



## Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) & Wellbeing Guidance

### Appendix 1: Signposts for Staff

At Thameside, we believe that wellbeing is personal. It can be helpful to consider that we each carry responsibility for caring for our own 'invisible dog' - a metaphor inspired by leadership coach Diana Osagie. Your wellbeing needs feeding, rest, boundaries, and occasional check-ups - just like a real dog.

This guide isn't a policy. It's a collection of tools, reflections, and signposts to help you take ownership of your wellbeing and find the support you need. We're proud of our caring school community - and we hope this helps you feel supported and empowered in your role.

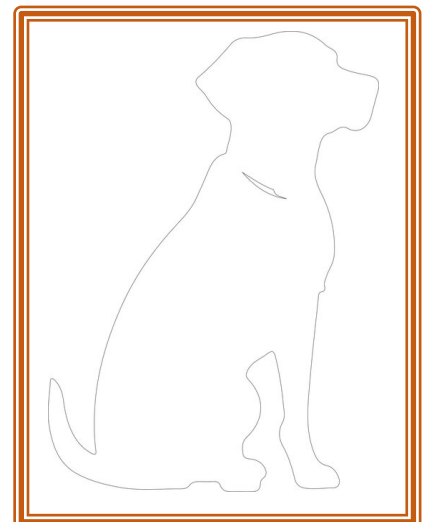
#### Caring for Your 'Dog' 🐾

- 🍲 Feeding – Eating well and staying hydrated.
- 🛌 Resting – Making time for good sleep and regular breaks.
- Grooming – Exercise, self-care and feeling good in yourself.
- 👨 Vet Check – Seeking support or professional help when needed.
- 🚶 Walking – Fresh air, movement, and perspective.
- Boundaries – Logging off, saying no, managing work-life edges.

#### Quick Wellbeing Check-In

**Use these prompts to reflect regularly:**

- What does my 'dog' need this week?
- Am I rested, fuelled, and connected?
- Do I need to say no to something to protect my energy?
- Have I moved or spent time outdoors recently?
- Would I benefit from talking to someone I trust?



## 1. How we promote good work health at Thameside

### Teaching, Learning, Planning and Curriculum

- We trust teachers to know their pupils.
- All staff contribute to the School Development Plan to help shape a shared vision and clear priorities.
- Collaborative working with partner teachers is encouraged to foster teamwork and share expertise.
- To reduce cognitive load, teachers are responsible for teaching either Maths or English.
- Schemes of work are provided for some subjects to support planning and delivery.
- Teachers receive the equivalent of one full day of PPA every fortnight.
- Lessons are not graded; our culture values typicality, not performance for observation.
- Pupils benefit from an engaging and supportive learning environment where they are eager to learn.
- Teachers are supported by specialists when delivering areas of the curriculum.
- Every teacher is allocated one 'Catch-Up Day' per academic year to use flexibly.
- A duty rota ensures fair distribution of responsibilities, including break duties.
- Transition Week at the end of the summer term allows staff to set up classrooms in advance, easing workload and reducing anxiety before the new academic year.

### Behaviour

- We have high expectations for behaviour, consistently reinforced by all staff.
- A clear Behaviour Curriculum and weekly Behaviour Briefings ensure consistent implementation and a calm environment.
- Therapeutic approaches are embedded in our behaviour management strategies.
- SLT maintain a visible presence and actively support with challenging behaviour.
- RISE Regulation provides bespoke support for managing complex behaviours on referral.
- Three dedicated SENDCOs provide expert support to staff for pupils with SEND.
- A part-time Therapeutic Thinking Lead based in The Nest offers targeted support for both staff and pupils.
- 'Positive Play' is offered at lunchtimes for children needing additional support with regulation.
- Every class includes a familiar adult (TA, 1:1 or teacher) to support behaviour management.
- A trained Emotional First Aider is available in The Nest to support staff wellbeing.

