



DAWPOOL

Dawpool Church of England Primary School

Mental Health & Well Being Policy for Staff



Vision Statement

'The Dawpool community are united in their ambition to create a school which embodies the person, love and work of Jesus Christ: a school which enables Christian values to flourish and where all children may experience the abundant life that Jesus offers.'

*'The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience,
Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness
and Self-Control' (Galatians 5: 22-23).*

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1. Rationale

Dawpool Church of England Primary School is committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all its staff, pupils, volunteers, and families. We are committed to ensuring our staff have an effective work-life blend¹, providing them with the energy and mental health to perform their roles to the very best of their abilities.

In particular, teacher and non-teaching staff working hours are widely acknowledged, including by the government, to be excessive, unsustainable and not supportive of children's learning. At Dawpool, we take positive steps to reverse this trend and ensure all staff are able to balance their working lives with their other commitments, hobbies and life's pleasures.

All staff, including the headteacher and senior leaders, are entitled to enjoy a reasonable work-life blend. This is acknowledged in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which states:

"Governing bodies and headteachers, in carrying out their duties, must have regard to the need for the headteacher and 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 of work. In having regard to this, governing bodies and headteachers should ensure that they adhere to the working limits set out in the working time regulations."

(2015 STPCD, Section 2, Part 7, paragraph 54.4)

Furthermore, one of the key professional duties of the Headteacher is to:

"Lead and manage the staff with a proper regard for their wellbeing and legitimate expectations, including the expectation of a healthy balance between work and other commitments."

(2015 STPCD, Section 2, Part 7, paragraph 48.13)

¹Work-life blend – rather than work-life balance. The latter means 'work' and 'life' are separate. It implies that when work ends, life starts. We want all staff to feel and see purpose and meaning in their work – and being able to blend it into their lifestyle.



Good work-life blend is an essential factor in staff effectiveness and satisfaction, which in turn supports pupil learning. It can help recruit and retain better motivated staff through giving them greater control of their working lives. This policy is written in recognition of these statutory provisions, and with our moral commitment to our staff and their right to an appropriate work-life blend.

As part of its commitment to a positive work-life blend the school:

- Recognises that effective practices to promote work-life blend benefits both teachers and pupils.
- Will promote the development of workable solutions and encourage a partnership between all staff and senior leaders.
- Ensures accountability systems are based on trust, respectful professional dialogue and proportionality.
- Will develop, monitor and evaluate appropriate policies and practical responses that meet the specific needs of the school, having regard to fairness and consistency, and valuing teachers for their professional skills – not their working patterns.
- Will emphasise its commitment to work work-life blend to its staff on a regular basis.
- Will encourage senior leaders to lead by example.

2. Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- Enable employees to balance their working lives with their personal needs, interests and caring responsibilities.
- Safeguard health, safety and welfare of staff.
- Assist the headteacher and senior leaders in carrying out their professional duties.
- Enhance the teaching and learning experiences for pupils and in turn, their outcomes.

3. Policy Implementation

Role of the governing body

The governing body will monitor the efforts undertaken to ensure the wellbeing and work-life blend of all staff in the school. In the implementation of policies, initiatives and requirements of staff, they will consider the potential negative impact on staff wellbeing.

‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord. ‘Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’ (Jeremiah 29:11)



Staff consultation

The involvement of staff is key to the success of this policy and the wellbeing culture described. Staff will be consulted over the introduction, monitoring and ongoing evaluation of the policy and its impact. Where necessary, staff will be offered training and advice to improve their work-life blend and wellbeing.

Staff responsibility

Dawpool encourages all staff to take personal responsibility for their own wellbeing. Members of staff are responsible for:

- Demonstrating the expectations outlined in the school's code of conduct.
- Committing pro-actively to the core values of the school.
- Deliberately choosing positive attitudinal choices.
- Implementing meeting guidelines and other advice included in this policy.
- Ensuring they speak to another member of staff if they are encountering difficulties.
- Keeping shared areas such as staff rooms, kitchen, offices etc. tidy and being considerate as to their use.
- Keeping in mind the workload of other members of staff when setting meeting dates or activities and events.
- Keeping in mind the workload of other members of staff and ensuring unnecessary interruptions are minimal – or non-existent.
- Valuing all members of staff in the school and acknowledging the important role that everyone takes.
- Thanking other staff members for the work they do.

