



Unity Schools Trust

'Excellence through collaboration'

Staff Wellbeing & Work Life Balance Policy

Policy Reviewed:	August 2019
Next Review:	June 2022
Approved by Trust	December 2019

Introduction

The Unity Schools Trust recognises the importance of the wellbeing at work of all employees and ensuring that they have a reasonable work life balance.

Positive wellbeing and health of employees is important to the Unity Schools Trust and this policy will outline the processes, procedures and benefits we have in place to support this goal.

The Unity Schools Trust recognises that an organisation that is committed to the health and wellbeing of its employees will have: -

- Effective practices in this area that benefit its employees.
- A joint responsibility to discuss solutions between the Trust, individual schools and employees. This can be done using various strategies including, but not limited to, wellbeing/staff forums, line management meetings, opportunities to discuss matters related to wellbeing with the Head of School, health and wellbeing surveys and an HR adviser available to staff.
- Policies that develop, monitor and review appropriate policies to meet the needs of the school, whilst having regard for fairness and consistency.
- An ethos that values all employees for their contribution to school life regardless of their working pattern.
- A commitment to supporting a work life balance for all employees.
- An aim to encourage senior managers to lead by example.
- External interventions to support employee wellbeing.

Aims

- To support staff at academies within the Trust in their work.
- To acknowledge that the needs of the Trust and its staff are not static, but change over time.
- To acknowledge the need for leadership (including the Trust and local governing bodies), unions/staff representatives and staff to discuss workable work-life balance solutions.
- To encourage a partnership approach to meeting the needs of both the Trust 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 students to succeed.
- To take into account the equality implications of any policies introduced.
- To communicate work-life balance practices to all staff in the Trust. 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 development plans, for work-life balance initiatives and strategies.

Wellbeing at Work

The Unity Schools Trust has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practicable. We aim to implement measures that mitigate factors that could impact the physical and mental wellbeing of employees which includes work related stress. This duty only extends to those factors which are work related and within the control of the Trust and its individual schools.

Managerial Responsibilities

To promote an ethos of wellbeing for staff, managers will endeavour to:

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to fulfil their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads through line management meetings to ensure that employees are not overloaded.
- Ensure employees maintain a work life balance through line management meetings and additional support as necessary.
- Ensure any issues related to workload raised by employees are considered swiftly and with compassion.
- Ensure that any inappropriate behaviour such as bullying and harassment is dealt with through a zero tolerance approach.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to any employees who are experiencing stress through circumstances outside the work environment, for example, bereavement or separation.

Employee Responsibilities

To facilitate an ethos of wellbeing in the workplace, employees will:

- Treat all colleagues with respect and dignity
- Be open and honest about any issues that occur.
- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel that there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their wellbeing.
- Take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing by adopting healthy lifestyles.
- Take responsibility for their own development as a means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce the risk of stress.
- Utilise the schools wellbeing services when in need.
- Cooperate with the Trust when support for health and wellbeing of yourself or others is offered.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, thus helping avoid stress to colleagues.

Health, Safety and Welfare

The Trust 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 Trust and senior leaders have put in place to prevent and deal with workplace stress. The wellbeing of the staff will be supported wherever possible.

Work Life Balance

The Unity Schools Trust recognises the importance of employees having a healthy work life balance. It does this by recognising employees for the work that they do and not the hours that they do. All employees should enjoy a reasonable work life balance.

Should employees wish to improve work life balance they have several options: -

- Flexible working request – This policy is separate to the Wellbeing policy, but it offers the opportunity for employees to consider changing their working pattern in order to achieve work life balance, this may be for childcare purposes or it may just be to enjoy a hobby. Please read the Flexible working policy for more information.
- If employees are struggling to achieve a work life balance due to excessive demands at work, they must raise this with their line manager and can also meet with the HR Manager for additional support.

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 Trust undertakes to ensure that the schools' requirements and expectations are reasonable.

Employment Policies and Practice –

- The Trust 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 Trust.
- We aim for school timetables to reflect a fair and reasonable balance of work between different members of staff. 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 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.

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.

Individual Support and Training - Individual support, including confidential counselling through Towergate Insurance 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.

Stress at Work

When an employee is experiencing stress at work, a stress risk assessment may be completed by the line manager to offer additional support and Towergate Insurance offer counselling to support the employee.

The stress risk assessment looks at six key areas which are as follows:- demands, control, support, relationships, role and change. Please contact the HR Manager for more information and support with this process.

The Health & Safety Policy also refers to strategies to reduce stress at work.

Occupational Health Intervention

There are times when an Occupational Health referral will be recommended to help support an employee's wellbeing at work. This will always be done with the employee's consent and allows a medical expert to give advice about an employee and recommend reasonable adjustments to support that employee at work.

Other Individual Support

- Face to face counselling via Towergate Insurance together with other support (see Appendix B)
- Blue Sky performance management gives employees an opportunity to raise any concerns in regard to job role and workload or other aspects of their life
- Line management meetings are in place for support
- HR support from the HR Manager which will be completely confidential and the employee will be asked permission to disclose to any relevant parties should it be necessary
- Trade Union support (in house and external)
- Exit questionnaires allows HR an insight into reasons why employees are leaving

Appendix A

Individual School Initiatives

Bishop David Brown School

- Wellbeing Monday – all employees are expected to leave early on these allocated Mondays and refrain from work related activities during this time
- Wellbeing employee forum
- Employees are not expected to send emails between 6pm and 6am or at weekends to improve worklife balance.
- Wellbeing staff forum

The Magna Carta School

- Friday break time for all staff to meet and relax
- Annual wellbeing questionnaire
- Consultative staff forum
- Weekly Yoga group offered by Cathy Jones

Appendix B

WELL-BEING AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STAFF

Please call this service for confidential help, support and advice. Any information given to Towergate is confidential and will not be provided to the Trust without your express permission.

Towergate Health Assist

0800 030 5182

Health Assured App: Health E-Hub
User name: Towergate Password: EAP

Telephone help lines 24 hours a day, 7 days a week offering practical information and emotional support (including family issues, bereavement, trauma, relationship issues and stress-related conditions)

Personal legal information

Tax information

Medical information via a GP call-back facility

Money management and debt support

Up to 8 structured telephone counselling sessions per issue per employee, partner or spouse and dependents (between the ages of 16-24 in full-time education)

Up to 8 face to face counselling sessions per issue for employees of cognitive behavioural therapy

Physiotherapy support services

Serious illness and accident support

Online health and wellbeing portal (www.healthassuredeap.com) which provides access to extensive well-being resources including four week programmes, videos and webinars