

# National Specialist SCITTs

## National Mathematics and Physics SCITT

## National Modern Languages SCITT

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### Wellbeing Framework: Guidance for Good Practice

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The accredited provider for both the National Mathematics and Physics SCITT and the National Modern Languages SCITT, is Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs.

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# 1. Purpose

The SCITT has a duty of care requirement to look after the wellbeing of its trainees, mentors in partnership schools and all colleagues involved in the partnership. Nationally, 3 in 5 people have had mental health issues due to their workload, and over 60% of staff think their employer should be doing more to address mental ill health issues. According to recent studies, during the pandemic, teachers were more likely to report feeling stressed and burned out than other state and local government-sector employees. Eighty-four percent of teachers surveyed by the EdWeek Research Center in March 2021 reported that teaching was at that point more stressful than it was before the pandemic.

In light of this, promoting and protecting wellbeing at every level is as important for the SCITT as for every business or education provider.

There are many factors that influence the health and wellbeing of trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership. Understanding and overcoming these issues can result in a range of benefits for both individuals and the partnership as a whole.

Mental wellbeing is relevant for everyone in the partnership, which means everyone can play a part in improving wellbeing at every level. By addressing mental health issues, SCITT can improve the general wellbeing of trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership, reduce absenteeism and presenteeism, lower withdrawal and break in study rates, support those who have experienced mental health problems, and ensure trainees are entering their new profession with the necessary skills and strategies to establish a good work-life balance.

Similarly, promoting physical activity and encouraging healthy eating, can help all manage stress and weight loss, while also improving concentration and alertness. Those who exercise regularly and eat a balanced diet also report less illness and are more likely to recover more quickly from any illness they do get. This framework aims to set out the SCITT's approach to:

- Support the wellbeing of all trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership to avoid negative impacts on their mental and physical health
- Provide a supportive work environment for all trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership
- Acknowledge the needs of trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership, and how these change over time
- Allow trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities
- Support trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- Ensure that trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership understand their role in working towards the above aims.

This Wellbeing Framework covers mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing, management and leadership, support for all trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership and support applicants, trainees, mentors and colleagues who join the partnership with existing mental health issues or are returning to work or training.

## 2. Principles

Promote mental wellbeing by:

- Providing information and raising awareness of mental health issues

Promoting policies and actions that support mental wellbeing in every aspect of the partnership

- Equipping trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership with the skills to support their own mental health.

Encourage physical health by:

- Promoting physical activity across the partnership
- Supporting a healthy, balanced diet
- Encouraging everyone to drink 6-8 glasses of water a day.

Equip managers and leaders across the partnership with the skills to:

- Identify and assist those with mental ill health
- Raise awareness of mental and physical wellbeing across the partnership
- Be aware of the wellbeing frameworks and policies of their own employer/institutions.

Offer support to trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership by:

- Creating a culture that supports the wellbeing of everyone
- Offering help, support and guidance to those with a mental health issue
- Assisting those returning to work after a period of mental ill health
- Sign posting to available wellbeing support and/or HR department.

Support and positively encourage the appointment and recruitment for those with mental health issues:

- Making reasonable adjustments to the role/environment
- Establishing agreed recruitment practices
- Retaining and supporting colleagues, prospective trainees and trainees who develop mental ill health.

Support those coming back to work or training by:

- Making reasonable adjustments to the role/environment
- Supporting trainees and colleagues involved in the partnership who develop mental ill health during their training or employment.

## 3. Promoting wellbeing at all times

### 3.1 Role of all trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership.

All trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect

- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership
- Support trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as staff rooms, offices or training facilities
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing.

