

Staff Wellbeing

As part of our commitment to health and safety, St Thomas's School Board values the wellbeing (hauora) of our staff and aims to create a safe physical and emotional environment that creates a positive, inclusive culture which supports effective teaching and learning. The Board however does acknowledge that of its very nature, teaching carries with it stressful situations which cannot necessarily be alleviated.

The Board of Trustees will:

1. Promote awareness of workplace stress as a potential health hazard.
2. Reduce, as far as possible, unreasonable workplace stress on employees.
3. Provide all reasonable support and assistance to reduce the incidence of unreasonable stress.

Staff Wellbeing

The school monitors the health of workers and discusses workload and stress levels at regular Health and Safety meetings and during professional conversations. Free counselling is available for all St Thomas's School staff through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

At St Thomas's School:

- We provide appropriate induction and professional guidance.
- We recognise stress in the workplace as a hazard to be managed.
- Workplace harassment or bullying is unacceptable.
- Staff may request access to professional development and mentoring, as required, to increase competency and confidence and reduce stress.
- In the case of injury or illness, we recognise support and rehabilitation as an important part of our safety management system.
- When a staff member is made aware that they are the subject of a concern or complaint raised by a member of the school community, they are informed about concerns and complaints process and are offered appropriate support.
- If a staff member is involved in a confrontation with a student (physical or verbal), they are offered support appropriate to the situation, which may include an incident debriefing.
- If a staff member becomes aware that a colleague is at risk of self-harm or suicide, they consult with senior staff. In the case of the imminent threat of suicide of a staff member, we ensure the person's immediate safety and ring 111 or the regional mental health services crisis management team.

Stress in the Workplace

Workplace stress is a recognised hazard in schools. This policy enables us to:

- Identify the stressors in our workplace.
- Provide procedures for identifying and managing risk factors.
- Educate staff members about stress.
- Ensure that the employer and employee jointly accept responsibility for stress management.

Stress describes our physical and emotional response to a demand or stressor in our environment. Everyday stress is a natural occurrence in life. Individuals react to different amounts of stress and respond in a variety of ways. Feeling stressed for any length of time can have a very negative impact on an individual, and consequently, the organisation they work in.

At school, working together to develop a healthy work environment that minimises workplace stress has far reaching and positive results.

If a staff member attributes stress to the workplace they must provide the principal with detailed information regarding the diagnosis, symptoms, or prognosis. The principal will work with the staff member to develop an appropriate stress management action plan.

Should the board be asked to consider leave, they will act in good faith on the basis of information and advice available at the time its decisions are made, and in the best interests of all students, parents, and staff.

Ratified by Board

Signed A. Ch

Date 28/11/2024.