

Promoting Staff Wellbeing in Bury Schools: A Guide for Governors and Trustees



This document has arisen from concern expressed by school governors and the Local Authority in response to the impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of staff in Bury schools. This guide has an emphasis on Headteacher wellbeing, however, it also addresses the culture of wellbeing for all staff.

This document should be read in conjunction with the suite of Workload and Wellbeing documentation already produced in consultation with the unions.

Contents:

Introduction	Page 2
A: The Role of the Wellbeing Governor in schools	Page 3
B: Guidance to Governing Boards on Headteacher Wellbeing	Page 5
C: Self-Evaluation	
NGA Self-evaluation (1)	Page 7
NGA Toolkit	Page 9
Bury Council Self-evaluation	Page 11
D: Staff Wellbeing Case Studies/ Examples of Good Practice	Page 13
E: Local School examples	Page 19
F: Other Resources	Page 20

Introduction

This guide is the outcome from a series of wellbeing workshops with a volunteer group of suitably skilled and experienced governors in the autumn term 2020. The group has been supported by officers from the Education and Inclusion Directorate at Bury Council. The need for this piece of work has been heightened by the impact of COVID-19 on the work/life balance of staff, in particular, headteachers. However, the aim of this guide is to improve practice in all Bury schools for the long-term.

The guide is in addition to the Workload Charter for Schools Based Staff, the Bury Fair Workload Charter and the Workforce Wellbeing Guidance. Governors may also wish to refer to Bury LA's policy on Managing Stress. This suite of documents can be accessed on the Bury Governors Support Website (click [here](#))

We are grateful to the governors who gave of their time to shape this guide. Three task and finish groups focused on the role of the wellbeing governor, adapting the NGA Toolkit and the gathering of examples of best practice. Our thanks also go to schools that have given permission for us to include their work as examples.

A: The Role of the Wellbeing Governor in schools

1. Rationale

- 1.1 School leaders and governing boards have significant responsibilities to support the wellbeing of those employed in their schools and trusts, including their work-life balance. These responsibilities are underpinned by health and safety law and statutory pay and conditions. In maintained schools, governing boards have a duty, which cannot be delegated, to make sure that headteachers benefit from any statutory entitlements and comply with the duties imposed on them which are contained within the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2020 (STPCD).
- 1.2 The Governance Handbook (October 2020) states that '*the board should foster a common culture, set of values and ethos across the whole organisation, ensuring it is reflected consistently in both its policies and its practices*'.
- 1.3 Governing boards should reflect on the culture of wellbeing that exists in the school or trust. They should not accept a culture that normalises overwork and excessive working hours, but instead create one that demonstrates an overriding concern for the wellbeing of the school community.
- 1.4 Governing boards need to ensure that effective wellbeing strategies are in place which:
 - encourage school and trust leaders to lead by example by prioritising their own wellbeing and self-care
 - provide mechanisms for highlighting and responding to specific pressure points and risks
 - use effective communication to demonstrate the commitment to priorities (e.g., reducing working hours)
 - allocate sufficient resource, including resource for providing confidential external support, for those who need it
 - monitor through executive reporting that is discussed by the board alongside other evidence and wider feedback received

2. The Role of the Wellbeing Governor

- 2.1 The role of the wellbeing governor is to support and challenge the school in relation to its wellbeing strategy, ensuring that wellbeing is prioritised and that agreed policy and practices are embedded and sustained. Whilst the role of the full governing board includes responsibility for the wellbeing of all members of the school community, this role focuses on staff wellbeing.
- 2.2 The role has three aspects:
 1. **Strategy**
 - Ensuring that staff wellbeing, including that of the Headteachers/ Principals, is prioritised by the governing board
 - Working with the school to complete an audit of current wellbeing provision for staff to identify strengths and areas for development
 - Keeping up to date with relevant training and disseminating key points to the governing board and staff
 - Being ready to challenge and guide the school leadership team in relation to staff wellbeing

2. Action

- Acting as the point of contact on the governing board for staff wellbeing
- Ensuring wellbeing is discussed in appropriate committee meetings and as an agenda item in full governing board meetings
- Acting as a wellbeing champion for the school

