

Manurewa Central School
STAFF WELLBEING POLICY

RATIONALE:

The Manurewa Central School Board values the well-being (hauora) of our staff and aims to create a positive workplace environment that helps staff teach effectively and support student needs.

We take a holistic approach to mental health and wellbeing which focuses on the spiritual, physical, mental and social wellness of staff. We acknowledge that in practice it looks different from person to person and place to place. In considering the wellbeing (hauora) of our staff we acknowledge the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We respect, value and celebrate the diversity of cultures and identities within our staff.

PURPOSE:

As part of their commitment to health and safety, the School Board will:

1. Monitor the health of workers as part of its primary duty of care, and discusses workload and stress levels at health and safety meetings and through professional growth cycle meetings.
2. Recognise mental health as a well-being state to be acknowledged and managed. See below.
3. Recognise workplace stress as a hazard to be managed. See below.
4. Provide and maintain a safe physical and emotional environment and a positive, inclusive culture for both students and staff.
5. Acknowledge workplace bullying or harassment as unacceptable. See below.

MENTAL HEALTH GUIDELINES:

By focusing on mental health and wellbeing we give our staff the strength and optimism to consider, challenge and change the way they work so that they are able to proactively prioritise their mental health. We consider that mental health and wellbeing is both an individual and collective responsibility. In drafting this Policy we have adopted the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health as - "Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to the community." We recognise that the experience of mental distress is common, that anyone can be affected at any stage of their lives and that mental health is not linear, it fluctuates.

We show our commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of our staff by:

1. Ensuring that staff wellbeing is at the forefront of everything we do by ensuring that our strategic plan, policies, practices and environment are designed with staff wellbeing in mind and are regularly reviewed to reflect the changing needs of staff.
2. Consulting with staff about what workplace wellbeing means to staff, and what initiatives around mental health and wellbeing could look like taking into account the diversity within our staff and how initiatives ought to reflect a deep respect for staff's identity, culture and beliefs.

3. Keeping our staff well-informed of the school's policies and procedures that demonstrate our commitment to mental health and well-being.
4. Encouraging a culture of openness – staff can speak up about any concerns at any time and know they will be heard.
5. Educating staff about stress and actively identifying stress factors in the workplace together with ensuring procedures are in place to deal with identified stress factors.
6. Making sure staff feel supported to seek help for any issues or distress, including using our conflict resolution processes.
7. Making sure staff understand what is expected of them at work – in their work tasks and what is acceptable behaviour.
8. Checking in with staff at agreed times to ensure their workload is manageable, and to discuss any issues.
9. Offering flexible work practices wherever possible.
10. Supporting opportunities for professional skills, development and growth including developing their knowledge and expertise for teaching about mental health.
11. Not tolerating bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour and ensuring that policies and procedures are in place to deal with these issues should they arise.
12. Providing contact details for support services that staff can access easily and discreetly.
13. Ensuring that if a member of staff is involved in a confrontation with a student or family member of a student (physical or verbal), they are offered support appropriate to the situation.
14. Ensuring that where a member of staff is injured or is physically or mentally unwell they are given opportunities for support and rehabilitation and "return to work" support is provided.
15. Ensuring that staff are aware of the policies and procedures around disclosures and staff are fully supported when making disclosures.

We encourage our principal and staff to protect their mental wellbeing by:

1. Treating everyone with respect and civility, acknowledging the diversity of staff.
2. Speaking up if they need help or support.
3. Speaking up about any bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour they notice happening in the workplace.
4. Taking their own steps to stay mentally healthy at work (e.g. taking rest breaks, speaking up if stressed).
5. Supporting other staff to speak up if they need help for anything affecting their mental health.
6. Accessing support if they need it.
7. Asking about options such as flexible working arrangements or special leave if they feel they need time away from work to manage their mental health.

