

Health and Wellbeing Policy (staff)

Reviewer: Janneke Blokland, Staff Wellbeing Lead and Chaplain + Sue Atkinson, Director of Human Resources, February 2026)

Approved by SMT: February 2026

Scope

Hurst is a wonderful school in which to work, learn, continually improve and develop in such a way as to offer every pupil an outstanding all-round education that prepares them for life. For this to happen it requires dedication, hard work and engagement from all of us at Hurst, combined with an environment where we can give our best and thrive.

This policy sets out our commitment, responsibilities and arrangements for supporting and securing the physical health, mental health and wellbeing of staff. It complements and supports the implementation of our other policies and procedures including but not limited to: Dignity at Work; Recruitment, Selection and Disclosures; Sickness; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Flexible Working; Stress and Health and Safety Policy. It is in line with our legal responsibilities as per The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and Equality Act 2010. It also provides detailed guidance and resources for managing Mental Health and Menopause.

Vision

At Hurst we recognise that the protection of health and the promotion of wellbeing is the basis for a fulfilling and successful life at work and beyond. We are committed to providing a working environment for staff which maximises performance, minimises risk to health and promotes positive wellbeing. We aim to deliver this commitment by:

- Providing an environment in which staff who have health conditions that may affect their work receive suitable support, and that reasonable steps are taken to make adjustments to their work circumstances to enable them to achieve and maximise their full potential.
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of staff through our embedded and integrated [Staff Wellbeing Programme](#), [Employee Assistance Programme](#), management policies, support services, information networks, and by means of health promotion campaigns. Providing access to specialist health and mental health support.
- Encouraging staff to declare any relevant health or wellbeing matters to enable the College to identify and implement appropriate measures to actively support them. The College will respect the confidentiality of staff making such declarations and will ensure that information is only shared where it is appropriate to do so.

Responsibilities:

The Head of College:

The Head of College has the overall day to day responsibility for health and safety matters at the College. The Head of College is committed to managing and maintaining staff health and wellbeing at work and delegates responsibility for undertaking aspects of these duties through line management and identified roles. The following people are identified as having responsibilities (in addition to any other responsibilities under other health and safety policies) for the management of health and wellbeing risks in the areas that they are responsible for:

Senior Leaders are responsible for:

Leading, implementing and promoting the principles and role modelling the behaviours embedded in College policies and procedures that contribute to positive staff health and wellbeing.

Implementing line management responsibilities for those teams and areas that they directly line manage, ensuring that expectations are clear and appropriate interventions and support are in place for individuals, providing a positive working environment, where individuals feel valued and are able to thrive.

Line Managers are responsible for:

Providing a team environment where individuals can thrive at work – ensuring clear direction, expectations and communication, roles that play to individuals' strengths and where individuals feel valued.

Meeting regularly with individual members of their team regarding their roles, expectations and anything else which may significantly impact upon their health, especially any planned changes.

Providing regular opportunities for staff to raise any matters that are preventing them from giving their best at work and maximising their performance.

Jointly with the member of staff, identify and respond to issues. Where necessary escalate to a meeting with the individual, the relevant SMT member, HR and the line manager to carry out a risk assessment identifying control measures to reduce risks to health and wellbeing as far as reasonably practical, arrange referral to the relevant support services, action plan and schedule appropriate monitoring and review meetings.

Staff

Staff should take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (i.e., in relation to diet, sleep, alcohol consumption or smoking) and inform the College if they believe their work or the working environment poses a risk to their health or if they require support.

Individuals should speak with their mentor or line manager in the first instance to make them aware of any health and wellbeing concerns. They should identify and implement any support measures to sustain attendance and support health and wellbeing.

Staff should make use of the College's Wellbeing Programme, Employee Assistance Programme and any other appropriate support.

Individuals should attend Occupational Health where this is recommended and consent to relevant information being disclosed to line management.

Health and Safety Manager

The Health and Safety Manager is responsible for:

- supporting the Head of College and Leaders to manage and maintain staff health and wellbeing at work.
- providing guidance and support to managers when carrying out risk assessments and identifying control measures to reduce risks to health and wellbeing.
- arranging the annual health and safety audit, reviewing the findings and putting the necessary actions into place.

Staff Wellbeing Lead

The Staff Wellbeing Lead is responsible for:

- the promotion of employee health and wellbeing across the College and providing the Staff Wellbeing Programme.
- facilitating the Staff Wellbeing Survey and action planning.
- offering a space, support and advice to members of staff, as appropriate.

