



A Toolkit For
Governors and Trustees
to Support Leadership Wellbeing

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What is the Essex Education Task Force (EETF)?

The Local Authority have convened an Education Task Force to strategically support Education services and provision in light of the Covid19 pandemic. The Task Force is driving, and overseeing, the Essex response to long term impact of this pandemic on Children and Young People (CYP) education and to mitigate this as far as possible.

The Task Force seeks to bring innovation across the education system in Essex, questions the current national approaches to education and seeks to minimise the impact of the pandemic on all CYP as quickly as possible, but with a five-year overview.

The Task Force is made of up education leaders across Essex (early years, schools, further education), other key education stakeholders, voluntary sector, ECC staff, political membership, and a National Leader of Governance to be "the voice of governance". The EETF is Chaired by Roy Blatchford.



Introduction from the EETF members

One of the key messages arising out of the Covid period in education is the importance of how leaders in different settings, schools and colleges are supported in their work by governing bodies and boards.

Every leader is entitled to wellbeing support from those who have responsibility for governance. Each leader has individual needs. This is the starting point. Leaders will decide for themselves what that 'entitlement' might mean.

One of the starting points for leaders to access directly is the approach that Essex County Council has committed to and delivered webinars to support governors in their role. This approach is called trauma perceptive practice (TPP) to understand behaviour and support emotional wellbeing.

It is fundamentally grounded in the following values:

- Compassion and kindness
- Hope
- Connection and belonging

This toolkit is produced in that spirit of respecting each and every leader's own perspective. Valuing wellbeing should be implicit in everything one says and does. Wellbeing is 24/7 not a once-a-week focus.

Ofsted expects governors to hold leaders to account. Governors need also to be held to account for how they support education leaders' wellbeing.

What is the Aim of the Toolkit?

The toolkit is for Governors and Trustees governing in different settings.

Aim of the Toolkit

- A document that sets out a framework for governors and trustees to support leadership wellbeing provision within their educational setting
- To provide an outline of the roles and responsibilities for leadership wellbeing link governors and trustees
- Practical solutions and examples of what and how to support leadership wellbeing and to ensure support is effective in your particular setting
- Through referring to the toolkit governors and trustees can identify training requirements to support leadership wellbeing provision in their school community

Wellbeing Governor Roles and Responsibilities:

This role provides a delegated link between the governing board and wellbeing support to the Leadership. This requires the appropriate skills set, including approaching this role with sensitivity and understanding to respect the individual's needs and level of support and wellbeing provision required.



Strategy

What?

- Understanding what current support is in place through evidenced based research and evaluation of the leadership needs
- Collaborating with the leadership team to develop and support wellbeing provision
- Understanding what best practice looks like by networking with governors from different settings both locally and nationally
- Ensure that leadership wellbeing is discussed and included as part of the leadership performance management review
- The leadership wellbeing governor will undertake relevant training and updates throughout the year, keeping their skills and knowledge up to date

How?

- Listen without judgement as you may not be aware of all the issues
- Communicate kindly with the leadership when emailing, face to face and during online meetings
- Encourage individual responsibility for one's own wellbeing. As an example, are leaders putting the oxygen mask on themselves first?
- Recognise how the leadership support the team as people not just employees

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Putting into Practice

- Building links and a governor to contact for wellbeing champions and staff members who oversee wellbeing provision
- Ensuring wellbeing is an agenda item and discussed at governing board meetings
- A termly activity for example Leadership surveys – do leaders feel better informed about what support is available? What impact has there been from the initiatives and support put in place?
- Focused with key questions planned and shared with the leadership prior to the discussion
- Collating and triangulating of information to support and inform evaluation and evidence gathering
- Identify what is working well and any areas for development to support the leadership



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Examples of questions to ask to support discussions with the Leadership include;

- How is leadership wellbeing being supported?
- What are the leadership wellbeing priorities for the year?
- What is planned half termly/ termly?
- What is working well?
- What is not working so well?
- Is the support appropriate and if not, how can it be adapted?
- Governors attending training, webinars and researching leadership wellbeing in educational settings to inform supporting leadership wellbeing provision

We advise you to meet regularly.

Evaluation in Practice:

- On-site visits to see how leadership wellbeing provision is supported within the community
- Write a one-page report, summarising the visit. This will provide the governing board with an understanding of the leadership wellbeing provision and enables governors to provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support
- Review of policies to ensure they are up to date and align with leadership wellbeing support

Annexe 1

Compassion Fatigue - Raising awareness of the factors that can impact leadership wellbeing

Signs and Symptoms Include;

- Exhaustion
- Reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy
- Anger and irritability
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Dread of working with certain CYPs or parents/carers
- Diminished sense of enjoyment of career
- Disruption to world view, heightened anxiety or irrational fears
- Intrusive imagery or dissociation
- Hypersensitivity or insensitivity to emotional material
- Difficulty separating work life from personal life
- Absenteeism – missing work, taking many sick days
- Impaired ability to make decisions and care for others



More information on compassion fatigue is available [here](#).

Annexe 2

The following responses were identified through leadership wellbeing surveys as having an impact on workload and wellbeing. These include;

Pupils Results and Outcomes	Covid Management	Increasing Demand and Level of SEND
Complaints from Parents	External Pressures Including Governance	Ofsted Pressures
School Finance and Administrative Issues	Staffing Issues	DfE Expectations and Pressures

Leadership wellbeing - a governor's checklist to support conversations with the leadership on reducing unnecessary workload and hours, to support their wellbeing.

