



# Staff wellbeing during a pandemic!



This is the year that just keeps on giving doesn't it! Just as we thought we were nearing the end of 2020 we now have new lockdown restrictions to contend with and with cases rising we are dealing once again with school closures and remote learning.

I have updated this resource to reflect the new working practices we are undertaking.

## Communication

At the moment everything is happening very quickly and situations change on a daily basis.

Try and find a balance between communicating too much and overwhelming people and not communicating enough and people feeling ostracised and out of the loop.

Emails may be the best way to reach everyone quickly, but consider that tone can easily be misinterpreted, especially in times of stress. Take time to reread what is being sent out and consider it from the point of view of the recipient as well as what you are trying to say.

Think about who needs to know about situations too, quite often support staff are the last to know things but they are just as affected as teaching staff,

## Flexible working

Now is the time to think creatively about who could do what jobs and roles.

We are not working in the same environments as we were this time last year so people may need their roles rethinking.

If classes are remote learning how can you make the most effective use of support staff for instance?

As with lockdown earlier in the year it may not be possible for all teaching staff to do live learning. We have come on in terms of training and technical capabilities but if they have their own children at home or are sharing spaces with other people working from home it may not be possible. Could your teaching assistants help in any way, or split up live learning between those who can easily do it and other teachers work on creating resources?

This is just scratching at the surface, but it's just to show we need to think outside the box to accommodate everyone's wellbeing. It does seem that this is going on forever but it won't be. Please remember to communicate with all staff what changes are happening and why and reassure them that it all temporary and how much you appreciate their flexibility.

## Showing that you care

"Working remotely can mean we become less personable and this can have a negative affect on staff wellbeing, including your own.

Emails don't come with a smile and little acts of kindness like collecting someone's photocopying or making them a cuppa are hard when we are working in bubbles and impossible when working from home!

Again, think outside the box as to how you can show you care and how staff can do this to everyone else too. Staff challenges can work well. Fitbit groups for walking challenges, Bake Off challenges, book clubs, quiz nights, having lunch together on video call are all ideas that I have seen work well. But remember that they won't be for everyone and they should be optional.

Even a simple email check in or a gifting exchange can really make a positive difference to someone's day. Don't forget your own wellbeing in all of this and delegate to someone else who does have capacity for the organising is totally ok!

## Useful resources

**Headspace** - wellbeing and mental health app. Free for everyone in education. Staff apply themselves by sending proof of employment.

**#teacher5aday** and **#EdWellbeingGoals** - wellbeing support for education staff of Twitter and Facebook

**@teachersdolaugh** - they sell wonderful things to send to staff to make them smile, they have accounts on Twitter and Facebook and sell through an Etsy shop

**livespiffy.co.uk** - very similar to above

**nourishtheworkplace.com** - affordable staff surveys and CPD

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