### Assessment and Reporting to Parents

- Feedback is given through conferencing, allowing timely verbal responses within lessons.
- Foundation subject books do not require written marking due to our Exit Ticket system.
- Data entry is kept minimal and never duplicated.
- Teachers write one annual report per pupil, focusing on Maths, English, and a general overview.
- Parents' evenings occur twice a year with clear target-setting.
- Teachers only receive direct emails from parents if they choose to share their work email address.

### Professional Development

- CPD aligns with individual appraisal targets and school priorities.
- Where possible, there is only one staff meeting per week to respect staff workload.
- Time is built in to implement new learning.
- CPD values peer expertise.
- In-house leaders and subject experts provide curriculum support.
- Tailored support plans are developed for staff who need additional guidance.

- ECTs receive comprehensive support with regular mentoring.
- Performance Management is supportive and personalised. Pay progression is the default unless significant underperformance is evidenced.
- Teacher-led book reviews replace formal scrutinies.
- TAs receive training during the school day from SLT to keep up to date.
- Weekly support staff briefings ensure all staff are well-informed and supported.
- Subject leaders receive dedicated time during review weeks to lead and monitor their subjects.

## Working Sustainably and Supporting Wellbeing

- There is no expectation to stay late or 'look busy'; staff are trusted to manage their time and workload effectively.
- No expectation to respond to emails outside school hours.
- School systems are continuously reviewed to make processes as efficient as possible.
- Staff feedback is actively sought to guide improvements.
- Peer-to-peer praise is embedded through emails, thank you notes, and values postcards.
- SLT maintain an open-door policy for all staff.
- Regular social events foster team spirit e.g. those organised by the Wellbeing link governor.
- We enjoy shared fun during seasonal events such as World Book Day and the staff pantomime.

## 2. Useful Websites

### Workplace Mental Health & Employee Rights

**Acas** – <https://www.acas.org.uk>

Comprehensive guidance on managing stress at work, risk assessment, equality, and fostering a positive workplace.

**HSE – Stress Management Standards** – <https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>

Authoritative resource aligned with Acas on organisational risk factors and prevention strategies.

### Education-Specific Support

**Education Support** – <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk>

UK charity supporting mental health and wellbeing of education professionals. Offers a 24/7 helpline, guides, and grants.

**Teacher Development Trust** – <https://www.tdtrust.org>

Evidence-based professional development support and CPD for teachers.

### General Wellbeing and Mental Health

**Mental Health Foundation** – <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>

Campaigns and resources promoting mental health across communities and workplaces.

**Together for Mental Wellbeing** – <https://www.together-uk.org>

Community-based mental health support and advocacy.

### Carer and Family Support

**Carers UK** – <https://www.carersuk.org>

Support, guidance, and benefits advice for unpaid family carers.

**Gingerbread** – <https://www.gingerbread.org.uk>

Support and campaigning for single parents across England and Wales.

**Princess Royal Trust for Carers – <https://carers.org>**

Improving carers' lives through advocacy and services.

#### Alcohol & Relationship Support

**Alcoholics Anonymous – <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>**

Fellowship-based mutual support for alcohol recovery.

**Relate – <https://www.relate.org.uk>**

Relationship counselling for individuals, couples, and families.

#### Employment & Legal Guidance

**Edapt – <https://www.edapt.org.uk>**

Independent educational employment advice and representation.

**NASUWT – <https://www.nasuwat.org.uk>**

Teachers' union with wellbeing resources and legal support.

#### Scheduling and Workload Support

**Mindful Employer – <https://www.mindfulemployer.net>**

Guidance on managing mental health in the workplace.

**Local Government Association (LGA) – <https://www.local.gov.uk>**

Stress prevention policies and workforce wellbeing for councils.

#### Other Useful Resources

**Place2Be – <https://www.place2be.org.uk>**

Mental health support in schools and staff training.

**Mind – <https://www.mind.org.uk>**

Mental health support and workplace awareness campaigns.

