

A Model Policy: Work-Life Balance

Guidance towards a school policy by **Solihull** Local Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group with the support of:

- Mrs Val Duffy-Cross, Headteacher Langley Secondary School
- Mrs Marilyn Phipps, Headteacher Damson Wood Infant School
- Mrs Sue Williams, Headteacher Lanchester School
- Mr Vic Scutt, Headteacher Light Hall School
- Solihull Human Resources Division

XX School policy on Work-Life Balance

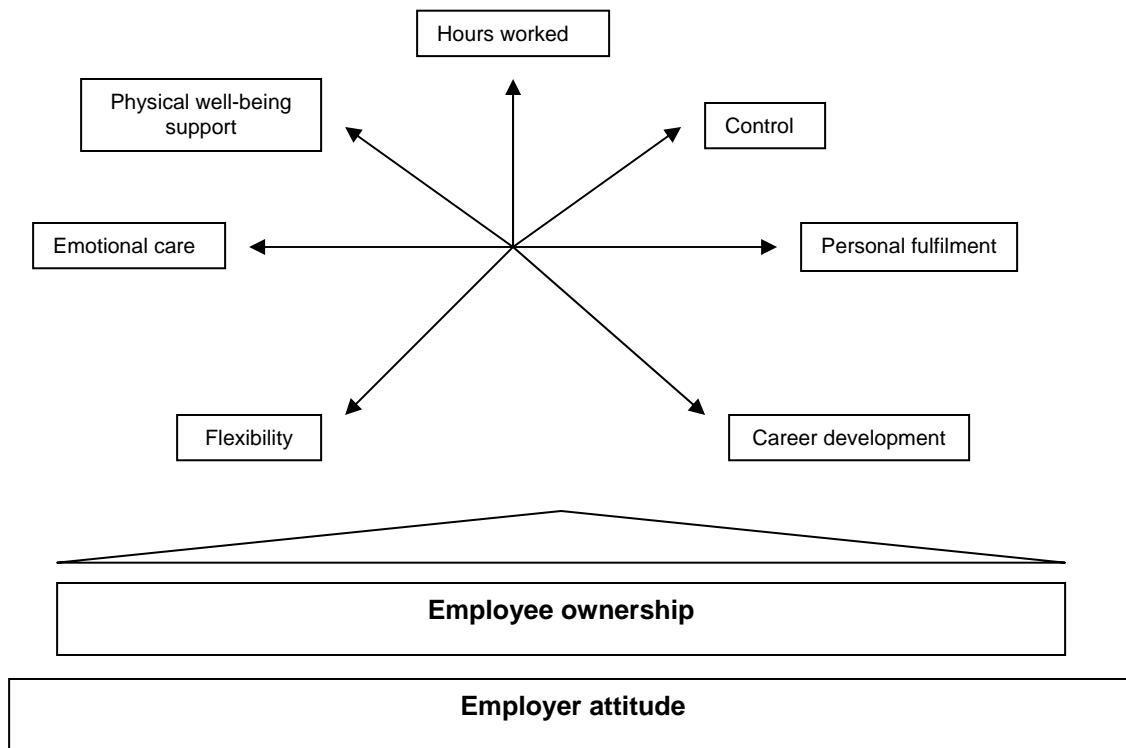
- The National Agreement defines work-life balance as being about helping teachers combine work with their personal interests outside work, and cites hours worked and workload as key elements of this
- Although the focus of the National Agreement is on teaching staff, schools should ensure that **all** their staff, both teachers and support staff enjoy a reasonable work-life balance. The provision of reasonable work-life balance to teachers should not be at the cost of appropriate balance for other school staff
- The National Agreement gives governors responsibility for Head Teacher wellbeing
- The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2006 (STPCD) in Section 4 reports on the contractual changes brought about by the National Agreement between September 2003 and September 2005. This section covers Work/life Balance as a contractual requirement (September 2003) (23 – 29)
- The Education (School Teacher Performance Management) (England) Regulations 2006 maintains in Planning meetings 13. (2) (d):

“..... what can be reasonably expected of any teacher in that position given the desirability of the reviewee being able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge his/her professional duties and the time required to pursue his/her personal interests outside work”.

