

Workplace Health and Wellbeing Toolkit

Introduction

This toolkit details a range of information, policies and actions which a school may consider in developing an action plan in support of its health and wellbeing strategy. This may be added to over time as new research and information becomes available.

The toolkit is arranged in sections as follows:

[Section 1 – Getting started](#)

[Section 2 – Health](#)

[Section 3 – Work](#)

[Section 4 – Values and behaviours](#)

[Section 5 – Monitoring and review](#)

Within each section, a range of possible actions are suggested for schools to consider when developing their action plan. These actions are not exhaustive and may not be relevant to all school settings. It is also not expected that schools will tackle all of them at once. Rather, they are given to stimulate discussion and generate ideas for the development of successive action plans over the short to medium term.

Schools will already have in place a range of policies, arrangements and activities which currently contribute to employee health and wellbeing. It is important that these are recognised and retained where they are effective.

Section 1 - Getting Started

The elements of a school's approach to wellbeing will be unique to that setting and tailored to meet its specific challenges and needs. To be truly effective wellbeing should be embedded into all aspects of school life and its importance recognised by all members of the staff team. Consideration will be given to the impact on wellbeing of any changes to policies, practices and arrangements which are being proposed.

Suggested actions

- Hold a launch event where health and wellbeing are explained and priorities discussed with staff
- Adopt and communicate a Health and Wellbeing Strategy through which the leadership of the school is able to demonstrate its commitment to health and wellbeing

- Undertake a needs assessment to identify health and wellbeing priorities and inform the development of an action plan

- Appoint, support and develop health and wellbeing champions within the workforce who can promote and encourage wellbeing
- Develop communication mechanisms which enable all within the workforce to participate and contribute to discussions and consultations regarding health and wellbeing on an ongoing basis
- Consider signing up to a wellbeing programme or award for example the free Public Health award [Workplace Wellbeing Award North Yorkshire](#)

Section 2 - Health

In this section:

- [Mental health and stress management](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#)
- [Health promotion, exercise and nutrition](#)

Mental health and stress management

Approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year. The overall number of people with mental health problems in the UK is not thought to have changed significantly in recent years, but worries about things like money and jobs can make it harder for people to cope.

All employees are likely to experience stress at times. It affects different people in different ways at different times and is sometimes the result of a combination of factors in the employee's personal and working lives.

There is a difference between stress and pressure. Everyone will experience pressure on a daily basis, and need it to motivate them and enable them to perform at their best. It is when an individual experiences too much pressure without the opportunity to recover that they start to experience stress. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as:

'the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them'.

Work-related stress can be tackled by employees working with their employers to identify issues at source and agreeing realistic and workable ways to tackle these. Employers have legal responsibilities to monitor and manage risks within the workplace, including stress.

Early identification and intervention can often help prevent issues developing and reduce the amount of time lost through absence. This may be achieved through effective absence monitoring, constructive and supportive discussion, return to work interviews, reasonable adjustments and signposting to available support.

There are a number of tools and frameworks available which schools can use to support the mental health of their workforces. A range of these are available on the workplace health and wellbeing hub on CYPInfo.

Suggested actions

- Implementation of a stress management policy (available on [CYPInfo](#))
- Undertake regular whole staff stress audits and implement action plans
- Discuss outcomes of risk audits and action plans with staff team
- Systematically review sickness absence data to identify levels and trends in stress related absence
- Provide training to managers and employees to enable them to identify and address stress related issues
- Undertake individual risk assessments with employees who may be experiencing work related stress and implement relevant measures
- Regularly report to the Governing Body on stress related issues
- Provide access to counselling through employee assistance programme – see also below
- Consider appointing and training mental health first aiders

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The purpose of an EAP is to provide a confidential, individual assistance and support service designed to help employees to cope with personal and/or work-related problems that may impact their job performance, health, mental and emotional wellbeing.

EAPs are usually provided by an external specialist provider or number of providers and can include a range of services.

NYCC contracts [Health Assured](#) to provide support to staff with a broad range of issues including, but not limited to:

- Personal life
- Work issues
- Managing Finances
- Health
- Retirement

The service provides confidential and independent telephone counselling. The log in details are - Username: **Northyorkshire** Password: **Council**.

