

## **Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**

Mental health and wellbeing is recognised as a priority at Mairangi Bay School, and is an explicit goal in our strategic plan, supported by our Vision, Values and Policies to develop a visible supportive culture.

Our school is a place that enhances everyone's mental health. It is environmentally inclusive, empowering and mana enhancing.

### ***Our Rationale***

We take a holistic approach to mental health and wellbeing which focuses on the spiritual, physical, mental and social wellness of staff. We acknowledge that in practice it looks different from person to person and place to place.

In considering the wellbeing (hauora) of our staff, we acknowledge the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We respect, value and celebrate the diversity of cultures and identities within our staff.

By focusing on mental health and wellbeing, we give our staff the strength and optimism to consider, challenge and change the way they work so that they are able to proactively prioritise their mental health.

We consider that mental health and wellbeing is both an individual and collective responsibility.

In developing this policy, we have adopted the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health as -

*"Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community."*

### ***Our Guidelines***

We recognise that the experience of mental distress is common, that anyone can be affected at any stage of their lives and that mental health is not linear, it fluctuates. We show our commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of our staff by:

- ❖ Ensuring that staff wellbeing is at the forefront of everything we do by ensuring that our strategic plan, policies, practices and environment are designed with staff wellbeing in mind and are regularly reviewed to reflect the changing needs of staff.
- ❖ Consulting with staff about what workplace wellbeing means to staff, and what initiatives around mental health and wellbeing could look like taking into account the diversity within our staff and how initiatives ought to reflect a deep respect for staff's identity, culture and beliefs.
- ❖ Keeping our staff well-informed of the school's policies and procedures that demonstrate our commitment to mental health and wellbeing.
- ❖ Encouraging a culture of openness – staff can speak up about any concerns at any time and know they will be heard.
- ❖ Educating staff about stress and actively identifying stress factors in the workplace together with ensuring procedures are in place to deal with identified stress factors.
- ❖ Making sure staff feel supported to seek help for any issues or distress, including using our conflict resolution processes.
- ❖ Making sure staff understand what is expected of them at work – in their work tasks and what is acceptable behaviour.
- ❖ Checking in with staff at agreed times to ensure their workload is manageable, and to discuss any issues.
- ❖ Offering flexible work practices wherever possible.

- ❖ Supporting opportunities for professional skills, development and growth including developing their knowledge and expertise for teaching about mental health
- ❖ Not tolerating bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour and ensuring that policies and procedures are in place to deal with these issues should they arise.
- ❖ Providing contact details for support services that staff can access easily and discreetly.
- ❖ Ensuring that if a member of staff is involved in a confrontation with a student or family member of a student (physical or verbal), they are offered support appropriate to the situation.
- ❖ Ensuring that where a member of staff is injured or is physically or mentally unwell they are given opportunities for support and rehabilitation and “return to work” support is provided.
- ❖ Ensuring that staff are aware of the policies and procedures around disclosures and staff are fully supported when making disclosures.

We encourage our principal and staff to protect their mental wellbeing by:

- ❖ Treating everyone with respect and civility, acknowledging the diversity of staff.
- ❖ Speaking up if they need help or support.
- ❖ Speaking up about any bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour they notice happening in the workplace.
- ❖ Taking their own steps to stay mentally healthy at work (e.g. taking rest breaks, speaking up if stressed).
- ❖ Supporting other staff to speak up if they need help for anything affecting their mental health.
- ❖ Accessing support if they need it.
- ❖ Asking about options such as flexible working arrangements or special leave if they feel they need time away from work to manage their mental health.

This policy has been co-constructed alongside our Mitey Coach - Abbe Waghorn, Senior Leadership Team and our staff. We are all committed to supporting the wellbeing of all staff through our words and actions. We intend to provide opportunities to review policy annually to ensure we maintain a culture of support through our school vision, values and mission of

“Learning together to create a better tomorrow”