

The Quick Guide to Staff Wellbeing in Schools and why it is so important!



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WELCOME TO YOUR QUICK GUIDE TO WELLBEING

INTRODUCTION

Why would you want to focus on wellbeing?

Here are a few reasons you might want to consider it.

- As school budgets come under pressure and there is the need to do more with less, this is one area that will both improve results and save money.
- There is considerable and compelling research and evidence that clearly demonstrates improvements in staff wellbeing lead to improved financial and student results, including in exams. There is a strong business case for this to be your main focus, alongside ensuring the right leadership, people, and processes are in place.
- It improves engagement and staff will willingly give you more.
- It reduces staff absence levels and the need for cover, reducing any supply costs.
- It improves staff attraction and retention. You will recruit better teachers and support staff and they will stay longer, reducing spending on recruitment.
- It reduces management time spent on unproductive tasks, such as staff friction, poor performance or grievances.
- You are likely to have more fun as a leader, working with more people who want to be there and who are enjoying their job.
- Teachers will have better physical and mental health and role model this for students.

I am sure you can add more of your own reasons. Put simply, making wellbeing part of your everyday culture will improve your outcomes, for both students and staff.

You can use this guide to help gain buy-in from across the leadership team and staff in your school. For those not convinced, some of the research and evidence might just change their mind.

It is not soft and fluffy! It is about taking the right action to deliver a significant return on any investment you make (both time and money).

WHAT IS WELLBEING?

There is no simple answer to this, and there are multiple descriptions. The Measuring National Wellbeing Programme at the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) has created a live dashboard covering 43 different indicators of wellbeing.

For simplicity here are a few of the many definitions.

- How you feel (personally and socially).
- How you function – physically, emotionally, mentally (including positive psychology) and spiritually.
- How you evaluate your life as a whole – not just moment to moment happiness (though this can also improve wellbeing).
- How you develop and become fulfilled - which is why continuing professional development and career aspirations can be so important.
- The degree to which positive effect is greater than negative effect. This last one has a clear link with resilience, where you look to build protective factors (positives) and mitigate risk factors (negatives).

Whatever your own view or definition, don't spend too much time debating it. Instead, quickly move to action.

THE HOUSE OF ORGANISATIONAL WELLBEING

There is another way you might want to think about wellbeing!

On the next page you can see a house. If you are like many leaders (and other individuals), when you start to think about wellbeing, you probably think of providing support in the way of giving something for free, providing training, counselling, or improving fitness.

For example you might arrange for some resilience or mindfulness training, give access to a gym, if you have one, or put free fruit in the staff room. There is nothing wrong with this, but it isn't the place to start and is unlikely to make any substantial difference if you haven't built firm foundations.

This is where people are putting on the roof, rearranging the loft, or kitting out the middle floor, but haven't dug the foundations properly. As a result, as they add things, they do not sustain or provide benefits. In fact the level of wellbeing is at a position, where it is likely to fall.

Take a look at the house and think about what you do in your school.

THE HOUSE OF ORGANISATIONAL WELLBEING



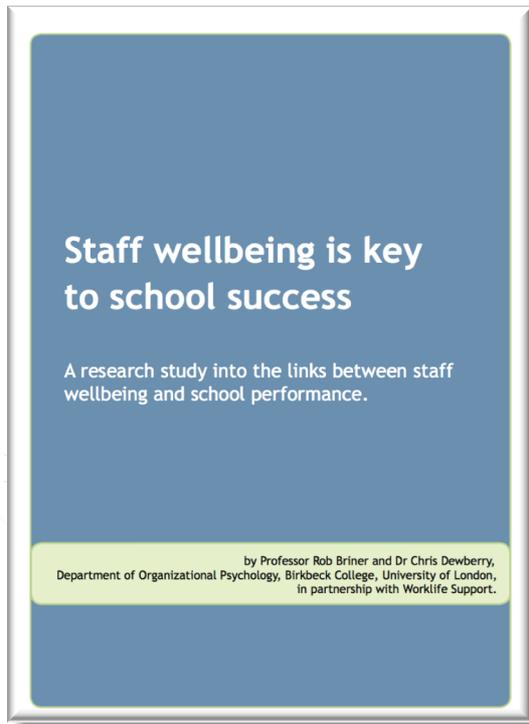
TOP TIP!



Start with the foundations – it's all about wellbeing being part of the culture. That means how leaders behave and treat others, the working hours, the one to one time people are given, the control they have over what they do and how they do it, and the systems of support, such as performance management.

THE EVIDENCE FOR A FOCUS ON STAFF WELLBEING

The evidence for making wellbeing a part of everyday behaviours and activities is compelling.



The only major report into staff wellbeing in schools was undertaken by Birkbeck College, University of London, in partnership with Worklife Support. This found that:

- There was a statistically significant impact on the SATs results of English primary schools.
- Teacher enjoyment was linked with a higher value added measure of pupil performance
- There was an increased performance in 5+ GCSEs A to C.
- There was improved value added progress through key stages 2 to 4.