The [Health and Wellbeing Service](#) provides an advisory service to schools to support all staff in identifying and minimising any detrimental effects of health on work and work on health. The H&WB team are experienced specialist practitioners in Occupational Health.

The **Education Support Partnership** provides practical and emotional support to staff in the education sector and their families. Information, support and coaching is offered to all staff 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 <http://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/>.

Suggested actions

- Ensure the school has effective arrangements for the provision of an employee assistance programme
- Regularly communicate the services available through the EAP and the contact arrangements to all staff
- Designate a notice board for EAP information
- Undertake particular health promotion activities to meet the needs of staff and address concerns raised through survey/ health needs assessment

Health promotion, exercise and nutrition

The general health of employees can impact on their performance at work. Physical exercise and good nutrition are important to the general health of employees and can also contribute to emotional wellbeing. Staff are encouraged to take exercise and eat well and that staff have a reasonable lunch break during the school day and that facilities are available for the storage and consumption of food brought from home.

Suggested actions

- Ensure that staff have a reasonable lunch break away from their workplace (see also [Working Time Regulations](#))
- Provide facilities to enable employees to store, heat and consume food brought from home
- Enable staff to access nutritionally balanced school meals
- Undertake particular activities to promote healthy eating
- Encourage staff to use school sports facilities or make arrangements with local gyms
- Introduce staff exercise activities e.g. mile a day in May, 10,000 steps, badminton club, tournaments between staff or staff and pupils.
- Promote the bike to work scheme and provide facilities to support staff who travel to work by bike
- Implement a workplace substance misuse policy and a smoke-free workplace policy (available on [CYPInfo](#)).
- Signpost employees who may have alcohol or substance misuse issues to the EAP or additional services

- Undertake particular health promotion activities to reduce the intake of alcohol e.g. dry January
- Provide support to employees wishing to give up smoking and signpost them to smoking cessation services e.g. [Living Well](#)

Section 3 - Work

In this section:

- [Workloads and Work-life balance](#)
- [Cover arrangements](#)
- [School calendar](#)
- [Directed time](#)
- [Flexible working](#)

Workloads and work-life balance

Workloads and work-life balance are an on-going, significant issue for schools and is something which effects both support and teaching staff. It is widely recognised that the ability of employees to achieve a balance between their work and other interests and responsibilities in their life, is an essential factor in staff wellbeing and effectiveness, which in turn supports pupil learning. It can help with the recruitment and retention of staff through giving employees greater control of their working lives.

An acceptable work-life balance will be different for each employee and will change throughout their lives and careers. It is not in the interest of either the school or the individual member of staff for work to be detrimental to the employee's physical health or emotional wellbeing. Excessive work without rest and recreation is not conducive to efficient or effective working which in turn will impact on the contribution which individual staff are able to make to the school community.

The **Working Time Regulations** govern the maximum hours employees can work and the daily and weekly breaks they are entitled to. The relevant provisions of the regulations are as follows:

- Maximum of 48 hours worked per week averaged over a 17 week reference period
- A daily rest break of at least 20 minutes if the employee works more than 6 hours
- A daily rest period of 11 hours
- A rest period of 24 hours each week or 48 hours each fortnight (cannot run concurrently with the daily rest period)

Suggested actions

- Undertake regular (termly/annual) audits to determine the average weekly hours which staff are working in school and the additional hours typically carried out at home

- Take steps to address any culture of long-hours with senior staff leading by example
- Consider the impact of new policies and initiatives on workload and try to minimise this
- Access the DfE toolkit '[Reducing workload in your school](#)' and use it to assess and address workload issues

Cover arrangements

Having to provide cover for absent colleagues, places additional workload and pressures on members of staff. The School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document states that teachers should be required to provide cover only rarely, and only in circumstances that are not foreseeable (this does not apply to teachers who are employed wholly or mainly for the purpose of providing such cover).

This provision applies to all teachers, including those in the leadership group, leading practitioners and part-time teachers.

Where teaching assistants are used in the provision of cover, the school should ensure that they are suitably qualified, that the requirement to provide cover is appropriate to their job role and that they are correctly remunerated. Schools should consider the impact that providing cover has on the ability of teaching assistants to undertake their other duties and responsibilities and factor this into workload allocation.

Some events which prompt a need for cover are foreseeable, for example, when teachers are absent from school due to other work commitments such as school trips, external meetings or training. Whilst some level of cover for unplanned absences, such as sickness absence, can be anticipated, the amount and timing of this is not predictable and therefore much harder to plan for.

