



Work Together

Love to Learn

Reach for the Stars!

NEWPORT PRIMARY SCHOOL

STAFF WELLBEING AND TEACHER  
WORKLOAD POLICY

(Work Life Balance)

Signed:

Name: Ms Deborah O'Connell

Position: Headteacher

Signed:

Name: Mr Jimmy Sykes

Position: Chair of Governors

## Core Positive Principles:-

### Smiles are contagious!

We genuinely understand and cherish the fact that our rapidly improving outcomes are the result of our outstanding teachers and teaching assistants, and their relationship with our compassionate and creative Senior Leaders. Happy children are good learners and the quickest way to ensure children are happy at school is to make sure staff are inspirational, aspirational and enjoy coming to work. Happy staff make happy children, happy children learn well!

A key element to this is the culture we create around our staff, listening, respecting and caring. The Headteacher continues to teach so that she always ensures tasks are manageable and are having an impact, whilst continuing to be at the heart of the learning and understanding the demands on the teacher. A teaching Headteacher has empathy and sees the wider perspective. It is essential that teachers never feel that their workload is overwhelming, and that if they do they have a supportive network around them where they can ask for help or additional time. Work should always have direct impact on the learners or the efficiency of the school. Staff must know that everything they do directly improves outcomes for children – and that there is no futile task in their workload.

On entering the school, people feel the homely, caring and supporting nature of the school. We have a staff tree, not organised in any hierarchy... showing the whole team. The quote reads... ‘Together we are a family, helping your children grow’. We have positive and motivational posters and quotes displayed all around the school and honestly live those quotes.

If staff feel valued, respected and listened too – then they are happy and confident. The Learning culture is for them too. Nurturing, mentoring, modelling and sharing ideas are at the heart of our staff philosophy. Our staff absence runs at about 1% and staff turnover is very low. Maintaining this is of vital importance to the team and the benefit of both of these factors being so good reduces workload for the Senior Leadership Team and supports the continual improvement of the School. It is up to the Governors and the Senior Management to ensure that our teachers manage their work-life balance effectively, and the Governors are very

proactive in assessing this and monitoring the Headteachers work/life balance too. The ethos of our school is founded on

Communication, enthusiasm, respect, teamwork, passion, thoughtfulness, creativity and gin always helps.☺

## **Practical Application of the Policy:-**

But, what do our teachers experience in their classrooms?

*Quite simply, we treat our teachers like professionals. We do not micromanage, we encourage creativity, variety, fun and risk taking. We live our moto...*

***‘Work Together, Love to Learn and Reach for the Stars’***

We give our teachers responsibility for their pupils’ progress and attainment. They are free to plan, teach and assess however they please. We have no planning policy, a very simple and effective marking policy and no policy on pedagogy.

Every teacher is expected to reach the highest possible standards with every child in their class by using whichever approach works best for them, and their pupils. Pupils are taught so that they are supported in their learning or stretched, depending on their needs. The needs of the SEN learners are written down only when there is real deviation from the general classroom practice, and reason to keep these additional records i.e. to inform parents or to inform external agencies. We strive to ensure that all learners are given the best varied diet of learning for them and ensure that the curriculum is rich, creative and diverse – whilst continually challenging them to be independent learners.

## **How do we ensure that this happens?**

We share the data that is used to judge our school with all staff and Governors. We all want to ‘Work Together’ to improve and aim to be the best we can be, positive language and encouragement is regular, whilst realistic expectations have

to be understood. The accountability of all schools is on attainment whilst maintaining the variety of a broad and exciting curriculum. We know this means that, in Year 2 and year 6, children must be achieving at a certain level and every child in every other class must be on track to reach that target as well- but that this goal is not at the expense of the creative curriculum. Our teachers have challenging but realistic targets that are set to improve on last year's data and also embed the school above the National Benchmarks. We all want the data to reflect the outstanding teaching and Learning that has taken place. We all want the school to 'shine'. We all want our children to 'Reach for the Stars'.

There is a creative planning structure for long and medium term planning but in the short term, teachers can plan however they like. Some plan in detail, others do a broad overview at the start of the term and nothing else is formally written down. We only check sample planning and we very rarely do formal lesson observations. Lesson observations are always agreed beforehand and the teacher is as always given free rein in the lesson. Feedback is always positive heavy with the smallest tweaks and ideas for improvement. All teachers are able to do observations on any teacher and the ethos is on continual improvement and knowledge that all parties have strengths and weaknesses in different areas and everyone has a valued opinion or idea.

Drop ins are commonplace and the SLT pop in and out of classrooms each day, spending a few minutes in each classroom on a random basis, chatting to children, hearing them read or asking them about their work and targets. In this way we concentrate on the outcomes of the teaching rather than 'inspecting' the teaching itself. Children are used to visitors and are happier to talk about their learning.