**World Health Organization – [https://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/publications/en/oehstress.pdf](https://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/en/oehstress.pdf)**

High-level research on occupational stress and health outcomes.

### 3. Useful resources

#### **Wellness Action Plans**

Wellness action plans (WAPs) are an easy, practical way of helping you to support your own mental health at work. If you are a manager, they're also a useful tool in helping you to support the mental health of your team members.

[Mind](#) has guidance and templates to get you started, for both employees and line managers. Everyone can complete a WAP; you don't need to have a mental health problem in order to feel the benefits and it can be used to help us identify what keeps us well at work, as well as to facilitate a conversation around support or adjustments between manager and employee.

**Guide for people working in a workplace:** <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/12145/mind-wellness-action-plan-workplace.pdf>

This is for those working in a physical workplace. We've designed it to help you reflect on what supports your mental health and wellbeing at work.

**Guide for line managers:** <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/13262/mind-wellness-action-plan-linemanagers.pdf>

We also have a guide for line managers to help you implement Wellness Action Plans across your team and start conversations about mental health. The guide also provides useful information on workplace adjustments and signposting.

**Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - Where to find it...**

Free and confidential advice on a range of topics, including personal finances, stress and work-life balance can also be accessed via the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)\\*](#) by visiting the website <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/> or by calling them on **0800 028 0199**.

On **Instagram** - there is also The Mental Health Hour - a monthly Q&A with a counsellor which takes place at 12pm on the last Thursday of each month

On **Spotify** - there are a number of playlists (from Cosy Self-Care to Stress Relief to Mood Boost and more) and podcasts where different mental health topics are discussed

You can download the Instagram app and the Spotify app from the Google Play Store or the Apple Store.

**Health Assured App** – You can access Health Assured's online services and wellbeing tools by downloading the **My Healthy Advantage** app from the Google Play Store or the Apple Store.

When you download the app you will be asked to provide Reading Borough Council's unique code: **MHA179566**

You will then be asked to create an account (use a personal email address and password) and, once you have done that, you will be able to access all the online services provided by Health Assured.

### Stress Awareness

The things that cause us stress are different for different people and people experience and deal with stress in different ways. A small amount of stress can be useful. It can motivate you to take action and get tasks completed. It can also make you feel alive and excited. But too much stress can cause negative effects such as a change in your mood, your body and relationship issues. Rethink have produced a [Stress – How to Cope](#) factsheet (see [www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/wellbeing-physical-health/stress-how-to-cope](http://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/wellbeing-physical-health/stress-how-to-cope)), which outlines self-care ideas, links to online resources and when to seek further advice from your GP.

There are many tools and resources available on [Mindtools](#) (see [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/managing-stress.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/managing-stress.htm)), although there is a limit on the number of articles you can view for free. These include keeping a [Stress Diary](#) and [relaxation techniques](#) for stress management, and there is also an article on [Supporting a Friend or Co-worker Suffering from Stress](#).

### Compass Recovery College

Whether you're looking to develop your knowledge and skills in self-management, you are supporting someone with mental health-related challenges, or you work in mental health services, we're delighted to welcome you on a learning journey. We offer a wide range of workshops that are an educational route to recovery from mental health challenges and increasing positive wellbeing. You don't need a referral from a clinician or service to enrol. As a participant, you can choose which workshops interest you or suit your needs.

Workshops are delivered both online and in person. We have three main categories of workshops:

**Mental Health workshops:** Designed to help us understand mental health challenges. These workshops focus on increasing knowledge, building confidence, and teaching self-management skills to help us in our day to day lives. This term we have run workshops on understanding psychosis, managing stress, and understanding bipolar. We have upcoming workshops on managing anxiety and understanding emotions.

**Wellbeing Workshops:** Designed to improve wellbeing and help keep us well. They provide a space to explore our creative side, engage in exercise and connect with others. Examples of workshops include yoga, creative writing and reading for wellbeing.

