

# An Daras Trust – Education Staff Well-Being Charter



**well-being(n):** A state of complete physical and mental health that is characterised by high-quality social relationships.

*(This definition was agreed by the Department for Education’s Expert Advisory Group on Education Staff Well-being. Schools should use this working definition as a basis for discussing what well-being means for them, in their organisation)*

## **Who is this charter for?**

All staff working in the An Daras Trust setting, including teaching, support and temporary staff. See **Appendix 1** for a current checklist of Trust wellbeing/workload reduction strategies operating.

## **Supporting documents:**

The development of this charter has been informed by a range of existing resources and frameworks including: the Mental Health at Work Commitment; The Association of Colleges’ Mental Health and Well-being Charter; The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education; the National Education Union’s Mental Health Charter; and the Valued Worker Scheme (endorsed by NASUWT, GMB, Unison and Unite).

## **Part A. Rationale:**

**We believe that everyone working in education should have the opportunity to enjoy the highest possible standard of well-being and health.**

We are united in our view that improved well-being among staff is a key outcome for education policy. Our staff are a precious resource: valuing them, and their well-being and mental health, is a duty we all share.

Not only is this a good thing itself, it is critical in recruiting and retaining high quality education staff now and in the future. It is also crucial in securing better outcomes for young people, including regarding their own well-being and mental health.

We want to see a sector that is free from mental health discrimination, guided by emotional intelligence, and characterised by supportive, nurturing cultures. A sector where the conditions are such that every member of staff can thrive.

We recognise that everyone has a role to play in creating and sustaining those conditions, including government, leaders, employers and staff themselves. In producing this charter, we signal our intent to come together with people across the system with the shared aim of improving well-being at every level

We recognise that the Department for Education (DfE) shapes the policy environment state funded schools and colleges operate in, and that our policies can have both direct and indirect impacts on the well-being of staff. DfE will work in partnership with the sector, leading the way in protecting, enhancing and promoting well-being.

We will hold ourselves accountable in the delivery of the commitments set out below and will uphold the Principles of Shared Understanding that underpin them. We recognise that the Department for Education (DfE) shapes the policy environment that state funded schools operate in, and that our policies can have both direct and indirect impacts on the well-being of staff.

## **Part B. An Daras will:**

- **'Design in' well-being** - We will integrate well-being into school workload policy, where appropriate, plus consider the impact of policy changes on staff well-being.
- **Measure and respond to changes in staff well-being** - We will monitor on an ongoing basis the levels of anxiety, happiness, worthwhileness, life satisfaction and job satisfaction across our schools. We will continue to take the advice of sector experts on all aspects of well-being, health and mental health.
- **Support schools to reduce unnecessary workload** - We will continue to work with the sector to reduce unnecessary workload and promote the Workload Reduction Toolkit. We will work to remove unnecessary burdens, including improving how we collect data.
- **Ensure that Trust guidance/policy meets user needs** - Where appropriate we will ensure Trust guidance/policy covers or links with staff well-being. We will develop guidance based on the needs of educational staff, focussing on what they need to know and do. We will publish new materials only during defined working hours.
- **Consider aspects of flexible working (where that is possible with educational needs of pupils as the priority) and diversity** - We commit to considering flexible approaches to working at all career stages - where that is proven operationally appropriate and effective. We will strengthen our efforts to promote diversity in our schools – eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- **Break down stigma around mental health** - We will build staff well-being and mental health into our wider communications strategy on recruitment and retention, ensure there is an HR 'Open Door' policy for support, linking to existing campaigns and strategies that aim to tackle mental health stigma in our society.
- **Embed well-being in training and professional development** - We will continue to strengthen support for CPD. We will ensure that training and development is underpinned by the 'Standard for Teachers' Professional Development' and that it includes mental health and well-being where appropriate. We will ensure that teacher training and CPD continues to include a focus on managing pupil behaviour effectively. We will continue to develop effective CPD programmes for support staff.
- **Improve access to mental health and well-being resources** - We will work to improve access to high quality mental health and well-being resources and support both on-line and through confidential external counselling.

## **Part C. Ofsted:**

Ofsted recognises that we have a dual role to play in protecting and enhancing the well-being of staff. They are committed to making sure requirements of schools on well-being are clear.