3. Monitor and Review

- Monitoring how effectively policy is being implemented in practice including through staff voice
- Writing reports for the wider governing board to build their understanding of the work the school is doing and enabling other governors to offer challenge and support
- Ensuring any relevant policies are up to date
- In line with legal requirements and HSE good practice
- Working in partnership with the Health and Safety School representative

Remit of the role of the Wellbeing Governor

- Lead the governing board's annual evaluation of the approach taken towards staff wellbeing in the school, for example through use of the [NGA's Toolkit](#).
- Lead the governing board in an annual review of headteacher wellbeing.
- Meet with the Headteacher/ Principal at least termly, with an agreed level of confidentiality, to ensure that they are prioritising their own wellbeing including, for maintained schools, through use of dedicated headship time* as referenced in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions.
**Governing Boards may wish to set out their agreed approach to dedicated headship time as an appendix to the Workload Charter for School-Based Staff*
- Meet with the Headteacher/ Principal, and/or other senior leaders, to discuss progress on actions to address staff wellbeing and plans for further improvement.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the wellbeing strategy in practice, through for example, staff voice, sickness absence etc.
- Contribute to the design of annual staff wellbeing surveys, reviewing the outcomes to inform the next steps.
- Report back to the governing board at least termly through 'Staff Wellbeing Update' as a standing agenda item at full governing board meetings.
- Attend training sessions and webinars to keep up to date with recent research on wellbeing in schools in order to offer suggestions.
- Meet regularly with school-based Health and Safety union representatives.

Eligibility for the Role

The wellbeing governor is a member of the board who has the knowledge, experience and skill set to undertake the requirements of the role (see NGA Skills Audit). The wellbeing governor should not be a member of the school staff. It would depend on context as to whether or not it was appropriate for the Chair of Governors to be the wellbeing governor. Governing boards may wish to consider including the wellbeing governor in the panel of appointed governors for the headteacher's annual appraisal; the appropriateness of this should be discussed with the headteacher.

B: Guidance to Governing Boards on Headteacher Well-Being

Introduction

Governing Boards have a statutory responsibility for the work-life balance of their Headteacher. The Headteacher has the responsibility for ensuring that all school staff achieve the same.

Limiting unnecessary stress; working a reasonable number of hours and meeting the demands of the role, whilst maintaining a personal life, are essential to ensuring that our Headteachers can effectively fulfil the role in leading a school.

The School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (2020) states:

"Governing bodies and headteachers, in carrying out their duties, must have regard to the need for the *headteacher* and teachers at the school to be able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge their professional duties and the time required to pursue their personal interests outside work." (STPCD para 52.4)

Legislation underpins this, within the Health and Safety Act (1974); the Working Time Directive (1998) and the Employment Regulations Act (1999). The Working Time Regulations (1998) state "a worker's working time ... shall not exceed an average of 48 hours for each seven days" applied over a period of the previous 17 working weeks.

Phase 3 of the National Workforce Agreement places responsibility on the Governing Body for:

- ensuring that the Headteacher has a reasonable workload in support of a reasonable work-life balance, having regard for health and welfare, and
- providing Headteachers with dedicated time to lead

What is a reasonable work/life balance?

What constitutes a reasonable work/life balance is different for different people and different for individuals at different times in their life. Headteachers also have a responsibility themselves for their own work/life balance but do not always recognise this. Governing Boards need to be proactive in exploring this issue with their Headteacher, to challenge them and to watch out for indicators such as health issues, stress, reduced attendance etc. **We recommend that governing boards have an assigned Wellbeing Governor, and that this role includes meeting with the headteacher at least termly to ensure that they are prioritising their own well-being including, for maintained schools, through use of dedicated headship time.**

Dedicated Headship Time

Since September 2005 (STPCD 2005), Governing Boards have had a statutory responsibility to ensure that the Headteacher takes dedicated headship time during the school working week. It is particularly important that the governors take an active role in strategically monitoring that this time is taken; this is part of the role of the Wellbeing governor.

The Headteacher needs to focus on the important rather than the urgent in order to develop the necessary vision and direction to improve the quality of education and raise standards. Clearly this time alone will not be sufficient for heads to complete all of their strategic activities. However, it will ensure that Headteachers have some highly productive, dedicated time, free from interruptions to lead, rather than just manage, their schools.

