

**Staff Well-Being and
Work-Life Balance Policy**
Heathcote School and Science College



Approved by the Governing Board: Summer 2023

To be reviewed: Every 3 years

Next review due: Summer 2026

Other Documentation

This Policy should be used in reference with the following documents;

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Staff Handbook

Summary of the Policy

The Mental Health and Well-Being Policy outlines the importance of promoting positive mental health and well-being in the school community, including pupils, staff, parents, and carers.

The policy recognizes that mental health plays a crucial role in overall well-being and academic achievement. It aims to create a nurturing and supportive environment where pupils feel safe, valued, and able to openly discuss their problems.

The policy sets out strategies to promote positive mental health, prevent mental health problems, identify and support pupils and staff with mental health needs, and train staff to understand and address mental health issues.

It emphasizes the importance of early identification, involvement of parents and carers, and collaboration with specialist services when necessary. The policy also highlights the link between mental health and other school policies such as safeguarding, inclusion, anti-bullying, and special educational needs.

Overall, the policy aims to create a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health, reducing stigma, and ensuring the well-being of all members of the school community. Whilst also ensuring a range of services is readily available to all staff, pupils and parents.

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Purpose and Principles

The Governing body and school recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff in school enjoy a reasonable balance between their working life and the demands of home, family and other interests and commitments. An acceptable work-life balance will be different for each employee and will be different at different times in careers. It is not in the interest of either the school or the individual member of staff to work to the detriment of their health. Excessive work without rest and recreation is not conducive to efficient or effective working. Staff well-being is important in maintaining a positive atmosphere in the workplace.

The Governing body and Head Teacher recognises that employees are not obliged to work in school beyond their contracted hours, although teachers are expected to complete preparation, planning and assessment beyond the school day.

In order for our staff to be at their most effective they need to have a healthy work-life balance:

- To attract and re-train the calibre of staff needed for an outstanding education system.
- To retain a motivated workforce, with high morale, able to deliver a high quality education for our pupils.
- To improve team work, staff development and co-operation by effectively distributing leadership and creating new leaders.
- To recognise that excessive hours of work can reduce staff effectiveness.
- To recognise that improving workplace communication has a positive outcome for the whole school workforce.
- Staff need to feel valued and cared for

Key Aims of the Policy

- To support staff at Heathcote School in their work
- To acknowledge that the needs of both Heathcote School and its staff are not static, but change over time.
- To acknowledge the need for leadership (including the governing body), unions/staff representatives and staff to discuss workable work-life balance solutions.
- To encourage a partnership approach to meeting the needs of both Heathcote School and the staff.
- To operate in a fair and consistent manner.
- To carefully plan and agree work-life balance solutions including flexible working practices where possible and appropriate without damaging the opportunities for pupils to succeed.
- To take into account the equality implications of any policies introduced.
- To communicate work-life balance practices to all staff at Heathcote School. Developments and changes to policies should also be communicated on a regular basis.
- To include a monitoring, evaluation and review mechanism, linked to performance management and the school improvement plan, for work-life balance initiatives and strategies.
- Share the results with trade union reps in order to assist with finding solutions

School Context

The Governing Body and School is committed to ensuring that positive steps are taken in school to promote a healthy work-life balance for all employees. For teachers the School

Teachers Pay and Conditions Document requires that all teachers and Headteacher enjoy a reasonable work-life balance.

‘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 being able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge their professional duties...’

This same principle will be extended to all support staff who work at Heathcote School. The Governing Body and Headteacher will make this policy available to all employees at the school.

Health, Safety and Welfare

The Governing Body recognises its duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees at the school. This policy will be implemented and will incorporate all aspects of welfare, which the governing body and Headteacher has put in place to prevent and deal with workplace stress. The wellbeing of the staff will be supported wherever possible.

Implementation

The Governing Body takes overall responsibility for implementing this policy and for ensuring the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team enjoy a reasonable work-life balance. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will ensure the staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance and provide them with an example of good practice. All employees will assist in the development of good practice and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or their colleagues.

Commitment

The following issues will be reviewed for inclusion in a programme of committing to and improving employees’ work life balance and their well-being;

Unmeasured Working Time

- Where employees are contracted to work unmeasured time, for example the Senior Leadership Team, the Governing Body undertakes to ensure that the schools’ requirements and expectations are reasonable.

Employment Policies and Practice

- The Governing Body undertakes to adopt and apply the appropriate policies in respect of ‘family friendly’ employment, including consideration of part time working, flexible working patterns etc. where this can be implemented without detriment to the operational requirements of the school. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will adopt policies and provide clear guidance on time off for public or trade union duties, or for personal reasons (see Leave of Absence policy).

Individual and Team Workloads

- We aim for the school’s timetable to reflect a fair and reasonable balance of work between different members of staff. School management will ensure that new and emerging priorities are discussed with the employees affected and that ways of managing the implications for individual workloads are addressed.

- We are conscious in our allocation of non-teaching time for teaching staff. Everyone teaches a maximum of 90%. We employ, where possible, cover supervisors to meet the “rarely cover” requirements.

