

Hursthead Junior School Staff Wellbeing and Work life balance policy

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OVERVIEW

All teachers, including head teachers are entitled to enjoy a reasonable work/life balance. This is acknowledged in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which states that:

52.4. Governing bodies and head teachers, in carrying out their duties, must have regard to the need for the head teacher and teachers at the school to be able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge their professional duties ... and the time required to pursue their personal interests outside work. In having regard to this, governing bodies and head teachers should ensure that they adhere to the working limits set out in the Working Time Regulations 1998(23).

One of the key professional duties of head teachers is to:

46.13. Lead and manage the staff with a proper regard for their well-being and legitimate expectations, including the expectation of a healthy balance between work and other commitments. (STPCD, 2017)

In recognition of these statutory provisions, the Governing Board of Hursthead Junior School has adopted the following work/life balance policy.

The Kirkstead Education Trust at Hursthead Junior School recognises that the staff are their most important resource and are to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a learning and caring community. The emotional and physical wellbeing of all staff is important to trustees, and governors. At our school, not only does every child matter but we also believe every person matters.

Work/life balance is about ensuring that this school's teachers are able to combine work with their personal interests and commitments outside work. Good work/life balance is an essential factor in staff effectiveness and satisfaction, which in turn supports pupil learning. It can help to recruit and retain better motivated staff through giving them greater control of their working lives.

There are employer duties to staff that require sensitive staff policies and practice.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a document that embraces the many school practices that support staff health and wellbeing
- to take a positive and understanding approach to the management of stress in line with current good practice
- to ensure that there is cohesion and progress in working towards the health and wellbeing of all staff
- to provide effective support for all staff
- to help each individual to achieve and appropriate work-life balance
- to respect confidentiality
- provide employees with a clear overview of what support can expect as a member of staff

As a school, we promote work life balance. We seek advice from outside support agencies such as occupational health. We have policies and procedures to deal with bullying, harassment and issues of personal safety. We seek opportunities to care for the staff through initiatives and through discussions within performance and development reviews.

The main part of this policy is based around the Health and Safety Executive Management Standards. Each section responds to a standard and how the school carries out its duty of care.

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DEMANDS

The Standard states that: “Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns”.

Hursthead Junior School strives to provide employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work. Through effective recruitment and the appraisal process, people's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands, which are designed to be within the capabilities of employees. No member of staff will be expected to carry out duties which are beyond their capabilities unless these are agreed as a development strategy. Every member of staff has a job description which is reviewed annually. Policies and procedures are in place for employees to raise concerns about their work environment e.g. through appraisal, open door policy with senior leaders, regular briefings, health and safety training, whistleblowing policy. Every attempt will be made to rectify any concerns raised.

CONTROL

The Standard states that: “Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns”.

Employees are provided with a clear overview of key events for the year to support them in planning their workload. Employees are encouraged to manage their workload to suit their own work life balance. If, because of unexpected pressures, a member of staff recognises that they may not be able to meet a particular deadline then they should inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss how they can be supported in completing the task. Staff are encouraged to consider the impact of missing deadlines or not completing tasks on the workload of other colleagues. They are offered opportunities for their own professional development in line with School Development Plans and are encouraged to make proposals about activities they would like to be involved in. Initiative is actively encouraged and as a school we welcome staff to be free thinkers and extend practice beyond the expected. Through the appraisal process, staff are given the opportunity to comment on activities/ tasks that they would, within reason, prefer not to be undertaking and encouraged to come up with solutions or make suggestions for the improvement of work/life balance. Although all staff are employed throughout the school day, the management of time before and after school is determined by employees. All teaching staff run at least one extra-curricular activity, engage in a one hour staff meeting and an 8:30am weekly briefing. INSET days are sometimes taken as twilight sessions to meet training needs. Teachers are always given advance notice of these additional after school sessions. We are open to the changing face of employment structure and the relationship between home and work life. We make every effort to ensure that an employees working pattern suits their needs.

SUPPORT

The Standard states that: “Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns”.