Ofsted recognise that staff can feel that inspections are a source of stress. Ofsted will;

- Ensure that inspectors tackle staff well-being into account in coming to their judgements and monitor this through quality assurance and evaluation.
- Review whether the framework is having inadvertent impacts on staff well-being (e.g. creating unnecessary workload and take steps to alleviate any issues.
- Continue to clarify what we do not expect providers to create documentation for inspection to try to reduce administrative workload.

### **We will also be clear that Ofsted:**

- Do not grade individual lessons or people.
- Do not require evidence from any lesson visit that could be used in capability or disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.
- Do not require lessons to be planned in a certain way or for lessons plans to be

provided to inspectors.

- Do not require schools to prepare for inspections.
- Do not require schools to provide information in any specific format.

### **Part D. Organisational Commitments:**

In producing this charter, the Trust commits to placing well-being, overall health and mental health at the heart of our decision making. We will support staff to make positive choices for their own well-being and encourage a collegiate culture across and between all roles in the Trust.

**Specifically, we commit to develop a long-term strategy for improving staff well-being that will:**

- 1. Prioritise staff mental health;**
  - Tackle mental health stigma within the organisation, promoting an open and understanding culture.
  - Give the same consideration and support to mental health as physical health, including in the management of staff absence.
  - Fulfil our legal duty to control the risks associated with work-related stress in the education setting so far as is reasonably practicable.
  - Channel support to individuals whose role is known to have a significant emotional component. This might take the form of peer support, supervision, and/or counselling.
  - Ensure that staff understand the real benefits that sensitive pastoral support can have, while also recognising where their limits are as non-specialists.
  - We will ensure there are opportunities to increase joint working in support of pupils, as well as routes to refer for specialist support.
- 2. Give staff the support they need to take responsibility for their own and other people's well-being;**

We will empower staff to take ownership of their own well-being and look out for the well-being of others. This will include ensuring that all staff are familiar with the different dimensions of well-being, including mental health, financial well-being and physical well-being. We will ensure that staff know how to access appropriate guidance, support and tools, and that their use is encouraged throughout the organisation.
- 3. Give managers access to the tools and resources they need to support the well-being of those they line manage;**

We will work to provide managers with tools, resources and training to support their staff. We will not, however, expect managers to provide professional well-being support for which they have no professional training, and will ensure that there are clear routes in place to escalate for further support.
- 4. Establish a clear communications policy;**

We will provide clear guidance to all stakeholders (internal and external) on remote and out-of-school/college hours working, including when it is and isn't reasonable to expect staff to respond to queries. This should not necessarily include preventing staff from accessing email at 'unsociable' hours if it suits them personally.
- 5. Give staff a voice in decision-making;**

We will constantly strive to improve the ways in which the voice of staff is included in the decision-making process across the schools (this may also include engagement with key stakeholders, such as recognised trade unions and others). In particular, we will seek to draw upon the experience of those with mental health issues and/or of discrimination, ensuring that they are able to share their experience confidently and safely.

6. **Reduce unnecessary workload;** We will work proactively to reduce unnecessary workload, making use of available tools (such as the Workload Reduction Toolkit for Schools).
7. **Consider flexible working (where that is possible considering the educational needs of pupils first) and diversity;** We will work to create a supportive culture around flexible working where that is possible. We will agree an approach that not only recognises employees' legal right to request flexible working but acknowledges that for some staff working flexibly when their role facilitates it can be a key means of protecting and enhancing their personal well-being. We will work to promote diversity – eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity.
8. **Create a good behaviour culture;** We will work with staff and pupils to maintain and implement a school-wide behaviour policy. All staff and pupils will have a shared understanding of how good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded, and the sanctions that will be imposed if pupils misbehave. We will support staff to create calm, safe and disciplined environments, which allow teachers to teach and pupils to learn. Our approach will go hand-in-hand with understanding and supporting pupil mental health issues.
9. **Support staff to progress in their careers;** We will ensure that staff are able to pursue professional development without adversely impacting their own or other people's workload. In schools, we will ensure that any professional development activity for teachers is aligned to the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development.
10. **Include a sub-strategy for protecting leader well-being and mental health;** We will ensure that all those with strategic decision-making responsibility (including as appropriate Local Governors and Trustees) should collaborate to develop a sub-strategy specifically for protecting leader mental health. This should include access to confidential counselling and/or coaching where needed.
11. **Hold ourselves accountable, including by measuring staff well-being;** We will measure the well-being of staff using recognised tools and metrics and be clear about results. We will monitor trends over time, and act in response to changes. Further, we will work with staff and relevant stakeholders (this might include parents, recognised trade unions and others) to agree an approach to organisational accountability on our commitments, giving due consideration to workload.

