

The Quick Guide to Staff Wellbeing in Schools & Multi-Academy Trusts

...and why it's so important!



Intro

Why would you want to focus on staff wellbeing?

- 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 outcomes, including in exams. It improves engagement and staff will willingly give you more.
- It reduces staff absence levels and the need for cover, reducing cover and supply costs.
- It improves staff attraction and retention. You will prevent more good staff leaving and in time recruit better teachers and support staff, who will stay longer.
- It reduces management time spent on unproductive tasks, such as staff friction, poor performance or grievances.
- You are likely to have more success 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 staff wellbeing part of your everyday culture will improve your outcomes, for both staff and students.

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.

Yet many of these cannot be influenced by school leaders. The focus needs to be on those things that can be influenced and this means supporting staff to develop their psychological, social and physical resources so they are better able to meet challenges.

However, this also has to be about that part of a staff member's overall wellbeing that they perceive to be determined primarily by work and can be influenced by workplace interventions.

This means it has to be about the culture you create and what happens in your school everyday, rather than thinking about one-off initiatives or activities.

The house of organisational wellbeing

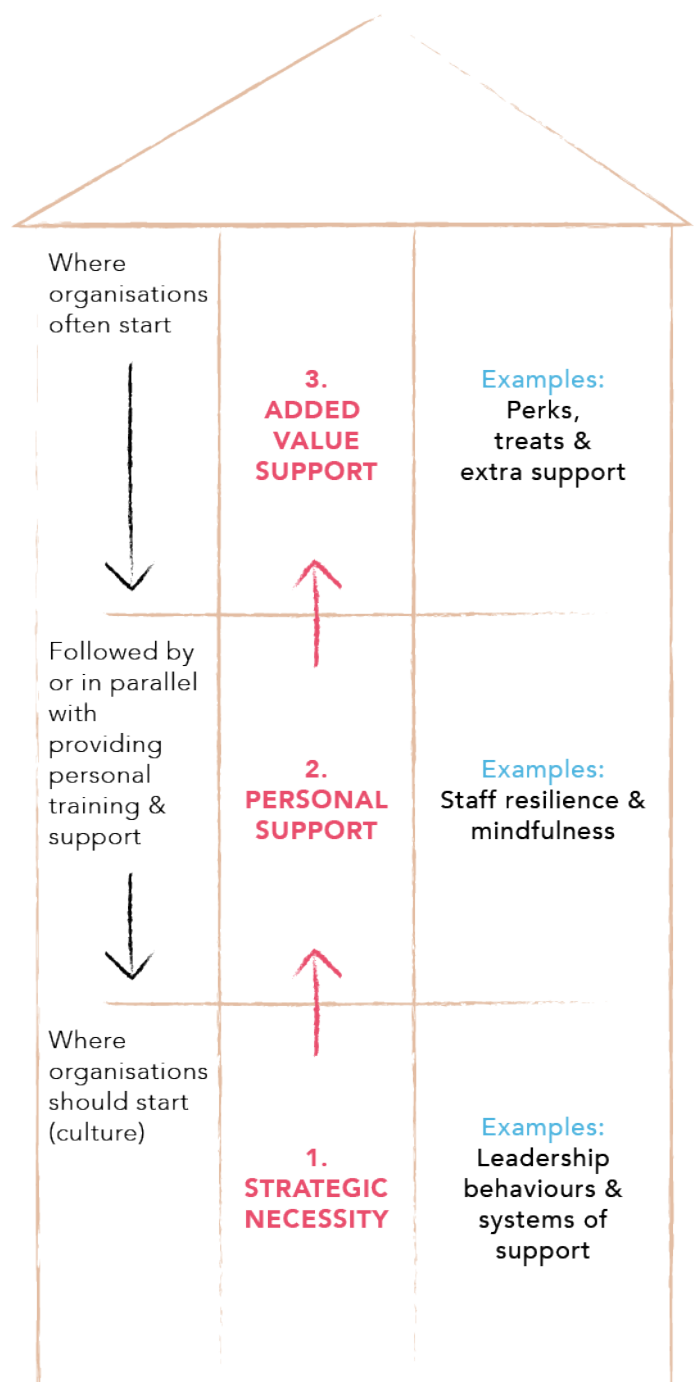
There is another way you can think about staff wellbeing!

It is like building a house and needs firm and strong foundations to be set down first. However, many leaders start by providing support that means they are trying to build the middle or top floor first. As a result little difference is made and there is no sustainable change.

This might include providing free fruit, an early morning breakfast, other perks, a wellbeing day, access to training, for example on mindfulness or resilience, or activities to improve fitness, such as Yoga and Pilates. Yet these all tackle symptoms, rather than the causes of poor wellbeing

There is nothing wrong with any of these, they are just not the place to start and are unlikely to improve the wellbeing of most staff, without firm foundations being in place first. If a staff member is unwell, under pressure or not enjoying their job each day, none of these actions are likely to change this. When they come to work the next day what has changed? The culture and working environment remain the same.

The foundations are built through the behaviour of leaders and the systems of support, such as performance management, appraisals, the quality of 1 to 1 conversations, and whether the school values are known and lived.



The evidence for a focus on staff wellbeing

Staff wellbeing in schools

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.

Staff wellbeing in the health sector

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 self-reported wellbeing and performance outcomes.
- There is a relationship between staff reported wellbeing and patient reported care, hospital infection and mortality rates (so the lower the wellbeing of staff the more likely patients will die).
- Local climate is very important, even for high performing staff in demanding jobs and it is important to monitor staff wellbeing.
- Management practices are significantly linked to wellbeing.
- It is also linked with multiple financial outcomes, including staff absenteeism, turnover, and agency spend (e.g. supply staff), and the associated costs of these can be very significant.