The Teachers' and Head teachers' Performance Management Guidance from the Rewards and Incentives Group (RIG) states that when objective setting (5.8):

“Reviewers are responsible for ensuring rigour when objectives are set. Objectives should focus on priorities. They should be time bound, challenging but achievable, and reflect the need for a satisfactory work/life balance. A reviewee's objectives should reflect any relevant team, year or whole school objectives. They should reflect the experience and aspirations of the reviewee”.

- In reality, work-life balance means different things to different people but it is, in effect, about culture:



- School culture has to do with the way members of the workforce feel, behave and interact with each other. All staff need to enjoy a healthy work-life balance, a non-hostile environment and friendly, co-operative relationships with colleagues. A positive culture is about high expectations, standards, beliefs and a values-based approach.
- Improving work-life balance in schools is time crucial and critical to the profession. It is important to address whole school work-life balance and to take into account:
 - Our needs and priorities change over time
 - To maintain a reasonable work-life balance the way we organise our lives needs to change accordingly
 - It is the interrelationship of the components shown that is very individual and often complex
 - A work-life balance programme should consider these components together and not separately
 - They can all influence an individual's ability to manage workload effectively within the contracted hours

Scope of Policy

This document sets out our policy on encouraging and enabling all staff to maintain a healthy balance between their work and other interests and responsibilities in their life. The policy applies equally to teaching and support staff in school.

Rationale

- A good work-life balance is central to staff effectiveness and satisfaction, and student learning.
- Work-life balance is about helping staff combine work with their personal interests and commitments.
- The governing body has a statutory responsibility to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees.

Work-Life Balance

The Government introduced the Work-Life Balance campaign in 2000. The campaign was to help employers to recognise the benefits of implementing policies, procedures and strategies to improve the well being of employees. Within Education, Workforce Remodelling has become a key strategy in delivering certain aspects of a work-life balance for both teaching and support staff. Flexible working patterns are also a cornerstone of many Work-Life Balance policies and have a place within Education establishments. Work-Life Balance includes better communication within the workplace, clearer job rôles and workplace support.

In order for our staff to be at their most effective they need to have a healthy work-life balance in order:

- To attract and retain the calibre of staff needed for a 21st Century education system;
- To improve the school's effectiveness by actively reducing staff absenteeism and turnover;
- To develop a more motivated workforce, with high morale, even more able to deliver a better education for our children;
- To improve team work, staff development and co-operation by effectively distributing leadership and creating new leaders;
- To recognise that excessive hours of work reduce staff effectiveness;
- To recognise that improving workplace communication has a positive outcome for the whole school workforce.

Key Aims

- To benefit the organisation and its employees;
- To acknowledge that the needs of both the organisation and employees are not static, but change over time;
- To acknowledge the need for management, unions/employee representatives and employees to create work-life balance solutions which support the educational context and which operate in a fair and consistent manner;
- To be economically sustainable and feasible;
- To underline the fact that employers value employees for their contribution to the school irrespective of their working pattern;
- To communicate work-life balance practices and policies to all employees in the organisation with any changes to policies as they arise;
- To include a monitoring, evaluation and review mechanism for work-life balance initiatives and strategies;

Policy Principle

All staff within the school, including the Head Teacher, will be supported in attaining a balanced lifestyle where they can achieve their best at work and manage other areas of their life effectively.

Our strategies to support a balanced lifestyle will include:

- Clear identification of duties and responsibilities relating to individual staff rôles, reviewed annually through performance management interviews, to aid them in the delivery of their work and managing the expectations of the job;
- Involving the employee in agreeing and setting realistic work-related targets;
- Providing a system for and encouraging efficient and effective working practices, and discouraging staff from working excessively long hours;
- Involving, encouraging and enabling staff to manage their own careers, personal development and work/life balance;
- Consulting with staff on decisions relating to their employment, encouraging them to seek third party advice, e.g. to confer with their Union representatives, where appropriate;
- Providing opportunities for flexible working practices contingent on this being in the best interests of the organisation;
- Providing workplace facilities for breaks and relaxation;
- Presenting opportunities for discussion of the school's management of the work/life balance of all staff
- Considering support for childcare facilities and services where possible;
- Communicating with parents and the wider community the benefits of our work-life policy.

Monitoring & evaluation

Staff development and workforce remodelling will be discussed annually at an appropriate Governors' meeting or sub-committee.