Within the Schools Teachers' Pay and Conditions document, there is no prescribed amount of dedicated headship time in hours, but many governing boards look to **at least a minimum of ten percent** during the school week. This provides, for example:

- time for longer term strategic thinking, to consider what is on the horizon and how best to lead the school to meet these challenges
- dedicated time to engage in research/reflection in line with identified school improvement priorities either alone or in partnership with other professionals
- time to read, reflect on, interpret and consider implications of Government or local initiatives

It should not be interrupted by:

- routine matters
- phone calls or enquiries in person
- requirements to cover classes
- visitors - internal or external

This time may be spent off site; working individually; working with members of the senior leadership team, other Headteachers and associated professionals.

How can governors and trustees promote the health and wellbeing of their Headteacher?

In addition to the allocations of dedicated headship time, we believe that it is good practice to allocate resources to support staff health and wellbeing. We recommend that headteachers have time set aside at least half-termly to support their health and well-being, for example, supervision provided by a suitably trained and experienced external professional. Opportunities to talk to another colleague, in confidence, can be the factor that averts the onset of stress.

C: Self-Evaluation

The National Governance Association, working with the Schools Advisory Service, has published a [wellbeing evaluation tool](#) in two parts.

We recommend that Part One is used annually to review the school's approach to promoting staff wellbeing as part of its culture. Part Two is a questionnaire for use with Headteachers/ Senior Executive Leaders. This questionnaire has been adapted by a staff wellbeing governor task and finish group. The Bury version is designed as a tool to promote dialogue between the Wellbeing Governor and the Headteacher to inform an action plan which can be reviewed on an annual basis.

NGA Self-Evaluation: Promoting a culture of wellbeing in schools and trusts an evaluation tool for governing boards and school leaders

Introduction

School leaders and governing boards have significant responsibilities to support the wellbeing of those employed in their schools and trusts, including their work-life balance. These responsibilities are underpinned by health and safety law and statutory pay and conditions. The judgement of leadership and management in the current education inspection framework also considers how governing boards and school leaders review and address issues relating to staff workload and wellbeing, including the removal of unnecessary workload associated with data and evidence collection in schools.

Wellbeing culture and strategy for all staff

It is important for those governing and leading schools and trusts to understand the legal frameworks, and all of the requirements with which they must comply. However, it is much more important to look beyond this and to reflect on the culture of wellbeing that exists in the school or trust. We should not accept a culture that normalises overwork and excessive working hours, but instead create one that demonstrates an overriding concern for the wellbeing of the school community.

Effective wellbeing strategies:

- encourage school and trust leaders to lead by example by prioritising their own wellbeing and self-care
- provide mechanisms for highlighting and responding to specific pressure points and risks
- use effective communication to demonstrate the commitment to priorities (e.g. reducing working hours)
- allocate sufficient resource, including resource for providing confidential external support, for those who need it
- are monitored through executive reporting that is discussed by the board alongside other evidence and wider feedback received

The wellbeing of school leaders

This evaluation tool focuses on the wellbeing of school leaders, their self-care and how this is modelled throughout the school/trust. Governing boards have a clear statutory responsibility for the work-life balance of the senior executive leader. The senior executive leader has the responsibility for ensuring that their staff achieve the same.

Senior executive leaders work in an increasingly challenging environment with limited resources and higher levels of accountability. In this context, it is important for the senior executive leader to feel supported by a governing board that plays its part in limiting unnecessary stress, challenging excessive working hours and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. If the governing board models this approach with their senior executive leader, then they should expect their senior leader to embody and model this to their staff. The impact will be seen through:

- successful recruitment and retention of staff at all levels in the school or trust
- reduced absence due to stress or other mental health related issues
- improved outcomes for children and young people

We recommend that the evaluation tool is completed as a joint activity involving the senior executive leader (i.e., the headteacher of the school or CEO in the trust), the chair of the governing board and/or a relevant governor/trustee as determined by the level of delegation in the school or trust.

Part one of the evaluation: Consider the approach taken towards staff wellbeing

Part one of the evaluation invites the participants to reflect on the approach taken towards staff wellbeing at board and operational level in the school or trust. You may wish to refer to the Workforce Wellbeing Guidance and the Bury Workload Charter ([click here](#))

Decide which of the descriptors below best describes the approach taken towards staff wellbeing. Remember that collaboration is key and that collaboration between governing boards and senior executive leaders is underpinned by a fundamental understanding and recognition of their respective roles. This is explained further in the guidance [what governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other](#).