Schools should have an effective cover policy that establishes a strategy for dealing with planned and unplanned absence of teachers that ensures that cover can be arranged in a speedy and appropriate way.

Suggested actions

- Audit the internal cover provided by staff considering frequency, length of cover events and distribution between staff
- Review the school's cover arrangements to ensure that employee absence can be effectively covered and teachers only cover rarely

School calendar

Schools are encouraged to publish an annual calendar of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload in such a way as to help maintain a satisfactory work-life balance.

Changes to the school calendar should only be made in exceptional circumstances where there is an important organisational or academic reason for doing so.

Suggested actions

- Ensure a school calendar is published in a timely manner and communicated effectively to all staff, ideally by July each year
- Put in place agreed arrangements for amending the school calendar in the event that changes become necessary

Directed time

Under the STPCD teachers, not including those on the Leadership Group or Leading Practitioners pay spine, may be directed to work a maximum of 1265 hours of directed time per annum. This is pro-rated for part-time teachers based on the proportion of the School Timetabled Teaching Week which they work.

The school must ensure that all teaching staff have their appropriate allocation of Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time and that they will not be required to attend meetings or undertake other directed time activities during these times. PPA must be provided in units of not less than half an hour during the school's timetabled teaching week and must not amount to less than 10% of a teacher's timetabled teaching time.

Newly Qualified Teachers should have a reduced timetable of no more than 90% of the timetable of the school's existing teachers on the main pay range to enable them to undertake activities in their induction programme. This is in addition to the timetable reduction in respect of PPA time that all teachers receive.

Staff with designated management responsibilities (TLR holders) should, where possible, have designated time to fulfil these duties during directed time.

Schools are not required to publish an annual directed time budget even though the teaching professional associations may push for this to be done. There are pros and cons associated with publishing a directed time budget and it is entirely at the school's discretion whether they wish to do so. The publication of a budget ensures that teachers are not exceeding the directed time limits, however, it can reduce flexibility for both the school and individual teachers. In the absence of a published directed time budget Headteachers may wish to monitor directed time informally to ensure that excessive time demands are not being placed on teaching staff.

Suggested actions

- Review the provision of appropriate facilities within school to ensure that staff can productively use their PPA time and are not disturbed unnecessarily
- Plan and monitor directed time of teaching staff to ensure it falls within the 1265 hours limit
- Consider whether publishing a directed time budget would be appropriate within the school
- Ensure meetings are kept to the minimum necessary for the efficient running of the school and are detailed within the school calendar

There is a statutory duty to consider requests for flexible working, and there are a range of policies a school can adopt which support employees in meeting their commitments outside of work or offer the opportunity to request a change to their working pattern. These policies are listed below and template policies are available on [CYPInfo](#):

- Flexible Working Policy including job share
- Leave Policy and extended unpaid leave
- Early Retirement Policy (including phased and flexible retirement)
- Parental leave policies, including maternity, paternity, adoption, maternity support leave and shared parental leave

Not all types of flexible working will be appropriate for all roles and should be considered within the context of the school, the staff group and the impact on pupils. However, all requests must be given fair consideration in line with policy and statutory entitlements.

The DfE has issued [guidance](#) to help teachers, schools and employers make arrangements for flexible working.

Suggested actions

- Ensure that the school has adopted the latest policies which support flexible working
- Ensure relevant policies are effectively communicated to staff so they are aware of their entitlements to request flexible working e.g. through meetings, on notice boards, through intranets, etc.

Section 4 – Values and behaviours

In this sections:

- [School culture and communication](#)
- [Dignity at work](#)

School culture and communication

Within any school, the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and other managers are responsible for encouraging an inclusive culture where all staff members feel valued and are comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. Leaders should be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and will act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises.

An important element to developing an inclusive culture is through meaningful and relevant communication involving staff in all areas of the school. Such communication aids wellbeing through the belief that staff feel valued and that their views are important to the school.

The provision of development opportunities and CPD for all staff is important both in terms of developing new skills but also in demonstrating the value the school places in staff. Development opportunities should be offered to all staff and access to development managed in a fair and transparent manner.

