physical and mental wellbeing, which includes work related stress. This policy aims to highlight the strategies in place to ensure the mental health and wellbeing of staff is considered and upheld.

Scope/Policy Objectives

We are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust, and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with fairness and dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

Our role in school is to ensure that every individual in the school community can manage times of change and stress, be resilient, are supported to reach their potential and access help when they need it. We also have a role to ensure that students learn about what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, how they can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and where they can go if they need help and support.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and be a school where:

- all staff and students are valued
- staff and students have a sense of belonging and feel safe
- staff and students feel able to talk openly with colleagues/trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- bullying is not tolerated

Whole School Approach

A whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing encompasses a comprehensive and integrated approach that addresses the mental health needs of all members of the school community, including students, staff, and parents/guardians. This policy aims to create a positive and supportive school environment that promotes mental health, prevents mental health issues, and supports early intervention and appropriate support for those who may be struggling.

Responsibilities of Staff

College Director

The College Director should foster a positive and supportive culture that values mental health and wellbeing as integral to the ethos at De La Salle College. They promote an inclusive and respectful environment where all members of the college community feel safe, accepted, and

supported. The College Director encourages staff, students, and parents/guardians to actively participate in mental health initiatives and activities. The College Director should develop and implement effective crisis management protocols to address mental health emergencies within the college community. This can be found in the college Crisis Management Policy.

Wellbeing Leads

The school's Mental Health Team (Head of Pastoral, Wellbeing-Coordinator, SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Heads of House):

- models and works with other staff to coordinate whole school activities to promote positive mental health
- provides advice and support to staff and organises training and updates
- keeps staff up to date with information about what support is available
- liaises with the PSHE Leader on teaching about mental health
- is the first point of contact and communicates with mental health services leads on and makes referrals to services

All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand the protective and risk factors for mental health. Some staff and students will require additional help, and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that staff and students with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need. All staff understand the possible risk factors that might make someone more likely to experience problems; such a physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss (including loss of friendships), family breakdown and bullying. They also understand the factors that protect individuals from adversity, such as self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of worth and belonging and emotional literacy.

Creating a Supportive Environment

- a) All staff members are responsible for creating and maintaining a supportive environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing for students and colleagues.
- b) Staff should strive to foster a culture of acceptance, respect, and inclusivity, where individuals feel safe and supported in discussing mental health concerns.
- c) Staff members should actively engage in promoting positive mental health practices and encourage healthy coping mechanisms among students and colleagues.

Early Identification and Intervention

- a. All staff members should be vigilant in observing signs of mental health issues among students and colleagues and promptly report any concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. For students, this would be the relevant pastoral lead e.g., Head of House, or the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) if there was a risk of immediate harm. For staff, this would be to the staff members line manager or a member of the Senior Management team as appropriate.

- b. Staff should familiarise themselves with the warning signs and symptoms associated with mental health problems to facilitate early identification and intervention.
- c. It is essential to maintain confidentiality while sharing concerns with designated personnel, ensuring that privacy is respected.

Referral and Support

- a. Staff members should be knowledgeable about the mental health resources and support services available within the college and the local community.
- b. If a staff member becomes aware of a student or colleague in need of additional support, they should guide them to the appropriate resources and services. See external agencies and services for more information.
- c. Staff should actively participate in training programs to enhance their understanding of mental health issues and develop skills to support individuals in need.

Collaboration and Communication

- a. Staff should collaborate with relevant personnel, including mental health professionals, counsellors, and support staff, to ensure a coordinated approach to addressing mental health and wellbeing.
- b. Open and effective communication channels should be established to facilitate the sharing of information, concerns, and strategies related to mental health and wellbeing.
- c. Staff members should engage in regular discussions and meetings focused on mental health topics to stay updated on best practices and exchange ideas.

Role Modelling and Self-Care

- a. Staff should prioritise their own mental health and wellbeing, recognising that their wellbeing directly impacts their ability to support others effectively.
- b. Staff members should actively engage in self-care practices, seeking support and utilising available resources when needed.
- c. It is important for staff to serve as positive role models for students by demonstrating healthy coping mechanisms and self-care practices.