Evaluation part one – consider the approach taken towards staff wellbeing

We consider the approach to be:	This means in practice:	Our approach would be even better if:	Actions (Dates):
Strategic, organised and effective	<p>Sufficient time is allocated at board and operational level to assess wellbeing, develop the wellbeing strategy, implement wellbeing measures and evaluate the impact.</p> <p>This includes reports received at board meetings, evaluating and assessing the impact of resources allocated towards staff wellbeing.</p> <p>The chair of the governing board and senior executive leader model the approach by ensuring that their one-to-one meetings consider the wellbeing of the senior executive leader and their work-life balance including how much dedicated leadership time they take.</p> <p>Support is always being offered even if it isn't asked for.</p>		
Ad hoc	<p>The governing board and the senior executive leader recognise the importance of staff wellbeing to the school or trust. Wellbeing issues are discussed occasionally at governing board meetings.</p> <p>However, there is no routine assessment of wellbeing throughout the school or trust that is used to develop and inform a wellbeing strategy. This is reflected in the one-to-one conversations between chair of the governing board and the senior executive leader, in which neither party is likely to raise the issue of wellbeing and work-life balance unless there are obvious problems and concerns that need addressing.</p>		
It's not considered seriously, almost entirely reactive and issue driven.	<p>The governing board waits to be informed by the senior executive leader of staff wellbeing issues and how they are being addressed through day-to-day management.</p> <p>The senior executive leader's approach to wellbeing is mostly reactive to concerns or issues raised with them. This approach is reflected in the one-to-one meetings between the chair of the governing board and the senior executive leader, which focus on current events and issues more than the progress being made towards achieving strategic priorities.</p> <p>Little, if any, time is spent reflecting on the "climate" – how things feel in the school or trust.</p>		

Part two of the evaluation: Audit current practice in relation to Headteacher wellbeing

Note: The NGA Toolkit evaluation tool has been adapted.

Use the following questions in conversation with the Headteacher to audit current practice in the school.

An audit of current practice will help to identify improvements that positively impact on the wellbeing of the Headteacher/ senior executive leader, which they can extend and model to all staff.

The high-level priorities relating to staff wellbeing should be reflected in the governing board's strategy.

The actions should be reviewed at least annually, and the questions revisited to inform new/ further actions.

Evaluation part two Consider the approach taken to Headteacher wellbeing

Not in place/considered Partly in place/considered, not yet embedded Fully in place and embedded

No.	Areas for Governors/ Trustees to consider	RAG rating	This means in practice:	Our approach would be even better if:	Actions (Dates):
1.	Does your Headteacher/ Principal/ Executive Leader feel valued and respected?		Confident able to speak up Asked if feel valued & respected Feedback – Informal Check ins Governing Board trust what’s said		
2.	Is the Headteacher’s/ Principal’s/ Executive Leader’s work and contributions continually recognised and acknowledged?		Recording of thanks in minutes Thanks via email to staff/Headteacher Letters recognising achievements		
3.	Are Governors/ Trustees proactive in encouraging work-life balance for the Headteacher/ Principal/ Executive Leader?		Taking an interest in personal life Regular supervision Keep in mind individual’s choice Don’t be intrusive Choice of governor to be the wellbeing governor, to build up trust Gentle & genuine conversations		
4.	Is the appraisal process used in a meaningful way?		Wellbeing target (– example to follow) Positive action by governors/ trustees		

No.	Areas for Governors/ Trustees to consider	RAG rating	This means in practice:	Our approach would be even better if:	Actions (Dates):
			An interim review of the appraisal process in Feb/March and ongoing informal dialogue		
5.	Are Governors/ Trustees and the Headteacher/ Principal/ Executive Leader aware of the entitlement to external wellbeing and professional support?		Peer supervision model Headteachers in: - Bury/Salford - Head 2 Head Ask Headteacher what would work for them Personal network for supervision, outside of Bury Personal/Life coaching Coping strategies/Mindfulness Don't increase the working day Their own suggestions Cluster groups		
6.	Do Governors/ Trustees promote, encourage and ask about dedicated Headship time?		Promote, but don't insist Dedicated Headship time can be used in school or at home (without feeling guilty) Flexibility and freedom for Headteacher to make decisions where to work from as will alleviate stress.		
7.	Do Governors/ Trustees discuss leadership capacity and succession planning? (senior/middle leaders)		Aware that experience maybe being developed – upskill other members of senior leadership team Delegate		