Within Hursthead Junior School, we have an active support structure within the staff which is generated from mutual respect. There is a clear induction process for new staff and NQTs. New staff will be allocated a mentor and a line manager, who is usually the Head Teacher, Deputy or one of the Assistant Heads as NQT mentor. There is a clear induction handbook and staff are always supported by the team they work within. Policies are in place, that staff are required to sign for, to support staff in adhering to school systems and processes. Senior leaders are always available to support staff both personal and professionally. Although we have formal lesson observations, informal feedback and dialogue e.g. through Pupil progress meetings is a part of our school culture and more formal professional development dialogue takes place through the appraisal process. We aim to work within the Social Discipline Window so that staff feel that they are being worked **‘with’** rather than **‘to’** or **‘for’** when appropriate. Staff can be referred for confidential counselling as well as to an Occupational Health service. Hursthead Junior School is a supportive school with a proactive leadership team and governing board. All reasonable requests for leave (that fall outside the formal absence procedures) e.g. attendance at child's school play, are given full consideration and, if the necessary staffing arrangements can be made within the constraints of the budget, will be authorised. Although it is not formal policy, staff are generally given a half day wellbeing time in the second half of the Autumn term, to be taken out of school.

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RELATIONSHIPS

The Standard states that: “Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work, and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns”.

Within Hursthead Junior School we promote positive relationships within the staff. Teachers work in teams and are encouraged to share best practice and the workload. The vast majority of PPA sessions are provided for teachers to work together in their year group teams. We encourage everyone to report any incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour. These will then be fully investigated by an appropriate member of the SLT and a governor, if required. There is a clear whistleblowing policy in place and a culture of honesty, trust and respect. Informally, staff arrange social events, which are open to all staff and teachers have informally agreed to provide a staff breakfast at the end of each half term.

ROLE

The Standard states that: “Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns”.

All staff have a job description, reviewed annually, which clearly defines their roles. As far as possible, we actively ensure that staff do not have conflicting roles. Expectations are made clear through these job descriptions, the teacher standards and appraisal targets, which are shared and agreed with staff. All staff are encouraged to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their roles and responsibilities so that these can be addressed swiftly.

CHANGE

The Standard states that: “Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns”.

As a school, we have many influences which impact upon our working structure. This may result in short notice changes. During periods of role change, staff will be kept up to date through staff briefings and individual meetings. The overview of key events keeps staff up-to-date with planned events. As much advance notice is given as possible for events that take place outside school hours. These are often part of staff meeting or INSET time. We seek to involve all relevant staff in consultations regarding change. We provide information as soon as possible. Staff are always aware that consultations are a means by which we gather views and are not always a mechanism for changing policy or decision. When changes do take place, timescales will be published and details will be available showing the impact upon the working lives of staff. Support will be provided or signposted throughout the process.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The Governing Board will nominate a work/life balance Governor with responsibility for promoting and monitoring work/life balance in the school.

The school will:

- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system and promote information about and access to support services.
- Provide staff, through training and building security, with a sense of safety and the confidence to deal positively with stressful incidents.
- Review the demands on teachers, support staff and administrative staff in the time spent on paperwork and seek practical alternative solutions where possible

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- Respond sensitively and flexibly to external pressures that impact on staff lives whilst at the same time ensuring the efficient running of the school
- Maintain contact with staff when they are absent for long periods

The school will use the following to assess the impact of the staff wellbeing policy:

- Leaders are positive role models
- Decision-making processes are clearly understood by staff
- Opportunities are provided for staff to socialise and relax with each other
- An open, listening leadership team that responds quickly to problems
- A welcoming staff room that is sensitive to issues of race, gender, homophobia, culture, religion and disability
- The quality of staff facilities e.g. adequate seating and toilet facilities
- The regular and systematic monitoring of staff absences and the recruitment and retention of staff