### **3.2 Role of the Administrators**

The Administrators are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their central team, trainees and colleagues in partnership schools and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to everyone in the partnership
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and raise these with the Course Leader and Director following SCITT / Chorus Education Trust policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and aim to promote a healthy work/life balance
- Make sure new trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures during training may have a temporary effect on performance, and take that into account during any C4C procedures
- Ensure that trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep communication channels open for trainees during any absences
- Monitor trainee sickness absence, and alert the Course Leader or Director if any patterns emerge
- Ensure that return-to-training interviews are conducted to support trainees after a break
- Ensure that exit interviews with withdrawing trainees and resigning mentors are conducted to help identify any wellbeing issues that led to their resignation
- Take into consideration the needs of applicants with existing mental health needs, alert the Director and Course Leader and ensure any necessary adjustments are made.

### **3.3 Role of Course Leader and Hub Leaders**

The Course Leader and Hub Leaders are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their team of hub leaders, trainees, mentors and colleagues in the partnership and value them for their skills, not their working pattern

- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their team
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately following SCITT policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to colleagues and trainees about their work/life balance
- Make sure new trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures during training may have a temporary effect on performance, and take that into account during any C4C procedures
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep communication channels open for trainees if they are absent for long periods
- Monitor trainee sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return-to-training interviews to support trainees after a break
- Conduct exit interviews with withdrawing trainees and resigning mentors to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation
- Take into consideration the needs of applicants with existing mental health needs and make any necessary adjustments.

### **3.4 Role of the Director**

The Director is expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other, trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership, and adhering to agreed working hours and/or practices
- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership
- Monitor the wellbeing of trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership, and seek efficient solutions and systems wherever possible
- Make sure job and role descriptions are kept up to date, with clearly identified responsibilities for trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership are consulted before any changes are implemented
- Support wellbeing with task calendars, task lists, procedures, and guides for roles which are kept up to date
- Listen to the views of trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives

- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership to ensure they feel included and are aware of any changes occurring at the school/central team
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of members of trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership can plan ahead and manage their workload.

### **3.5 Role of Strategic Board**

The members of the Strategic Board are expected to:

- Ensure trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership at the school have a reasonable workload and create a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the Director in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer and Hub Strategic Director
- Ensure that resources and support services are promoted to all trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership to support their wellbeing
- Ensure decisions are taken with the wellbeing of trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership in mind, particularly regarding workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership as part of the work of the Strategic Board
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections.

## **4. Identifying Specific Wellbeing Issues**

### **Factors that cause mental health issues**

All trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership may experience mental health issues for various reasons that the SCITT cannot control (e.g. hereditary, family conflicts, general health).

However, there are also work-related reasons for mental health problems, including:

- Job insecurity
- Excessive pressure
- Work-life imbalance
- Lack of appreciation
- Hostile workplace conditions
- Unsatisfactory job or workload
- Poor communication
- Unclear expectations.

To every extent possible, the SCITT Strategic Board, the Director and the Course Leader aim to recognize and address pressures that contribute to mental health issues. They are working closely with mentor and trainee representatives in all relationships that might be improved among colleagues or managers.

## **5. Supporting wellbeing**

### **5.1 Physical activity**

To raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity:

- Signpost educational leaflets and resources on physical activity
- Signpost courses and seminars on the benefits of activity and risks of inactivity /sedentary behaviour.

To support colleagues and trainees in becoming more active in a variety of ways:

- Encourage colleagues to make active choices through the use of promotional and motivational resources, for example encouraging them to walk or cycle all or part of the way to work, or to use the stairs instead of the lift
- Signpost information on online courses, classes and clubs
- Encourage lunchtime activity groups e.g., walking.

To remove barriers and enable colleagues and trainees to be active in and around work:

- Provide examples of how to establish a good weekly timetable to fit around working/training hours to allow for physical activity before, during and after work
- Highlight examples of good practice, e.g. walking or cycling to meetings, physical activity and sporting excellence.

### **5.2 Healthy eating**

To raise awareness of the benefits of healthy eating:

- Signpost educational leaflets and resources on healthy eating
- Include workplace health on the training programme and in agendas of all boards
- Signpost courses and seminars on the benefits of healthy eating and the risks of poor nutrition.

