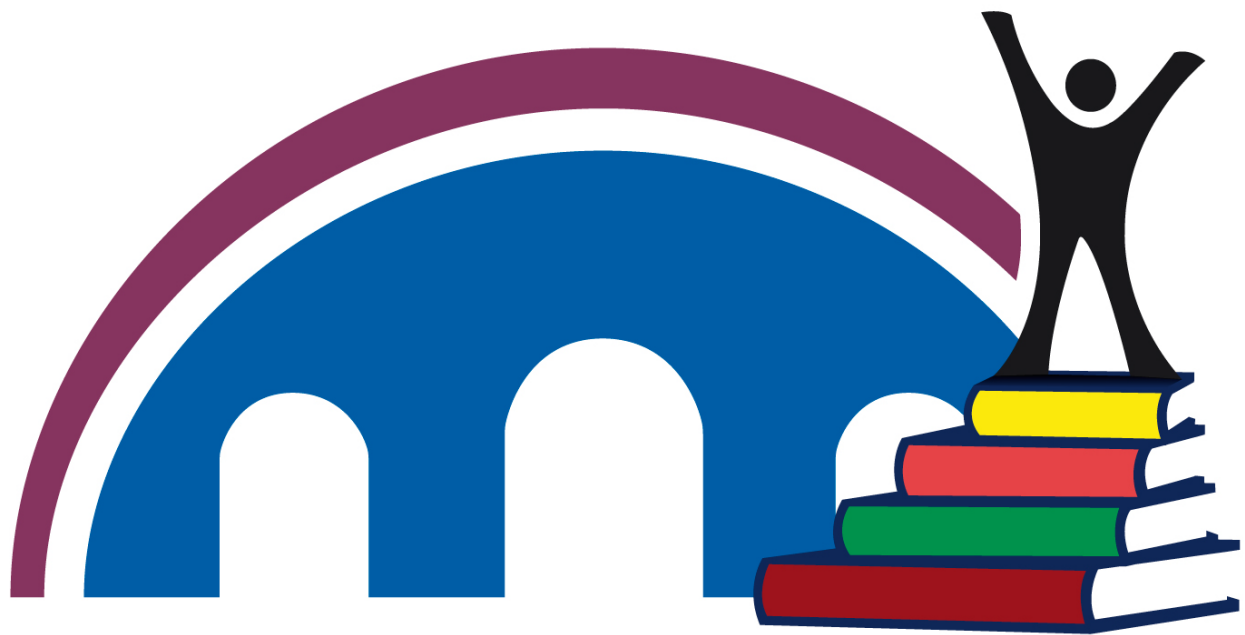




Bridge Academy Trust

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING POLICY

September 2026

Summary of Changes

- Clarifies that the Employee Wellbeing Policy is non-contractual, and may be amended by the Trust as required (section 1.3)
- Updates and strengthens legal references, including the addition of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, ensuring the policy reflects current legislation (section 2.2)
- Removes reference to Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) and instead signposts employees to line managers, HR, Occupational Health and relevant external professionals for appropriate support and early intervention (section 8.2)
- Update references to the Trust's internal systems by renaming the Bridge Staff Portal to the BAT Staff Portal for consistency across policies (sections 7.3–7.4)
- Introduces a new Retention & Data Protection section setting out GDPR-compliant handling and retention of wellbeing-related data (new section: Retention & Data Protection)

Date of Draft Policy: (this is the month/year the policy was drafted)	March 2026	
Last approved version Frequency of review	September 2025 Annually	
Consultation with Staff Required	Yes ☒	No ☐
Period of Consultation (if required)	From 5 th June 2026	To 19 th June 2026
Trustees Committee Reviewing Document	Trustee Policy Review Committee	
Date of Board of Trustees Meeting at which Policy Approved	7 th July 2026	
Date of Adoption of Policy	1 st September 2026	
Date Policy available on Central Area/www (If appropriate)	1 st September 2026	
Reviewer	People Director	
Advice From	Browne Jacobson, The Key, ACAS	

Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
SCOPE	1
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	1
ROLE OF ALL STAFF	1
ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS	2
ROLE OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS	2
ROLE OF THE TRUSTEES	2
ROLE OF GOVERNORS	2
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)	2
UNDERSTANDING STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH.....	2
MANAGING SPECIFIC MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ISSUES	3
OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES IN MAINTAINING HEALTH AND WELLBEING INCLUDE:.....	4
SELF-MANAGEMENT	5
CONFIDENTIALITY	5
RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER POLICIES.....	5