WORKPLACE STRESS PROCEDURES

Guidelines

1. The school will follow guidelines that aim to identify, reduce and manage unhealthy stress. In order to minimise stress, an employer might:
 - provide support (eg an employee assistance programme)
 - provide additional resources (eg providing assistance with work)
 - provide leave for stress
 - liaise with the employee and the employee's doctor or medical specialist
 - discuss and adjust the mix of duties

- reduce the employee's hours by agreement
 - suggest alternative, less stressful roles for the employee.
2. The school will promote an awareness of the causes of workplace stress, which include:
- an unreasonable workload
 - lack of health and safety precautions against hazards
 - workplace bullying
 - workplace restructuring
 - a toxic work environment
3. Senior staff will monitor employees' potential workplace stress and minimise the source of stress as far as is practicable.
4. All concerns or complaints from employees related to workplace stress will be responded to in a serious manner as the school recognises its responsibility to:
- look into the issues
 - come to their own decision about whether the problem is work-related
 - discuss the situation with the employee
 - agree on appropriate solutions
5. Staff will be made aware of the need to take responsibility for their own stress levels including holidays, effective time management, efficient classroom management (for teachers) and reporting unhealthy levels of stress to senior management. Some strategies for managing workplace stress can include:
- taking regular breaks
 - learning how to act rather than react – we experience stress when we feel situations are out of our control
 - taking a deep breath – a few minutes of deep breathing can help restore balance if you are feeling stressed; there are some great tools to help with this at [QuietKit](http://quietkit.com/1). (<http://quietkit.com/1>)
 - minimising interruptions – make a plan to control regular interrupters, for example, only answer emails during certain windows of time
 - eating and sleeping well
 - keeping physically fit by doing regular exercise
6. The school will endeavour to support any employee who needs sick leave for workplace stress related illness when a return to school is made.

Visit WorkSafe New Zealand to see their [resources on identifying and managing stress](#)

<http://www.worksafe.govt.nz/information-guidance/guidance-by-hazard-type/stress-fatigue>

HARASSMENT PROCEDURES

Harassment is defined as any form of discrimination or intimidation that can adversely affect the learning chances, personal development and performance of students and staff. Any form of harassment is unacceptable.

Purpose

1. To fulfil the legal requirements of the [Human Rights Act 1993](#).
2. To clarify the nature of harassment, including sexual harassment.

3. To ensure procedures are in place to safeguard against harassment.
4. To ensure procedures are in place to make and deal with complaints of harassment.

Guidelines

Harassment means any form of discriminatory behaviour which may result in the loss of equal opportunities, personal dignity or privacy. Harassment refers to a situation where a person is subject to undue pressure from another.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- *being shouted at in an offensive manner*
- *being physically assaulted*
- *being spoken to in a racist or prejudiced manner*

Sexual Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- *unwanted, deliberate physical contact*
- *being referred to by a sexual name/sexist jibes*
- *offensive gestures or comments*
- *misuse of visual or written material of a sexual nature*
- *implied threats to coerce someone to accept conditions that restrict opportunities or*
- *advancement*

The most effective safeguard against harassment is a school environment characterised by mutual respect. All staff carry the responsibility to promote such a climate in their dealings with one another and their students.

Serious incidents and repeated harassment will be reported to the School Board.

A case of harassment should be settled as quickly and informally as possible. While respecting the rights and interests of both parties, the seriousness of an incident is to be judged by the impact on the victim.

Any person in the school experiencing any form of harassment should act assertively by making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable and tell the person to stop it.

All pupils, staff members, parents/caregivers will be able to lodge a complaint should any form of harassment be suspected of occurring to them personally or to others in their care.

Every case of notified harassment will be investigated following our complaints procedures.

Where harassment is proven to have occurred, the person responsible for investigating that complaint will take appropriate action to see that further harassment does not occur.

Anyone who is not satisfied with the investigation into any complaint of harassment may appeal their case to the School Board or a union representative.

KEY RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

[Ministry of Education: Mental Health Education, Years 1-13 A Guide for Teachers, Leaders and School Boards](#)

[Mental Health Foundation: The Five Ways to Wellbeing](#)

[NZSTA: Workplace bullying](#)

