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1 PURPOSE

1.1 AFTRS believes that the mental health and wellbeing of our School community are key to the overall creativity, success and sustainability of the School, staff and students. The purpose of this policy is for AFTRS to establish, promote and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all staff and students through good workplace and learning practices, and to encourage both staff and students to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing.

2 SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to all staff (including contractors and PC1 staff) and students at AFTRS.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 We seek to build and maintain an environment and culture that proactively support mental health and wellbeing, promote help-seeking behaviours and prevent any form of discrimination (including bullying and harassment).

3.2 Through continued education and awareness raising, AFTRS is committed to building the knowledge, awareness and capability of staff and students around mental health and wellbeing issues, actions and behaviours, normalising the conversation on this topic, reducing the stigma associated with depression and anxiety and encouraging help-seeking behaviours.

3.3 This policy has a direct link to the Creativity and Wellbeing Strategy, with the aim to facilitate a range of initiatives that promote and support mental health and wellbeing, directly dispelling the myth of the “tortured creative”.

4 PROCEDURE

Mental Health & Wellbeing Support Services

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of all staff and students at AFTRS to read, understand and seek clarification on this policy when required. The AFTRS Community is expected to actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy – bringing our School values of community, courage and generosity to life by looking out for one another, being kind and respectful to one another, and speaking up if you are concerned about yourself or someone else.
- 4.2 AFTRS has clear expectations of staff and students in their behaviour and actions when working, learning or taking part in AFTRS-related activities, both on campus and online. These expectations are clearly outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct, Student Code of Conduct and the AFTRS Charter. This is supported through clear policies and procedures for both staff and students, which can be found in the Student Handbook (students) and on the staff intranet (staff).
- 4.3 AFTRS has signed up to the [Mentally Healthy Minimum Standards](#), publicly affirming our commitment to creating and maintaining a mentally healthy workplace. We will continue to ensure the standards are core to our strategies, projects and day to day operations at AFTRS.
- 4.4 AFTRS provides free access to wellbeing resources such as the Headspace app, promoting healthy practices that support mental health and wellbeing such as mindfulness practice, guided meditations, guided exercise and workout sessions and resources to support healthy eating, working, studying and sleeping habits.
- 4.5 AFTRS will promote healthy eating habits by providing fruit onsite, access to filtered water, fridges, kitchens and equipment to store and heat food, as well as ensuring onsite vendors offer healthy choices.
- 4.6 AFTRS provides designated quiet spaces for staff and students as a refuge when feeling overwhelmed and/or overloaded by the sensory input from their immediate environment. They may also be used as a safe, calm and comfortable space for reflecting and resetting.
- 4.7 AFTRS will ensure that there is a deep, reliable and accessible network of support offered to staff and students across the School that it is clearly communicated and resourced annually.
- 4.8 Mental Health First Aid training will be delivered annually, with a list of Mental Health First Aid officers kept current on both the Student HUB and staff intranet – Basecamp.

Specific Supports for Students

- 4.8.1 The Student Centre team can provide a comprehensive range of supports to students across a wide range of matters, including pastoral and academic. The Student HUB provides a wide range of resources, links to external supports and self-help to students seeking support. This helps to promote help-seeking behaviours.
- 4.8.2 Students can book an appointment to see a Student Engagement Manager using the online booking service. The Student Engagement Managers are available to meet with students who are seeking guidance, advice and/or support to deal with their current circumstances. This can be face to face, online or via chat using Teams. The Student Engagement Managers receive external clinical supervision on a monthly basis to support their own mental health and wellbeing.
- 4.8.3 Students can book an appointment to see the AFTRS Student Counsellor for free and confidential counselling using the online booking service. The Counsellor can meet face to face or online and can make referrals on to other external support services where relevant. The Counsellor also receives external clinical supervision to support their own mental health and wellbeing.
- 4.8.4 The Safe Conversation Officer network is managed by the AFTRS Counsellor and comprises a number of trained staff from across the organisation who can assist staff and students to access information, support and/or reporting mechanisms. Each student cohort has a designated Safe Conversation Officer(s) to ensure a clear point of contact, however students can speak to any of the Safe Conversation Officers. The Safe Conversation officers receive quarterly external clinical supervision to support their own mental health and wellbeing.

- 4.8.5 The First Nations Community Engagement Officers work closely with the Student Engagement Managers to ensure a seamless community web of support for First Nations students.

Specific Supports for Staff

- 4.8.6 The Human Resources team can provide a comprehensive range of supports to staff across a wide range of matters, including personal and work-related matters. The HR Team are available to meet face to face or online with staff who are seeking guidance, advice and/or support to deal with their current circumstances.
- 4.8.7 The staff intranet provides a wide range of resources, links to external supports and self-help to staff seeking support. This helps to promote help-seeking behaviours.
- 4.8.8 Leveraging a hybrid work model, AFTRS will continue to offer staff a range of flexible working options to allow staff to manage personal wellbeing, family and other commitments.
- 4.8.9 All staff have access to our confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) service – AccessEAP. Staff and their immediate families can access free and confidential counselling sessions at any time.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Education

- 4.9 The Student Engagement Managers and Student Counsellor will work with the HR Team and the Director, People & Culture to schedule information and awareness raising sessions on matters relating to mental health and wellbeing. This includes regular Mental Health First Aid certification and refresher workshops, Safe Conversation Officer training and workshops delivered by external providers including the AFTRS EAP provider.

Creativity & Wellbeing Program

- 4.10 The Student Engagement Managers, Student Counsellor, First Nations Community Engagement Managers, HR Team and the Director, People & Culture will work closely and collaboratively to schedule a series of creativity and wellbeing workshops each semester, designed to encourage creativity, reflection, and relaxation, whilst improving confidence, connection, resilience and self-belief.

