



# Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

## Work-life Balance

Work-life balance is the ability to balance satisfaction and good functioning at work and home while experiencing minimal role conflict (Clark, 2000). The inability to maintain work-life balance can lead to stress, strain, and psychological distress (Sana & Aslam, 2018). Work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the responsibilities of the two separate roles become incompatible (Frone, 2003).

### Why is it important?

- A lack of work life-balance can result in negative outcomes, including physical and mental fatigue, agitation, and sleep loss (Erdamar & Demirel, 2014).
- Work-life balance is associated with employee motivation, productivity, and well-being (Byrne, 2005).
- Employees with work-life balance have greater organisational commitment and are less likely to leave their jobs (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019).



## In Practice

To encourage a positive work-life balance, school leaders should provide a positive school culture that allows employees to openly discuss their struggles and collaboratively find solutions to address them.



### What can schools do?

School management can provide a work environment that recognises the importance of work life balance by:

- Creating a supportive climate that acknowledges the negative impact of work intensification by taking concrete steps to prevent it.
- Establishing and maintaining open communication with staff to ensure they are supported in relation to workload concerns.
- Working alongside staff members individually to help them prioritise their work, highlighting both essential and non-essential tasks.



### Leader Reflection

School leadership can prioritise employee well-being and work-life balance through the following specific actions:

- Set boundaries by coordinating regularly scheduled “catch-up” time to be used at staff’s discretion (e.g., responding to e-mails, grading student work etc.).
- Look into roles and responsibilities where little autonomy exists and allow staff to dictate how they will conduct this work.
- As much as possible, assess current work responsibilities and redistribute and eliminate any redundant or unnecessary work responsibilities.
- Actively monitor staff workloads to ensure that individuals do not overcommit themselves.
- Explore a variety of ‘hacks’ intended to reduce staff workload (e.g., rotated assignments, shorter meeting times, paring down initiatives etc.).
- Establish a supportive professional community where staff feel comfortable disclosing concerns and sharing strategies to make work more manageable (Bartlett et al., 2021).

## References

- Bartlett, M. J., Arslan, F. N., Bankston, A., & Sarabipour, S. (2021). Ten simple rules to improve academic work–life balance. *PLoS Computational Biology*, *17*(7), e1009124.
- Byrne, U. (2005). Work-life balance: Why are we talking about it at all. *Business Information Review*, *22*(1), 53-59.
- Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, *53*(6), 747-770.
- Erdamar, G., & Demirel, H. (2014). Investigation of work-family, family-work conflict of the teachers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *116*, 4919-4924.
- Frone, M. R. (2003). Work-family balance. In J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology*. American Psychological Association.
- Jaharuddin, N. S., & Zainol, L. N. (2019). The impact of work-life balance on job engagement and turnover intention. *The South East Asian Journal of Management*, *13*(1), 106-118.
- Sana, F., & Aslam, N. (2018). Effect of role ambiguity and role conflict in predicting work-family conflict among teachers. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, *33*, 349-365.