**Drop-in Sessions:** Our drop-ins are a good place to start if you are new to Compass. These can be attended as little or often as you like. They offer a safe space to connect with others in a relaxed environment. Drop-in sessions currently running include coffee and chat sessions on Tuesday mornings and a walking session on Friday mornings.

For further information, please contact Compass at: [Compass.Opportunities@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Compass.Opportunities@reading.gov.uk) or call us on 0118 9373945. More information can also be found via the website at [www.compassrecoverycollege.uk](http://www.compassrecoverycollege.uk).

### **Resources for School Business Managers**

Education Support, in partnership with Education Mutual, have launched new wellbeing resources aimed at helping School Business Managers stay mentally healthy. These easy-to-read guides are based on research conducted in the education sector and are relevant for anyone working as a School Business Manager. You can download or print each of the guides from the [Education Mutual website](http://www.educationmutual.co.uk) or via the following links;

*Getting the right work-life balance and protecting yourself: A guide for School Business Managers -*

[www.educationmutual.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Resource-2-Work-life-balance.pdf](http://www.educationmutual.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Resource-2-Work-life-balance.pdf)

*Supporting each other with mental health and well-being: A guide for School Business Managers -*

[www.educationmutual.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Resource-1-Mental-health-and-wellbeing.pdf](http://www.educationmutual.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Resource-1-Mental-health-and-wellbeing.pdf)

**Financial support** <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/get-help/help-for-you/financial-support/>

Education Support offer a financial grants service for teachers, teaching assistants, supply and support staff, lecturers and retired staff. They do not need to be paid back! See if you are eligible.

### **Financial Support and Advice for Teaching Assistants**

Money worries can have a big impact on your mental wellbeing. It can disturb your sleep, and leave you feeling anxious and unable to concentrate. And with inflation rising and the cost of living increasing, it's something more and more of us are thinking about. Whilst primarily aimed at Teaching Assistant, this guide from [Education Support](http://www.educationsupport.org.uk) will be of interest to anyone who is looking for help managing a budget. With an accurate budget, you'll be able to cut out unnecessary expenses and save money, or stop running up big debts. If you already have debt problems, a budget will show you how much spare cash you have. The page also links to a benefits checker, so you can find out what you're entitled to and how to claim them. For further information see;

[https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/fhvh2b0i/eds046\\_teaching-assistant-resources-v4-finance.pdf](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/fhvh2b0i/eds046_teaching-assistant-resources-v4-finance.pdf)

### **Grief Support**

Cruse Bereavement Support offers specialist advice and access to grief counsellors. You can contact them online at <https://www.cruse.org.uk/> or via the helpline on 0808 808 1677. Their services also include one to one sessions and support groups, and there is a selection of online guides on their website aimed at helping to understand our responses to grief, the feelings we may experience and some techniques to help manage grief.

Untangle Grief is a free app, available on the App Store or Google Play, which aims to help navigate life after a loss. Users of the app can access a community of support groups, advice from bereavement experts and personalised help via a private chat helpline.

### **NHS Berkshire Talking Therapies**

NHS Talking Therapies Berkshire is a friendly service for people aged over 17 with common mental health problems such as low mood, anxiety and stress. Individuals can refer themselves via the website (<https://talkingtherapies.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk>), by phone on 0300 365 2000 or email [talkingtherapies@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:talkingtherapies@berkshire.nhs.uk) – or you can ask your GP or care professional to refer you. The service will then get in touch with you within 1 or 2 days to arrange a time to talk to you about your situation and organise a wellbeing assessment with one of our therapists. Following the Wellbeing Assessment, the different treatment options will be discussed with you and a personalised plan made.

For any further information, including a step by step guide on what to expect and resources to support your mental wellbeing, please visit <https://talkingtherapies.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/>

Please see our Mental Health & Wellbeing section on the website for more information on these offers of support:

<https://www.thamesideprimary.co.uk/page/?title=Mental+Health+%26amp%3B+Wellbeing&pid=218>