Teachers are enormously reflective and aspirational and they know exactly what went well and what they need to do to make things even better. Teachers are very supportive of each other and will often discuss ideas and share their core strengths or particular interests. Teachers and Teaching Assistants strengths are respected and fostered, designing the school and tasks around that strength, supporting each other where needed. All staff are respected and valued and are each responsible for making the team work effectively.

The SLT creates the structures for them to be able to do this, and offers a listening ear if it is required. Teachers know that they are accountable for the achievement of the children in their class, so they take responsibility for improving their

teaching and learning, Teaching Assistants all also take accountability because they want to and genuinely support the Teachers in helping the children be the best they can be. Teachers and Teaching Assistants go above and beyond in the role and do so with enjoyment.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants, talk regularly assessing the learning of the children. Teams work well together and characters strengths and weaknesses are assessed to best improve outcome in class whilst develop a fun and happy environment. All staff have the opportunity in performance management meeting to talk to the Headteacher, stating where they feel most comfortable and with which age group, class team, and curricular area. The Headteacher and SLT try to facilitate all staffs requests and are flexible with their thinking to best work with strengths. All staff are proactive in finding or developing new strategies to best support individuals, whether this is for adults or children. All staff will focus on tasks that have a proportional impact on pupil progress and not on unnecessary or inefficient tasks. We have a culture of openness – no one is perfect, we are all striving to get better and better at our jobs. Individual strengths are fostered and used to maximum efficiency.

The SLT do not ever expect teachers to mark everything. If the teacher has given formative feedback to a child, that book need not be marked. No book should be marked by the teacher or TA unless there is a good educational reason to mark it.

Children check and edit their own work whenever possible; as this is a key part of the teaching process. Teachers talk to children about their progress and understanding as they are working, peer assessment is always encouraged – feedback is instant and useful, helping children to know how they can improve. Children respond to feedback in purple pen, so their learning and extension is evidenced in the lesson.

Each child knows their own targets or where to find them and the teacher knows each child's targets, and what the next steps are. There is no need to write it all down every day. All teachers and the Headteacher can talk about the children and their families, their learning and their strengths and weaknesses. There is regular reporting to parents but this co-insides with parents' evenings and end of term data input.

The school will never ask teachers to complete vast spreadsheets for data collection. Three times a year, teachers fill in a tracking sheet telling us whether children are at, above or below the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. TA's with strong computer skills then complete the tracking spreadsheet and keep this data up to date.

Completing the class trackers takes about an hour each time, after the assessments are all complete. The results entered into the spreadsheet are based on teacher's professional judgement, using the assessments and ongoing knowledge of the children. They use some formal assessments to support their judgement but ultimately, their knowledge of the child and the curriculum gives the most accurate assessment of the child's achievement.

All of the approaches above ease the workload for both teachers and SLT. We keep paperwork to an absolute minimum and TA's benefit from the additional hours so their skills are also rewarded and teacher time is not misspent. If it is not helping pupils' progress, we do not do it. Our trackers are simple and informative and all staff and Governors understand them. They track all children across the school and highlight key groups.

## **What do our teachers and TA's think?**

Newport School staff are motivated by having responsibility, recognition for their work, the work itself, and the chance to achieve, they are allowed freedom in which to work and creativity and flexibility is cherished. The school has a policy of trust in the staff and is heartfelt in the knowledge that all groups work for the continued improvement of the school. Respect and encouragement is given whereas too much supervision and rigid policy would be demotivating.

Our teachers work very hard, but they have control over their workload. Almost everything they do, they choose to do. We are all accountable and we have to ensure we all do as good a job as we can, ensuring the pupils attain as highly as they can.

**"I have worked in a number of schools and genuinely feel a real part of a caring, supportive and exciting team here. It has renewed my faith in the educational system and I enjoy every day."**

“Newport Primary has allowed me to become the creative and inspirational teacher I wanted to be. I am trusted and encouraged to take ownership of the curriculum which benefits the children massively.”

“It is good to be listened to, and I feel valued. We are able to have true freedom in the way we teach and that works really well. We all support each other and share ideas.”

## Next Steps:-

We continue to review teacher workload regularly – and often find elements of practice that could be changed or removed as the education landscape changes.

If something new is added to teacher workload, something else must be eliminated and it is essential that we monitor this. We are proactive in trying to find simple, methods which are useful and effective. Policies are developed around the practice and ongoing professional judgements in the school. Our practice is fresh and changeable with some solid features and philosophies that form the structure. We are a constantly developing team and policies have to be refreshed regularly to match this practice.

The Headteacher will never ask any member of staff to do something that she would not be prepared to do herself and will at any time assist or stand in to support the team. All staff are flexible and supporting of each other and all have the responsibility to consider other staff wellbeing and support if they are needed. This is a strong and effective team, where staff wellbeing is paramount.