D: Staff Wellbeing – Case studies/examples of good practice

The suite of documents relating to Wellbeing and Workload produced in consultation with the unions can be found [here](#)

1. Sustaining a Vital Profession; the impact of Leadership Coaching in schools

This research article relates to the impact of coaching on Headteacher Wellbeing.

Research by **CollectivED**, a research and practice centre in Leeds Beckett University Carnegie School of Education, demonstrates that coaching can provide an effective approach to support headteachers' wellbeing and their capacity to manage the complexity of their roles. The research was a year-long study of headteacher coaching provided by **Integrity Coaching** and was funded by the National Education Union (NEU). It was undertaken by **Professor Rachel Lofthouse** and **Ruth Whiteside**. The research highlights the vulnerability that some headteachers feel and was the first of its kind to explore the relationship between coaching, wellbeing and leadership effectiveness amongst senior school leaders in an English context.

Headteachers give so much of themselves to support teachers and to make a positive impact on children and young people, and yet they experience some of the highest levels of stress in the system. In November 2019, Education Support published its **Teacher Wellbeing Survey**. This revealed that over 84% of senior leader respondents admitted to experiencing high levels of stress from the role, while over 66% of senior leaders have considered leaving. Their survey adds to the growing evidence of the deterioration of wellbeing amongst teachers and school leaders and a growing recruitment and retention crisis facing the profession. Education Support also highlighted the culture of overworking in the profession; 59% of senior leaders who completed the survey indicated they typically worked more than 51 hours per week. Meanwhile, 28% of senior leaders worked more than 61 hours per week and 11% working more than 70 hours per week. There is also a real concern about leadership succession, as revealed in the 2019 **NAHT survey of middle leaders**. The NAHT found that 79% of middle leaders are discouraged from aspiring to senior leadership positions due to concerns about work/life balance and 69% due to accountability pressures. Given that securing recruitment to headship posts relies on maintaining ambitions for promotion to senior leadership posts this is a significant concern.

The new research indicates the contribution of coaching to making the profession, and therefore the school system, more sustainable, thus having the potential to thwart a growing crisis in school leadership. Headteachers and their coaches who participated in the new CollectivED research highlighted a number of key challenges. Many headteachers had experienced what one phrased as the "erosion of their resilience" which had detrimental effects on their wellbeing and work/life balance. Headteachers said that they had feelings of extreme isolation and loneliness and experienced high levels of pressure and professional scrutiny. They felt constrained by insufficient school funds and due to workload had very little opportunity to reflect on decisions or plan ahead. This compounded the

“emotional weight” of having to provide emotional, pastoral and practical care to their school community.

The research demonstrates that headteachers who had coaching are able to better manage these significant demands and address the common feeling of isolation. They also report a positive impact on their self-belief and confidence. Coaching helps them to place a greater priority on their physical and emotional health.

Coaching creates a protected and sustained and supported space which gives headteachers the time to prioritise the issues that need resolving. As such coached headteachers report that they have developed greater work-life balance and a heightened level of self-confidence in their leadership role. They state that they had an improved ability for developing staff within their schools, managing difficult issues and improving working relationships, and an enhanced capacity for problem-solving, strategic thinking and the need to cope with continuing demands of the job, including emergency management. One headteacher stated that “I am more emotionally resilient and can cope with the major decisions and issues that daily come my way”.

This research demonstrates that specialist coaching can make a real difference in the professional and personal lives of headteachers. As such, amidst the growing recruitment and retention crisis amongst headteachers and school leaders, the research also provided evidence that coaching could be an effective strategy for helping to keep headteachers in the profession and create greater sustainability in the school workforce. While coaching might be seen as a luxury in a school system impacted by austerity budgets it is important not to see it as a self-centred activity. Headteachers in the research feel that it helps them to gain a deeper, essential understanding of their roles in developing teachers and systems to better support children’s learning and wellbeing. As Rachel Lofthouse said about the research during a CollectivED symposium at the **ICSEI 2020 conference** “coaching isn’t a shiny solution, in fact it can take the gloss off the stories we tell ourselves about our wellbeing and our reality, and show us the raw underbelly, but that can allow us to take positive action.”

