



WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICY

The Governing Body of Stokes Wood Primary School has adopted this policy.

1. Introduction

There are a number of statutory aspects to work/life balance which apply to the children's workforce, including the Employer's Duty of Care. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) employers must pay due regard to the welfare of their employees in carrying out their duties, and under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) employers must conduct risk assessments and undertake to introduce measures to prevent such risks. Therefore school governors must be able to demonstrate how they meet this duty of care.

There is also a range of equality legislation relating to flexible working, and a general duty under the Equalities Act 2010, to support the workforce to carry out work and their family and caring responsibilities.

There is a specific contractual entitlement to a satisfactory work/life balance in the National Agreement (2003), which is incorporated into the statutory School Teachers' Pay and Conditions. Whilst this provision applies specifically to teachers, the principles of achieving a satisfactory work/life balance should apply to all members of the school workforce. The duties are that the Headteacher has a professional duty to *"have regard to the desirability of teachers at the school being 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"*. Governors also have a duty to ensure Headteachers have a *"reasonable work/life balance"*.

There are a number of practical and business reasons why this is important for schools. Schools need to grow, to develop, to improve and to succeed. To this end they need to recruit and retain their workforce, and to ensure equal access to appropriate learning, training and development. The workforce need to feel valued and not feel abused or over-worked, therefore a Work-Life Balance Policy (WLB) is an essential feature of a successful school and applies to the whole workforce as the health and wellbeing of all members of the team is equally important.

It is important to recognise that good health and wellbeing for the workforce has elements of both employer responsibility and individual's personal involvement. This policy should enable management, governors, employees and trade unions/professional associations to work together to identify solutions to improve and maintain a reasonable work-life balance for all members of the workforce.

This school sees achieving a reasonable WLB:

- as a partnership between individual members of the workforce and their line managers will jointly discuss workable solutions
- as integral to valuing the workforce for their contribution not their working pattern
- as a part of developing policies and practical responses that meet the specific needs of the school

- by demonstrating effective leadership and evidenced within the practice of the leadership team endorsing the importance of work/life balance

The Governing Body will ensure that:

- a) there is communication of the contents of this policy to staff on a regular basis
- b) there is regular consultation with staff and their unions/professional associations to identify any issues affecting a reasonable work-life balance for all staff, and ensure that these are considered and appropriate support is provided where necessary
- c) monitoring and evaluation of the policy takes place and actions to address and progress improvement are taken
- d) it specifically discusses and supports the Headteacher to maintain their own reasonable work life balance and achieve dedicated headship time.

2. Definition

An effective Work-Life Balance policy is one that “encourages organisational and personal success by helping people to manage the demands of work with their personal lives and, thereby, enhance satisfaction with both.”

It involves adjusting working patterns and policies so that everyone – regardless of age, race or gender, can more easily combine work with their other responsibilities and aspirations. For individuals this will ensure a measure of control over when, where and how they work. This will be more likely when an individual’s right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, organisation and society.

3. Benefits

There are many sound reasons why a school/setting should aim to provide a good work life balance. Schools where staff¹ are healthy and generally fulfilled are likely to benefit in the following ways:

Financial:

- Unnecessary turnover of staff which results in lower costs for recruitment purposes
- Less supply cover is needed for both short and long term absences

Strategic Management

- There is less disruption to the institution so that more focus can be placed on strategic management and less on operational issues

Operational Management

- Less time is spent organising cover
- Less time is spent managing conflict
- Less time is spent managing behaviour of children who may be suffering from having little continuity in provision

¹ For the Headteacher the statutory responsibility for ensuring a reasonable work-life balance is with the Chair of the Governing Body, a community school can also obtain advice from the Local Authority.

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- There is little disruption to learning, training and development due to staff absences

Performance

- Outcomes for children are generally better when consistency and continuity of staffing takes place
- Staff relations are generally good
- The reputation of the school is likely to be good amongst other professionals
- Staff recruitment may be easier as the school/setting will have a positive reputation as a place to work
- The ethos of the school is more likely to be inclusive

4. Strategies to Achieve a Work Life Balance - a range of approaches

In support of staff the Governing Body will keep under consideration a range of approaches that can help contribute to a reasonable work-life balance for their workforce. These would include:

Working Time²

- This school will put in place an annual timetable which will include a calendar of regular meetings at the beginning of each academic year and this will involve consultation with staff. This school will also provide teaching staff with a breakdown of directed time within the maximum limit of 1265 hours as required by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (a statutory requirement).
- Working hours for support staff will comply with the general duty of care and Working Time Regulations 1998 which are requirements of all employers.
- Leadership group members have no contracted working hours; however, their hours of work should be reasonable and such staff are covered by the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Additional working time

The Governing Body recognises that a reasonable work-life balance for staff can only be achieved if limits are placed on the additional working time that staff undertake on top of time that is directed by the Headteacher.

We will conduct a stress audit of staff at least annually; this will be done more frequently in times of change or unusual circumstances, for example when a school is in Special Measures, or during a building project. As part of our commitment to achieving a reasonable work-life balance, the Governing Body will audit staff to estimate the amount of additional hours that staff are typically carrying out per week.

Where an audit shows that a particular policy, format or initiative is contributing to excessive workload, or when it is raised by trade unions on behalf of staff, the Headteacher will consult and review the policy, format or initiative to seek to reduce workload pressures. Staff must be able to exercise their own professional judgement and be able to use the need to maintain a work-life balance as a legitimate reason to decide to limit the time taken on carrying out a task.