Commitment to work-life blend:

Staff employed by the school are trusted and respected. When teaching is effective, the school adheres to the following good practices of work-life blend:

- Teachers will not be required to provide evidence of the work that they undertake, other than that which arises naturally.
- Teachers will not be required to use marking schemes which generate excessive written dialogue between them and their pupils.
- There will be no requirement to produce detailed lesson plans, or to hand them in for scrutiny.
- Formal lesson observations will be limited, except in cases of concern and, in accordance with Ofsted advice, such observations will not be graded according to the Ofsted evaluation schedule.
- Learning walks will take place only as part of school improvement activities, no more than once per term.
- Peer observations will be positively encouraged.



- Communication from leaders will consistently be clear, timely and concise.
- Teachers will be consulted on how data collection demands can be reduced.
- Staff will receive advice and support to enhance their own wellbeing.
- An annual calendar of meetings, deadlines and events will be provided to staff so they can plan ahead and manage their workload in such a way as to help maintain a positive work-life blend.
- When drawing up a calendar for the following academic year, the Headteacher will consult staff on the timing of proposed events and activities to ensure that workload is manageable, for example the timings of INSET, school improvement activities, report schedules, parent consultation meetings, class assemblies, subject leader responsibilities, lesson visits and other activities and events that might impact on work-life blend.
- If, because of unexpected pressures, a member of staff recognises they may not be able to meet a particular deadline then they should inform the headteacher at the earliest opportunity to discuss how they can be supported.

Flexible working

From time to time, staff may need the opportunity to work flexibly in order to achieve a work-life blend. For example:

- Attending emergency appointments
- Attending to unexpected incidents and emergency situations
- Caring for dependents
- Workload pressures

The Head Teacher and senior leaders will listen to staff needs as they arise and do their best to accommodate flexible working options in accordance with Staff Leave of Absence Policy and Procedures.

Flexible working options will be considered where it doesn't inadvertently lead to a sustained increase in workload for other staff members.

Where flexible working is required for a sustained period of time, a referral to occupational health may be considered to ensure the school supports the member of staff in the most appropriate way.

Wellbeing Services

Education Support

All staff are encouraged to access the resources and services provided by **Education Support**, a UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff.



Website: <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

Helpline: 08000 562 561

The helpline is staffed by professional counsellors who can offer immediate, confidential emotional support for circumstances such as:

- Managing difficult feelings or situations
- Advice on boundary setting and self-care
- Getting the best out of work relationships
- Planning for or processing difficult conversations
- Any challenging personal matter
- Anything that is causing distress or upset

Health and Wellbeing Service

The school subscribes to the **Education Mutual Health and Wellbeing Service** and all staff are encouraged to use the services on offer, which include:

- ❖ Nurse support service
- ❖ Menopause care and support
- ❖ Physiotherapy services
- ❖ Counselling services
- ❖ Stress coaching
- ❖ Bereavement support
- ❖ 24/7 GP access
- ❖ Physiotherapy / muscular skeletal problems
- ❖ Cancer support
- ❖ Lifestyle health screening

Education Mutual can be contacted entirely free and confidentially on 01623 287840.

Referrals can be made for health and wellbeing services by completing the referral form on the Education Mutual website: <http://www.educationmutual.co.uk/> or by speaking to Dawpool's Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) Mrs E. Kenney & Mrs F. Barrick.

Thrive

The school's occupational health provider, **Medigold Health**, provides all staff with access to **Thrive services**. Thrive is a clinically led, NHS-approved, mental wellbeing app, available to use 24/7. Proven to aid in the prevention, early detection and self-management of common mental health issues, Thrive empowers users to take charge of their own wellbeing. Providing insights into identifying and managing stress, anxiety and depression, tools to help build resilience and support better sleep, and much more. It offers over 100 hours of content including:

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- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) programme
- Signposting to support services when you need them
- Structured psychoeducational courses on a variety of topics
- Relaxation exercises and techniques to help manage stress
- NHS-approved assessments to help screen for symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Anonymous and confidential progress journal to track your mood over a long period

Information about how to access Thrive can be found [here](#).

Staff can also access the [Thrive Content Hub](#), including support and resources for anxiety, burnout, depression, grief, menopause, sleep, stress and work-life balance.

Staff can visit the [Thrive Mental Health & Wellbeing YouTube Channel](#) for an extensive range of videos and webinars to support all aspects of Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Pastoral support

Revd Jane Turner is the school governor for pastoral support and can be contacted confidentially to discuss any matters relating to work-life blend and wellbeing. Revd Jane visits school every Wednesday afternoon and is available to speak with staff. Alternatively she can be contacted as follows:

Email: rector@thurstaston.org.uk
Phone: 0151 648 1816

Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA)

All teachers are entitled to 10% Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time. This time will be largely protected; however some meetings and professional training may be scheduled to take place during PPA time if it relates to children's learning or professional practice. To support teachers' work-life blend, PPA time may be taken away from the school premises.