It may be appropriate for the school to employ a range of processes to aid and promote communication and involvement. Communication should always be proportionate and relevant to individual employees and accommodate different working patterns. The following are examples of communication activities which the school could adopt:

- daily/weekly/fortnightly staff briefings □ Newsletters, e-mail updates, etc.
- Line manager meetings
- Team meetings

Suggested actions

- Review existing arrangements and develop a communication strategy for the school, taking into account the views of staff
- Ensure all staff are offered development opportunities, regardless of role, and that access to this is fair and transparent
- Develop a range of development opportunities, which may include secondments, research, mentoring and coaching
- Provide training in holding effective challenging conversations, so that managers are skilled in engaging staff in discussion which focuses on solutions whilst maintaining positive working relationships
- Ensure the school operates a robust performance management process with individual targets linked to team and school priorities
- Check arrangements for access to training activities and days and that consideration is given to providing access part-time staff e.g. videoing CPD sessions for part-time staff to access at other times
- Involve all staff in the development and implementation of the School Development Plan
- Consider the introduction of a celebration event or scheme which recognises and rewards positive behaviours or performance
- Encourage staff to develop some social activities either during or outside the school day e.g. cake break, book club, etc.

Dignity at work

All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and employees must be provided with a safe working environment which is free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment. All staff are expected to behave professionally and have the right to expect professional behaviour from others.

If an employee believes that the behaviour of another member of staff towards them has been inappropriate, the school should have arrangements in place for the

Suggested actions

- Ensure that staff are aware of the school's [Resolving Issues at Work Policy](#) and know how to raise issues of concern
- Provide training to managers around dealing with grievance issues and trying to resolve them informally if possible and appropriate

Section 5 – Monitoring and Review

In this section:

- [Governing Body and designated governor](#)
- [Exit interviews and staff surveys](#)
- [Embedding wellbeing across the school](#)

It is important, when developing the school action plan, that consideration is given to how progress is monitored and success measured. This should be recorded on the action plan which should be regularly reviewed and updated.

Governing body and designated governor

Health and wellbeing should be supported at all levels and the Governing Body have a role to play in promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees within the school.

The Governing Body have a particular responsibility for supporting the wellbeing of the Headteacher and helping them to achieve an appropriate work-life balance.

Suggested actions

- Consider appointment of a designated governor for health and wellbeing who is responsible for ensuring that the policy and action plan are effectively implemented and information is regularly fed back to the Governing Body
- Ensure that the Governing Body provides appropriate support to the Headteacher including monitoring their workload and work-life balance

Exit interviews and staff surveys

Exit questionnaire and interview process can provide valuable data about why an employee chose to leave the school and to identify if any health or wellbeing issues played a part in the decision. Staff surveys can provide a useful snapshot about how staff are feeling within the workplace. Information gathered through these process can be used to monitor progress against an action plan or inform any adjustments required in the school's health and wellbeing practices.

- Implement an exit questionnaire and interview process and decide how the information collected will be used to inform adjustments to health and wellbeing practices
- Undertake a termly/annual staff survey and consider to whom the results will be reported

Embedding wellbeing across the school

Sometimes the unintended consequence of a new initiative or policy can be an increase in workload or demands on one or more staff. By actively considering the impact on wellbeing in decision making processes, it may be possible to avoid introducing initiatives which have a significant impact on work-load.

Wellbeing is not a one-off event and should be seen as a key value in the school's culture. Through an ongoing series of activities and events the school can demonstrate its long-term commitment to wellbeing and build understanding, positive behaviours and embed working practices.

Suggested actions

- Ensure effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the wellbeing action plan and setting new targets and activities on an ongoing basis
- Have employee wellbeing as a regular agenda item on SLT and staff meetings
- Involve wellbeing champions to develop a programme of wellbeing activities throughout the year
- Implement a process to ensure new policies and practices are evaluated for the impact they will have on the work-life balance of staff i.e. a workload impact assessment. The following could be incorporated:
 - What is the benefit for pupils and for staff?
 - Will any staff be disproportionately affected compared to others by any changes to working practices?
 - How much time will staff need to spend on this new initiative and what, if any, will be the net increase in working hours?
 - Are additional resources needed and, if so, have they been made available?
 - Will it lead to other activities no longer needing to take place, or being undertaken by other staff?
 - Consider implementing new initiatives or policies on a trial basis assess effectiveness and any impact on workload