



Staff Wellbeing Policy

2024-25

Date last reviewed | June 2024

Review period | Annually

Lead Reviewer(s) | Primary & Secondary Principal



***“Empowering today,
for a limitless tomorrow.”***



**Limitless
Learning**



**Limitless
Solutions**



**Limitless
Possibilities**

Aims and Expectations

This policy aims to:

- Support the wellbeing of all staff
- Provide a supportive work environment for all staff
- Acknowledge the needs of staff and how these change over time
- Allow staff to balance their working lives with their personal needs and responsibilities
- Help staff with any specific wellbeing issues they experience
- Ensure that staff understand their role in working towards the above aims

Wellbeing & the Academy Vision

The Academy wellbeing approach links directly to the school vision.

- **Limitless Learning:** staff are committed to life-long learning and developing themselves as professionals. Staff are driven by students’ learning needs and improving outcomes for all.
- **Limitless Solutions:** All staff have a voice and shared responsibility within their departments, with all staff members contributing positively and professionally within their teams. Staff are committed to finding solutions to develop better ways of working. Staff have open, honest, respectful dialogue with all colleagues, including leaders, to build a positive school culture.
- **Limitless Possibilities:** Staff take opportunities to reflect on and improve their practice. Staff embrace diversity and the opportunities to learn from others. Staff members take responsibility for their own wellbeing, finding a balance between professional and personal commitments.



Teaching, Learning, Planning and Curriculum

- The PPA allocation for teachers is more than the requirements set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and amounts to 20% of a teacher's timetabled teaching hours.
- We allocate additional PPA time for ECTs and assign a mentor within the teaching and learning team.
- Staff within departments, where possible, have PPA time together, including within the school day, to allow for collaborative planning.
- All staff are empowered to have a voice within their teams, playing an active role in planning and preparing.
- Middle leaders set a clear purpose for meetings and share expectations for all staff.
- ECAs are planned to support year-group collaboration, i.e. teachers in the same year group have common afternoons 'free' to allow for meetings, preparation and planning.
- Collaborative planning enables teachers to discuss and share best practice and develop professionally while also sharing the workload.
- Departmental resources should be shared centrally to support workload. Resources should quality assured, distributed and reviewed by Heads of Department.
- All teachers follow a streamlined, research-driven set of Teaching Principles that focus on current evidence and have a significant impact on learning and progress.
- The professional development culture favours feedback based on evidence-based practice and small 'steps' for development over lesson gradings.
- All teachers are assigned a coach to support with personalised professional development.

Behaviour

- Everyone has the highest expectations of behaviour, with all staff (not just teaching staff) reinforcing those expectations.
- We share behaviour expectations with parents at induction meetings and via our school policies.
- A clear system of consequences/sanctions is applied consistently by all so staff to ensure understanding and consistency.
- There is an escalation process to ensure that teachers are supported in working with families to address any behaviour concerns.
- The ALT is visible around the school and involved in duties to support high standards of behaviour.

Professional Development

- Lesson observations are low stakes, high frequency and are focussed upon professional development and your personal targets and growth.
- There is a clear Feedback for Success Policy, and staff have regular training on effective



feedback to ensure the greatest impact on student progress.

- The Academy calendar is well planned to ensure school events are evenly spaced across the year to support workload.
- Professional development meetings are carried out with line managers for all staff. These meetings acknowledge the staff member's experience, qualifications and support aspirations for the future.
- The professional development calendar is reviewed annually to ensure teachers have additional time for year level, department level and personal areas of interest.
- Middle and senior leaders have training to ensure that meeting time is used as productively as possible.
- The school leadership structure, and supported leader development, allows various opportunities for growth as a school leader, should teachers wish to follow this route.
- Staff may request external professional development which is of personal interest.
- New staff are supported via our induction period. See appendix 1 for details.

Assessment, feedback and reporting to parents

- The home learning policy prioritises key learning for students while also considering teacher workload and allocated time vs. impact on student outcomes.
- The whole school assessment calendar is created alongside middle leaders to ensure the best possible timings of events, data captures, exams and moderation to avoid 'pinch points'.
- Our Feedback for Success Policy encourages live marking and feedback to improve progress 'in the moment' and impact during the lesson. Where applicable, tests and exams can be self/peer marked.
- Report formats are reviewed annually to ensure a balance of quality feedback for parents and appropriate workload for teachers.