While more research would be helpful in the education sector, there has been research in business (examples below) and in the health sector (details on page 8).

In business, a 2014 report for the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, titled 'Does Worker Wellbeing Affect Workplace Performance', found that wellbeing shows a strong and positive link with Improved workplace performance for both profitability (financial); and labour productivity and the quality of outputs and services.

It also showed a strong link between wellbeing and job satisfaction, including aspects such as training, skills development opportunities, how much autonomy employees have in their role, and how much scope they have to use their own initiative and influence decisions.

Dame Carol Black's review of the health of Britain's working age population, 'Working for a healthier tomorrow' found considerable evidence that health and wellbeing programmes produced economic benefits across all sectors and all sizes of business: in other words, that good health is good business. She also concluded that the benefits of wellbeing go beyond the quality of life of staff and extend to increasing an organisations productivity and profitability.

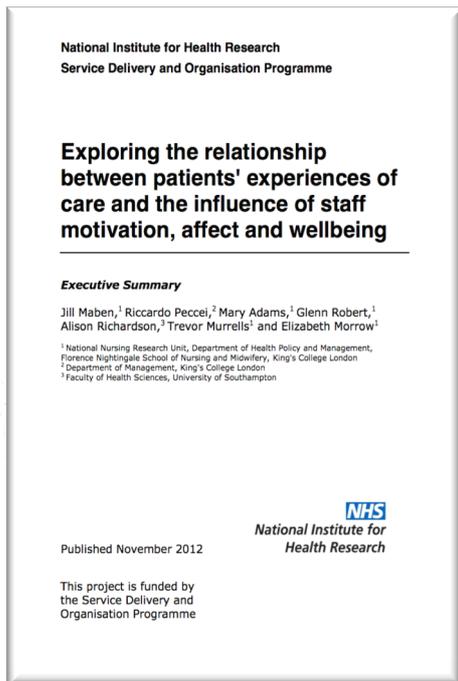


REFLECTION TIME!

What impact might greater staff wellbeing have on your school?

THE EVIDENCE FOR A FOCUS ON STAFF WELLBEING

Much greater research has been carried out within the health sector, where staff wellbeing is consistently shown to be linked with patient care, welfare and mortality.



Among the highlights from findings are:

- There is evidence of a causal link between staff wellbeing and performance outcomes.
- There is a relationship between staff wellbeing and staff reported patient care, patient reported patient care, hospital infection and mortality rates (higher staff wellbeing leads to fewer patient deaths).
- Local climate is important, even for high performing staff in demanding jobs.
- It is important to monitor staff wellbeing and target resources to areas known to be problematic.
- Management practices are significantly linked to NHS staff health and wellbeing
- This is linked to multiple outcomes, including staff absenteeism, turnover, agency spend (e.g. supply staff), patient satisfaction, infection rates, and annual health check performance.
- The associated financial costs of these can be significant.

If you want to see the benefits highlighted above, in your school, then make wellbeing a keystone habit and a focus of what you do every single day.

WHY AND HOW TO MEASURE WELLBEING?

If you are want to take action then the first step should be to measure current staff wellbeing.

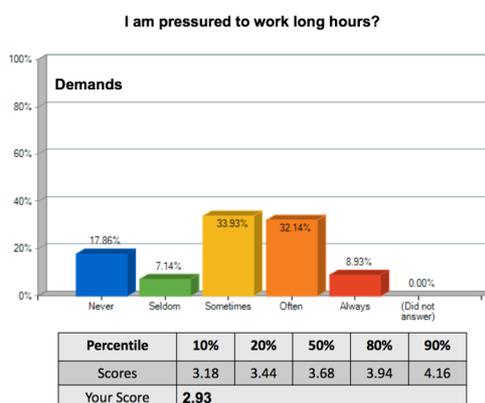
Why? Well if you are going to focus on improving it, then knowing the current state of play is a good place to start. There are other reasons too:

- Even though you may have a good sense of current challenges or issues, this step will help to uncover anything hidden, as well as identify priority areas.
- It allows you to put a stake in the ground and to use that to measure progress, including identifying trends.
- It provides great feedback, which you can use to create context and engagement with your staff, to involve them in action and ensure they take a share of responsibility for improving their own and whole school wellbeing.

HOW TO MEASURE WELLBEING

A simple way to start is through reviewing your school data and talking to staff This will include:

- Information you already collect such as sickness/absence, retention, exit interview responses, grievances, the extent to which any staff assistance or counselling schemes are used, student behaviour, progress and outcomes.
- One to One interviews.
- Group discussions and focus groups.



Then use a relevant questionnaire.

