Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru
National Academy for Educational Leadership Wales

Keeping in touch

Meet our Associates

Ian has nearly fifteen years' experience as a member of senior management teams in schools in North Wales and has been headteacher at Ysgol Aberconwy for the last five years. He is also actively involved in many groups across the local authority.

He is an NPQH assessor, has worked as a PiXL associate and is a peer inspector for Estyn. His team works closely with the GWE consortia to help develop and share best practice with other schools, and to help develop the leaders of tomorrow.

As the summer term begins and the period of lockdown is extended, I have continued to think about ways of supporting the well-being of my staff. For many, the beginning of the term, although far from 'normal', has brought with it a sense of routine – subject teachers are back to thinking about setting work for their classes, pastoral staff are thinking about how to engage students in their learning – but equally lockdown continues to prove an isolated challenge for us all.

Based on the 'Well-being of Future Generations Act', we understand well-being for our workforce as having the means and ability to undertake their work effectively. I have centred my thinking on this at the start of this term and have tried to ensure that we foster a sense of familiarity in our routines and systems to cope with these strange times.

For example,

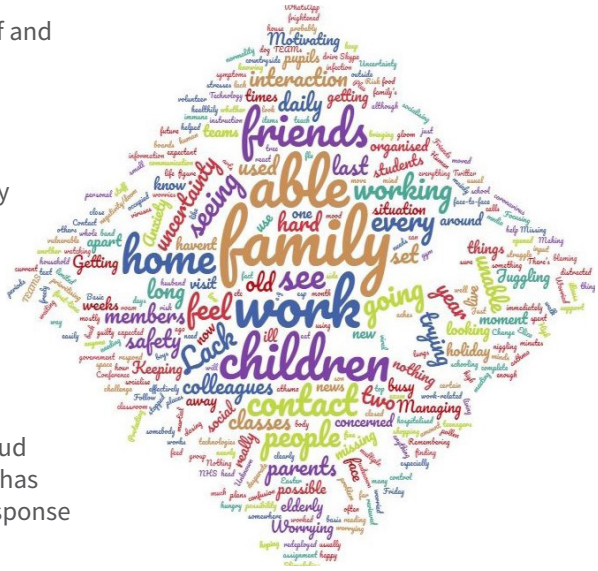
- We have returned to a weekly 'virtual' briefing on a Monday morning, just as we would normally do in the staff room.
- I have reduced the number of daily updates by email, to a weekly one, to replicate our usual weekly bulletin.
- We are returning to our usual 'calendared' meetings on line to discuss our new ways of working with the different teams that operate across the school.
- Line management meetings are up and running again to provide the support that people need to operate in their new roles.

Whilst this may be helpful, we are also aware that times are not normal, and so we have continued to engage with staff and students to 'check in' with them and to see how they're doing. One thing that we found useful was to encouraged all staff and students to complete a quick questionnaire to evaluate their own well-being, to help us inform strategy and to address individual issues as they arise. Brevity has been the key here, to provide a quick and accurate snapshot, which we can repeat regularly to test the water and adjust our processes accordingly.

We asked four questions :

- Name – this was deliberately not an anonymous survey
- A rating (1 to 10) of your well-being
- What are you finding particularly challenging during this period of self-isolation?
- Is there anything school can do to support you more?

The results from both staff and students showed us that our support strategies are generally working well, but we spoke to every member of the community who scored their well-being at less than 5 to check in with them and to let them know what help is available should they need it. The responses from staff are summarised in a word cloud and show that their focus has necessarily changed in response to our current situation.



There are many things that we can do to support staff, students and families at this time, but it is clear that one of the most important is keeping in touch with them, letting them know that you are there for them, and providing them with the tools and support they need to work in a new way. This is nothing new in itself, but we are all having to find new ways to demonstrate the skills that have served us well over the years – hopefully this is just one idea that might help us do just that.

Further information and resources can be found at
www.nael.cymru

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