

# Reading Early Years Schools Federation



## Wellbeing Policy

**Chair of Governors: Julia Cottee**

**Executive Head teacher: Joanne Budge**

**Date: February 2025**

**Date to be reviewed: February 2028**

The REYS federation is committed to ensuring the health, emotional and physical wellbeing, and work-life balance of all staff members is maintained. Within our federation not only does every child matter but we also believe every person matters. Everyone must take responsibility for their own work-life balance and be aware of the role model they are setting for others. Each nursery promotes a friendly, caring, family ethos where the staff all work as a team to support each other across all areas of nursery life. This culture is very paramount throughout nursery and the caring atmosphere is reflected through the physical environment, and our unique happy teams.

The policy aims to:

- Provide effective support for all staff.
- Help everyone achieve an appropriate work-life balance.
- Take a positive and understanding approach to the management of stress in line with current good practice.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Minimise the harmful effects of stress.

### **Policy Principle**

All staff within the nursery will be supported in attaining a balanced lifestyle where they can achieve their best at work and manage other areas of their life effectively. Our strategies to support a balanced lifestyle will include:

- Create a positive, caring and supportive atmosphere throughout the nursery.
- Clear identification of duties and responsibilities relating to individual staff roles, reviewed annually through performance management interviews, to aid them in the delivery of their work and managing the expectations of the job.
- Regular review, discussed at annual staff meetings, of how effectively the nursery is considering the work-life balance of all staff.
- Continually looking at existing and new practices to make systems as efficient and time saving as possible.
- Working with staff to agree and provide appropriate training to enable them to do their jobs competently and effectively and within normal hours.
- Involving staff in agreeing and setting realistic work-related targets for the staff and the nursery.
- Providing a system for and encouraging efficient and effective working practices.
- Involving, encouraging, and enabling staff to actively manage their own careers and personal development.
- Consulting with staff on decisions relating to their employment, encouraging them to seek third party advice, e.g. to confer with their Union representatives, where appropriate.
- Granting special leave, as appropriate, when staff are faced with an emergency outside work.
- Supporting individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their manager on a planned return to work
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.

- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress

A crucial element within the wider remodelling agenda is the statutory responsibility Governors have regarding the work-life balance of the Executive Head teacher. The Executive Head teacher, in turn, will have regard to the work-life balance of other staff. Work-life balance includes better communication within the workplace, clearer job roles and workplace support.

All staff members are invited to air their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the nursery at regular staff meetings and informal gatherings. REYS federation strongly believes in an 'Open Door' policy for all stakeholders, allowing a free flow of information and personal thoughts. There is a strong 'no blame' culture within each nursery. Staff achievement is recognised and valued by others within the nursery and other members will ensure that they are thanked during meetings or as part of the nursery day. All staff members are encouraged to take on new challenges and supported in doing this by others. Everyone contributes to providing a happy, caring workplace where all staff members support each other in a bright learning environment.

### **Staff Inclusion**

The opinions, feelings and ideas of all staff members are valued. Any member of the nursery team knows that they can offer current ideas or thoughts about established systems for discussion at staff meetings where everyone attends. Where possible, before any timetable, policy, event or other is implemented in nursery, each member of staff is given an opportunity to comment upon it. Views are taken into consideration before anything is introduced.

### **Staff workload: the 'work life' balance**

The staff team at REYS federation are all dedicated people who work hard throughout the day (both at nursery and at home) to ensure the smooth running of the nursery and to create the best and most effective learning and teaching environment for the children that can be provided. Everyone is aware of the tremendous workloads that all members of staff have and try wherever possible not to add to it. They also offer to help and share tasks wherever they can when it is recognised that a particular member or members of staff are becoming swamped with work owing to factors such as the time of year it is, the absence of another member of staff or other events.

### **Monitoring & evaluation**

The staff will be asked to regularly monitor their own work-life balance and to report any arising concerns to the Head of School/Nursery Manager which will feed into the Executive Head teacher's discussions with the Governing Body. If there are concerns regarding work-life balance, nursery systems and procedures will be reviewed.

Staff absences are tracked by the Head of School/Nursery Manager who also conduct back-to-work interviews on return to ensure that staff feel fit for work.

The Governing body have a responsibility to ensure that all staff, including the Executive Head teacher manage an acceptable work-life balance. The Governing Board endeavours to provide appropriate administrative and leadership support and leadership and management time for the Head. The Governors will regularly review their own practices with consideration to staff workload. The Executive Head teacher has a duty to monitor their own work-life balance, model good practice and report concerns to the Governing Body. Impact: Staff are happy and secure in our environment enabling them to deliver

A member of the governing body will be assigned as a wellbeing lead, taking overall responsibility for monitoring the wellbeing of staff.

The governing body will:

- Ensure the effective implementation of this policy.
- Recognise mental health issues and seek to manage staff mental health through risk assessments, surveys, and early intervention.
- Ensure staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and monitored.
- Ensure that all school policies are assessed for workload impact.

We have appointed a wellbeing ambassador within each nursery to work together to coordinate activities to support staff wellbeing. A budget is available in each school to support staff wellbeing and will be used according to the needs of the school. The federation aims to provide at least one (social activity each year that is free for all staff to attend e.g. games night, quiz night, barn dance, Christmas party.

If any member of staff wishes to raise a concern about wellbeing, they can approach the wellbeing ambassador or any senior member of staff.

The wellbeing ambassadors will provide staff with information about the support that is available to them; this includes both within the school and outside sources. These resources may include:

- Staff assistance programme
- Talking therapy

The wellbeing ambassadors will treat all cases confidentially. Real names of staff will not be used when wellbeing ambassadors are reporting to senior leaders.

In some cases, such as those that involve a direct impact on day-to-day activities, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If this is the case, staff will be made aware of the situation.

The wellbeing ambassador, in receipt of the complaint, will investigate and report this to the Head of School. The Head of School will decide whether any further action will be taken.

The Heads of Schools/Nursery Manager will undertake an annual wellbeing audit by distributing surveys to all members of staff. Findings will be used to tweak or amend the wellbeing offer for staff. Any proposed changes will be communicated to all members of staff.