### **5.3 Mental wellbeing**

To develop a supportive culture, tackle factors that may negatively affect mental wellbeing, and to develop management skills:

- Give trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership information on and increase their awareness of mental wellbeing
- Give non-judgemental and proactive support to those who experience mental health problems
- Include information about the SCITT Wellbeing Framework in induction and training programmes.
- Provide opportunities for trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership to look after their mental wellbeing, for example through physical activity, stress-buster activities and social events

- Offer trainees adjustments due to personal circumstances wherever possible
- Set realistic targets that do not require them to work unreasonable hours
- Ensure all trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership have clearly defined job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities and provide them with good management support, appropriate training and adequate resources to do their job
- Manage conflict effectively and ensure every aspect of the SCITT programme is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism
- Establish good two-way communication to ensure trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership are able to contribute and voice their concerns, particularly during periods of organisational change.

To provide support for all colleagues and trainees experiencing mental health difficulties:

- Ensure individuals suffering from poor mental health are treated fairly and consistently and are not made to feel guilty about their problems
- Encourage trainees, mentors, and colleagues involved in the partnership to consult their employer's occupational health department (if there is one), their own GP, or a counsellor of their choice
- In cases of long-term sickness absence, put in place, where possible a phase returned to training plan in line with SCITT policies
- Make every effort to identify suitable alternative employment/training, in full discussion with the trainee, where a return to the training placement is not possible due to identified risks or other factors
- Treat all matters relating to an individual and their mental health illness in the strictest confidence and share on a 'need to know' basis only with consent from the individual concerned.

To encourage the employment/recruitment of people who have experienced mental health ill health:

- Show a positive and enabling attitude to all colleagues and applicants with a mental health illness. This includes having positive statements in recruitment literature
- Ensure that all colleagues involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues and the [Disability Discrimination Act](#) and are trained in appropriate interview skills
- Do not make assumptions that a person with a mental health illness will be more vulnerable to workplace / training stress or take more time off than any other colleague or applicant
- Ensure all hub leaders, the Course leader, Administrator and Director have information and training about managing mental health in the workplace / during training.

To recognise that stress in the workplace or during training is a health and safety issue:

- Identify workplace / training stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress
- Provide training in good management practices
- Provide confidential pastoral support and coaching

- Signpost confidential counselling and adequate resources.

## 6. Communication

All trainees, mentors and colleagues involved in the partnership will be made aware of the Wellbeing Framework and the facilities available.

The Wellbeing Framework will be reviewed and promoted on an annual basis and be readily available to download through the SCITTs intranet or shared drives.

A specific focus group will be established to take forward the actions from this framework as necessary. Regular updates will be provided to the SCITT Strategic Board.

The SCITT promotes the following principles of good practice:

- There is no expectation to answer emails after 6pm and over weekends
- There is no expectation to answer emails immediately
- There is an expectation to acknowledge receipt of emails with a proposed deadline of completion/response
- There is an expectation that colleagues and trainees check emails each working day
- There is an expectation for all colleagues and trainees to note deadlines and adhere to them
- There is an expectation to communicate about workload issues
- There is an expectation that if a deadline cannot be met, this will be communicated in a constructive way, with a suggested new reasonable deadline.

## 7. Managing Specific Wellbeing Issues

The SCITT will support and discuss options with all trainees, mentors and colleagues in the partnership that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at work or in their personal lives.

Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior colleagues members, this could be through:

- Giving colleagues or trainees time off to deal with a personal crisis (see the employer's **Leave Policy & Procedures** for staff; [Fitness to study policy](#) for trainees)
- Sign posting external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise
- Sign posting colleagues to their own internal HR department for support.

At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of all colleagues and trainees will be maintained.

## 8. Publishing this framework

This policy is available through the SCITT website and our SCITT Intranet. A copy can also be requested via our SCITT office.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs, and the accredited provider for the National Modern Languages (NML) SCITT and the National Mathematics and Physics (NMAP) SCITT, is a member of this scheme. If a trainee teacher is unhappy with decisions made by the SCITT regarding this framework, they may be able to ask the OIA to review this decision. More information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong can be found here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students> .