Calendars

Following consultation, a regular calendar of meetings, deadlines and events will be provided to staff so that they can plan ahead and adjust their workload so as to help maintain a work-life balance.

When drawing up a calendar for the academic year, the Headteacher will consult staff on the pattern and number of meetings as well as agreeing who should be expected to attend.

Consultation with staff will also include the timing of INSET, 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 identifies 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 within a reasonable timescale, or enable consideration of an alternative approach.

- Training and mentoring will take place during directed time
- Two of the five training days will usually be disaggregated³

Organisation of Meetings

- Staff⁴ will be consulted about a pattern of regular meetings to be established and included in the published staff timetable/calendar.
- Meetings should have a clear purpose.
- Only staff whose presence is essential should attend.
- Agendas for meetings will be produced in advance.
- Staff meetings will have an 'AOB' for staff to raise issues.

Principles when managing change

The Governing Body recognises that their school is a place of change and in principle will ensure that staff be informed and supported appropriately.

Before any change is introduced, the Headteacher will consider the implications including the demands on staff and whether the necessary resources are in place.

Opportunities will be provided to explain proposed changes and where appropriate, how the change will impact on an individual's job role.

Where changes are more serious the existing processes will be used for full consultation with staff representatives including unions and professional associations.

Classroom Observation

³ It has been agreed in School Terms and Holiday Working Parties that two of the five training days are "deemed to be disaggregated" and this has become custom and practice.

⁴ For the Headteacher the statutory responsibility for ensuring a reasonable work-life balance is with the Chair of the Governing Body, a community school can also obtain advice from the Local Authority.

The Governing Body recognises that classroom observations can be stressful for some individuals. The school will abide by locally and nationally agreed classroom observation protocols for teaching staff. The ethos behind observations and learning walks or drop-ins are always supportive and a part of a member of staff's professional development. Feedback is honest but constructive and will always highlight strengths and good practice.

Breaks and rests

The Governing Body recognises that individuals need to work at a pace that involves reasonable breaks and will seek to ensure the following good practice is implemented:

- It is reasonable to enable all staff on morning or afternoon break duty to have time for a drink and short break.
- Staff are to have a proper lunch break of reasonable length and ideally this will be over lunchtime between 12.00pm and 2.00pm.
- Lunchtimes cannot be part of directed time and so teachers cannot be required to work during their lunch break
- There will be provision of suitable workplace facilities for rest, including a suitable staff room.

The school will also abide by the statutory requirements in the School Teachers' Pay & Conditions Document and Working Time Directive. For example this means that individuals have a right to a break of 20 minutes if working more than 6 hours at a stretch, even if this is in more than one job. This break cannot be taken at the beginning or end of the working day.

Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) Time

Teachers have a statutory right to PPA time as part of their conditions of service and advice.

Access to counselling and occupational health services

Schools will subscribe to an occupational health service as part of a corporate Leicester City Council commissioned service.

This school subscribes to Leicester City Council's injury prevention and re-habilitation service. This service provides early intervention for muscular skeletal disorders.

Please ask at the school office for more information on how to access these services.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body will ensure that they are monitoring and evaluating the impact of this policy and its implementation.

1. ensure that work/life balance is a regular item in the Headteacher's Report at least annually.
2. a named governor (Mr Nilesh Makwana) could take the lead on Work-life Balance (WLB) issues and promote this within the school and:
 - keep abreast of current WLB initiatives.
 - report back to the Governing Body on the WLB approaches, practices and developments within school

- generally promote WLB within school
 - work with the Headteacher and/or change management team to implement identified Work-life Balance approaches
 - review with the Headteacher their WLB issues and identify solutions
 - review school policies relating to WLB to ensure that they reflect the school's approach
 - review Governing Body practices with regard to WLB, i.e. meeting times, reporting structures
 - identify how the Governing Body could aid the implementation of WLB
3. WLB balance could be a specific item at meetings of staff at least annually.
 4. Staff will have an individual responsibility to themselves including monitoring their own work-life balance and a right to raise any concerns with their management.
 5. The Governors will regularly review their own practice and requirements of the workforce to ensure due consideration to the workforce's WLB.
 6. The Headteacher and Governors will undertake an audit to gather information, action plan and monitor effectiveness to ensure they have sufficient knowledge of the WLB of the workforce within the school.
 7. Monitoring and evaluation can be informed by existing practices that will provide useful information and indications of the work-life balance of the workforce.
 - A review of properly conducted exit interviews, or use of exit questionnaires when staff resign, will inform the school of staffs' experiences while working there.
 - Any reviews between school management and staff for example ECTs, new appointees, and those promoted internally, to explore work-life balance issues and to ensure the school can offer or signpost further support and resources.
 - There should be consideration of WLB and any issues or concerns either the individual or managers have. It is appropriate for managers to discuss the ways that individuals work, their hours, their achievements and to invite consideration of the impact upon the individual's wellbeing.
 - Annual stress audits to inform the statutory stress risk assessments in order to develop a stress reduction action plan which all schools are required to complete.
 - The school health and safety committee will also have summary information on the level of staff absences. This will include reasons and may provide indications of the work-life balance and health and wellbeing of the workforce.