- It is important to use one that has been shown to be valid and reliable and ideally with benchmarks. That's why we use the Health and Safety Executive's Indicator Tool. Evidence shows it to be a good predictor of workplace stress.
- The reasons for using a questionnaire include; the relative ease to administer; ability to reach everyone, particularly if delivered on-line; the focus on measurable specifics; and you can repeat at intervals and measure progress.

WHAT ARE YOU MEASURING?

In addition to the organisational data, mentioned on the previous page, such as absence information, when we use the HSE Indicator Tool, we are measuring the self-assessed scores of staff against those risk factors for workplace stress identified by the Health and Safety Executive.

THE 6 MAJOR RISK FACTORS ARE:

- The **demands you face** (workload, work patterns and working environment).
- **Control** (how much say you have in the way you do your work).
- The **support you receive** (the encouragement from leaders and colleagues and the resources to which you have access).
- Your **relationships at work** (the extent to which positive working practices and behaviours are encouraged and problems dealt with).
- **Your role** (whether you clearly understand what is expected of you).
- **Change** (how it's managed and communicated to you)

Of course it isn't just work (shown as HSE risks in the stress bucket diagram opposite) that might cause poorer wellbeing.

There are many things at home and in life to add and some of these are listed on the left of the diagram. So, helping staff to develop coping strategies is important but not before addressing those elements that affect culture.

This is also why leaders have to spend quality one to one time with their team members to understand what is going on for them outside school.

You can also add factors such as lack of exercise and poor nutrition.

Stress Factors

Things that cause the stress level to rise

- HSE Risks
- Finances
- Not enough sleep
- Family
- Bereavement
- Arguments
- Relationships
- Etc.



Vulnerability Factors

Size and strength of your bucket

Coping Strategies

Coping strategies = holes to let out the stress

The Stress Bucket – as things build up, it's like a bucket. When things become too much, the bucket overflows and stress becomes less manageable. People also respond differently to situations as their ability to cope (bucket size) varies.



WHAT NEXT?

You've run your questionnaire and received your report covering each of the six risk areas for workplace stress. Your scores are benchmarked against 136 organisations across sectors. The benchmark is useful, because not all questions are created equal. That is scoring 3 out of 5 in some areas might put you in the 80th percentile, while in another area you might need to score significantly more.

You've reviewed your other data and had conversations with staff.

It's likely that there will be some key issues highlighted. This will probably include the demands they face, for example workload, and that they don't feel sufficiently in control of how they do their job.

Comments are likely to show that the behaviours of some leaders and line managers, such as department heads, and their lack of empathy are having an impact on wellbeing, and as a result, performance and results. There is probably little one to one time being spent and your performance management process maybe too much of a tick box exercise once a year.

You take the graphs and PowerPoint of the questionnaire results and findings, plus the commentary and suggested actions and share them with your staff. As well as talking about the findings you ask for their ideas and engagement in deciding on priorities and action.

You ask your leaders to complete their self-assessments on the 12 competencies proven to reduce or prevent stress in staff and discuss these as a leadership team.

SETTING GOALS

After reviewing with staff you are able to set clear goals and objectives. This might include longer term aspirations and a small number of specific priority actions that become part of your school development plan.

Actions may cover a wide range of areas and include:

- Quick wins, for example, looking for leaders to give more praise and recognition.
- Longer term development, for example, improving line manager empathy or coaching skills.
- Improving systems, for example, changing performance management to encompass regular check-ins and conversations and not one off interventions.



The most important aspect is to focus on those things that will build the foundations for the right culture and influence the behaviours of leaders and staff every single day.

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

You are likely to be addressing many of the areas covered and benefiting from more engaged and well staff. As a result, you will also be seeing strong performance and results.

If you aren't yet confident in your foundations and would like support then we can help in a number of ways, including:

- Running your 'wellbeing' questionnaire, providing advice and helping you decide on your strategy.
- Giving you access to four evidence backed psychometric questionnaires for leaders to self-assess their performance against competencies proven to prevent or reduce stress in staff.
- Providing access to staff guides, chat cards and a school toolkit.
- Giving you access to our student character lesson plans, including on resilience and growth mindset.

All available as low cost annual plans within the Acceleration Academy.

[You can access free resources and see what is available by registering for free here.](#)

We can also provide greater support to include:

- Building out your strategy for you.
- Developing and/or implementing a more detailed plan.
- Implementing specific elements to build better foundations, for example articulating the behaviours that underpin your values, implementing a more effective performance management process or developing coaching skills and empathy within your leaders.
- Providing a range of standalone workshops and seminars for leaders and staff, for example on managing personal wellbeing, resilience or energy for results.

It is all about building the right foundations

You can also take advantage of a FREE strategy call to discuss your specific situation and needs. This is all about giving you value, and making sure you take action and follow up.

We also offer a full guarantee with our paid for services. If we deliver anything you are not happy with then you simply don't pay.

Get in touch to book your call. We'd love to hear from you.



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