## **Part E. Principles of Shared Understanding:**

### **1. Well-being is subjective (but it can be monitored);**

This charter recognises well-being as a sense of 'how we are doing' that includes, but is not limited to, our physical and mental health, and the quality of our social relationships. Well-being can therefore be described as a state of total health that is not merely the absence of disease or illness. We will use this working definition as a basis for discussing what well-being means in our organisation.

While well-being is itself subjective, we recognise that there are indicators that can and should be monitored. In the UK, the National Well-being Programme at the Office for National Statistics has drawn upon the expertise of leading academics from around the world and now reports on a range of indicators in its national well-being data sets. The 'What Works Centre for Well-being's' workplace well-being question bank includes a list of questions that can be used by the Trust to monitor the well-being of employees

### **2. Well-being has multiple benefits;**

In England, the state-funded school system employs almost one million people (FTE). The Trust

recognise that the well-being of this workforce is something that should be promoted, protected and enhanced for its own sake.

In addition, the Trust needs to attract and retain high-quality staff. Improving the well-being of staff, including by creating supportive cultures, is a crucial means of increasing and safeguarding workforce supply in the long-term. Well-being is not the only factor involved in recruitment and retention, but it is recognised that improving well-being in the Trust can help to both increase the chance of keeping current talent and heighten the appeal of the Trust to new talent in the long-term.

### **3. Well-being is holistic;**

The well-being of individuals is affected by many inter-related factors. This means that levels of low or high well-being are rarely due to just one factor, and that the issue should be looked at holistically. This charter recognises that not all such factors are unique to staff in education settings. Equally, there are many critical factors outside of the workplace (like access to key services) that are beyond the scope of this charter, and outside the influence of the Trust.

There are many evidence-based frameworks that aim to capture the drivers of staff well-being inside the workplace. The Department for Education used the following evidence-based model from 'What Works for Well-being' as a reference point during its engagement with the expert advisory group. It sets out five main drivers of well-being in the workplace, some of which overlap.

- **Health:** Including mental and physical health. In education, there is often a focus on stress caused by excessive workload (especially hours worked) and lack of recovery time. Importantly, pupils and students can also present with highly complex emotional needs, including mental and physical health issues. This can directly impact the health of those who support them.
- **Security:** Including working conditions, safety, bullying and harassment, and financial security. Equality and diversity are of particular importance here, especially where a member of staff has protected characteristics that they feel make them vulnerable to discrimination.
- **Environment:** This is a broad category that in education can cover both:
  - a) The organisational environment: including the physical environment (school facilities) and systems (such as the availability and efficaciousness of flexible working arrangements). This may also include the degree to which a member of staff identifies with organisational values.
  - b) The policy environment: including the policies of the government of the day, and public perceptions of the status of the profession.
- **Relationships:** In particular, the degree of support and respect an individual has from immediate colleagues, line managers, and leadership. It can also include relationships with parents.
- **Purpose:** In particular, high-quality job design. For staff, this can mean:
  - The right type of work for the individual.
  - A sense of 'belonging' – including shared organisational goals and vision.
  - The opportunity to develop and demonstrate competence, and progress in their career.
  - An appropriate degree of autonomy.

### **4. Well-being is a shared responsibility;**

We recognise that the responsibility for well-being and mental health must be shared across the

entire education system. There is no single panacea or golden bullet to improving well-being. It must be a long-term and concerted effort from people across the system, each fulfilling their responsibilities, many of which are covered by a range of existing frameworks and legislation.