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Trust's Employee Wellbeing Policy outlines the measures in place to prevent, address and support the health and wellbeing of our employees.
- 1.2 The policy aims to:
 - a) Promote the importance of a community approach to mental health and wellbeing in all employees.
 - b) Support the wellbeing of all employees to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health.
 - c) Provide a supportive work environment for all employees.
 - d) Acknowledge the needs of employees, and how these may change over time.
 - e) Allow employees to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities.
 - f) Help employees with any specific wellbeing issues they experience.
 - g) Ensure employees understand their role in working towards the above aims.
- 1.3 Information relating to employee wellbeing, including health information, will be processed in accordance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Trusts Data Protection Policy.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. The Trust reserves the right to amend this policy at any time and may vary any of the provisions detailed within this policy without consultation.

SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy reflects the Trust's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and applies to all staff employed by the Trust.
- 2.2 This policy is informed by the Trust's obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Employment Rights Act 1996, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Working Time Regulations 1998 and Equality Act 2010.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to making the Employee Wellbeing policy effective.

ROLE OF ALL STAFF

- 3.2 All staff are expected to treat each other with empathy and respect, adhere to the Code of Conduct, and be mindful of colleagues' workload and wellbeing. They should support all colleagues, report their own wellbeing honestly, and follow out-of-hours working policies. Staff are encouraged to contribute positively to team morale, use shared spaces respectfully, participate in wellbeing training, and take proactive measures for their own

wellbeing. Additionally, they should seek support early, use available resources, and make healthy choices to maintain overall wellbeing.

ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS

- 3.3 Line managers are expected to maintain positive relationships with staff, value their skills, and promote open communication. They should provide confidential support, address complaints seriously, and monitor workloads for potential signs of stress or wellbeing concerns. Regular discussions about work/life balance are essential. Managers must ensure a thorough induction for new staff and provide appropriate performance feedback. They should offer necessary training, monitor sickness absence, conduct return-to-work interviews, and uphold expected behaviours, addressing any deviations promptly.

ROLE OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

- 3.4 Senior leadership teams are responsible for setting conduct standards, managing confidential support systems, and monitoring employee wellbeing through surveys and conversations. They ensure accountability systems are trust-based, regularly review employee requirements, and keep job descriptions up to date with employee consultation. They listen to employee views, involve them in decision-making, and communicate new initiatives effectively. They establish clear out-of-school hours policies, recognise employee efforts, and provide resources for wellbeing, including access to external support services. Additionally, they organise extra support during stressful times and produce calendars to help employees manage their workload.

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEES

- 3.5 Trustees are responsible for ensuring the Trust fulfils its duty of care by providing a reasonable workload and a supportive work environment. They must ensure resources and support services are available to promote employee wellbeing, make decisions and review policies with a focus on wellbeing, especially regarding workload, and be reasonable in the information they request from employees for monitoring purposes.

ROLE OF GOVERNORS

- 3.6 Governors are responsible for monitoring and supporting the wellbeing of the Headteacher/Head of school, ensuring resources and support services are available to promote employee wellbeing, and clarifying the purpose and information required for any monitoring visits to employees.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy which identified no significant negative impacts.

UNDERSTANDING STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

- 5.1 The Trust recognises the importance of employees understanding stress and mental health and will endeavour to promote wellbeing at all times.
- 5.2 Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or demands placed on them. Sustained over a period of time, stress can lead to mental and/or physical illness.
- 5.3 Mental health refers to an individual's emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It influences how people think, feel, and behave, as well as how they manage the everyday pressures of life. Positive mental health is not typically a fixed state, as it can be affected by

a range of factors both within and outside the workplace. As a result, individuals may move along a spectrum from good to poor mental health over time.

- 5.4 There is an important distinction between working under pressure and experiencing stress. Certain levels of pressure are acceptable and normal in every job. They can improve performance, enable individuals to meet their full potential and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it produces stress and undermines mental health.
- 5.5 Pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events such as accidents, illness, bereavement, family breakdown or financial worries, can result in stress and poor mental health. They can also compound normal workplace pressures.
- 5.6 The Trust recognises that individuals react to similar situations in different ways and that what triggers stress and poor mental health varies from person to person.

