



## **NEU Work/Life Balance for Teachers Model policy checklist**

This checklist should be used alongside the NEU's model policy on work/life balance to help you negotiate a policy acceptable to the union. Non-negotiable points (ie those required by law or union policy) are highlighted in red. You may not be able to secure everything on this checklist – if that is the case, you will need to consult members on whether the proposed policy is sufficiently positive to be acceptable. More advice can be found on the NEU website at: [neu.org.uk/help-advice](http://neu.org.uk/help-advice)

### **Policy objectives**

- Is there an introductory statement containing a clear commitment by the employer to maintaining a work/life balance for all employees at the school?
- Does the policy explain how the employer will seek to reduce or manage and maintain at an appropriate level, workload and working hours of teachers at the school/trust?
- Is there acknowledgement of the requirements within the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), where applicable, for governing bodies and head teachers to have regard to the wellbeing and work/life balance of staff?
- Is there an acknowledgement that employees should be able to balance their working lives with their personal lives, interests and other responsibilities?
- Is it acknowledged that a poor work/life balance can have negative impacts on mental and physical health?

### **Policy implementation**

- Is there a member of the governing body with particular responsibility for overseeing and monitoring work/life balance within the school?
- Is there a commitment to regular communication and consultation with staff on their work/life balance?
- Is there a commitment to consultation with trade union representatives on the application and evaluation of the policy?
- Are steps being taken to monitor the work/life balance of employees, including consultation with newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and newly appointed staff members and properly conducted exit interviews?
- Is the equality monitoring of the policy undertaken annually or, at the very least, biennially?
- Will the results of equality monitoring be shared with the recognised trade unions?

### **Practical steps to be taken by the employer/school**

- 1) Does the policy detail the measures which the employer/school is undertaking to address the issues affecting the work/life balance? Do they include:
  - Setting targets to reduce overall working hours
- 2) Is there a commitment in line with NEU policy to reduce overall working hours to 35 per week, with at least an initial target to reduce hours to 48 per week, in line with the 1998 Working Time Regulations?

### **Reasonable additional hours**

- Is there an acknowledgement that excessive additional hours, beyond what is directed by the head teacher, prevent the establishment of a work/life balance?
- Is there a termly (or regular) audit undertaken to determine the additional hours which teachers are working?

### **Accountability systems within the school**

- Is the employer adopting procedures which demonstrate that teachers are trusted and respected?
- Is there confirmation that teachers are not expected to undertake excessive marking and written dialogue with pupils, produce detailed lesson plans and/or hand in lesson plans, in line with Ofsted expectations?
- Is there a commitment to limit observations to three per year, lasting no more than three hours altogether, in line with NEU policy?

### **Calendars**

- Is an annual calendar of meetings, deadlines and events provided to staff before the beginning of the academic year, so that they can plan ahead and manage their workload?
- Are staff consulted on this calendar each year?

### **Directed time**

- Is each teacher provided with a breakdown of directed time at the beginning of the year? Setting out their commitments in regards to teaching, planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, management time and meetings?

### **New initiatives**

- Are all new initiatives assessed for their likely impact on work/life balance prior to implementation? Is this done in consultation between management and trade union representatives?

### **Meetings**

- Is there a commitment that organised meetings will be in line with in NEU policy? This is that meetings should not last for more than 60 minutes, should be held on average no more than one evening per week during a term, with a maximum of two evenings within any one week.
- Are meetings timetabled at the beginning of the academic year?
- Is there confirmation that teachers who are not contractually obliged to work on certain days (eg part-time staff) will not be expected to attend meetings on these days?

### **Working at home**

- 1) Is consideration given to requests to work from home during PPA time?
  - Job sharing and part-time working
- 2) Is there a commitment to accommodating requests for flexible working, such as job shares and part-time working, wherever possible?

### **The position of the head teacher**

- Is there consideration of the need to ensure a work/life balance for the head teacher and other senior managers?

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