

Staff Wellbeing Policy

Policy statement:

The EKC Group recognises the increasing importance of wellbeing in the workplace and the impact and pressures that modern life has, both inside and outside of work. Employee wellbeing at work is important for many reasons including creating a positive, healthy environment in which to work is key to productivity, as well as employee retention and happiness.

There is an increased focus on employers' duty of care to offer a more proactive wellbeing support, as well as developing effective rehabilitation pathways in the event of absence. This needs to be embedded within an organisation's corporate strategy and people management activities in order to promote employee wellbeing and improve engagement, retention and performance.

Work can have a positive impact on our health and wellbeing. Healthy and well-motivated employees can have an equally positive impact on the productivity and effectiveness of a business.

Fostering employee well-being is good for people and promoting well-being can prevent problems from escalating and help create positive working environments where individuals and organisations can thrive. It can be a core enabler of employee engagement and productivity.

Promoting and supporting employee well-being is at the heart of our purpose to champion better work and working lives because an effective workplace well-being programme can deliver mutual benefit to people, businesses, economies and wider society. We believe that work should do more than meet our basic financial needs and contribute to economic growth; it should also improve the quality of our lives by giving us meaning and purpose and contributing to our overall well-being.

The East Kent College Group engenders a culture where we recognise a commitment to work life balance is important and we have developed this policy to support staff in promoting this ethos.

The policy will incorporate the existing flexible working, relocation, home working and compassionate dependent leave policies. It also introduces an enhanced package of lifestyle benefits to promote a healthy work life balance for all staff and accommodate wherever possible having regards to the business needs of the College.

Procedures:

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the College's commitment towards all staff achieving a healthy work life balance. All additional leave other than annual, maternity, paternity, parental or adoption is outlined in this policy.

1.2 The Policy recognises that employees may occasionally require time away from work in order to deal with personal situations and time off will be given when it is practicable to do so. All leave is at the discretion of the College and needs of the business will be taken into account as the service to students and customers must not be detrimentally affected. However, time off will not be unreasonably withheld.

1.3 The College's Policy is to encourage managers to support where possible, all requests made under the policy guidance and all requests should go to the line manager in the first instance although guidance should be obtained from HR to ensure consistency in approach.

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Page 1 of 12

1.4 The Policy covers all employees of the College regardless of service and all changes would be notified to HR by the authorising manager to ensure accurate records are maintained.

2. General Principles

2.1 Agreements must be documented with HR, reviewed at regular intervals and will usually be time limited.

2.2 All staff will work together to support each other and managers have a duty of care to ensure that staff take appropriate breaks as described by the Working Time Directive, including a rest break of 20 minutes after or during a period of 6 hours work.

2.3 All staff are entitled to the holiday entitlement commensurate with their role plus accrued bank holiday entitlement.

Holiday allowance will include increments for regular additional hours worked, including hours where staff are regularly 'on call'. By regularly, we mean for a period of 12 weeks or more.

Where it is likely a change will lead to an increase in hours for more than 12 weeks a contract change will be completed (thus ensuring accrual of annual leave automatically).

3. Paid Leave of Absence

3.1 Paid leave of absence should not exceed, in any period of twelve months, an aggregate total of 18 days, unless otherwise stated here. This would be pro-rata for staff working less than full time. And 3.5 hours of work in any one day will be deemed as a half day. Exclusions to this total are Statutory and Company Sick leave as detailed in the Sickness Policy and leave as detailed in the Maternity, Paternity, Parental and Adoption leave Policy.

3.2 Salary will only be paid where the employee does not receive and is not entitled to claim for their salary from any other source.

3.3 Duties covered for payment of full salary will be granted for extraneous duties such as

- a. Justice of the peace
- b. Persons appointed or nominated by a Minister, Association of Local Authorities or a Local Authority to serve on a Committee, Tribunal Panel, Board of Prison Visitors or other similar body
- c. Persons appointed as members of their Associations' or Union's national Executive to attend meetings of the Executive
- d. School Governors
- e. Local councillors

4. Subpoenaed Witnesses and Jurors

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Date of approval: 22.02.18

Page 2 of 12

Employees who undertake jury service or act as witnesses for a court or tribunal are required to claim from the court an allowance for loss of earnings that should be notified to payroll on receipt. This claim amount is deducted from their salary. This does not however apply where an individual attends a court or tribunal in a professional capacity as an employee of the College.

