34- Health and Wellbeing Policy

Date ratified: June 2026

Date policy to be reviewed: June 2028

Committee responsible for policy: Board of Governors

Geraldine Kelly — Chair of the Board of Governors

Review No.	Date	Summary of Changes	Reviewer
1	June 2026	No amendments to policy	D Whittington

1. Introduction

1.4 As the employer of staff in The Ridge Employability College, directors recognize the statutory responsibilities related to employment. Day-to-day management of staff is delegated to the Head of College and line managers in The Ridge Employability College. Throughout this document, reference is made to the responsibilities held by the Head of college for operational purposes. Ultimate responsibility rests with the Directors.

2.4 The Ridge Employability College directors are committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and will provide suitable support for all members of staff. Taking action to prevent ill health and promote good health makes good educational and business sense, as sickness absence carries high costs both in monetary terms and in terms of the impact upon performance, teaching and learning, morale and productivity, which may disrupt or compromise student progress.

3.4 Members of the teaching and non-teaching staff are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times. The board of Directors of The Ridge Employability College takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all members of staff and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty.

These include:

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Equalities Policy;
- Grievance Procedure;
- Whistleblowing Procedure.

Other policies contribute to staff wellbeing by providing certainty, fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff in different contexts, including:

- Performance Management Policies for teaching and support staff;
- Behavior Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy;

All mandatory policies are published on the Ridge Employability College's Website. (www.theridgecollege.co.uk)

4.4 The board of Directors recognizes the importance of workplace unions in promoting and maintaining a positive health and wellbeing environment.

2. Who this policy applies to

1.4 This policy will apply to all employees working in The Ridge Employability College.

3. 'Aims

1.4 This policy aims to:

a.1.8 Provide a working environment which enables staff to work in an environment in which staff wellbeing is supported and which enables staff to carry out their duties effectively.

a.2.8 Recognise the key role of the Head of College/Senior Leaders/Line Managers for their responsibilities by enabling access to guidance, training, and support.

a.3.8 Encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

a.4.8 Comply with all statutory requirements.

a.5.8 Develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture through regular communication and consultation with staff and their trade union representatives on health and safety matters.

a.6.8 Develop an open culture in which mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing is taken seriously and in which staff are supported in order that they may seek any help and support they need.

a.7.8 Ensure that all staff are aware of the policy through regular promotion.

a.8.8 Identify the hazards that could lead to poor staff health and wellbeing and reduce these where possible.

4. Legislation

1.4 Pieces of legislation that will be considered when promoting positive mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing, including, but not exclusively:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- Working Time Regulations;
- Employment Rights Act 1996;
- Employment Relations Act 1999.

5. Responsibilities

1.4 The board of Directors shall:

a.1.3 Provide the necessary professional advice, support, and training to all college staff as and when required.

a.2.3 Assist with the referral of staff to Occupational Health, Counselling, or mediation when appropriate.

a.3.3 Assist in the formulation of return-to-work programmes and provide advice on the implementation of statutory requirements.

2.4 The Board of Directors shall:

a.1.10 Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that recognise and deal with the issue of common mental and physical health problems, which will include: consideration of organisation of work; health risk assessment where appropriate; early recognition for staff with common mental and physical health problems (which may require training); and interventions that include short-term

rehabilitation and return-to-work plans and longer-term reasonable adjustments.

a.2.10 Actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental and physical health problems by creating an environment where staff feel comfortable in asking for help.

a.3.10 Act early and provide consistent support.

a.4.10 Enlist the support of The Ridge Employability College's HR function and Occupational Health, when appropriate, and ensure staff are able to access this support that includes.

a.5.10 Ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

a.6.10 Attend regular training on health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.

a.7.10 Ensure that all of The Ridge Employability College's policies are assessed for workload impact.

a.8.10 Take into account the equality implications of any policies introduced and monitor on a regular basis.

a.9.10 Develop a wellbeing strategy that includes access to the Westfield staff benefit scheme to support accessibility to extended support services.

a.10.10 Ensure the policy is monitored, evaluated and reviewed with the recognised workplace unions on an annual basis, in the light of changing needs and legislative frameworks.