New initiatives

Before their introduction, all new initiatives will be considered by senior leaders in terms of their impact on work-life blend. The following questions will be considered:

- What will be the benefit of the new initiative for pupils and staff?
- Will all teachers (and non-teaching staff) be equally affected by any changes to working practices?
- How much time will teachers need to spend on this new initiative?
- Are additional resources needed and, if so, have they been made available?

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- Will it lead to other activities no longer needing to take place?
- What, if any, will be the net increase in working hours?
- Does the policy conflict in any way with the teachers' contractual entitlements as set out in the STPCD?

If it is agreed that the proposed new initiative is beneficial and workload neutral, then it will be introduced during a review period. The review process is to ensure that additional or unanticipated workload burdens do not build up over time

Meetings

Dawpool is committed to reducing unnecessary paperwork, meetings and admin tasks. Where possible, information will be shared through a weekly diary and written briefing which staff are asked to read and will often negate the need for a formal meeting. The weekly diary will contain:

- Prayer or reflection
- Bible verse
- Worship focus & links
- Diary for at least the next two-weeks
- Written briefing for all staff

Where a formal meeting is deemed necessary, it will be held on a Wednesday and will last for no more than 1 hour. There will be different types of meeting according to need:

- Full staff meeting
- Key Stage meeting (EYFS , KS1 & KS2 to meet separately)
- Subject leader meetings
- Time allocated to complete a task

The type of meeting and focus will be published at least 1-week in advance. To ensure effective time management, staff should arrive at meetings having read relevant documents and with any contributions prepared.

Part-time teachers will not be required to attend meetings or come into school for other purposes on days when they are not required to be available for work under their contract of employment.

In weeks where other events such as parent consultation meetings take place, meetings will be held only in exceptional circumstances.

Communication

The school's communication procedures promote positive staff wellbeing and work-life blend:

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- Staff are not expected to read emails or respond to communication before 8:30am and after 4:30pm each day and during weekends, school holidays and bank holidays.
- School leadership will not contact staff members out of school hours regarding work related matters.
- In accordance with the home-school communication procedures, all contact to the school is addressed to the school office, not to individual staff members. The school office staff will facilitate communication on behalf of all staff.
- It is recognised that it may not always be possible to respond to communication during the working day due to teaching and other commitments. Where required, we will aim to acknowledge all written communication within 48-hours of receipt and provide a time frame for further response.
- Whilst staff may choose to write and respond to emails before 8:30am and after 4:30pm, these should be 'schedule sent' to arrive in school hours.

Job sharing and part-time working

The school recognises the benefits for staff and employers of job shares and will seek to accommodate requests for job sharing or part-time working wherever possible in accordance with Trust policy.

The position of the headteacher

This policy is also intended to ensure the Headteacher and others in leadership positions also maintain a positive work-life blend.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if required.

The policy is next due for review in April 2024.



Appendices

Some publications that might be useful

- The Chimp Paradox – Professor Steve Peters
- Personality Portraits: The enneagram encountered – Amanda Maney & Rachel Watson
- Strength in Numbers: A deeper understanding of yourself and others - Amanda Maney & Rachel Watson
- The Book of Joy – The Dalai Lama & Desmond Tutu
- Mindfulness – Mark Williams and Danny Penman
- Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world - Mark Williams and Danny Penman
- Change your mindset, Change your Life – Jackie Beere
- The Compassionate Mind Approach to Difficult Emotions – Chris Irons
- Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World – Max Lucado
- Do Nothing to Change Your Life: Discover what happens when you stop – Stephen Cottrell
- Living Without Worry: How to replace anxiety with peace – Timothy Lane
- Time for Everything: How to be busy without feeling burdened – Matt Fuller
- Less is More: Spirituality for Busy Lives – Brian Draper

Resources and organisations that support wellbeing

NHS: Every Mind Matters

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

NHS: 5 Steps to Wellbeing

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

NHS: Mindfulness

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/tips-and-support/mindfulness/>

Mind

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Mental Health Foundation

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

Sleep Foundation

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>

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Education Support

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

Thrive App

<https://protect.medigold-health.com/employee-dashboard/>

Thrive Mental Health & Wellbeing YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@thrivementalwellbeing9520/videos>

Thrive Content Hub

<https://content-hub.thrive.uk.com/>

Education Mutual Health & Wellbeing Service

<http://www.educationmutual.co.uk/>