

## **Staff Well-being Policy (As of September 2024)**

The mental health of students is just as crucial as that of staff (teachers, office staff, janitors). Our school has consistently referred to the government's "Family-Friendly Employment Measures" and has developed a series of school-based initiatives to fully support the mental health and well-being of our staff. We have also signed the Labour Department's "Mental Health Workplace Charter" to reinforce our commitment.

Here are some of our key measures:

### **1. Flexible Paid Leave Applications**

Our school adopts a more lenient principle for paid leave applications. While most schools only accept leave for bereavement or weddings, we allow staff to apply for paid leave for the following reasons:

- Attending significant school events for their children, such as graduations and parent days.
- Caring for sick family members.
- Addressing urgent personal or family matters, such as obtaining a driver's license.

### **2. Flexible Work Arrangements**

Teachers can flexibly arrange their lunch breaks, allowing for early departure during lunchtime (between 11:30 AM and 1:40 PM) to address personal or family matters, provided that student care is not compromised.

### **3. Support for Family Life**

We offer various support services to meet the needs of teachers and office staff:

- Establishing a lactation room for working mothers; teachers should register with the Administrative Officer in advance.
- Allowing staff to bring their children to work when necessary, alleviating family pressure.
- Providing stress and emotional counseling services to help staff cope with workplace challenges.
- Staff may apply for temporary part-time status in special circumstances to better accommodate family care needs.

### **4. Health and Leisure Facilities**

To enhance the working environment and comfort for teachers and office staff, we have implemented the following measures:

- Teachers and office staff can wear casual attire on Thursdays and Fridays (except on days with major ceremonies).
- Teachers suffering from foot discomfort may wear health shoes during class without prior registration.
- We have established a monthly refreshing day to encourage participation in activities that foster relationships, ensuring no meetings are scheduled on this day.
- We also encourage social events, including mindfulness classes and yoga sessions, to help teachers relax and enhance colleague interactions.

### **5. Health Equipment**

- To promote staff's physical and mental health, we have installed ergonomic chairs in classrooms and General Office and provided footrests and monitor stands to support spinal health.
- The Common Room is equipped with automatic tea and coffee machines, regularly stocked with quality tea and coffee products for teachers to enjoy

during work hours and equipped with food steamers (one specially designed for vegetarians) to encourage healthy eating;

- The school has a fitness room and mindfulness space available for use by staff during breaks or lunch hours, encouraging everyone to maintain their health.
- The school has also purchased crutches to assist colleagues with foot injuries.

#### **6. Work-Life Balance**

We prioritize the work-life balance of our staff:

- To prevent burnout, we will implement a “Well-being Button” starting September 2024, which will activate at 6 PM daily to remind office staff to shut down computers and go home for adequate rest.
- Staff who work beyond 8 PM must seek approval from the principal to avoid overworking.
- The school will waive lateness records for special circumstances, such as traffic congestion, illness, or family emergencies.
- During adverse weather conditions, such as red rain, black rain, or typhoon signal No. 8, staff with mobility issues or those who are pregnant may leave early when the Education Bureau announces school closures.

#### **7. Expressing Care on Special Days**

- During important holidays, the principal and vice-principals will personally provide traditional treats like rice cakes, mooncakes, and dumplings to office staff and janitors to show support and boost morale.
- Staff may leave early on major holidays to spend time with their families.

#### **8. Regular Review and Improvement**

We regularly review the substitute teaching mechanism to optimize the system, ensuring that teachers do not need to cover classes on the first day of sick leave, limiting substitutes to one class period per day with a cap to reduce the burden on teachers.

#### **9. Safety Measures**

To enhance occupational safety, we prohibit the use of unsafe ladders and ensure all staff work in a safe environment. Regular first aid training sessions are conducted to ensure immediate support for any injuries sustained during work.

#### **10. Encouraging Professional Development**

- The school encourages teachers to pursue further education and self-improvement. During staff meetings, teachers are allowed to leave early to have sufficient time for meals and preparation, catering to their physical and mental needs. This not only aids their professional development but also enhances teaching quality.
- The principal will recommend teachers interested in pursuing a master’s degree for the Education Bureau’s Teacher Scholarship program.
- The school also encourages teachers to seek further education even during class hours, with most applications receiving approval to enhance their expertise in grading and align with assessment requirements.
- Teachers serving as DSE markers can also leave during free periods to mark papers, allowing for flexible scheduling.

#### **11. Labour Department’s “Mental Health Workplace Charter” and Becoming a Mental Health-Friendly Organization**

- **Goal I** – Promote mental health in the workplace, including building a respectful and positive work environment, promoting active listening and communication, encouraging help-seeking behavior, and facilitating early identification and timely treatment of mental distress.

- Conduct lectures, workshops, and activities to enhance positive thinking and mutual respect in the workplace.
- Promote information exchange related to mental health.
- Provide information about mental health support services and encourage seeking help.
- Introduce a mentorship program to facilitate discussions about mental health issues.
- **Goal II** – Create an inclusive and friendly work environment for colleagues experiencing mental distress.
  - Assign teams or coordinators to implement committed measures.
  - Develop human resources policies that care for employees with mental health needs and provide a supportive environment to promote recovery.
- Organize events related to the “Mental Health Workplace Charter,” including workshops and mindfulness experiences.

As educators, we must prioritize the mental health of our students while also committing to supporting the mental health of all staff members, ensuring that every member can thrive in a healthy and supportive environment. These measures are designed to help all staff better understand the school’s support system and promote your professional development.

The principal, vice-principal, and assistant principals will also regularly meet with teachers, staff, and workers to understand their needs and will optimize relevant measures whenever feasible, without compromising student interests.