What impact might greater staff wellbeing have on your school or Trust?

Why and how to measure staff wellbeing

Ready to take action? Then the first step should be to measure current performance.

Why? If you are going to focus on improving it, then you need to know the starting point, and the priority areas for focus. 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 measure progress, including identifying trends, differences between support and teaching staff and across schools in a Trust.
- It provides specific feedback, which you can use to create engagement and better conversations with your staff. It involves them in action and helps to make sure they take a share of responsibility for improving their own and whole school or Trust 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 you can use a staff survey to dig deeper and ensure everyone has the opportunity to have their say.

- Always use a survey that is evidence built, reliable, independently evaluated and has benchmarks. Creating your own survey means you cannot rely on answers or be sure what they are telling you. And without benchmarks you are likely to take action in the wrong areas as all scores will not be equal.
- That's why we recommend and use the Health and Safety Executive's Indicator Tool, as it meets all these conditions.
- We have built on it to provide more than a survey and you will see more on this later in the guide.



What are you measuring?

When we use the HSE Indicator Tool, we are measuring the self-assessed scores of staff against those risk factors for workplace stress and wellbeing identified by the Health and Safety Executive.

The 6 major risk factors are:

- 1 Demands**
Workload, work patterns, deadlines, working environment etc.
- 2 Control**
How much say staff have in what they do at work and in the way they do their work.
- 3 Support**
The encouragement from leaders and colleagues and the resources to which they have access.
- 4 Relationships**
The extent to which positive working practices and behaviours are encouraged and problems dealt with.
- 5 Role**
Do they understand what is expected of them and how this fits with their department, function and the overall aim of the school?
- 6 Change**
Are they consulted on changes at work and do they have opportunities to question leaders about them?

Can we support you?

We have built this into much more than a survey. Designed for busy school leaders, we worked with a panel of schools to make sure it delivered what they needed.

Anonymous surveys

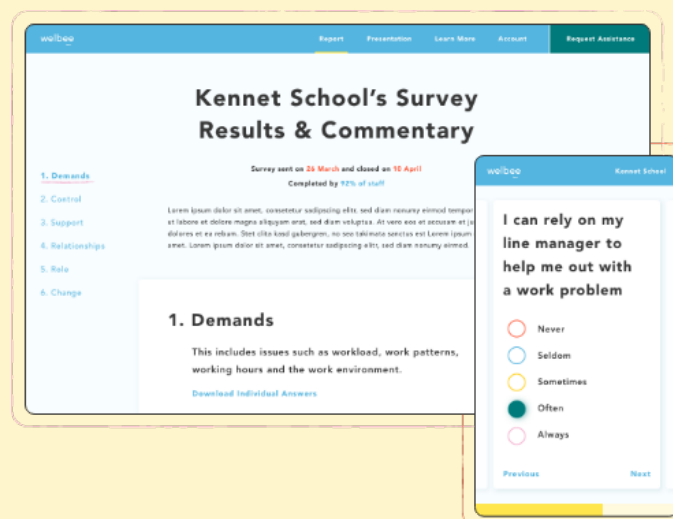
Anonymous staff responses empower honest feedback

Alleviate stress

Built to UK health and safety standards

Benchmarking

Compare staff wellbeing to school and cross-industry averages



Identify strengths

Highlight and where what is going well with your staff

Report & capture

Compare results to track improvement

Identify priorities

Focus only on the areas that have impact

Making staff wellbeing easier

Your results are delivered into your on-line dashboard, allowing you to see scores at a glance. Your benchmarks against other schools and cross sectors organisations are shown, together with filtered scores for support and teaching staff.

What sets this apart is the focus on moving to action. Your school strengths and focus areas are also shown, together with recommended priority actions for each area, and the top three actions to take, based on your results. This makes it much easier to set goals and make plans, that are all focused on building the right foundations for your school.

You are also provided with staff comments, which will provide further insight into your scores, and you can respond to for further engagement.

There is also a PowerPoint presentation of results to make sharing easy.

If you would like to find out more about how a survey and support can fast-track improving the wellbeing of your staff then get in touch. Prices start from just £247 + VAT, based on the size of your school and it will be more than paid for in cost savings if you implement the findings effectively.

Guarantee

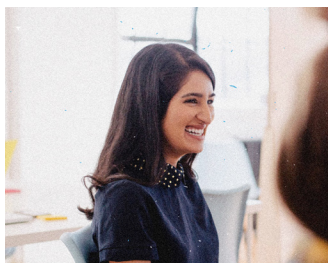
We are so confident that you will get such good value from using the survey that we also offer a guarantee. In the unlikely event of you not being happy with what we deliver, we will provide a full refund. This allows you to buy and try without financial risk.

Setting goals

Whether or not we can support you, the next steps are to set specific goals. What do you want to improve and how will you know if you have.

Actions may cover a wide range of areas and include:

- Quick wins, for example, looking for leaders to give more praise and recognition or achieving further workload reduction.
- Longer term development, for example, improving line manager skills, such as empathy or coaching.
- Improving systems, for example, changing performance management, improving appraisals.



Remember goals need to target your 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.

If you have any
questions or
are interested
in taking part in
our trial, please
get in touch!

Email

support@welbee.co.uk

Website

welbee.co.uk

Phone

01277 554 001

About Mark

Mark Solomons, founder of welbee, has been working with school leadership teams to improve staff wellbeing and results since 2009.

Applying years of knowledge and research into workplace cultures, welbee is built to increase staff retention, reduce staff absences and cover, improve staff engagement and significantly cut costs for your school.

