

October 2021

Work/Life Balance Policy

Policy Statement

In order for people to achieve their potential in the work place they need to feel supported, valued and clear about what is expected of them. Our provision has a responsibility to ensure that staff enjoy coming to work, find help when they need it and feel that their efforts are recognised. We pride ourselves upon the support we offer one another whilst also recognising that we must continue to improve and place an emphasis upon delivering the highest quality education we can to the children in our care.

We believe it is only with a healthy, happy and relatively stress-free workforce that such quality of delivery can be made. We have a responsibility to all members of our community and provision to value the contributions that everyone makes and recognise that we are as strong as our weakest link. Through staff development and mentor support we aim to encourage the sharing of difficulties and develop an open environment in which staff feel able to come forward with their problems and offer examples of their strengths.

We also wish to recognise that our staff may have dependants who will also make demands upon their time. We aim to provide opportunities for staff to attend to the needs of their immediate family and recognise the additional pressures that this can sometimes place upon an individual at different times of life.

Procedure

Fitting in with families

Every employee has demands outside of the work place which will on occasion place pressure upon them and are likely to lead to differences in work practice. It is important that we recognise this and support colleagues in managing these demands. This includes:

- a. being flexible about requests for attendance at funerals
- b. enabling support for ageing relatives and children with medical appointments
- c. enabling staff to attend significant important events in respect of children, ie Christmas concerts, first day at school
- d. attempting to accommodate staff preferences for early starts/late starts, early finishes/late finishes.

It is expected that wherever possible staff will make arrangements around the working day but where this is not possible we will attempt to support them in meeting the demands of home and work.

We also request that staff take responsibility for ensuring that, when they are absent, cover arrangements are able to be put in place before continuing to be absent, unless it is an unavoidable emergency situation.

Encouraging good working practices

In order to help prevent stress and to provide the best working environment for the health and well-being of staff we recommend that:

- a. times of any evening meetings be discussed and are aimed at limiting the length of time and frequency with which staff need to remain at work after school finishing time
- b. length of meetings are agreed and wherever possible adhered to
- c. notice is given of cancellations
- d. consideration is always given to timescale to enable a reasonable amount of time to be given for completion of a task before the deadline
- e. deadlines can be renegotiated in extenuating circumstances
- f. consideration is always given to workload and that no individual, regardless of level of authority, is expected to complete an unreasonable amount in a limited time
- g. PPA is regular and reliable
- h. adequate staffing levels are maintained with sufficient numbers of support staff deployed where possible.

Support for colleagues

We consider it the responsibility of all staff to come to the assistance of any colleague who needs support or help. This might include:

- a. support with a child exhibiting challenging behaviour
- b. assistance with a parent
- c. advice in respect of a subject/planning/resources/the person to contact
- d. providing opportunity to talk about concerns
- e. alerting senior staff to where difficulties might be arising
- f. supporting in terms of distress over a personal issue.

All staff are entitled to support through their line manager and all senior management will be happy to provide advice as necessary.

Cutting down on stress

Common causes of stress include:

- a. bereavement
- b. serious illness of a loved one
- c. moving house
- d. excessive workload

- e. loneliness
- f. financial worries
- g. home/work conflicts
- h. boredom
- i. relationship problems
- j. being bullied or harassed.

Some common effects of stress include:

- a. high level of anxiety
- b. low self-esteem
- c. inability to concentrate
- d. being more prone to accidents
- e. headaches/migraine
- f. depression
- g. panic attacks
- h. chest pains
- i. stomach problems
- j. relationship problems.

It is intended that some of the guidance provided in this document should address some of these areas. Colleagues should be alert to signs of stress in themselves and one another and should take steps to address these as they occur. Methods for dealing with stress might include:

- a. sharing concerns with colleagues
- b. prioritising workload
- c. learning when and how to say “no”
- d. taking up a new hobby or sport
- e. sharing feelings with people at home
- f. ensuring that some time every week is set aside for relaxation
- g. discussing responsibilities with a senior colleague and perhaps negotiating deadlines
- h. pay attention to diet and ensure that you eat healthily and regularly.

If symptoms persist make sure you contact your GP and discuss your concerns with a senior colleague.

Valuing staff

All our staff are considered to be hardworking and conscientious. It is important that we all operate in an environment of trust and consideration for one another's feelings. This does not mean that open and honest discussions about performance should not take place but that any difficult issues should be tackled with tact and consideration for the individual involved.

The senior management team and team leaders have a responsibility to ensure that the staff they are responsible for see that their work is recognised and valued. It is up to individuals to determine how they might do this as each context and set of relationships is unique.

Monitoring

It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor the efficacy of this policy. However, it is expected that any particular concerns should be raised with senior management verbally, via email or during their supervision meetings.

Review

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Policy review date: _____