Reporting and Documentation

- a. Staff members should promptly report any incidents or concerns related to mental health or wellbeing to the designated authorities as per the college's reporting procedures.
- b. Accurate and comprehensive documentation should be maintained for all incidents, interventions, referrals, and support provided.
- c. Confidentiality and data protection protocols must be strictly followed while handling sensitive information.

Professional Development

Staff members should engage in ongoing professional development opportunities related to mental health and wellbeing. De La Salle ensures a proactive use of INSET to support school development plan and to train staff in positive behaviour management. Training on mental health first aid and particular training for specific disorders are available upon request. If there

is a concern that a pupil is in danger of immediate harm, then the school's child protection procedures are followed.

Wellbeing Co-ordinators should provide regular training sessions, workshops, or resources to enhance staff members' knowledge and skills in supporting mental health. Staff should actively seek out and utilise professional development opportunities to stay informed about current research, best practices, and evidence-based interventions

Arrangements/Incentives for implementing staff MH and WB

Primary School & Secondary College:

This Staff Wellbeing Policy expands upon the college's Health and Safety policy but sets out how the school promotes the wellbeing of staff and tools in place to provide a positive working environment.

At De La Salle College, we incorporate a well-disciplined environment, with dedicated support and action on poor student behaviour towards staff. Poor student behaviour is deemed to be a cause of stress for teachers; therefore, we strive to ensure our positive behaviour management policies are updated and easily accessible to all staff. If you are struggling with a particular class or student, it is important to ensure your Head of Department or a Senior Member of staff so that support can be provided.

A provision in place to support teacher wellbeing and to facilitate a comfortable teaching environment, our classes have low pupil teacher ratios, and your timetables include a 10% protection on non-contact periods, as well as ensuring staff are used to cover absent colleagues as a last resort. Teachers will not be expected to give up more than one free period to cover an absent member of staff per week.

The teaching environments at De La Salle College are pleasant, well maintained, and resourceful. Staff with management responsibilities have fortnightly meetings with senior management to raise any concerns and issues, and active support is put in place to resolve them over a timely period.

It is suggested that staff at De La Salle make a conscious effort to regulate their working hours, so that they have the time they need to recharge, pursue personal interests, and connect with their families and communities. A balanced work-life equilibrium is crucial as it not only promotes the mental and emotional health of our staff, but also enhances their effectiveness in the classroom. We encourage our staff to maintain this balance, and if at any point they feel it is becoming overwhelming, they should reach out to their line manager or the wellbeing co-ordinator for support.

Life Events:

As part of the wellbeing initiative, we recognise that if for any reason you are unable to come to work, due to an appointment, a family bereavement or sickness, there is provision available to you. Staff members are advised to speak to their line managers, giving detail on their requests and necessary support can be arranged.

Staff are encouraged to schedule medical/other appointments and procedures in PPA time or, with consultation, at other times in the school day, even if cover is needed. With this, staff are not required to sign in or sign out but must ensure Assistant Headteacher (Primary) (Primary

teachers), Assistant Headteacher (Cover) (Secondary teachers) or your line manager (Admin staff) is aware of when you are off site and when/if you will return.

Physical Initiatives and exercise:

Physical exercise has shown to reduce stress and improve overall wellbeing. To encourage the participation of physical exercise, the use of fitness suite is available to staff, and is free of charge. Wellbeing initiatives for staff have been arranged, such as 1:1 boxing sessions available upon request. Staff should make suggestions for consideration to the Primary and Secondary wellbeing co-ordinators. Thirdly, it is also possible to utilise the sports hall for recreational purposes and is available upon request from the Head of PE.

Financial hurdles:

Studies suggest that financial strains are a huge contributing factor to stress levels, especially in teaching. To buffer the financial burdens De La Salle College, offer multiple services.

- Staff parking spaces are allocated, free of charge. These spaces are available upon request to Simon Barrett and are in the lower car park, behind Stanley building and adjacent to the sports hall.
- De La Salle College also provide financial support for Masters and other higher-level qualifications. This includes time and funding for non-teaching staff to gain degree level qualifications, or for teaching staff to further improve their personal development portfolio.
- If a member of staff is financially struggling, they are advised to arrange a meeting with the College Director and discuss their concerns. Although financial help is not guaranteed, there are external agencies that the college can refer you to.
- A small but useful initiative that we uphold at De La Salle is the free provision of tea, coffee, milk for staff refreshments. Coffee, tea, and water are available in the staff room and is accessible to all members of staff.

