

The Learning Trust

WELLBEING CHARTER



What is wellbeing?



“ A state of complete physical and mental health that is characterised by high quality social relationships”

DfE Advisory group on Education Staff Wellbeing



A welcome from the CEO

Darran Jones

The Department for Education has developed a Wellbeing Charter for all staff working within education settings in England and sets out the commitments to protect and promote the wellbeing of education staff.

As a Trust, we recognise the value of promoting wellbeing across all of our schools and have signed up to the charter.

However, as a Trust, we want to go further than this and have developed our own Learning Trust Wellbeing Charter, which also includes our Work Reduction Charter. We have also established a wellbeing working group to support wellbeing across our Trust and to regularly review this charter.

We are committed to reducing the workload for all our staff and this document provides examples of how being part of The Learning Trust not only improves your skills and experiences as a professional, but will also boost your wellbeing.





The DfE has committed to the following:

1 Design-in wellbeing



They will integrate wellbeing into DfE's school workload policy test, where appropriate, considering the impact of policy changes on staff wellbeing.

2 Measure and respond to changes in staff wellbeing



For the school sector, they will measure on an ongoing basis the levels of anxiety, happiness, worthwhileness, life satisfaction and job satisfaction across the sector. They will track trends over time and build this evidence into policy making.

3 Support the sector to drive down unnecessary workload



They will continue to drive this down and promote the Workload Reduction Toolkit. They will work to remove unnecessary burdens, including improving how they collect data.

4 Ensure that DfE guidance meets user needs



Where appropriate they will ensure DfE guidance covers staff wellbeing. They will develop guidance based on the needs of educational staff, focusing on what they need to know and do. They will publish GOV.UK content aimed at education staff in working hours only.

5 Champion flexible working and diversity



They commit to establish school cultures to support and value flexible working at all career stages. They will strengthen their efforts to promote diversity in the sector – eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

6 Break down stigma around mental health



They will build staff wellbeing and mental health into the DfE's wider communications strategy on recruitment and retention, linking to existing campaigns that aim to tackle mental health in our society.

7 Embed wellbeing in training and professional development



They will continue to strengthen support for professional development. They will ensure that training and development is underpinned by the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development and it includes mental health and wellbeing where appropriate. They will also ensure that teacher training and professional development continues to include a focus on managing pupil behaviour effectively.

8 Improve access to mental health and wellbeing resources



They will work to improve access to high quality mental health and wellbeing resources online, with a particular focus on those that help employers and staff deliver their organisational commitments.

9 Review



They will review progress made against their commitments in 2023. They will also review the impact of this charter in helping to protect, promote and enhance wellbeing amongst staff.



Alongside this commitment from the DfE, Ofsted recognises the role they have to play in protecting and enhancing staff wellbeing. They are committing to the following:

- 1 They will ensure that inspectors take staff wellbeing into account in coming to their judgements and monitor this through quality assurance and evaluation
- 2 They will review whether the framework is having an inadvertent impact on staff wellbeing (for example, creating unnecessary workload) and take steps to alleviate any issues.
- 3 They will continue to clarify that they do not expect providers to create documentation for inspection, to try to reduce administrative workload.

They will also be clear that:

- 1 They do not grade individual lessons or people
- 2 They do not require evidence from any lesson visit that could be used in capability/disciplinary proceedings or for the purpose of performance management
- 3 They do not require lessons to be planned in a certain way or for lesson plans to be provided to inspectors
- 4 They do not require schools/colleges to prepare for inspections
- 5 They do not require schools/colleges to provide information in any specific format



OUR WELLBEING CHARTER

To complement these national commitments, The Learning Trust and all its schools commit to placing wellbeing at the heart of our decision making. We will support staff to make positive choices for their own wellbeing and encourage a collegiate culture across and between all roles in our schools. Specifically, we commit to developing a long-term strategy for improving staff wellbeing. We therefore present our own pledges to all Learning Trust staff.

