



Healthy
Workplace

Education Staff Health & Wellbeing

Examples of good practice

Introduction

Staff wellbeing has always been an essential element of a healthy and successful school but at a time when schools are returning to the challenge of the new normal, post Covid-19, it has never been more important. As such, we wanted to ensure we are supporting schools and other education settings as best we can, to ensure that the wellbeing of staff remains prominent in your school, despite all the new and existing challenges. To help, we thought it would be a good idea to gather some of the great work that has already been done in certain schools across Cornwall and share these ideas of good practise.

We appreciate that one size doesn't fit all, a healthy workplace takes time to achieve and embed and is not just a 'tick box' exercise. Understanding what staff require and gaining feedback is really important to be successful with promoting workplace health, as well as ensuring communication to all staff of new topics and information which might interest them.



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Refreshed Staff Room

- Our old staff room was in use daily with staff making drinks but not always used for staff to eat their lunch. The room was poorly lit, had limited space and often was used as a storeroom. Staff would regularly eat their lunch in their classrooms, rather than socially with colleagues in a communal space. In the new design, white walls with matching kitchen and units were picked, to give a light and airy feeling.
- We made the main focus a large 15-seater table and chairs, to encourage staff to sit together and communicate with each other when having their break.
- We also purchased a small sofa and coffee table as additional seating, which provides a more relaxing vibe when colleagues want to relax.
- 2 fridges, so that all staff can store their lunch & the vast amount of milk we use!
- We have daily fruit deliveries, which is presented in a fruit bowl to give that homely feel.
- Although the staff room is a place where information is stored for teachers, we also use the space to promote staff talking to each other, supporting where needed and celebrating birthdays and achievements.
- Since the re design, our staff room has become the hub of the school, it is used on a daily basis by all staff. Lunch times have become more sociable and relaxing, where staff are actually taking a break from class and coming together in a central environment.



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Communication

- Communication is key in any organisation. This will raise awareness and foster even more support from the senior team. It was great to hear a staff wellbeing noticeboard is used in the staff room for staff to access. Communication is something that is really important to keep going to ensure that colleagues stay engaged and current with any updates or changes.
- Annual staff surveys present the opportunity for staff to put forward their ideas to support wellbeing and to maintain harmony amongst the school. There will be reflection on measures that have been put in to place for the pandemic which may be seen as a new to continue in improving working conditions.
- Health and wellbeing, including workload, is covered during the interview and induction process, to inform new staff members about how they are supported. New staff are made aware of the Wellbeing Champions and Mental Health First Aider in the school, if they require any additional support.
- Employees are supported by the senior leadership team who have attended training in difficult conversations, something which adds another strong dimension to the support for staff well-being. In addition, a friendly, open-door policy, where employees are free to discuss issues, is another great way to support the workforce. Termly training is also available for staff to manage stress and anxiety in work as well as the support given through essential counselling



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Mental Health

- Having policies that allow staff to manage their work-life balance means that work issues can remain at work. Examples given to support this included: No emails before 7am or after 7pm. No emails at the weekend. Staff to leave the premises before 6pm
- Staff work life balance has improved hugely through encouraging staff to finish work by 5.30pm, turn their technology off during evenings, weekends and school holidays and not to take marking home, if possible.
- A new marking policy and new teaching and learning principles were introduced that further reduce workload by streamlining planning and removing any unnecessary marking – these are fantastic examples of senior leadership commitment to staff health and wellbeing.
- Here is one example of the impact our staff library has had: "Just a quick message to say how fab the sharing books idea in the staff room is. I have got back my passion for reading. This time of year can be stressful in school and home but I have found that by reading a couple of chapters each night is helping me switch off. I feel like retaking my A level English all over again!!!! Thanks again".
- Two staff members have been trained to become Mental Health First Aiders, enabling them to identify signs and symptoms of mental ill health and put the correct support in place for individuals. A buddy system has also been introduced for staff to identify someone they would feel most comfortable in talking to and support each other when needed.
- Feel Good Friday happens every week and the staffroom becomes a calming environment with music, nature scenes on the screen and good food. The Mental Health First Aiders work in the staffroom on Fridays for staff to access them if they need to talk.
- As part of our work as an academy we strive to give back into our local community, recently we organised a beach clean. This time was used, not only to improve the environment surrounding the local area but also to allow the staff members to bond and connect with one another in a calm and serene environment, out of their place of employment.

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Physical Activity

- Online tai chi sessions have recently been offered to staff and they have been encouraged to participate in a walking challenge. There are future plans for afterschool Zumba sessions from September with childcare provided removing barriers for staff to participate
- 12 members of staff are doing the Couch 2 5k running programme and they are planning a triumphant 5k run in the holidays together, as they finish the programme – fantastic! Staff also undertake monthly walks and also take part in pub quizzes which helps team bonding and staff having fun together. A typical example of having fun was a recent 'Colour Run' which help raise funds for the PTA and photos for all to reminisce over, which went really well with many staff joining in.

Feedback from staff has been really positive, with comments such as; "Such a great idea for staff wellbeing, I never thought I'd enjoy running." "I'm surprised how much I am enjoying it."

- Staff have the opportunity to join in with the children for the Daily Mile and to access and enjoy the outdoor space within the school grounds.
- As a team we completed a 24-hour bike ride, this developed a strong bond amongst the staff.
- Staff participate in a variety of after school sessions and opportunities throughout the year including yoga, rounders, paddle boarding and Friday evening beach club with a wellbeing swim in the sea.



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Nutrition

- The identification of staff being dehydrated and understanding that this will affect their well-being and work efficiency, was a good example of consideration to workplace health. However, to act on this and take measures to improve this issue was great to hear about too! Supplying staff with water bottles and water coolers to ensure they remain hydrated was a great positive action to take.
- Keeping employees well during winter and avoiding illness by providing fresh smoothies and a cup of vitamins was fantastic. Porridge with healthy toppings is also available to staff for breakfast which adds more strength to the focus on well-being through healthy eating and the opportunity to socialise.
- We hosted a Healthy Workplace Initiative for our staff, aimed at encouraging further understanding of the importance of a healthy, balanced diet and safe, controlled ways to manage it. The project was for 12 weeks and involved a weigh-in in the first session and another at the last. All staff attending used this time together to exchange snack/meal ideas and talk about their experiences with the sessions. This, in conjunction with the outstanding turnout, allowed each member of staff to achieve successful results. The program was enjoyed by all who registered and was a massive success.
- A group of staff take part in a weekly weigh in and share healthy recipes with each other. Free fruit is available in the staffroom once a week.