Director of HR

The Director of HR is responsible for allocating resources to:

- Enable prospective employees to confidentially disclose health issues prior to taking up employment to enable reasonable adjustments to be identified and implemented prior to employment commencing.
- Coach and support line managers to manage health and wellbeing issues within their teams.
- Ensure competent advice is available for health and wellbeing matters. This will include access to Occupational Health and related services.
- Consult with staff forum representatives and other stakeholders, where appropriate, on proposed action relating to staff wellbeing and the prevention of workplace ill-health.
- Reviewing staff absence and turnover to identify and address areas of concern.
- Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of this policy.

College Wellbeing Group

The College Teaching Staff Wellbeing Group is Chaired by Helen Harper, Director of Teach Hurst and includes Janneke Blokland, Staff Wellbeing Lead, and Sue Atkinson HR Director.

The Group is responsible for co-ordinating health and wellbeing policies, plans and initiatives and ensuring that appropriate support is in place for individuals who are not well.

Janneke Blokland, Staff Wellbeing Lead, Dan Higgins, Chief Operating Officer and Sue Atkinson, HR Director are responsible for the wellbeing of support staff.

Guidelines and Resources

Mental Health

The College's approach to occupational stress includes a number of measures which individuals, together with their line managers should proactively address to protect health and wellbeing. Line managers should:

- Review workloads to ensure they are reasonable. In some cases, the workload may be temporarily adjusted to support an individual;
- Support staff to develop their skills to enable them to manage their workload effectively e.g., time management, planning skills;
- Identify, where possible, and respond to issues of work-related stress. Line managers and individual members of staff should be mindful of the common symptoms of mental ill health, which might include: a gradual deterioration in job performance, attitude to work or conduct; unexplained change in behaviour i.e. lack of patience, outbreaks of anger, over reacting; lack of energy – uncommunicative behaviour; increased absenteeism or lateness; difficulty in concentration or memory; lack of attention to detail; unexplained physical aches and pains; lack of attention to appearance etc;
- Where necessary, ensure that formal Wellbeing Risk Assessments are carried out in accordance with the College's Health and Safety procedures;
- Follow recruitment procedures which ensure an appropriate fit between an individual's abilities and the requirements of the post;
- Consider stress issues which may arise during promotion, job changes, organisational

change or changes in work allocation or skill requirements and provide an opportunity for staff to discuss matters impacting upon them personally which may lead to stress;

- Listen to solutions identified by staff and where possible, implement these on either a short or long term basis;
- Take immediate action when you suspect that an individual is suffering from the effects of stress;
- Ensure effective communication within the department/team;
- Provide opportunities for regular, one to one meetings and provide constructive feedback.

If, despite measures undertaken by the College to prevent occupational stress, a staff member becomes stressed as a result of factors in the workplace, the line manager should endeavour to take all practicable steps to remove or reduce the effects of these factors upon the staff.

The staff member will be asked to try to identify any work-related factors that may be contributing to their stress which may be causing the problem, through the completion of the Wellbeing Risk Assessment form. However, it should be recognised that some factors may be either beyond the College's control, or difficult to change and therefore they may have to be mitigated rather than removed entirely.

A meeting will be arranged with the staff member, their line manager and HR Director (if appropriate). The purpose of this meeting will be to carry out the College's Wellbeing Risk Assessment and review ways of reducing or removing the causes of stress, through joint discussion.

Appropriate measures to support an individual suffering from stress, which will depend on the causes of stress, may include:

- Adjusting workload or elements of a job or working environment that are potentially causing or contributing to the high levels of stress;
- Changing methods of working;
- Further training, coaching or mentoring;
- Temporary reduction of working hours;
- Counselling.

Consideration will be given whether it would be appropriate to seek Occupational Health advice at this stage.

The agreed supportive actions will be recorded as an outcome of the Wellbeing Risk Assessment process. The health and wellbeing of the member of staff will be monitored by their line manager and progress discussed during a review meeting with the HR Director. The suggested review period should be no longer than four weeks.

In the event that the stress is linked to a significant element of their job role, the HR Director will review any possible redeployment opportunities which may exist within the College. In the event that no such appointments are available, the case will be formally managed under the College's Capability Policy and Procedure.

Resources:

- Health Assured: [Employee Assistance Programme](#)
- Hurst [Staff Wellbeing Programme](#)
- The NHS website: [Mental health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- Mental Health UK: [Downloadable resources - Mental Health UK \(mentalhealth-uk.org\)](https://www.mentalhealth-uk.org)
- Mind: [Useful resources - Mind](#)

Menopause

At the College we aim to:

- Make sure that we can support staff affected by the menopause and help them to feel comfortable at work, both when experiencing symptoms and when asking for support and adjustments.
- Make reasonable adjustments to minimise the risk of the working environment making menopausal symptoms worse for those experiencing them.
- Minimise menopause-related stigma at College by educating staff on what it is and the symptoms that staff affected by it might suffer.
- Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them.

