

Mental Health and Wellbeing at Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest

Staff Wellbeing

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest, we believe that staff wellbeing is fundamental to providing the highest quality early education and care. When staff feel valued, supported and respected, they are better able to support children and families effectively and create nurturing learning environments. Research shows that strong staff wellbeing improves morale, retention and the quality of care provided to children.

We are committed to creating a positive working environment where staff feel they **achieve, belong and thrive** as professionals.

Our Wellbeing Commitment

We are committed to:

- 🌿 **Creating a positive culture**
  - Promoting respect, teamwork and open communication
  - Ensuring staff feel listened to and valued
  - Celebrating achievements and successes



Staff Wellbeing

⚖️ Supporting work-life balance

- Careful planning to support manageable workloads
- Clear communication and expectations
- Flexible approaches where possible

🤝 Providing professional support

- Regular supervision and professional growth meetings
- Access to training and professional development
- Supportive leadership and coaching

💬 Supporting mental health and emotional wellbeing

- Encouraging open conversations about wellbeing
- Signposting to external support where needed
- Providing a safe space to discuss concerns

☕ Promoting staff connection and belonging

- Opportunities for team-building and social activities
- Staff recognition and appreciation
- Wellbeing initiatives and events



Staff Wellbeing

Our Approach

Our approach reflects national guidance which recognises that staff wellbeing should be embedded into school culture and leadership practice.

Senior leaders regularly review staff wellbeing through:

- Staff feedback and surveys
- Professional growth discussions
- Absence and workload monitoring
- Informal conversations and team meetings

This helps us continuously improve and ensure that Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest remain supportive places to work.



Staff Wellbeing

Our Vision

We aim to create an environment where:

- Staff feel valued and respected
- Staff feel confident and supported
- Staff feel professionally fulfilled
- Staff wellbeing is prioritised alongside children's wellbeing

Because when adults thrive, children thrive too.



Still Human: Leading Staff Wellbeing

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest, we recognise that staff wellbeing is fundamental to delivering high-quality early years education and care. As a school and setting, we are fully committed to creating a culture where all staff feel supported, valued and able to thrive both professionally and personally.

As part of this commitment, the Headteacher has engaged with the *Still Human* programme, attending two face-to-face training sessions and will continue to participate in follow-up online support sessions. This ensures that our leadership approach is informed by current research, practical strategies and reflective practice in relation to staff wellbeing.

The whole staff team engaged with wellbeing training on the training day on Tuesday 2nd September 2026.



Strategic Approach to Wellbeing

Following this training, leaders will collaboratively develop a Staff Wellbeing Action Plan, ensuring that wellbeing is:

- Proactively planned rather than reactive
- Embedded within our school development priorities
- Responsive to the needs of all staff

In addition, *Still Human* will provide:

- Whole staff workshops to build a shared understanding of wellbeing
- Access to the Still Human App, offering ongoing support, strategies and resources for staff

This whole-school approach ensures that wellbeing is not seen as an add-on, but as an integral part of our organisational culture.



Mental Health First Aid Training

To further strengthen our provision, three members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and one member of support staff have undertaken Mental Health First Aid at Work training.

This is a deliberate and strategic decision to ensure that support for staff wellbeing is:

- Visible and accessible across all levels of the organisation
- Not solely leadership-driven, but inclusive of wider staff representation
- Embedded within daily practice and staff interactions



Benefits of Training SLT and a Member of Support Staff

Having both SLT members and a support staff member trained provides several key benefits:

1. A Whole-School Approach

Training across different roles ensures that wellbeing is **everyone's responsibility**, not just that of senior leaders. This promotes a culture of openness and shared ownership.

2. Increased Accessibility and Trust

Some staff may feel more comfortable approaching a colleague rather than a senior leader. Having a trained support staff member:

- Reduces perceived hierarchy
- Encourages early conversations
- Builds trust and psychological safety



Benefits of Training SLT and a Member of Support Staff

3. Early Identification and Intervention

Trained staff are equipped to:

- Recognise early signs of mental health concerns
- Offer initial support and reassurance
- Signpost to appropriate services

This ensures that concerns are addressed before they escalate.

4. Strengthening Leadership Capacity

SLT members with Mental Health First Aid training can:

- Lead with empathy and understanding
- Make informed decisions around workload and support
- Model positive wellbeing practices

This strengthens the strategic and operational leadership of wellbeing.



5. Embedding a Supportive Culture

By investing in training across roles, we are actively building a culture where:

- Wellbeing conversations are normalised
- Staff feel safe to seek support
- Everyone plays a role in supporting one another

Conclusion

Through our engagement with *Still Human*, the development of a targeted action plan, access to staff-wide resources, and investment in Mental Health First Aid training, we are taking a proactive, inclusive and sustainable approach to staff wellbeing.

We are committed to ensuring that every member of our team feels supported, respected and empowered, recognising that when staff thrive, so do the children and families we serve.



Staff Supervision at Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest, we recognise that regular staff supervision is an important part of maintaining high-quality provision and supporting staff wellbeing and professional development. All staff receive termly supervision meetings, providing a structured opportunity for professional dialogue, reflection and support.

Supervision meetings provide a dedicated time for staff to reflect on their practice, discuss their roles and responsibilities, and identify areas for professional growth. These meetings help ensure that staff feel supported in their work and have opportunities to discuss both successes and any challenges they may be experiencing.

Termly supervision supports staff to:

- Reflect on their practice and identify strengths and areas for development
- Discuss children's learning and wellbeing, including any concerns or additional needs
- Review professional development opportunities and training needs
- Discuss workload and wellbeing in a supportive and confidential environment
- Ensure a clear understanding of expectations and responsibilities
- Strengthen safeguarding awareness and professional practice

Supervision plays an important role in supporting staff wellbeing, ensuring that staff feel valued, listened to and supported in their roles. Regular professional conversations help to build confidence and encourage reflective practice, which in turn improves the quality of interactions and experiences for children.