3.4 The Head of college shall:

a.1.13 Recognise the value of good management practice with systems in place to effectively manage staff and encourage a partnership approach with staff, workplace unions and the staff with responsibility for health and safety.

a.2.13 Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.

a.3.13 Promote a healthy workplace and practices that ensure that members of staff are able to develop a healthy mind. This will include access to staff keep fit sessions and a quiet reflective area.

a.4.13 Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress.

a.5.13 Understand the differing needs of staff, at different points and events during their life cycles, and offer support accordingly, if and when required. This may include support for pregnant women, older women during the menopause, and those with caring responsibilities.

a.6.13 Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems.

a.7.13 Ensure that a return-to-work policy is established in the workplace that is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work.

a.8.13 Carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible.

a.9.13 Ensure that all staff have access to wellbeing support.

a.10.13 Carefully plan and agree work-life balance solutions including flexible working practices where possible and appropriate.

a.11.13 Demonstrate commitment, via systems and practices in place in The Ridge Employability College, to employees maintaining a good work/life balance, and ensure that such practices are communicated to all staff.

a.12.13 Manage pressures which may affect staff, including the impact of workload pressures, and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.

a.13.13 Conduct an annual survey of staff, including a section on health and wellbeing, and share and act upon results.

4.4 Senior Leaders/Line Managers shall:

a.1.8 Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.

a.2.8 Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress.

a.3.8 Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental health problems.

a.4.8 Ensure that a return-to-work policy is established in the workplace that is supportive of staff both while absent and upon return to work.

a.5.8 Carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible.

a.6.8 Attend regular training on health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.

a.7.8 Communicate work-life balance practices to all staff and manage pressures that may affect staff and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.

a.8.8 Demonstrate commitment to staff by encouraging a good work/life balance.

5.4 Staff should:

a.1.5 Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem, if possible, to a clearly identified line manager or named individual.

a.2.5 Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves or others whilst in the workplace.

a.3.5 Consider wellbeing support mechanisms offered by The Ridge Employability College; e.g. counselling.

a.4.5 Consider attending training on health and wellbeing issues where they feelthat this is appropriate.

a.5.5 Where possible, be watchful of any indication of changes of behaviour in colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress.

6. Support Mechanisms

1.4 Counselling

6.1.1 Counselling can be provided where appropriate through the The Ridge Employability College's provider. This will be a confidential, independent service using professionally qualified counsellors.

2.4 Mediation

6.2.1 In addition to the Counselling Service there is also a mediation service in order to assist employees to return to normal working relationships. Where this service is appropriate it will be discussed with the employees affected by the situation.

3.4 Education Support Network

6.3.1 The Education Support Network is a group of independent charities and a social enterprise that provides practical and emotional support to staff in the education sector and their families. Information, support and coaching is offered to all staff. The Education Support Network provides over 1000 factsheets covering a wide range of issues including money advice, how to cope with bereavement, mental health, diet and nutrition and how to manage

stress. To access the free support line, staff can call 08000 562 561, or for more information go to https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/about-us

4.4 Occupational Health

6.4.1 The college has access to an Occupational Health provider. This will enable an employee to discuss any concerns about their health and wellbeing with a nurse or doctor trained in occupational medicine. This is an opportunity to discuss any health condition and get feedback about managing or improving that condition to help an employee to carry out their duties or return to work. The information given is entirely confidential and will not be shared with the board of Directors or members of staff within The Ridge Employability College.

Appendix 1

Useful Websites

Acas www.acas.org.uk
Information on stress, and employer and employee rights, in the workplace

Alcoholics Anonymous www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
Fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other to recover from alcoholism.

Carers UK www.carersuk.org The voice of carers

CBI www.cbi.org.uk
Guidance to businesses on managing stress at work

Dignity at Work Partnership www.dignityatwork.org
Information and guidance on bullying in the workplace

The Equality and Human Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com
The commission is working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

Gingerbread www.gingerbread.org.uk
Gingerbread and One Parent Families have now merged to provide better support and a bigger voice to 1.8 million lone parents and their children throughout England and Wales.

HSE http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/ Information on the stress management standards

Local Government Employers www.local.gov.uk
Guidance for all councils on stress prevention and management

Mindful Employer www.mindfulemployer.net
Information and guidance on managing stress and mental health in the workplace

NASUWT www.nasuwt.org.uk
Information on a whole range of issues related to stress and wellbeing

NHS 111 http://www.nhs.uk/111
_National Health Service advice and guidance on health matters

Princess Royal Trust for Carers http://www.carers.org
Here to improve carers' lives by fighting for equality and recognition for carers.

Relate http://www.relate.org.uk
UK's largest provider of relationship counselling and sex therapy.

Samaritans http://www.samaritans.org
Offers confidential, non-judgemental support to individuals.

Education Support Network
https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/about-us Work Life
Balance Centre https://thewlbc.com/
Exists to help people restore control over their workload and working lives we enable them to cut down overworking and so make new decisions about how they spend their time.

World Health Organisation
http://www.who.int/occupational health/publications/en/oehstress.pdf Publication on work organisation and stress.