



Harlington Upper School

Staff Wellbeing Charter

Working together to make our school a happy and harmonious place to work by always acting with integrity; being open, honest, and transparent with decision making and doing whatever we can to reduce unnecessary workload from staff. We operate in an environment of high professional trust and high levels of accountability.

We recognise that the commitment and care shown by all staff are fundamental to the success of our students and we promise our staff that they will be supported, encouraged, and respected. The school is dedicated to developing, growing, and retaining talented leaders and staff. We want our school to be a place where people want to work and choose to stay.

Culture

The culture of our school is critical in ensuring we have an enjoyable, rewarding working environment in which all colleagues believe the demands of their job are reasonable and manageable. It is essential that our school is led in an ethical way that is driven by moral purpose. Leaders are asked to set a good example in how they behave and that they try to reduce levels of stress and anxiety in the organisation. Leaders are asked to seek to ensure they are able to translate the school's vision and values into behaviours which are built on the principles of dignity, respect, professionalism and integrity.

We start from an assumption of professional trust and the belief that everyone seeks to do a good job. Leaders should be clear that processes of quality assurance and performance development are, for most staff, about recognising great practice and supporting colleagues in their professional commitment to get better at their jobs. They are not about surveillance and catching people out. Processes must operate within a spirit of openness and transparency and staff must be made to feel confident to raise any concerns or issues they have.

We are an inclusive school and offer our full support to all staff regardless of age, sex, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or disability. We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind and ensure all recruitment practices are mindful of unconscious bias.

Workload

Recruitment and retention in schools is becoming increasingly challenging. Evidence shows that workload is cited as the main reason teachers leave the profession. Workload can include various aspects of teachers' working lives, including marking, planning, preparation, monitoring, evaluation and data collection. The school recognises it has a duty of care towards its staff and is committed to working with its recognised trade unions to clarify workload expectations, supporting staff to achieve a healthy work-home balance. This commitment is genuine and sincere, and it applies to everyone in the school. Leaders are expected to demonstrate this commitment and to be mindful of what is reasonable for staff.

The school recognises the important work of the unions and ensures that directed time for all teachers is below 1265 hours, while recognising there will never be parity across all roles.

Around 50% of our workforce are non-teaching staff. They form an integral part of our talented workforce, and they represent a range of professions. They have clearly defined job descriptions, contracts and working hours, and they work collaboratively to meet the needs of our students. Whilst we appreciate that there are times where our non-teaching staff work outside their normal parameters to meet the needs of our students (e.g. emergency situations where everyone works together to meet student needs and to keep students safe), we do not expect our non-teaching staff to work more than their contracted hours. We recognise that jobs can evolve over time, therefore we encourage non-teaching staff to work with their managers to regularly review their job descriptions, ensuring they accurately reflect the work required and undertaken.

Lesson Planning

Planning is critical and it underpins effective teaching. The school employs highly skilled teachers who plan and deliver high quality teaching and learning. Staff are not expected to submit daily, or weekly plans and they are encouraged to spend time collaboratively planning, sharing resources, knowledge and expertise within the schools and across the trust. We facilitate this further by actively planning calendared joint planning sessions for subject leaders and by providing SIT time for pedagogical development and moderation.

Data Collection

The school has reduced the requirement for staff to produce lengthy written reports and we have streamlined data collection to make it as quick and easy as we can while still being meaningful. Currently we collect student predictions three times a year to ensure we can monitor progress without over-burdening staff. Teachers are only asked to input data that requires their professional judgement. All other data is collected and processed by non-teaching personnel.

Marking and Feedback

We have recently reviewed our expectations around student feedback. Our starting point was that feedback should be: used to improve students' performance; based on evidence of what works and manageable and reasonable in terms of workload. The minimum expectations set for each subject area adhere to these principals.

Meetings

Meetings will usually be arranged in normal working hours. The school recognises that there may be times with mutual agreement where meetings may take place outside normal working hours. The school will be mindful of staff health and wellbeing in such circumstances, ensuring staff have reasonable time for breaks and refreshments and attendance at such meetings will be voluntary.

It is important that meetings only take place where they are the most efficient and effective use of staff time.

Emails

There is no expectation that staff respond to emails outside normal working hours. We want all staff to be able to achieve a healthy work-home balance and we trust the professional judgement of our staff to make decisions about when they work outside school hours. While it is appropriate for a member of staff to read and send emails at times that work for them, the sender should follow the school's communication policy and use the delay email function when doing so out of hours. We ask all staff, including leaders, to refrain where possible, from sending group emails and to think carefully before using the "reply all" function. Messages to all staff should only be sent when they are important and significant for every recipient.

Parents are made aware of our communication expectations and staff are not expected to respond to parents in their own time.

Inspection

We believe that the best preparation for external inspection is for staff to be able to do the best job they can do, without the additional stress that can be caused by the prospect of the process of inspection. It is the responsibility of the leadership team to prepare the school properly, but this should be done in a way that does not cause significant additional workload for teachers. We do not conduct 'mocksted' that require teachers to provide lesson plans or that involve processes outside the normal monitoring and evaluation and performance management policies. Leaders are mindful of the messages they send to staff and are asked not to use phrases like 'Ofsted expects to see...'

Well-being Offer

The school offers the following to support our staff:

- An open and supportive culture
- Ongoing professional development
- High levels of staff autonomy
- Opportunities to earn additional professional qualifications
- Regular staff well-being initiatives
- Staff social committee
- Free annual flu jab given in school time
- Discounted dry cleaning - collect from and deliver to school service
- Trust discounts on local goods and services
- Access to occupational health where necessary
- Well-resourced and maintained building
- Expansive site in a rural location