1. We will prioritise staff mental wellbeing



- 1 Tackle mental wellbeing stigma by promoting an open and understanding culture where mental wellbeing is openly discussed and staff are encouraged to seek help and support when required.
- 2 Give the same consideration and support to mental wellbeing as physical health, ensuring our absence management policies are followed in the same way and support is provided to staff who require it, through effective return to work meetings, wellbeing meetings, occupational health referrals, counselling referrals, return to work plans (for those experiencing long term absence) and developing individual risk assessments.
- 3 Fulfil our legal duty to control the risks associated with work related stress in the education setting so far as reasonably practicable.
- 4 Channel support to individuals whose role is known to have a significant emotional component. This might be in the form of peer support, supervision, counselling and/or support to access tools to take ownership
- 5 Ensure that staff understand the real benefits that sensitive pastoral support can have, while also recognising where their limits are as non-specialists. We will promote joint working and ensure there are ample routes to refer for specialist support.
- 6 Promote a culture where high staff self-esteem is valued as an important element of positive mental wellbeing, for example, through staff reward ceremonies, thank you and recognition events that acknowledge hard work and commitment.
- 7 Promote an ethos where staff feel valued and respected and a culture that recognises the need for a supportive and friendly work environment in promoting positive mental wellbeing, for example, through staff associations, social and celebration events.

2. We will give staff the support they need to take responsibility for their own and other people's wellbeing

- 1 Empower staff to take ownership of their own wellbeing and look out for the wellbeing of others. This will include ensuring all staff are familiar with the different dimensions of wellbeing including mental, emotional, financial and physical. We will ensure that staff know how to access appropriate guidance, support and tools, and that their use is encouraged throughout the organisation.....for example, our EAP - **Spectrum Life**
- 2 We will encourage a #TeamTLT ethos in all our schools, where staff have recognised 'buddies' who they can turn to for support.
- 3 We will set up Health MOT events where staff can monitor all aspects of their health and wellbeing.
- 4 We will enable staff to access online courses where they can learn about key areas and also find strategies to support themselves and others. Courses can be accessed by all staff via the HR team or **Spectrum Life**
- 5 Appoint and champion mental health first aiders in each of our schools.
- 6 Provide personal and professional development that incorporates regular opportunities for discussion and learning and be responsive to emerging needs.

3. We will give managers access to the tools and resources they need to support the wellbeing of those they line manage

- 1 Provide managers with tools, resources and training to support their staff. We will not, however, expect managers to provide professional wellbeing support for which they have no professional training, and we will ensure that there are clear routes in place to escalate for further support.
- 2 Build wellbeing discussions into performance management and coaching sessions
- 3 Ensure that there are leaders/managers across the trust, who complete the course 'Mental Health in Education' in our efforts to break any stigma surrounding mental wellbeing and ensure this is led 'from the top'
- 4 Encourage and facilitate all senior leaders to study for an appropriate NPQ
- 5 All headteacher's and SLT members will participate in INSIGHTS training to gain a better understanding of how to manager colleagues with different character traits.



4. We will establish a clear communications protocols

- 1 Provide clear guidance to all stakeholders on remote and out-of-school hours working, including when it is and isn't reasonable to expect staff to respond to queries, whilst appreciating that some staff want to and prefer to work at 'unsociable hours'.....nothing between 7and7 or **'While I choose to work at this time to suit me, I do not expect a reply to this email outside of normal working hours.'**
- 2 Produce a Termly Trust newsletter to keep all staff up-to-date with school and Trust news, adopt a 'you said, we did' approach to staff surveys
- 3 Ensure meetings have a clear start and finish time, and that they are adhered to, that every meeting has a clear agenda and purpose and if it adds no value – it's not needed.
- 4 Ensure staff understand that with communications and actions the underlying caveat to all of this is that the safety of the children come first and are paramount.

5. We will give staff a voice

- 1 Consistently strive to improve the ways in which the voice of the staff is included in the decision-making process across establishments.
- 2 Use a variety of tools (meetings, two annual surveys, staff wellbeing champions, line management, staff training sessions) to proactively gain the views, opinions, experiences and ideas of all staff.
- 3 Proactively engage with all key stakeholders, including recognised trade unions to ensure staff have another route to a voice in our Trust
- 4 Ensure that decisions are effectively communicated with employees. Where we make decisions based on staff views/feedback, we are clear on this and refer to any meetings and actions. Where we make a decision without views we are clear on this and inform staff of the reasons why, with an offer to raise any further concerns.
- 5 Holding an annual Trust conference during which staff are encouraged to participate in decision making
- 6 Establish a Trust working group to lead and further develop our wellbeing strategy



6. We will drive down unnecessary workload

1

Work proactively to drive down unnecessary workload, developing our own 'Workload Reduction Charter' and making use of available tools, such as AI and online HR platforms such as 'My New Term'.

2

Use a variety of tools (meetings, annual surveys, staff wellbeing champions, line management, staff training sessions) to proactively gain the views, opinions, and ideas of all staff of how workload can be reduced.

3

Constantly review the staffing structures in place to ensure they are fit for purpose and investment is made to change structures, amend job roles and where required, increase staff teams.