5. Other Special Leave

5.1 Child's first day at school

Staff, who have a child starting nursery or a school for the first time, can request the morning or afternoon of the first day off, paid, to enable them to take their child in on their first day at that establishment.

5.2 Trade Union Conferences

An employee may be granted, subject to the exigencies of the services, leave with pay to attend the Annual/Biennial Conference of any Trade Union recognised by the College subject to:

- the employee being properly nominated by the Trade Union concerned its representative to the Conference;
- the total leave given to any employee who is sent by his/her Trade Union to its Annual Conference not exceeding five consecutive working days in any year;
- the agreement of the Senior Manager that the work of the Section will not be detrimentally affected, where more than two people wish to attend a particular Conference from any one Section; and
- the total number of employees of the College attending the Conference being no more than the number to which the Branch is entitled to send under the Union rules.

Attendance of employees at annual conferences of professional organisations and societies remains entirely subject to the College's discretion in individual cases and therefore outside the scope of the above rules.

5.3 Training of Employees with Assistance dogs.

Special leave with pay may be granted to employees for the duration of any special training they may be required to undertake with Assistance dogs.

5.4 Interviews

Special leave with pay may be granted to employees attending interviews for up to 2 days in any 12 month period.

5.5 Leave for Examinations

Leave of absence without loss of salary to be granted to employees for the purpose of sitting for examination supported by the College.

In addition, for College supported training, up to 5 days without loss of salary may be granted for the purpose of final revision in the period preceding the examination.

5.6 Volunteers

i. Part-time fire-fighters, volunteer Special Constables and Life-boat volunteers will be granted paid leave in order to support their work in these areas.

Policy Owner: Head of HR

Approving Body: Policy committee

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: 22.02.18

Page 3 of 12

ii. Those who volunteer with cadets may request additional special leave or 'extended weekend leave' to support with weekend camps. Extended weekend leave would include permission to leave early on a Friday and start work late on a Monday. Additional leave will be agreed on the basis it does not impact on students and their lessons.

5.7 Service in Non-Regular Forces

The College endorses the principle that volunteer members of the Non-Regular Forces who attend summer camp should be granted leave additional to their normal annual leave. Two weeks will be granted for camp, as additional leave with pay.

5.8 Reservists

Further to agreed guidelines with Sabre the following time for Army, Naval and Air-force Reservists will be agreed:

Training days - consecutive of 16 for Army, 14 for Maritime and 15 for Air-force during the working week, with additional weekend time. The College will allow an additional ten days paid leave* for reservists to support the annual two week Summer camp training.

Mobilisation of up to 12 months, following agreed notice periods of a minimum of 25 days, for additional training, deployment of up to 6 months and recuperation.

*All other remuneration and benefits in these circumstances are paid by the Ministry of Defence.

5.9 Additional Support

Reservists, Ex-Forces and those serving in Non-regular Forces

It is recognised that there may be a need for special leave for those staff who have seen combat in order for them to attend support groups or reunions and extra leave of up to five days a year can be taken for this.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) can be contacted for further support at <http://www.ssafa.org.uk/>

5.10 Time off for Medical Screening

Necessary paid time off shall be granted to employees for the purpose of being screened cancer. Further time will also be allowed for appointments following treatment for cancers where ongoing check-ups are deemed necessary and are advised by medical practitioners.

5.11 Time off for fertility treatment

Reasonable time off will be granted for staff to attend fertility treatment where this cannot be taken outside or normal working hours.

5.12 Duties as Examiners or Internal Verifiers

Up to 5 days paid leave of absence shall be granted at the discretion of the appropriate Senior manager to enable employees to attend their extraneous duties as persons appointed as examiners or internal verifiers for Universities or similar examining boards or bodies. If this duty is carried out as voluntary, the College will pay normal salary for this leave. Additional leave may also be supported, but will need to be taken as leave.

5.13 Part time Inspectors

Staff who are employed as Associate Inspectors will be given paid leave of absence for up to two inspections a year, in addition to the remuneration received from Ofsted.

Involvement in a third inspection can be agreed, however this would not be paid by the College.

5.14 Day off for moving house

Managers can grant one day off on the day of the move, with pay for any staff member moving home, limited to one day per year per member of staff.