Practical Actions to Support Existing Staff

- Senior leaders available to organise informal meetings with all staff, if required.
- Teachers to receive advice and guidance on their PPA days from a member of the Senior Leadership Team, if required.
- PPA provided for year group teachers to work together whenever possible
- Consideration of requests for absence e.g. to attend a child's performance or family event
- Allocation of a half day wellbeing time in the second half of the Autumn term
- Social events and staff breakfast arranged informally by staff
- Teaching triads to share best teaching practice across year groups

Practical Actions to Support New Staff

- Induction sessions will be organised with a senior member of staff
- A mentor provided to each member of staff e.g. TA colleague or year group support for new teachers
- Time for new TAs to shadow colleagues and for new teachers to observe best practice across the school
- Induction handbook and provision of key policies

Examples of Good Practice

- Staff meeting and INSET time is allocated to planning and assessment
- Overview of key events is provided for the whole year
- Time is provided for subject leaders to complete major tasks
- Time is provided towards specific, additional projects
- Use of exit questionnaires when staff leave to ascertain whether work/ life balance played a part in the resignation.

Accountability Systems within the School

Teachers employed by The Kirkstead Education Trust will be trusted and respected. This will be demonstrated by adhering to the following good practice:

- teachers will not be required to provide evidence of the work that they undertake, other than that which arises naturally and is provided as evidence of appraisal targets;
- teachers will not be required to use marking schemes which generate excessive written dialogue between them and their pupils;
- there will be no requirement to produce detailed lesson plans, or to hand them in for scrutiny;
- formal lesson observations will be limited to 3 per year, except in cases of concern and, in accordance with Ofsted advice, such observations will not be graded according to the Ofsted evaluation schedule;
- peer observations will be positively encouraged; and
- teachers will be consulted on how data collection demands can be reduced.

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New Initiatives

Before their introduction, all new initiatives will be considered by management and teacher union representatives in terms of their impact on work/life balance. The following questions will be considered.

- what will be the benefit of the new initiative for pupils and for teachers?
- will all teachers be equally affected by any changes to working practices?
- how much time will teachers need to spend on this new initiative?
- 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, for example, support staff?
- what, if any, will be the net increase in working hours?
- does the policy conflict in any way with teachers' contractual entitlements as set out in the STPCD? (If so, the policy teachers' entitlements will be protected.)

If it is agreed that the proposed new initiative is beneficial and workload neutral then it will be introduced on a trial basis, but a review process will be put in place to ensure that additional or unanticipated workload burdens do not build up over time.

Where it is clear that the proposed new initiative will lead to a net increase in working hours then there will be a review of what activities could be ceased to accommodate the new initiative if necessary possible.

The Position of the Head Teacher

This policy is also intended to ensure that the head teacher and others in leadership positions also maintain a reasonable work/life balance.

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Staff Wellbeing Questionnaire

	Never 1	Seldom 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
1. I enjoy my work					
2. I feel valued at work					
3. I am clear what is expected of me at work					
4. I know how to go about getting my job done					
5. If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me					
6. I am given supportive feedback on the work I do					
7. I have a say in my own work speed					
8. I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are					
9. I am clear about the school's goals and objectives					
10. I have a choice in deciding how I do my work					
11. I understand how my work fits into the overall aims of the school					
12. I am able to make some decisions about the way I work					
13. I am comfortable with the pace of work expected of me					
14. I can rely on senior staff to help me out with a work problem					
15. I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour					
16. I have to work very intensively					
17. There is friction or anger between colleagues					
18. Senior staff put me under unreasonable pressure to work long hours					

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19. I am subject to bullying at work					
20. I have unrealistic time pressures					
21. I get help and support I need from colleagues					
22. I have some say over the way I work					
23. I have sufficient opportunities to discuss changes as work					
24. I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues					
25. Staff are always consulted about changes at work					
26. I can talk to senior staff about something that has upset or annoyed me about work					
27. My colleagues are willing to listen to my work related problems					
28. When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice					
29. I am supported through emotionally demanding work and situations					
30. Relationships at work are good					
31. Senior staff encourage me at work					
32. Communication is good					