4

Further develop and embed trust wide policies, systems and practices that are designed to improve quality whilst reducing workload; such as assessment policies, administration support, joint planning, curriculum maps, coaching communities, lesson resources.

5

Establish a Trust Teaching and Learning on-line portal to aid further collaboration and sharing of resources

7. We will Champion flexible working



1

Build on and further embed our already existing flexible working policy, promoting a supportive culture around flexible working, for example 'Hold the Fort' arrangements and allowing staff to take PPA at home where they can and offering as much flexibility as possible around family events and special occasions. Allow support staff to work from home when it is not necessary for them to be onsite. Our policy not only recognises employees' legal right to request flexible working but acknowledges that for some staff working flexibly can be a means of protecting and enhancing their personal wellbeing.

2

Allow establishments to work with staff to support activities that are important to their family, work-life balance, beliefs and wellbeing. Each establishment will work with staff to ensure the moral obligation detailed above, is never broken in allowing these to proceed.

3

Establish a working party to examine how the Trust can implement more flexible working patterns, such as job share, staggered start/finish times and time off in lieu for staff willing to cover absences.

4

Ensure that staff understand, appreciate and support their moral obligation to serve a community and that the needs of the community and children always come first and cannot be affected by any flexible working patterns.

8. We will create a good behaviour and an inclusive culture



1

Ensure all schools have effective behaviour policies which promote cultures where behaviour for learning is good.

2

Ensure that all staff and students have a shared understanding of how good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded, and that sanctions will be imposed if students misbehave.

3

Support staff to create calm, safe and disciplined environments, which allow teachers to teach and students to learn.

4

Develop this hand-in-hand with understanding and supporting student mental wellbeing.

5

Work closely with external partners to get expert support and strategies for staff to support students with SEMH and other SEND needs, such as COMPASS, and other local providers.

6

Promote diversity – eliminating discrimination, and advancing equality of opportunity.

7

Ensure that all staff receive online training in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and we will provide opportunities for all staff to undergo further training where this is required for their own understanding and development including:

Bullying and harassment for employees

Sexual harassment training

Bullying and harassment for managers

Unconscious bias for employees

Disability awareness and inclusion

Unconscious bias for managers

9. We will support staff to progress their careers

1

Ensure that staff are able to pursue professional development without adversely impacting their own and other people's workload and we will achieve this by having in place the following:

Provide personal and professional development that incorporates regular opportunities for discussion and learning, is responsive to emerging needs and is aligned to the Standards for Teachers' Professional Development

Strong trust wide appraisal and performance management systems for all employees that focus on developing skill, knowledge and allows them to actively progress their careers.

Strong leadership development training

Provide financial support for those staff wishing to undertake additional courses and qualifications designed to develop their skill, knowledge and expertise

Foster a culture of collaboration to widen experience, contacts and expertise

Offer a range of secondments, both within and between our schools

Offer a strong CPD programme in each school for staff at different levels, including support staff, ECTs and middle leaders

10. We will create a strategy for protecting leaders' wellbeing and mental health

1

Ensure that all those with strategic decision-making responsibility (including as appropriate, governors and trustees) should collaborate to develop a sub-strategy specifically protecting leader mental wellbeing. These should include access to confidential counselling and/or coaching where needed.

2

Set up a buddy programme for new leaders in the Trust

3

Set up coaching communities for leaders at all levels to discuss experiences and to offer strategies

4

Ensure each Headteacher/Principal has a partner to meet with every term and to utilise the Trust headteacher group to share problems and collaborate on solutions.

5

Ensure the School Improvement Partners have a specific focus on leader mental wellbeing

6

Regularly check on leader mental wellbeing via various means e.g. surveys, informal supervision, leadership days



11. We will hold ourselves accountable



1

Holding a twice-yearly staff survey with results shared across the Trust.

2

Providing exit interviews for all leavers to identify issues where applicable

3

Sending regular reports and data dashboard to the Trust Board, SLT and Local Governing Bodies for accountability.