MANAGING SPECIFIC MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ISSUES

- 6.1 The Trust will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school/work or in their personal lives.
- 6.2 If a member of staff believes they are suffering from work-related stress or mental ill health, they are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager in the first instance. If they feel unable to do so they should contact another senior member of staff or a member of the HR team. They should also access the support services provided by the Employee Assistance Programme (*details can be found via the BAT Staff Portal – Staff Wellbeing area*).
- 6.3 Once a health-related issue is brought to the attention of a line manager, a discussion will take place to determine what support can be provided, where possible, by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:
 - a) Giving employees time off to deal with a personal crisis (as per the Leave of Absence Policy);
 - b) Signposting/arranging external support, such as counselling via Employee Assistance Programme or Occupational Health services;
 - c) Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified;
 - d) Reassessing their workload and agreeing appropriate priorities, and where appropriate, considering and implementing reasonable adjustments.
- 6.4 Absence – If employees are absent due to work related stress or mental health & wellbeing, they should follow the sickness absence reporting procedure as per the Absence Management Policy. Any absences will be managed in line with that policy, including discussions about appropriate return to work arrangements.

OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES IN MAINTAINING HEALTH AND WELLBEING INCLUDE:

- 7.1 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – All employees and their immediate families can access the Trust's EAP, which is a free, confidential 24-hour helpline, which provides counselling and support. Further information and contact details for this service can be found via the BAT Staff Portal – Staff Wellbeing area.
- 7.2 Occupational Health (OCH) – The Trust has engaged OCH professionals who can be contacted for confidential advice on managing issues regarding work related stress and wellbeing. OCH will provide recommendations for helping employees to stay at work, or to return to work after experiencing mental health problems. A referral to OCH will be made if this is considered appropriate as per the Absence Management Policy.
- a) If staff believe that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager or a member of the HR Team. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands and raise issues such as identified training needs. After an initial discussion, a referral to OCH will be made if considered appropriate.
 - b) Discussions between staff and OCH are confidential, although OCH will provide a report on the individual's fitness to work, and any recommendations to support them in the workplace.
- 7.3 Training and communications – Line managers and staff should regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that they have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands.
- a) Managers and staff are encouraged to access the training and webinar materials to support them with mental health awareness and support.
 - b) Training is available for line managers and staff in mental health awareness and recognising the symptoms.
 - c) Managers and staff are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises e.g. staff wellbeing surveys. All staff are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications and Trust wide methods. The Trust will ensure that structures exist to give staff regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.
 - d) Managers and staff are encouraged to utilise Wellness Action Plans where appropriate. A Wellness Action Plan is an informal plan that can be considered for staff who already have a mental health disorder or concern, but they are also useful for staff who are currently well but want to take a more pro-active approach to staying mentally fit at work. A Wellness Action Plan template can be found on the BAT Staff Portal – Staff Wellbeing area.
- 7.4 Other services – Other measures available to support staff in maintaining health and wellbeing include:
- a) Procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment);

- b) Special leave arrangements;
- c) Opportunities for flexible working;
- d) Trust's Grievance Policy.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Positive lifestyle choices provide a solid foundation for good mental health and overall wellbeing. All employees, wherever possible, should take individual responsibility for their lifestyle choices for the sake of their own wellbeing and mental health and for the collective benefit of our work, colleagues and students. This includes, but is not limited to:
- a) Mindset
 - b) Movement
 - c) Nutrition
 - d) Sleep
 - e) Health care
- 8.2 Employees should seek support or help from appropriate internal or external resources (such as their line manager, HR, EAP Ambassador, occupational health or relevant health professionals) at the earliest opportunity when they think they are experiencing a problem. Early intervention ensures effective strategies can be implemented.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- 9.1 Information about stress, mental health and mental wellbeing is highly sensitive. Every member of staff is responsible for observing a high level of confidentiality.
- 9.2 However, there are occasions when information about stress or mental health wellbeing needs to be shared with third parties. For example:
- a) Where medical advice is required on how to support a member of staff, address issues raised by work related stress or address issues raised by mental ill health.
 - b) Where a member of staff presents an immediate danger to themselves or others.
 - c) Where allegations of harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying or other misconduct require a disciplinary investigation or proceedings to take place.
- 9.3 In these circumstances, where possible, matters will be discussed with the member of staff concerned before any action is taken.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER POLICIES

- 10.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering attendance and health, including policies on special leave, flexible working, the management of short and long-term absence, sick pay, bullying and harassment, equality and staff training and development