Definitions: The menopause is a stage of life when a woman stops having periods. It typically affects those aged between 45 and 55, when oestrogen levels begin to fall. Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms. Early menopause is when a woman's periods stop before the age of 45. It can happen naturally, or as a side effect of some treatments. For the purposes of this policy, any reference to the menopause shall include perimenopause and early menopause.

Individuals suffering from the menopause may experience symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact them at work.

Menopausal symptoms might include:

- Challenges with memory, confidence and concentration
- Low mood, anxiety and depression
- Hot flushes, night sweats and palpitations
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia and fatigue
- Headaches and joint and muscle pain
- Weakened bladder function and urinary tract infections
- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive

For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse. For example, if the temperature is too high, this may cause symptoms such as hot flushes, dizziness, discomfort, sweating and heart palpitations.

Symptoms affecting sleep can make it difficult for staff experiencing them to concentrate and stay focused, while low confidence, low mood and anxiety may impact on decision-making and relationships with colleagues.

We acknowledge that the menopause will affect everybody differently – some individuals may experience no symptoms at all, and some may experience a variety. We will adapt our response to staff affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

Legislation and guidance: The [Equality Act 2010](#) prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics, which include age, sex and disability. Employers are under a statutory duty to consider whether any 'reasonable adjustments' are required to alleviate any disadvantages staff encounter based on these characteristics. [Section 6](#) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment, and
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Relating specifically to menopause symptoms:

- Many of the aforementioned symptoms would be likely to be classified as a physical and/or mental impairment.
- 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial.
- 'Long-term' means an impairment if it has lasted for at least 12 months, is likely to last for at least 12 months, or is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.
- 'Day to day activities' are those carried out by most people on a regular basis, and includes but is not limited to: walking, driving, carrying or moving things, being able to concentrate, writing,

reading, typing, speaking

Ongoing symptoms linked to the menopause may meet the definition of a disability and where they do, employers will be required to consider whether any reasonable adjustments are required to alleviate any disadvantage. Any such adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis and, where appropriate, staff affected by the menopause will be offered a variety of approaches to support them.

Roles and responsibilities

The Senior Management Team and line managers:

- Make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support staff experiencing the menopause, and to make sure the workplace does not make their symptoms worse. By carrying out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of staff affected by the menopause.
- Create a culture in the College where staff can talk openly about menopause.
- Provide a non-judgmental, empathetic and confidential support system to staff.
- Appreciate the personal nature of any conversations about the menopause and treat them confidentially and sensitively.
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge.
- Have regular, informal conversations with staff that they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed.
- Consider flexible working requests in order to accommodate acute symptoms.
- Allow staff affected by the menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms.
- Promote information about and access to external support services.
- Be sensitive to health issues such as menopause during the performance management/appraisal process.
- If necessary, seek advice from HR or discuss a referral with the staff member to occupational health for further support.

Examples of adjustments and activities which may be considered are:

- Ensuring good ventilation and air quality throughout the College, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be safely opened.
- Ensuring regular access to cold drinking water for all staff.
- Regulating and monitoring the temperature of the College and collecting feedback from staff, as well as ensuring the temperature can be regulated per room by turning down radiators for example
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff, and establishing a system that allows for cover for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching.
- Providing small desk fans to help staff cool down.
- Fitting blinds to windows.
- Providing information on the menopause in the staff room, e.g. posters and leaflets.
- Creating a support group so that those who want to can seek support from each other.
- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations.
- Providing resources and training opportunities to make sure that all line managers are aware of the menopause, its potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary.
- Promoting information about and access to external support services.

Role of staff members affected by the menopause

We encourage staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager, HR or a member of the senior management team.
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted member of staff know if the menopause is having an impact on this.
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services

Role of all staff members

All staff are expected to:

- Promote health and wellbeing for themselves and others at all times.
- Treat each other with empathy and respect.
- Support others, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
- Accept and support any adjustments that staff affected by the menopause may be receiving as a result of their symptoms.
- Report honestly about their wellbeing to their line manager or to another trusted member of staff.

The College is proud to have signed the Menopause Workplace Pledge, which commits to recognising the impact it can have in the workplace, enabling open, positive and respectful conversation about the menopause, and actively supporting and informing our employees affected.

Resources:

The NHS Website: [Menopause - NHS](#)

Health Assured: [Employee Assistance Programme](#)

Menopause Friendly: [Free Menopause Support For Individuals | Menopause Friendly UK](#)

[British Menopause Society.](#)

[CIPD. Menopause.](#)

[Daisy Network. What is POI.](#)

[NHS England. Supporting our NHS people through menopause: guidance for line managers and colleagues.](#)

[NICE guideline \[NG23\]. Menopause:](#) diagnosis and management.

[TUC. Menopause at work.](#)

[Acas. Menopause and the law](#)

[Acas. Supporting staff](#)