Disclosure

- 4.11 Staff and students can make a disclosure regarding a mental health or personal wellbeing matter at any time. As per the Reasonable Adjustment Policy & Procedure (2021), staff and students are not required to disclose unless they choose to. There will be a certain level of disclosure needed if staff and students are seeking reasonable adjustments including where an extension to an assessment has been granted on the basis of special consideration, or if a disclosure leads us to believe that the staff/student or another person is in immediate danger.
- 4.12 Staff can disclose a mental health or personal wellbeing matters with their manager, the Director, People & Culture and/or Counsellors available through our Employee Assistance Program (AccessEAP).
- 4.13 Students can disclose a mental health or personal wellbeing matter to the Student Engagement Manager(s), the AFTRS Counsellor and/or the Director, People & Culture.
- 4.14 Disclosures and requests may be made verbally in person or via the Medical Forms received at the start of employment or at enrolment.

Critical Incidents

- 4.15 The Critical Incident Management Plan and Procedure establishes and outlines the response to “incidents with an adverse effect on a person’s or people’s physical or mental health and wellbeing”. In these types of incidents, ensuring physical and psychological safety will be the first priority.

- 4.16 The Critical Incident Coordination Team will meet twice per year to run through the plan and actively participate in a mock scenario. This will support strong planning and response mechanisms, with continual improvement of plans and capability.

Complaints & Grievances

- 4.17 Section 13 of the Student Handbook outlines the process for students who wish to make a complaint. All parties in a complaint are supported by Student Engagement Managers and the HR team where relevant.
- 4.18 Section 14 of the AFTRS Enterprise Agreement outlines the grievance procedure for any staff who feel they have been treated unfairly during their employment. All parties in a complaint are supported by the HR team where relevant.
- 4.19 In order to ensure all parties to a complaint feel supported and as well as possible, the People and Culture team will use the following principles to guide their actions:
- Every effort will be made to deal with complaints with the people involved and in the least formal way that is appropriate, involving as few people as possible
 - Confidentiality will be preserved as far as is practically possible whilst ensuring thorough investigation of the issue and the development of an action plan, as appropriate
 - Both the complainant and the respondent will be encouraged to be accompanied by a support person
 - Complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible whilst ensuring thoroughness of process
 - AFTRS will work to ensure that any recrimination, harassment or discrimination against you as a result of lodging a complaint is dealt with swiftly, and could result in a charge of misconduct against the perpetrator

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 All staff and students are encouraged to:
- understand this policy and seek clarification from the People & Culture Team (Student Centre or HR) where required
 - consider this policy while undertaking AFTRS-related activities and at any time while representing AFTRS
 - support peers in their awareness of this policy
 - support and contribute to AFTRS' aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all

All staff and students have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health
- take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people at AFTRS

Managers and Course Convenors have a responsibility to:

- ensure that all staff and students are made aware of this policy
- actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals
- manage the implementation and review of this policy

Student Engagement Managers and Human Resources staff have a responsibility to:

- ensure that all staff and students are made aware of this policy at the onboarding stage
- actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals, by planning and measuring the efficacy of wellbeing activities and initiatives
- manage the implementation and review of this policy

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.2 The People & Culture dashboard, updated monthly, will be used to track numbers of students accessing supports, as well as issues and themes relating to staff and student support. This data will be used to refine this policy and resulting initiatives to ensure mental health and wellbeing remains a key priority for AFTRS.
- 5.3 The Director, People & Culture will review this policy twelve months after implementation and annually thereafter.
- 5.4 Effectiveness of the policy will be assessed through:
- feedback from staff, students, the WHS Committee and the Staff Consultative Committee
 - review of the policy to determine if objectives have been met and to identify barriers and enablers to ongoing policy implementation.

Reporting

- 5.5 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 5.6 All records relevant to administering this policy and procedure will be maintained by the Policy and Governance Officer.

6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms and definitions

“Disclosure” means sharing information that relates to you, with an HR or Student Centre team member, or any other relevant person.

“Mental Health & Wellbeing” means a person’s condition as it relates to their psychological, physical, spiritual, cultural and emotional wellbeing.

“Reasonable Adjustment” means altering some feature of the work or learning environment so that a person with a disability can engage and perform equitably, effectively and comfortably

7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Legislation

Disability Discrimination Act 1992
 Disability Standards for Education 2005
 Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987
 Higher Education Standards Framework 2015
 Higher Education Support Act 2003
 Privacy Act 2014
 TEQSA Standards

AFTRS Documents

AFTRS Charter
 AFTRS Enterprise Agreement 2017
 AFTRS Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
 Code of Conduct (Staff)
 Code of Conduct (Students)
 Critical Incident Management Plan & Procedure 2021
 Grievance Procedures
 Reasonable Adjustment Policy & Procedure 2020
 Student Handbook 2021
 Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy 2017

8 FEEDBACK

- 8.1 AFTRS staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@aftrs.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	CEO
Responsible Officer	Director, People & Culture
Contact Officer	Director, People & Culture
Distribution	Intranet and AFTRS website Staff and Student facing
Next Review Date	29/11/2024 <i>The Policy and Procedure documents will be reviewed every three years from the effective date, or earlier or later depending on external factors such as legislative reform, unless other review schedules are required, e.g., documents that align with Student Handbook, reviewed annually.</i>

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	V1.0_29/11/2021 — CEO (with Executive endorsement)
Amendment History and Date	N/A Brief detail of this amendment: N/A
Notes	N/A
Minor Amendment Approval and History	N/A <i>[If applying a minor (administrative only) amendment, do not amend Original Approval Authority]</i>