4

Open ourselves to external audits on our commitment and approach to employee wellbeing

5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Staff wellbeing will be monitored and reported on to the Trustees via the People committee on a termly basis. A senior member of staff and other relevant colleagues, health & safety officers, Staff Governors, subject leaders and union representatives will provide assurance and discuss development as part of departmental and Trust development policy. In addition, Governors will also monitor staff wellbeing using the following indicators:

- Review of attendance and sickness statistics and trends
- Regular briefings at Committee on staff welfare and sickness issues
- Staff Governors seeking feedback and participating on key committees
- Surveys of teaching and support staff
- Progress against SSDP
- Relationship with Trades Unions including number of complaints, grievances and industrial disputes
- Regular formal and informal contacts between all Governors and staff including Governor-led drop-in sessions

This Charter will take account of and support and embrace other policies including but not limited to:

- Equality Act Statement
- Health and Safety
- Recruitment and selection
- Safeguarding
- Whistleblowing
- Complaints





Vision

Nurture Ambition Excellence



Our Trust exists to serve young people, to educate, enlighten and give them the expertise and confidence to succeed



Values



Our Core Values

- 1. Students are always first** – the prime consideration in all decisions will be the best interests and educational outcomes of current and prospective students.
- 2. Mutual benefit** – the interests of the Trust will always be combined with the interests of individual schools, seeking the very best and co-operating to share resources and success.
- 3. Inclusivity** – the Trust will welcome students of all backgrounds and abilities.
- 4. Freedom to innovate and make decisions** – optimum delegation to local Governing Bodies and individual schools commensurate with the Trusts statutory responsibilities and efficiency.
- 5. Excellence and learning** – every student will be supported and challenged to achieve their potential. All adults employed by and associated with the Trust will have and exhibit a 'learning mindset'.
- 6. Partnership** – the Trust will continually seek to work in partnership to achieve better outcomes for current and prospective students and to improve education in the area.
- 7. Fairness** – all students and staff will be treated with fairness and parity whilst encouraging diversity and identity.
- 8. Integrity** – all those associated with the Trust will act with kindness, courtesy and integrity, in accordance with both school and Trust ideals and values.



The Learning Trust's Strategy 2023 - 2026



Nurture Ambition Excellence

Our Trust exists to serve young people, to educate, enlighten and give them the expertise and confidence to succeed

High Quality and Inclusive Education

- To ensure that all students make outstanding progress regardless of their starting point
- To provide high quality teaching and learning supported by an outstanding pastoral system, which is rooted in mutually respectful relationships and a nurturing learning community

Schools that Excel

- To develop a robust and flexible school improvement strategy that leads to sustainable and deep-rooted improvement and increased capacity in all our schools

Attracting, Developing and Retaining Great People

- To create a high-performing working culture for all staff that promotes collaboration, aspiration and support
- To use the flexibilities of the Trust structure to create opportunities for staff
- To ensure an inclusive working environment, promoting equality and diversity in our policies and processes

Developing capacity and ensuring a sustainable MAT

- To ensure that the Trust is an efficient and effective organisation with fit for purpose systems and processes, that delivers a scalable and sustainable business service - making a distinctive contribution to the success of our schools, by relieving pressure on school leaders
- To attract more schools into the Trust

Ethical Leadership and Governance

- To ensure high quality Governance across the Trust which ensures that leaders are accountable, challenged and supported.
- To ensure the Trust has effective quality assurance processes in place and an annual programme of review that affirm its effectiveness.



Workload Reduction Charter



Culture



Our culture within all our schools in our Trust is one of collaboration and collective efficacy.

We are committed to supporting each other for the common good through sharing good practice.

Open-door senior leadership – no concern is ever too small.

Pupil Feedback



There is no expectation to mark every piece of work. We encourage a blended approach to feedback including live marking, verbal feedback and more formal marking to support progress. Marking is for one audience and one audience only: pupils.

Data Collection



We only collect data three times a year so that we can review progress. It is up to individual teachers how they record or monitor progress at other times.

Teaching and Learning



Everyone has high expectations of behaviour, with all staff reinforcing those expectations. There are no 'show lessons', a culture of typicality is required. Our pupils are the hardest working people in the classroom.

Workload



We support the principles of reducing workload where possible.

Any meetings will be scheduled in the calendar and will stick to the publicised finish time.

There are no prizes for looking busy or staying late – work in a way that suites you and make sure you make time for yourself and your family.

Curriculum Development



We provide a Trust wide curriculum framework with a Trust teaching and learning portal to enable the sharing of resources to reduce planning and preparation workload.

PPA and Planning



No need to write lesson plans of any kind

Every teacher is entitled to their PPA and this is regular timetabled time out of class - we encourage teachers to take their PPA at home if they choose to support work/life balance.

Communication and Emails



Staff need to switch of as much as possible when they are at home! We have worked to reduce the number of emails from the central team. We are committed to not sending emails between 6pm and 7am and during holidays except in an emergency and ask our staff to adhere to this as well.

We ask that staff do not complete CPOMS after 5pm.

Support



Dedicated leadership and management time. Protected reflection time for headteachers. Employee Assistance Programme for all staff.