Positive Staff Community

- We provide well-maintained centralised staff rooms
- Termly formal and informal staff gatherings and socials include all members of the staff community
- Staff are encouraged to lead on community social events
- ALT is committed to staff wellbeing. This is a weekly meeting agenda item, and events are planned throughout the year to support staff wellbeing.
- Upstrive is used to gather regular staff voice on a range of topics.
- The pastoral team meet monthly to discuss student and staff wellbeing and continually work to build a positive school culture in response to student and staff voice.
- Monthly teacher, admin, TA/LSA, support staff awards are celebrated in staff briefing, with each winner receiving a monetary sum.
- Cultural occasions represent all staff and encourage international respect and understanding.



Managing Specific Wellbeing Issues

The school will support and discuss options with any staff that raise wellbeing issues, such as if they are experiencing significant stress at school or in their personal lives.

Where possible, support will be given by line managers or senior staff. This could be through:

- Giving staff time off to deal with a personal crisis
- Arranging external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassessing their workload and deciding what tasks to prioritise
- At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of staff will be maintained.

In the instance of staff grievance, ALT and HR support individual staff in moving forward. Staff have annual training on our Whistleblowing Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities for Staff Wellbeing

Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat each other with empathy, respect and professionalism
- Keep in mind the workload and wellbeing of other members of staff
- Support other members of staff if they become stressed, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let other members of staff know when they need support
- Follow the school's policy on out-of-school hours working, including guidance on when it is and isn't reasonable to send/respond to communications
- Contribute positively towards morale and team spirit
- Use shared areas respectfully, such as the staff room or offices, keeping areas tidy and organised before leaving
- Take part in opportunities to promote their wellbeing, including wellbeing surveys

Role of line managers

Line managers are expected to:

- Maintain positive professional relationships with their staff and encourage team spirit
- Appreciate individual working patterns, e.g. teachers who prefer to stay in school after hours vs. working at home after core hours
- Provide a non-judgmental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Maintain confidentiality where staff members discuss or report concerns
- Monitor workloads and be alert to signs of stress, and regularly talk to staff about their work/life balance
- Make sure new staff are well supported and know where to go to for help for specific areas



- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take this into account during key calendar events including professional development meetings
- Promote information about, and access to, external support including subject leader support
- Help to arrange personal and professional development training where appropriate
- Keep in touch with staff if they're absent for long periods, checking on their wellbeing and reporting any concerns to senior leaders and/or the HR manager

Role of senior staff

Senior staff are expected to:

- Lead in setting standards for conduct and professionalism, including how they treat other members of staff and adhering to agreed working hours
- Manage a non-judgemental and confidential support system for staff
- Ensure that all staff members have a clear line manager
- Regularly review the school calendar to ensure extra-curricular and key administrative work (e.g. reports) are spaced out across the year
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Listen to the views of staff and involve them in decision-making processes, including allowing them to consider any workload implications of new initiatives
- Communicate new initiatives effectively with all members of staff to ensure they feel included and aware of any changes occurring at the school
- Regularly review the demands on staff, such as the time spent on paperwork, and seek alternative solutions wherever possible
- Make sure any activities linked to coaching and/or teaching and learning reviews are based on trust, collaboration and professional dialogue and overall staff development
- Make sure job descriptions are kept up to date, with clearly identified responsibilities and staff being consulted before any changes are made
- Establish a clear policy on out-of-school hours working, including on when it is and isn't reasonable for staff to respond to communications, and provide clear guidance to all stakeholders
- Make sure that the efforts and successes of staff are recognised and celebrated
- Produce calendars of meetings, deadlines and events so that staff can plan ahead and manage their workload
- Provide resources to promote staff wellbeing, such as training opportunities
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services, and make sure that there are clear routes in place to escalate a concern in order to access further support
- Organise extra support during times of stress where needed
- Monitor staff sickness/absence, and have support meetings with them if any patterns emerge
- Conduct return-to-work interviews to support staff back into work
- Conduct exit interviews with resigning staff to help identify any wellbeing issues that led to



their resignation

Role of the governing board

The governing board is expected to:

- Make sure the school is fulfilling its duty of care as an employer, such as by giving staff a reasonable workload and creating a supportive work environment
- Monitor and support the wellbeing of the school principal
- Ensure that resources and support services are in place to promote staff wellbeing
- Make decisions and review policies with staff wellbeing in mind, particularly in regards to workload

Links with other policies

Please refer to the policies below which provide further information related to Staff Wellbeing:

- Communications Policy
- Feedback for Success Policy
- Behaviour for Learning
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Staff Handbook

Appendix 1 - Onboarding/Induction Process

The school aims to support new teaching staff during the induction period, making this as smooth as possible. We review this process annually, interviewing new staff to find out what went well and what we can do to improve the induction programme/period.

New teaching staff will experience the following before joining the academy:

- Meeting with the senior leadership team to understand the broad vision of the school
- Each staff member will be assigned a 'buddy' who already works in the school, where possible in their team
- If already residing in the UAE, staff can visit the school for a tour with a member of the leadership team
- Teachers will receive 'nutshell' videos to 'drip feed' information, including broad overviews on curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, school culture and, where relevant, life in Dubai
- Teachers will be invited to join a group Whats App where other new staff, the HR manager and senior leaders can support with any questions prior to arrival

Teachers starting at the beginning of the academic year will undertake an induction programme two weeks prior to the start of the school year. The aim of this programme is twofold: to support



staff personally in settling into their new life in Dubai and to support staff in learning key information prior to students starting school. The programme is designed to space learning across the two weeks so that new teachers are not overloaded with new information. Those delivering key training are encouraged to make sessions as interactive and relevant as possible to prevent new teachers receiving 'lecture' style training. Onsite staff childcare is provided for new staff during the induction period. During these two weeks, teaching staff will experience the following:

- Collection from the airport and escorted to new apartment by a member of the senior leadership team
- Support and advice in setting up new mobile phone and internet services
- Time to settle into new apartments free from planned activities
- Cultural understanding workshops – community and school level
- A tour of key locations in Dubai
- Shopping trips
- Social events with other new staff and the senior leadership team
- Support with school systems, including support in setting up new work laptop
- HR briefings and support
- Workshops around the school vision and pillars
- Health and Safety briefings, including safeguarding
- Workshops on curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and school culture
- GEMS awareness training
- Classroom set-up time with colleagues in the department
- Time with line managers to learn about planning, teaching and learning relevant to the department/year group
- Planning time within teams

Where new teachers are joining us from other schools in the UAE, we will adapt the above programme in consultation with each staff member to meet their needs (e.g. teachers joining from other GEMS schools may not wish to attend GEMS awareness training, and teachers joining from other Dubai schools may not wish to attend cultural and shopping events).

When teaching staff join the school mid-year, we strive to provide the programme above where possible. If events are not possible, we invite these staff members to join selected events in the next academic year. All mid-year joiners are assigned a buddy and will have frequent check ins from phase leaders, including team teaching, to support their transition.

Once the new academic year has begun and students have returned to school, new teachers will continue to receive the following support:

- Regular check-ins with line managers
- Buddies within the team to support with specific areas relevant to the department/year group
- Coaching from a member of the leadership team, including personalised support and Steplab drop ins
- Ongoing support from subject leaders, where requested



- Settling in check-in meeting with a senior leader
- Three- and six-month probationary check-in meetings with line manager to celebrate successes and identify personal areas for further development
- Continued IT support from the IT team where needed
- Continued HR support from our HR Manager where needed
- Ongoing professional development in line with school priorities and personalised development goals

Other new staff members, including support staff, teaching assistants, learning support assistants and admin staff will be assigned a buddy on arrival and will have regular check-in meetings with leaders within their teams to discuss how they are settling in and where further support can be provided. All staff will have a probationary check in meeting with their line manager after three and six months of joining the school. This meeting should allow the staff member and the line manager to celebrate successes and identify personal areas of development.

New senior leaders will be provided with a bespoke onboarding programme, personalised to their understanding of the school and local context. This will be delivered by other senior leaders and may include school visits, learning walks and personalised meetings with key members of staff.