These include:

- a) **DfE and its associated non-ministerial departments:** The policy environment determined by DfE and its agencies interacts with local school cultures to affect individuals working in education. Good policies will support employers, leaders and staff to care for themselves and for colleagues.
- b) **Employers:** We have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees. This includes their mental health and taking reasonable steps to prevent work-related stress. This duty is detailed in a range of legislation, including but not limited to:
  - The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974;
  - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended);
  - The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013; and;
  - The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.
- c) **Governing boards:** Trustees and Local Governors have a critical role to play in influencing the overall culture of the organisation – including ensuring that this produces a supportive environment for staff. As set out in the ‘Governance Handbook’, this means ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- d) **Senior leaders:** Senior leaders play a critical role in shaping the culture of the organisation and can have delegated responsibility for fulfilling the employer’s legal commitments on health, safety and welfare. It is important to emphasise that senior leaders are also employees whose well-being and mental health is of paramount importance, and firmly within the scope of this charter.
- e) **Individuals:** Everyone at every level carries responsibility for their own self-care and personal decision-making, though that decision making can only ever make the best of the broader context. Individuals also have a clear responsibility to look out for the well-being of others. Staff should play an active role in influencing their culture, including in challenging policies and practices that threaten their own or others’ well-being. We are expected to work to provide individuals with the support and training they need to fulfil these responsibilities, and to ensure that it remains culturally safe for staff to discuss and debate matters of well-being and mental health within the organisation.

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## Appendix 1

### **Staff Wellbeing – Examples of concrete and practical current Trust strategies;**

#### *Wellbeing for all Staff – Examples of current practice;*

- School Mental Health Leads employed who have completed DFE approved training
- Signed up to the Health and Wellbeing Hub – Details are displayed in each school
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing policy is in place – a copy is on school and Trust websites
- School days have been brought in line. All now finish at 3.15pm
- All staff are able to take their PPA at home
- Trust e-mail policy/protocol has been shared with all staff – provides daily cut off for emails
- Subscription to wellbeing apps including My Healthy Advantage app, Dare and Woebot
- Wellbeing action plans are in place to support individuals with mental health at work
- Signed up to Occupational Health Scheme to support employee wellbeing
- Wellbeing is a regular agenda item at Governors' meetings
- Free eye tests offered to Trust staff
- Annual flu jabs offered to all staff
- HR 'Open Door' practice in operation
- The Trust supports the Government bike to work scheme
- Schools may consider an annual wellbeing week – no homework, staff meetings, parents meeting
- At least one night per week, try to leave by 4:00pm. Schools may consider closing school at 4:00pm one day a week
- Hays School wellbeing training – Available for Free
- All new staff to be assigned a work place mentor
- Staff Code of Conduct in place
- Committed to staff training and CPD opportunities for all staff irrespective of role
- All staff have regular performance management and appraisal arrangements across the year

#### *Teacher Workload Reduction – Examples of current practice;*

- Trust retains an on-going commitment to reducing workload where practically possible.
- Subscriptions to online resources and subject specific associations to reduce workload
- Trust wide Progression documentation and Schemes of Work in place for many subjects to support planning
- Electronic reporting is used for reporting to parents and teaching staff have an INSET day for report writing time at many Trust schools
- Pupil level assessment data drops have been reduced to three a year
- School Improvement Officers and Trust Subject Leaders providing training, on-going support and educational research to schools and individual staff
- Trust SharePoint system in operation so resources can be shared to avoid schools duplicating work
- Staff advised to only update and respond to e-mails / messages from parents and colleagues during working hours
- HR, Finance and premises are managed by the Central Team
- Improved technology in all schools to enable smarter working
- Removal of non-essential admin tasks where that is practically positive
- Monday briefing to reduce email burden

- TAs allocated admin time to support teachers' workload
- Non-contact time provided for subject leadership
- Staff meetings reduced where possible and not held when assessments, parents' meetings or reports due
- In-school therapist times offered to staff for supervision
- Flexibility in allocation of family days to support staff maintain work-life balance
- When possible, well-being afternoons given to staff and 'lie-in' days.
- Subject leaders creating S-plans for their subjects to reduce planning.
- Monitoring kept to only necessary and reduced in school when Trust level monitoring is booked.

Final V4