Key Recommendations

School governors, MAT trustees and employers are recommended to:

- Be willing to consider the potential value of coaching in relation to the headteacher’s wellbeing and capacity and retention in role, and how this may impact positively on the wider school community;
- Be willing to consider the potential value of coaching in relation to the headteacher’s wellbeing and capacity and retention in role, and how this may impact positively on the wider school community;
- Respond with a commitment to consider funding headteacher coaching if it is requested and if an appropriate coaching provider can be identified and be prepared to offer it if it is felt that it may be beneficial;
- Recognise that coaching, in order to be effective, must be a confidential process and do not expect the headteacher to disclose details of the discussions either formally or informally;

- Use exit interviews with departing headteachers to establish whether they have experienced any of the challenges that might have been addressed through coaching;
- Be aware of the significance of creating a safe space for coaching in which there are no conflicts of interest between the parties;
- Employ coaches with appropriate and relevant professional experience and qualifications to ensure the quality of coaching;
- Develop a model of supervision for coaches to ensure that the quality of coaching is maintained and to offer coaches suitable means to access support and opportunity for their own professional development;
- Make use of relevant coach training and education opportunities to ensure that coaching practices are taking account of current research and evidence;
- As a combined sector seek opportunities to develop a specific professional organisational code of ethics for coaching in education to ensure that coaching in education has rigour and has independent profession-led quality assurance.

Central themes

- What matters most to you?
- Your lived experience of leadership
- Your values, your school
- Growing through the challenges
- Your identity as a leader
- The authentic self

[Read the full research report.](#)

2. The Key for School Governors- Headteacher wellbeing & development

Coronavirus: what you can do right now (Published during the COVID19 pandemic)

The wellbeing measures you have in place when it's 'business as usual' still apply now (see the sections below for advice on those). But during coronavirus, there are some particular things to bear in mind:

- Maintain regular virtual meetings with your headteacher
- It's likely you're doing this already, but you need to keep on top of your regular catch-ups with your headteacher to see how they're doing.
- Your headteacher is likely to be busy and stressed right now, so you might feel like you're bothering them, but try not to worry about this – you want to make sure they're doing ok and have the support they need, so these meetings are still important!
- Continue to ask questions. When you're catching up, ask:
 - How are you doing?
 - Do you have any concerns about the school reopening to more pupils?
 - What problems are you facing right now?
 - What can I do to help you solve these problems?

For more questions you can ask, see the section 'Check how they're coping' below.

- Help them manage their workload. You could do a short 'KISS' exercise with your headteacher to check how they're doing:
 - Keep – what's working well for their workload?
 - Improve – what workload issues do they have and how could they improve them?
 - Stop – what can be stopped permanently or in the short term to assist workload?
 - Start – what can they start doing to improve their workload?
- Focus on what's important: the wellbeing of the whole school community, including your headteacher

As a board, your key focus should be: 'Are we doing all we can to keep our school community safe, healthy and emotionally well?'

So, in terms of what you're asking of your headteacher right now, don't be scared to ditch some tasks or activities that aren't crucial. For example, could the headteacher's report be scaled back a bit? Do you need the head at every board meeting?

Make sure they have time off

Normally you wouldn't need to consider this, but coronavirus has disrupted school holidays this year, and it's not clear whether schools will be asked to remain open during upcoming holidays. Your headteacher is going to need a break.

You might need to be insistent with your headteacher about taking a break – you have a duty of care and it's important they can relax and recharge.

Some options:

- If your school is asked to open during the summer holiday, make sure your headteacher puts a senior team (staff on leadership pay scale) 'on-call rota' in place, so everyone has time to unwind
- You could consider time off in lieu – but you'd need to consult your local authority or trust HR team to check the practicalities and whether this is possible
- Talk to your local authority or trust about time off for your headteacher – they may have some other options

In all cases, make sure there's a contingency plan in place – your deputy headteacher should be ready to step up when needed, whether this be for headteacher sickness or leave.