Planning and Policies

- We aim to ensure that preparing documentation should be no more elaborate than is necessary and consistent with its purpose.

Meetings

- School managers aim to ensure that patterns of meetings are appropriate to the requirements of the whole school, faculties and departments etc. and that they are agreed in advance and that the pattern is adhered to. Leaders convening meetings should specify a target finishing time and adhere to it. Outcomes from meetings will be clear and concise. Line management is a method of support at Heathcote School and ensures that managers can offer care and guidance in regards to well-being. Return to Work meetings take place with a member of the Senior Leadership team upon a staff returning to work after a period of absence. The aim of Return to Work meetings is to understand the reason for absence and what support or adjustments need to be made for the member of staff returning to work.

Administration

- Administrative work has been delegated to appropriate support staff and systems will be regularly reviewed. Requests for information, statistics, policies and similar will be assessed for their importance and benefit to the school and where possible will be collated by support staff, where reasonable or possible.

Individual support and training

- Individual support, including confidential counselling through the Employee Assistance Programme is made available to employees so that they may raise concerns about problems and difficulties, which affect them either in their work or their family/personal life. The school is a member of an Employee Assistance programme and details can be found in the staff room, staff handbook and from the Headteacher. Return to Work and Line Management is an opportunity for support. We work hard to alleviate any work-related problems and will make referrals to Occupational Health where needed and carry out risk assessments where appropriate.

Calendars

- An annual calendar of meetings, deadlines and events will be provided to staff so that they can plan ahead and manage their workload in such a way as to help maintain a satisfactory work/life balance.
- When drawing up a calendar for the following academic year, the head teacher will consult staff in the summer term on the pattern and number of meetings, to be agreed within the limits explained below. Consultation with staff will also include the timings of Inset days, report schedules, parents’ evenings, sports days, classroom observations and other activities and events that might impact on work/life balance. If, because of unexpected pressures, a member of staff recognises that they may not be able to meet a particular deadline, they should inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss how they can be supported in completing the task.

Directed Time

- Following consultation, staff will be provided at the beginning of each academic year with a breakdown of directed time, setting out their commitments in terms of

teaching, planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, management time and meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body are responsible for the welfare of all staff and will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through the Headteacher. The policy will be reviewed annually.

The Head teacher and staff are responsible for dealing with issues and incidents where the safety and welfare of staff are not in their best interests. It will be each individual member of staff's responsibility to raise awareness when issues arise. Where staff are concerned, it is their responsibility to let the Senior Leadership Team know so that we can attempt to resolve the issue.

Role of all Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices
- Take part in training opportunities that promote their wellbeing

Role of Line Managers

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive relationships with their staff and value them for their skills, not their working pattern
- Provide a non-judgemental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are properly and thoroughly inducted and feel able to ask for help
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods
- With the HR Manager, monitor staff sickness absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work
- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that lead to their resignation

Role of Senior Staff

The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher is responsible for wellbeing for staff, and monitors wellbeing through regular surveys and meetings.

Senior staff are expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through structured conversations
- Make sure accountability systems are based on trust and professional dialogue, with proportionate amounts of direct monitoring
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Make sure job descriptions are kept up-to-date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Organise extra support during times of stress, such as Ofsted inspections

Role of the Governing Board

The governing board is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the headteacher
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload
- Be reasonable about the format and quantity of information asked for from staff as part of monitoring work
- Ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of any monitoring visits and what information will be required from them

Actions Taken to Support Well-being at Heathcote School

- Staff attendance is monitored on a regular basis with support offered and provided to staff where problems are being experienced.
- Staff are referred to Occupational Health to support them in returning to or remaining in work.
- Individual workstation assessments are carried out for staff as necessary.
- Parent's evenings and school events timings have been changed in order to improve the working hours of staff.
- Decision making processes are communicated, understood and supported by staff
- Termly opportunities to socialise outside of working hours

- Weekly praise bulletin
- Termly appreciation breakfasts after a late finish (late start the following day, breakfast provided and appreciation postcards from pupils given to staff)
- Staffing issues are regularly discussed in SLT. Where each member of SLT has the opportunity to raise any concerns about particular members of staff and also identify any staff worthy of praise for going above and beyond their normal duties
- There are termly reviews that allows all departments through their HODs and Year Leads to voice concerns to the SLT.
- Health & Safety to be a standing agenda item on all department meetings.
- The Head teacher formally meets the union representatives every week
- There is a detailed induction process for new staff starting
- Appropriate facilities are available for staff to take breaks, socialise and relax with each other at relevant times of the day.
- There is INSET and other forms of training throughout the year to meet CPD needs
- The school uses a whole school calendar which incorporates deadlines for staff and middle leaders, to ensure that all staff are aware of forthcoming parents evening/report timings etc. in order that they can plan their workload.
- Access to a counselling service is available to conduct one to one meetings with staff to listen to issues concerning staff well-being.
- The headteacher supports wherever possible, requests from staff for reduced/part time working where personal circumstances may impact upon their ability to perform their current role.
- The Head Teacher has an open door every Wednesday from 3pm - 4pm. The SLT support staff by having an open door policy and acting as positive role models.