5.15 My Ten Days

There may be a possibility on an annual basis for staff to apply to the 'My Ten Days' initiative. This enables staff to apply for ten days additional paid leave to apply for an opportunity to contribute to communities both at home and further afield.

A maximum of 50 days (10 per person) may be awarded each year and special consideration would need to be made regarding when the ten days could be taken – in or out of term depending on the role of the individual as their day to day tasks would need covering/rescheduling in some cases, or the Ten days should be taken outside of term time to reduce the impact on students.

All staff have an opportunity to bid for up to ten days on an agreed date each year and present to a committee consisting of the Head of HR, Group Deputy Principal, relevant Principal and once other member of staff, who can award up to Ten Days to those they think provide the best plan - enabling them to give time to a community or raise money for charity.

More details can be obtained from HR regarding scheme rules.

6. Good Mental Health

The EKC Group is a Mindful Employer and works to increase awareness of mental health and making it healthier to talk about mental health.

It is completely voluntary to be a Mindful Employer and enables us to recruit and retain valued and talented members of staff.

The College offers counselling to staff. Counselling aims to help deal with and overcome issues that are causing emotional pain or making someone feel uncomfortable.

It can provide a safe and regular space to talk and explore difficult feelings.

Counselling can help someone:

- cope with a bereavement or relationship breakdown
- cope with redundancy or work-related stress
- explore issues such as sexual identity
- deal with issues preventing someone achieve their your ambitions
- deal with feelings of depression or sadness, and have a more positive outlook on life
- deal with feelings of anxiety and reducing worry
- understand problems better
- feel more confident
- develop a better understanding of other people's points of view

Policy Owner: Head of HR

Approving Body: Policy committee

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: 22.02.18

Page 5 of 12

Counselling can often involve talking about difficult or painful feelings and in most cases, it takes a number of sessions before the counselling starts to make a difference. A regular commitment is required to make the best use of the therapy. For more details check the intranet or contact your HR Officer for details of a local counsellor.

The Staff Attendance Policy provides support to staff who are unwell and unable to attend work and a phased return process is available to support staff returning from long term sickness.

7. Compassionate Leave

Line managers have authority to grant up to five working days paid leave of absence on compassionate grounds in the event of bereavement or serious illness of a close relative, in any one year regardless of length of service. A further 5 days may be granted at the discretion of Senior Managers. A year is recognised as a rolling 12 month period.

Any period in excess of ten days would normally be without pay and considered on a case by case basis by the relevant College HR Committee. If leave with pay is not granted, consideration will be given to leave of absence without pay.

Example of when this leave may be appropriate (although this list is not exhaustive);

- i) Special leave to care for dependent relatives/partner who are seriously/terminally ill – this to be related to individual circumstances having particular regard to the difficulties being experienced by the individual involved.
- ii) Death of relative **

8. Bereavement Leave for loss of a child

Employees will be able to take two weeks paid leave following the death of a child. Support will be provided to help aid a successful return to work.

9. Time off for Looking After Dependents

Employees are entitled to take short amounts of unpaid time off during working hours when it is reasonable for them to do so to “look after their dependents”. To this end the College will consider granting leave in the following circumstances:

- If a dependent falls ill, is injured or assaulted, or gives birth
- Where a child is involved in a serious incident during school hours
- Where care for dependents or other arrangements break down at short notice

Dependent leave should be for unforeseen circumstances and the College does not expect any particular case to require more than two days leave. In recognising this, the College is prepared to grant up to two days paid leave in the above circumstances in any academic year. Any additional leave under this category will be unpaid.

Policy Owner: Head of HR

Approving Body: Policy committee

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: 22.02.18

Page 6 of 12

If you know in advance that you are going to need time off, or you need a longer period off, you should make arrangements to book annual leave, or you may be entitled to take Parental Leave – please see the maternity, Paternity, Parental and Adoption leave Policy for more information.

10. Flexible Working

10.1 All staff may put forward applications to vary their terms of employment by following the Flexible Working procedure.