The following sections reflect the kinds of things you'll be doing when it's 'business as usual', but the advice still applies during this time.

Have regular meetings with your headteacher

Ideally, at the beginning of the academic year you'll have:

- **Decided how you'll communicate**
 - Phone, email, video conferencing – whatever you and your headteacher choose should be tailored to how your headteacher works best
- **Set a schedule**
 - This'll be based on when your headteacher would prefer to be contacted, including time of day and how often. Try and establish the same weekly/fortnightly slot, so you're both clear on what's expected and no one feels overloaded
 - Have wellbeing as an agenda item in your meetings with the headteacher, but you'll talk about other things too. Find out what else you might cover and how to make your meetings productive here

If you haven't agreed on these points yet, don't worry – just agree with your headteacher how you'll have regular catch-ups going forward.

Check how they're coping

During your regular catch-ups, use our questions and audit below to help you check in with your headteacher:

Questions to ask

Audit for potential stressors

Spot the signs that your headteacher needs help

Having a strong relationship with your headteacher can help you spot the signs that they need additional support.

Some common signs of stress include:

- Changes in behaviour, mood or how they interact with you or their colleagues
- Changes in the standard of their work or their focus on tasks, such as:
 - No longer sharing information
 - Not meeting deadlines
 - No longer having catch-ups
- Appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn
- Increase in sickness absence

This is outlined in this Acas article.

Be direct

If you're not sure if your headteacher's ok, ask them:

- How are you?
- How are you being supported by senior leaders or fellow headteachers?
- What can I do to support you further?
- Do you need extra support? Do you know where you can go to get this?

Make it clear you're there for them, and that they're free to talk whenever they need to.

Stay strategic

Don't offer to take on any operational tasks – this can muddy the water and it's not your role. Practical changes you can offer can include:

- Making sure you handle communications with the rest of the governing board – that way the headteacher only needs to update you
- Reviewing the times of governing board meetings
- Reviewing how many headteacher reports you receive
- Making sure the headteacher isn't doing any governing board jobs like setting agendas or writing minutes

Know where to get further support for your headteacher

You're not expected to become a professional counsellor, so make sure you know where to signpost your headteacher to further support if they're struggling.

Check what support is available from your LA and/or trust

Your LA might have dedicated support networks for headteachers – this can be a great way for your headteacher to talk to other heads about what they're going through.

Your LA may also know of other local networks near you.

Similarly, if you're in a multi-academy trust, your trust may have networks or other support mechanisms you could point your headteacher to.

Consider hiring a coach for your headteacher to talk to

1 to 1 confidential meetings between your headteacher and an external coach can help your headteacher talk about stress points they have.

Ideally, this person should have past school leadership experience and be external to your school management so they can empathise and offer support to your headteacher.

Wider networks

Your headteacher's GP would be a great first port of call for them to access help.

There are also organisations you can signpost your headteacher to:

- [Mind](#)
- [Rethink Mental Illness](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation](#)
- [Together](#)


- [BACP Find a Therapist Directory](#)

This list is by no means exhaustive but should give you some good starting points.

Section E: Local Examples

1) Philips High School (Workload Charter 2020-2022)

PHS WORKLOAD CHARTER 2020-2022



School Priorities matter

- Briefings: Briefings are conducted regularly to disseminate information to staff and maximise sharing good practice.
- Staff Voice: Staff opinions are regularly sought and actioned where possible.
- Counselling is available for all staff. Place2Be and Place2Talk for pupils and staff is also available.
- Guaranteed PPA time is timetabled to be a minimum of 10% of timetabled teaching time.
- Working with Unions: The Headteacher meets regularly with Union representatives within the school.
- Calendar: One meeting per week.
- Sims will reduce administration time and workload.

CPD matters

- Increased department time: Departments are given two / three department meetings per half term, as well as two department morning briefings each week.
- Sensible use of Twilight time: We operate a training model whereby we work a set number of twilights and trade this time to gain three days off in lieu.
- Triads: Staff are placed in groups to share good practice using current educational research articles.
- Staff CPD book library: This ensures staff have access to new and up-to-date reading material to keep abreast of teaching and learning initiatives.
- Staff CPD Blog: This ensures that staff are kept at the forefront of new initiatives and knowledge.