Communication & Signposting

Meeting agendas for whole staff meetings are published in advance with clear guillotine time stated and AOB submitted in advance to prevent meetings being extended. Staff meetings are cancelled if they are simply information giving or if the agenda can be sent in an email.

The administration team actively manage the administrative and clerical tasks.

College Director and Senior staff daily site walk about to support staff with student's engagement and learning.

The Mental Health Matters notice board is in the staff room. This includes tips and tricks on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, it includes reading lists to further educate teachers on how to improve their wellbeing and provides healthy meal options once a month. There are monthly webinars available on request, speak to the Wellbeing Coordinator.

Managing Concerns

Staff members play a crucial role in managing concerns related to mental health and wellbeing in schools. They are responsible for identifying and addressing the needs of students,

promoting a supportive and inclusive environment, and implementing the school's mental health and wellbeing policy.

Here are some key aspects of staff management in relation to mental health concerns:

Training and Education

School staff, including teachers, administrators, counsellors, and support staff, should receive appropriate training and education on mental health awareness, identification of common mental health issues, and strategies for supporting students' wellbeing. This training can help staff members recognise signs of distress and respond effectively.

Identification and Referral

Staff members should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to identify staff or students who may be experiencing mental health concerns. This includes observing changes in behaviour, academic performance, social interactions, or emotional wellbeing. When concerns are identified, staff members should follow established protocols for referring students to the appropriate support services within the school or external agencies and should direct concerns regarding staff to the staff members line manager or a member of the senior management team

Communication and Collaboration

Effective communication and collaboration among staff members are crucial for managing mental health concerns. Regular team meetings, case conferences, or consultations can help staff members share information, discuss strategies, and coordinate support for students. Line managers should be available to provide supervision to their staff to help them manage their workload and troubleshoot any work-related issues.

Supportive Environment

Staff members should work collectively to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment within the school. This includes promoting positive relationships, encouraging open dialogue, and fostering a sense of belonging for all. Staff should be trained in implementing strategies that support positive mental health, such as promoting resilience, self-care, and stress management.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Staff members should adhere to strict confidentiality and privacy policies when dealing with mental health concerns. Staff and students' personal information should be handled with care, and information sharing should only occur on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with legal and ethical guidelines.

Self-Care and Support for Staff

It is important for schools to recognise the wellbeing of staff members themselves. Schools should provide resources and support systems for staff to manage their own mental health and wellbeing, such as access to counselling services, wellness programs, or opportunities for professional development and self-care.

By effectively managing concerns related to mental health, staff members contribute to creating a positive and nurturing school environment that supports the overall wellbeing of students.

Daily drop-in surgeries with College Director are available between 10:35 – 11:10 each day. Appointments can be scheduled for staff to see College Director if drop-in sessions are not appropriate.

External Agencies and Services

External Agencies play a vital role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing policy in schools. These agencies are external organisations or professionals who collaborate with schools to provide specialised services and resources to promote mental health and wellbeing among students. Here are some examples of external agencies that can be involved in a school's mental health and wellbeing policy:

- **BeSupport:** You can access Be Supported Services by 24/7 telephone support 0800 072 7072.
- **Mind Jersey:** Mind Jersey provides information, support, and practical help to anyone with mental health problems. Email: admin@mindjersey.org Tel: 07829 933929
- **TES Pulse:** Online Survey on the Mental Health and Wellbeing services around the College.
- **CAMHS (Child, Adolescent Mental Health Service):** CAMHS offers support to young people, their families, and to other professionals. Call: 01534 519000 Email: childrenandfamilieshub@gov.ie
- NAHT members can access a dedicated, confidential counselling and support helpline on 0800 9174055, provided by Education Support. It is open 24/7 and is staffed by qualified counsellors, who are ready to offer you emotional and practical support.

Policy Review

To be reviewed annually by the Wellbeing Coordinator.