10.2 These applications can be with regard to

- i) A change to the hours they work
- ii) A change to the times when they are required to work
- iii) To work from home

10.3 Applications made by staff who meet one or more of the following criteria will be given priority under this scheme:

- I. have a child under 16, or under 18 in the case of a disabled child and
- II. who have been employed continuously for 26 weeks at the date the application is made
- III. Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing
- IV. Be making the application to enable them to care for the child
- V. Carers of certain adults (spouse, partner, civil partner or relative**or live at the same address as the adult in need of care)

***Relative for this purpose is a mother, father, adopter, special guardian, parent-in law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, uncle, aunt or grandparent. Step and half blood relatives are also included.*

10.4 To accommodate requests there may be a resulting need to ask other staff to change their working hours and therefore details may need to be shared with them. Written authorisation would be gained in these instances. (see Appendix A)

10.5 A meeting will be held with the staff member, their manager and HR as soon as possible after the request is made. Notice will be given to allow the staff member to bring a workplace colleague along to their meeting(s)

The request will then be considered carefully, weighing the benefits of the requested changes for the employee and the business against any adverse business impact of implementing the changes.

All applications will be considered by the relevant College HR Committee and decisions will be communicated as soon as possible.

10.6 Applications must be dealt with in a reasonable manner and the employee must be notified of the final decision (including any appeal decision) within 3 months, unless mutual agreement is gained to extend this period.

10.7 The College may wish to consider a specified trial period, the timescale for review to be agreed at the time.

10.8 Applications can be refused if proposed changes have one or more of the following consequences:

- I. The burden for additional costs
- II. Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- III. Inability to re-organise work amongst existing staff or recruit additional staff
- IV. Detrimental impact on quality or performance
- IV. Insufficient work during periods the employee proposes to work
- V. Planned structural changes to the business

10.9 If a request is not granted, the employee may appeal within 14 days of notification of the final outcome and should write to the Head of HR outlining their grounds for appeal and the flexible working appeal process would then be instigated, which would include a further meeting.

10.10 Further applications cannot be made within 12 months.

11. Home Working

11.1 Home Working Options.

There are three ways that home working can operate, ranging from informal agreements on a one off basis to formal arrangements that agree a variation to contract and the College recognises three options:

- I. Occasional home working is on an ad hoc basis where a specific task needs a dedicated and focussed input or where it is difficult for staff to get in to work e.g. adverse weather, unavoidable commitment at home.
- II. Regular home working is for a percentage of the time on a regular basis as part of an agreed working pattern and could be to facilitate a more flexible work pattern or where the job involves frequent outside visits such as work based assessments. In such circumstances the College would provide the necessary ICT/communication systems to support the job and staff effectively.
- III. Permanent contractual home working is where the post is contractually based at home other than for specified meetings, events, training and appraisals. In such circumstances the College would provide the necessary ICT/communication systems to support the job and staff effectively

11.2 The Home Environment

Staff need to take personal responsibility for the health and safety aspect of home working. The environment should provide suitable; "office" space, security and confidentiality as well as freedom from interruptions and distractions.

The employee and their manager must also consider the potential impact of home-working on their home environment and their work.

The College insurers cover home working as long as the risk is well documented and appropriate controls are put in place, however it is essential that staff contact their own home insurers to make the company aware that they are working from home and it is the individual's responsibility to arrange personal home insurance cover for their own equipment if being used for work purposes.

11.3 Data Protection

No data should be stored on the hard disk of staffs own PCs or transported on non-encrypted storage devices. The College will provide lap tops and storage devices for staff undertaking regular home working and managers must involve the Systems and Network Team Leader, regarding all home computer connections for work purposes.

The College will ensure that any equipment given to home workers meets the criteria demonstrated in the Home Working Process document.

11.4 Requests for Home Working

Requests from staff wishing to use home working should be approached positively by managers and reference should be made to the Home Working Request Process and will be required to complete a Home-working Application Form.

There is no expectation for staff to undertake work outside core hours or at weekends and working at home will not be recognised as 'home working' unless agreed with the line manager. Once there is an agreement that an individual is to work at home, the arrangement will be mutually respected as far as possible. However, there may be occasions where employees working at home must be prepared to be recalled to the College at short notice.

11.5 Managing Home Working

Reassurance is needed to ensure the member of staff working from home will be safe. The college must be reassured that the member of staff working from home will be safe in the context of the Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999 and subsequent guidance issued via the HSE with regard to home working risk assessment and best practice. Risk assessments would be carried out by individuals who have received the correct risk training, the College's training would be accepted as the minimum level required. The completed risk assessment should be submitted to HR once checked and agreed by the line manager. The checking process would ensure the accuracy and soundness of the assessment and the document.

The Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999 applies to most common Health and Safety issues and links to other more specialist documents. The following document provides further information on Home Working for example regarding Electrical equipment - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg226.pdf>

The following operational considerations should be made regarding requests for Home Working:

- I. Additional costs
- II. Effect on service delivery

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Date of approval: 22.02.18

Page 9 of 12

- III. Effect on quality and/or performance
- IV. Effect on the team as a whole

Managers should take into account the following:

- I. The suitability of the work or task
- II. The suitability of the home (risk assessment)
- III. The capability and role development needs of the applicant
- IV. The home environment (will anyone else be in the home when the employee is working and what impact is this likely to have)

Managers must also ensure arrangements are fully understood by the member of staff and are clearly documented in particular:

- I. staff contact details and core times when they should be available.
- II. times when the member of staff is expected to attend College.
- III. clear guidelines on what work outcomes are expected
- IV. a schedule of regular meetings to assess performance and output.

11.6 General guidelines

All policies and procedures will apply to staff working from home as appropriate including but not exclusively data protection and health and safety, as will access to information, appraisal, training and career development opportunities as comparable staff. Arrangements for home working should include the provision to attend the necessary meetings, staff development and improvement activities and to be appraised.

All regular and permanent home-working should be reviewed on an annual basis as a minimum, if the situation changes or if it is felt necessary by the line manager and staff may be required to revert to their previous working arrangements and attend College for work.

Reasonable expense claims can be made for telephone costs caused by work. Travel expenses will not be paid for attending College. A discussion about likely costs to the College should take place at the time of the application. The College will provide paper, postage and other ancillary equipment as required. Electronic access to College software and files, the intranet, outlook, the learning curve and CIS.

Normal holiday and sickness absence reporting and notification will apply.

Those who work from home on a regular or permanent basis will not have a workstation/desk base at the College, however an identified area would be provided for use when they are on site.

12. Relocation, disturbance allowance

12.1 This allowance is in place in order to support new staff to move nearer to College. There is an expectation for employees to move to within 20 miles of College in order to be eligible to apply. Details of the scheme are available within the scheme policy.

Policy Owner: Head of HR

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Date of approval: 22.02.18

Page 10 of 12

13. Teaching at other sites

13.1 For staff requested to teach at other EKG sites on a regular basis (for 2 weeks or more), additional remission will be allocated to account for travel time. This is not relevant at the start at end of the day.

14. Other wellbeing support

14.1 Free flu jabs

The College will purchase flu jab vouchers to offer to staff each year and encourage staff who are not entitled to free flu jabs with their GP to accept these. Staff will be informed when these are available for collection.

14.2 Health checks

The College will arrange for staff to attend Health checks on site either through the NHS or a third party. These will include cholesterol, BMI and blood sugar checks and subsistence will be provided to support this where possible.

14.3 Denplan membership

All staff will be able to join Denplan to obtain support with dental treatment. Please contact your HR team for more details.

14.4 Counselling

Staff are able to attend free counselling sessions which they can book themselves by contacting the counselling coordinator. Your HR team will have contact details.

14.5 Occupational health

Staff can self-refer to Occupational Health. Please speak to your local HR team.

14.6 Gym membership and activities

Discounted Gym membership is available to all staff at the Canterbury College and this is open to all staff in the East Kent College Group. For more details please contact s.centre@canterburycollege.ac.uk

Activities take place weekly at a concessionary rate. These are advertised on a monthly basis and more details can be obtained from s.centre@canterburycollege.ac.uk

14.7 Cycle to work

The College supports the Cycle to work initiative and staff can purchase bikes through the salary sacrifice scheme. For more details, please contact your HR team.

14.8 Get well courses

The sports centre at Canterbury is able to offer 'get well' courses for staff referred by their GP. This includes free membership for the recovery period including a full induction and the gym will be available during quiet times with supervised sessions and access to fitness classes depending on recovery advice provided by your GP.

15. Management Guidance

Management guidance is available from HR on a range of subjects to support staff including:

15.1 Supporting staff who are experiencing domestic abuse

15.2 Supporting staff who are transgender

15.3 Supporting staff who are diagnosed HIV positive

16. Health and Wellbeing day

16.1 A Wellbeing day will take place annually to promote wellbeing and provide staff with an opportunity to attend wellbeing sessions.