Culture and ETHOS matters

- Lesson objectives: Lessons focus on BIG QUESTIONS.
- Staff Well-Being working party: Staff meet regularly to discuss ways to reduce workload.
- We are a mentally healthy school and instil a work life balance in all we do.
- Free sandwiches are provided for all staff on Parents' Evenings.
- We are a FAIR workload school.
- Staff attendance: Staff are rewarded for 100% attendance.
- Being flexible: We aim to meet the needs of family life, ensuring emotional and family well-being are supported.
- We are a part of the Bury Well-being Support Programme.

TIME matters

- Email embargos: No emails are sent from 6pm-6am weekdays and weekends.
- Rational approach to data: We have 2 data drops at KS3 and KS4.
- A rational approach to mocks: We have one full set of mocks in KS4.
- An extra hour per week of non contact time is given to staff.
- Non specialists/Btec/Character teachers have dedicated meeting times to support planning.
- A clear policy and robust system for managing rarely cover is in place.
- A directed time calendar is produced before the start of each academic year showing how 1,265 hours is allocated.
- Centralised detentions: All detentions are centralised, issued the same day and take place after school.
- A rational approach to marking: Staff are expected to follow their own department marking policy.

Section F: Other resources

1. Bury Wellbeing and Workload resources

<https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11157>

2. Headfirst – wellbeing and resilience

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/Headfirstwelbeingandresliencefinal1.pdf>

3. Some examples of Wellbeing Policies:

- <http://www.walworth.durham.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/59/2014/12/Mental-Health-and-Emotional-WB-policy.pdf>
- <http://www.silvertreeprimary.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/211/2014/07/staff-wellbeing-policy-sept-2016.pdf>

4. Other ideas to promote wellbeing in school

- Create a Dropbox or other facility to share ideas.
- Include Wellbeing as a regular item on school briefings.
- Some school insurance companies have extras attached such as a counselling services and physiotherapists for staff to use free of charge. They also have nurses that can into school for health checks.
- Hold a staff wellbeing PAD. This could be through staff working in small groups.
- Peer to peer staff coaching sessions.
- Growth Mind set – Carol Dweck is worth a look around fixed mind set and growth mind set. Useful when introducing a new concept to people who may be wary of change.
- Use a 'Wellbeing Toolkit' – a structured programme to support staff.
- Westfieldhealth.com

5. TES/Education Support Article – How heads can look after their wellbeing

<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwj76526v7TtAhW1UhUIHVyIC-IQFjACegQIBRAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.tes.com%2Fnews%2Fhow->

[heads-can-look-after-their-wellbeing-sponsored&usg=AOvVaw1fkCX6AwemOKRct5vv1r00](#)

6. Wellbeing Guidance – Egfl.org.uk

https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj76526v7TtAhW1UhUIHVyIC-IQFjADegQIAxAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.egfl.org.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2FHuman_resources%2FWellbeing_Guidance_1_0.doc&usg=AOvVaw2QfasrF_2MkN2YeDtvSudV

7. Archdiocesan Guidance on Headteacher Health and Well-Being

http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/userfiles/files/schools/Headteacher_Health_and_Well-Being_Guidelines.pdf

8. Headteacher Update – Health & Wellbeing

<https://www.headteacher-update.com/best-practice/health-and-wellbeing/693072/>

9. Resources to support wellbeing of headteachers

https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwj76526v7TtAhW1UhUIHVyIC-IQFjAPegQIHxAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.headteachers.org%2Fpost%2Fmust-read-websites-to-support-well-being-of-staff&usg=AOvVaw3hpWtrtR_uh0E4R0tWpfqw

10. Promoting Headteacher wellbeing – Norfolk schools

<https://csapps.norfolk.gov.uk/csshared/ecourier2/fileoutput.asp?id=6709>

11. Mentally Healthy Schools – supporting staff wellbeing

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/supporting-staff-wellbeing/>

12. Free Training for schools

Please note that we cannot comment on the quality of the training

Hays <https://educationtraining.hays.co.uk/wellbeing-first/>

13. **Future Learn** <https://www.futurelearn.com/subjects/psychology-and-mental-health-courses/mindfulness-wellbeing>

14. **The School Bus** – www.theschoolbus.net