## 58. STAFF MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Designated Lead is: **RUKHSANA MAHMOOD**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **KATIE LANGLEY**

**What is this policy?**

A staff wellbeing policy explains and sets out ASK's commitment to the wellbeing of all early years educators. It should outline how ASK will support its staff, its ongoing commitment to staff training, and ensuring that all early years educators are treated fairly and professionally at all times. It should be also reviewed and monitored against the National Health and Safety standards.

**Who is in charge of Wellbeing?**

ASK recognises the statutory responsibilities related to employment, and staff have the primary responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. This policy should also be viewed alongside other policies and procedures in relation to duty of care as an employer to all members of staff.

These may include (but are not limited to):

- Attendance/ Absence Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality;
- Grievance Procedure;
- Whistleblowing Procedure.

**How will this policy be communicated?**

This policy can only impact upon practice if it is a regularly updated, living document. It must be accessible to, and understood by, all stakeholders. It will be communicated in the following ways:

- posted on the ASK website;
- sent via email to all staff;
- available in paper format in the kitchen;
- part of induction programme for all new staff (including volunteers and students); and
- integral to updates and training for all staff.

Reviews of this policy will include input from all staff, helping to ensure further engagement.

## STAFF WELLBEING

### Policy Statement

We want to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise that staff are our most important resource and we seek to value our staff through personal and professional support, involvement in decision-making, and access to professional development. We have a duty to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of our employees as far as reasonably practicable. ASK is also required to have in place measures to mitigate factors, as far as is practicable, that could harm employees' physical and mental wellbeing, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within ASK's control.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate, and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

This policy recognises that there are many sources of work-related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees, or children.

We are committed to making sure that this Staff Wellbeing policy is implemented so that each individual is able to cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of stress, within an understanding and accepting environment.

The purpose of this policy is to maintain an ethos which supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

### Scope

This policy describes ASK's approach to promoting positive staff wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff, including volunteers and students. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies.

### Policy aims

- To develop a healthy, motivated workforce who are able to deliver a high-standard of care and education to children.
- To help ensure that our setting promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health.
- Develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture through regular communication and consultation with staff on health and safety matters.

- To recognise that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness and to agree on flexible working practices where possible (manager's discretion).
- To communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly.
- To encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.
- To comply with all statutory requirements.
- To respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members.
- To provide staff with training to deal positively with stressful incidents and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies via training.
- To improve staff development, co-operation and teamwork.
- To make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work-related health and wellbeing issues.

**Legislation**

Pieces of legislation that will be considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, including, but not exclusively:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Equality Act 2010
- Working Time regulations
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**The Manager will:**

- support in ensuring that strategies are implemented to effectively manage and, where necessary, reduce employee stress;
- foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner;
- ensure that there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of provision life;
- create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns and will enable staff to do so in an environment where stress is not considered a weakness;

- follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems, ensuring that a return-to-work format is completed and support is offered while staff are absent, and upon their return to work;
- monitor and review any measures that are planned and assess their effectiveness;
- ensure that all staff have access to regular training sessions on health and wellbeing in staff meetings;
- ensure that practical strategies that deal with mental, physical and emotional wellbeing issues are shared with the staff team and that they are given the appropriate time and resources to undertake this; and
- conduct an annual survey of staff, focussed on health and wellbeing, and share and act upon the results.

**Staff will:**

- act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves and others whilst in the workplace, and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or colleagues;
- make themselves aware of all the relevant policies e.g. Staff Personal Safety, Staff Attendance, Health and Safety;
- seek support or help if required. This includes understanding that a good relationship requires communication from both parties and therefore is important that issues are raised at the earliest possible moment so that effective strategies can be put in place to manage workloads;
- consider attending training on health and wellbeing issues where they feel that this is appropriate; and
- share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning ASK at formal meetings and informal gatherings.

**Support**

The Leadership Team must encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. The Leadership Team should be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.

Where additional professional advice is required, then Occupational Health Professionals and other avenues should be utilised.

Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the free confidential counselling service from Education Support Partnership 0800 562561.

On joining ASK the following support will also be offered:

- All new staff will have an induction programme and receive the staff handbook.
- All new staff will be made to feel welcome and given as much support as possible.

There will be reviews for new staff held throughout the first 6 months of employment.

**Arrangements for implementing the Wellbeing Policy**

Arrangements for wellbeing and stress prevention through good management practices.

These include the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures.
- Clear job descriptions to ensure staff have clear roles and responsibilities.
- Training and Development procedures to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/duties required of them.
- Managing performance procedures.
- Capability and absence management & return to work procedures to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.
- Suitable adaptations for disability.
- Procedures for communicating with employees on the work of ASK and issues affecting their work.
- Flexible working arrangements and contact days with staff on maternity leave.
- The arrangements will be updated and augmented as required and when deemed necessary by the findings of stress risk assessments.

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| This policy was adopted by: | ASK Kindergarten & Clubs |
| On: | May 18, 2026 |
| Date to be reviewed: | May 18, 2027 |
| Signatory: | Mark Stewart |
| Role of Signatory: | Owner & Ofsted Registered Provider |