The Governing body also has a responsibility to ensure that the Head Teacher has an acceptable work-life balance. This includes providing appropriate administrative and leadership support and leadership and management time for the Head to include 'Dedicated Headship Time'. The Governors will regularly review their own practices with consideration to staff workload. The Head Teacher has a duty to monitor his/her own work-life balance, model good practice and report concerns to the Governing Body.

This policy was written xxxxxx (date) and will be reviewed every 1/2/3 years.

Signed:

Date:

Annex 1

Additional guidance

Other Governing Body Responsibilities

The governing body will review work-life strategies annually/bi-annually;

- By monitoring the effectiveness of the statutory Performance Management policy in which the Head Teacher will be asked to comment about strategies the school is adopting with regard to staff work-life balance;
- By ensuring that the Head Teacher's workload is kept at a manageable level, enabling a healthy work-life balance and lifestyle. This should lead to a review of the Governing Body's own practices with relation to their own workload (alongside the Head Teacher's) with the aim of maximised efficiency;
- By reviewing this policy in conjunction with the School Work Related Stress Management Policy produced by Solihull MBC H & S Team.

Flexible Working Practices

The Employment Act, 2002 introduced a right for employees with 26 weeks' continuous service, who have a child under the age of six (18 where the child is disabled) and parental responsibility for the child to request a change to the number of hours that they work, the times that they work or their place of work.

Flexible Working (Eligibility, Complaints and Remedies) (Amendment) Regulations come into force on 6 April 2007.

The Regulations amend the Flexible Working (Eligibility, Complaints and Remedies) Regulations 2002 to extend the right to request flexible working to carers of adults from 6 April 2007.

Types of Flexible Working

Not all types of flexible working will be appropriate for all roles within the context of the school (recognising that teachers and support staff have different contracts of employment nationally). However, all requests must be given fair consideration.

The types of flexible working include:

- Part-time working
- Job Sharing
- Time off in lieu
- Annualised Hours
- Special leave arrangements
- Employment breaks

This is not an exhaustive list. For more information concerning flexible working practices consult Solihull MBCs '**Flexible Working Policy – the right to request and the duty to consider**'. This policy applies to the all employees within Local Government Services'. This can be found by accessing: www.business.solihull.int/schoolshr/policies-home-page.htm or if you require further clarification contact HR & E.

Home Working

The Governors recognise that in order to implement effectively PPA, Dedicated Headship Time and Leadership and Management Time, in some circumstances it may be more efficient for staff to work at home. Within the context of the smooth running of the school staff may be permitted to work at home by prior agreement.

Workforce Agreement

The statutory requirements of the Workforce Agreement are to be found in the 2007 STPCD and "Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement" (DfES 2003)

Annex 2

Resources

www.intouch.ccc/healthandsafety/stress.asp

www.healthyschools.gov.uk The National Healthy Schools Programme is a long term initiative that helps young people and their schools to be healthy. The Programme is not just about pupils either; a Healthy School involves the whole school community – from parents to governors to school staff – in improving their health and their happiness and getting the most out of life.

www.tda.gov.uk Further guidance on all aspects of remodelling, work-life balance and individual schools' case studies.

www.hse.gov.uk Information on work-related stress. Details of publications available from the Health and Safety Executive, e.g. Work Related Stress : A Short Guide, Tackling Work Related Stress : A Guide for Employees. Latest guidelines for employers and lots of case studies, also risk assessment forms for home working.

www.investorsinpeople.co.uk for the Investors in People guide to helping organisations manage a work-life balance. Follow links to the Government's Work-Life Balance campaign.

www.worklifesupport.com managed in conjunction with the Teacher Support Line, provides details of the Well Being Programme (an example of good practice in schools, detailed in HSE documents and Healthy Schools Initiative).

www.teacherline.org.uk Information about the Teacher Support Line and on-line stress audit and work-life balance questionnaire. Additional useful tools to help schools improve staff well-being.

www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=782 Stress at work guide with links to disciplinary and grievance and bullying and harassment procedures.

www.naht.org.uk A variety of references and policies.

www.lg-employers.gov.uk "Finding the Balance" for work-life policies specifically related to teaching and support staff.

www.teachernet.gov.uk A wide range of resources and downloadable documents

www.governornet.co.uk Key information and links useful to governors.

www.cipd.co.uk Chartered Institute of Personnel Development for guidance on work-life balance, absence management, professional development and training.