Date:

Participant(s):

Name of Governor(s):

What do you feel are the biggest workload issues that impact your ability to balance your work life balance?

What would you change which you believe would have a positive impact on reducing workload and therefore, improving your wellbeing?

How would you change this?

If you could stop doing one thing which would lessen your workload to support your wellbeing what would your priority be?

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Annexe 3

Links to further information for governors to signpost and support leadership wellbeing.

"We are the only UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff in schools, colleges and universities".

Education Support provides a menu of resources to support Wellbeing for those working in different educational settings.

Click [here](#) to find out what is available to support your leaderships wellbeing.

Education Support Helpline: 08000 562561

"Please make use of the support available! Sometimes it's hard to speak to people you are close to and even harder to speak to a stranger. But the counsellors at the Education Support are fantastic! They listen, support and guide to help you to discover solutions that are best for you."



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Annexe 4

Please see the following leadership wellbeing links to videos and resources to support governors in how they hold to account education leaders for wellbeing.

Click [here](#) to view the Essex County Council governor's webinar on Headteacher wellbeing RECAP June 2021- Jo Barclay and Stephen Chynoweth.

Click [here](#) to view a video explaining the wellbeing wheel.

Sally Rundell Wellbeing in Education- A workshop session for Headteachers to use in introducing the importance of professional wellbeing to staff, supporting a collaborative understanding of wellbeing bespoke to each school and in self-evaluating individual wellbeing.

Click [here](#) to view the Essex County Councils Essex Schools infolink to Headteacher Wellbeing. This link includes resources and recorded presentations for governors and senior leaders including, links to useful websites.



Case Study - Mrs B Maguire

Headteacher, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School,
Dovercourt, Harwich

I genuinely feel my governors care about my well-being and this cannot be overlooked. It has never felt like a token tick box question or just another agenda item to ask after my well-being. My Chair of Governors in particular asks me regularly about my well-being often more informally when the 'business' has been done, as a result of a patient and listening ear.

I feel she has a deep understanding of the strains and stresses of my role.

There is much reassurance just knowing that the governors really understand the impact the stresses my role can bring. My governors set me performance management targets focused on my well-being and being held to account for achieving these has certainly focused my attention on making and maintaining positive change.

Case Study - Caroline Wilson

Governor support over the last few years has revolved around robust challenge to evidence progress across the improvement plan and justify SEF decisions, this has come from meetings which involve all Governors so all have a clear grasp of every area of our work, inclusion in progress meetings, learning walks in lessons and meeting with staff and students and regular updates with myself. All governors have an area of focus for e.g.: KS3 curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and feedback at meetings to update all members. They fully engage with all training and are keen to be involved in updates regarding new DfE initiatives or Ofsted changes.



They are true critical friends bringing their skills set to the meetings and making valid suggestions. They are acutely aware of the pressures on staff during the pandemic and support my vision for the Academy and our wellbeing agenda. They actively engaged with myself during lockdown to ensure I and staff were well.

We are proactive in securing new Governors to the Trust that have a range of skills and backgrounds, this helps fill any gaps, we are fortunate that we have some long standing members who know us and the Trust very well.

Case Study - Clare White

Deputy Principal
Corporate and Student
Services, USP College



USP Governors are fully informed of the College's Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy which is aligned to the AoC Mental Health Charter. This agenda remains a College priority and the shared vision and responsibility is welcomed by Governors who regularly question and continue to better understand the current setting and issues that affect staff and our young people.

Governors were kept well informed during the pandemic of staff pressures and the additional impact on wellbeing of our college community, they were advised of the range of support mechanisms the college put in place and the positive impact and change this provided to our staff and students during unprecedented times. This joined up approach provided the opportunity for Governors to focus on the important issues and challenge the college on our approach and actions to promote a healthy learning and working environment whether that be on-site or working and studying from home.

Additionally Governors are active in staff and student events regularly attending our termly student conference where such topics such as wellbeing are widely discussed. Taking the time to chat and interact with students about important issues educates Governors and college leaders of the changing climate and the impacts on our young people.

Case Study - Katherine Cooper

Nursery Manager,
Lawn Lane Day Nursery School
- Seymour House



As a manager of a Private Day Nursery School, one of 10, I have a supportive network of colleagues in the same role, along with my Area Head of Operations who directly oversees my position. We meet regularly for discussions, where a genuine care is shown for my wellbeing and I can be open about the challenges of my role, also my personal circumstances and family life.

The challenges of my role are acknowledged by my AHO who shows understanding and appreciation, making me feel valued and trusted. Individual recognition comes centrally from AHOs, both one to one and during monthly management meetings which support wellbeing. I also receive personal recognition from Directors which makes me feel part of something worthwhile.

Company decisions are made from team feedback, through team and management surveys, with an acknowledgement of the stresses we have endured more recently during COVID times. This platform is great as it gives everyone a voice.

More formally annual and mid-year reviews help to give me focus and drive forward. These are always a positive experience with continued investment in me and my skills. However, the day to day support through phone or Microsoft Teams calls is second to none from any one of the AHOs and is key in supporting my wellbeing.