

School Staff Crave Wellbeing Support

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New research has revealed a major disconnect between the wellbeing support schools provide to staff, and what teachers and education employees say they need – highlighting that current offerings are falling short and instead proposing what education professionals really value.

According to **Heka**, 97% of HR teams say a flexible wellbeing programme improves organisational culture, and 93% of employees say an intentional wellbeing programme makes them healthier. For schools, this translates directly into better retention, stronger engagement, and reduced burnout among staff. A proactive approach to workplace wellbeing boosts morale, supports productivity, and ultimately benefits pupils.

Heka's 2025 Employee Wellbeing Trends Report draws on data from 40,000 wellbeing interactions, revealing what staff want, and what works. The Benefits Gap Report showed that 34% of employees chose workplace perks that were not offered in their organisation's programme – a huge mismatch between supply and demand.

*For schools, the question is clear: are existing wellbeing offers meaningful, or are they tick-box exercises? **Alex Hind, CEO of Heka**, highlights the importance of relevance: "Employee benefits are paramount for wellbeing, retention, and satisfaction. Unfortunately, the benefits landscape is flooded*

with tick-box solutions that often go unused or are not relevant to the individual. Employee benefits without intention get lost in the void, so it's essential to stay informed with what employees want from their workplace benefits and align employers with that."

The #1 Missed Opportunity in Schools: Nutrition

Nutrition plays an integral role in health and wellbeing, yet it remains a missed opportunity in most workplace programmes. Heka's data shows 42% of employees chose nutrition as a top benefit, but only 1% of employers provide nutrition-based perks.

In schools, this is particularly important. Teachers are constantly balancing workloads, irregular breaks, and high energy demands — making nutrition a cornerstone of resilience. Just as children are encouraged to “eat well to learn well,” the same principle applies to teachers: a healthy diet supports brain function, energy, and overall wellbeing.

Investing in staff nutrition can reduce absenteeism, improve concentration, and build a healthier workforce — outcomes that ripple across the whole school community.

Sustainability Matters to Staff

Sustainability isn't just a school priority for students; it's increasingly becoming a key part of staff wellbeing too. In 2024, B Corp benefits rose to the fifth most chosen employee perk among Gen Z. For schools, eco-initiatives such as bike-to-work schemes, green commuting options, and energy-conscious estates align with staff values while supporting institutional sustainability goals.

When sustainability practices are embedded, schools not only meet policy expectations but also strengthen staff morale by showing alignment with their values.

Reproductive Health and Inclusivity in Education

Around half of employees are affected by reproductive health — whether menstruation, endometriosis, menopause, or post-partum depression — yet these remain under-addressed in many workplaces, including schools.

According to Bupa, almost 1 million women leave the workforce each year due to menopause symptoms, yet 90% of workplaces offer no support. For schools, this is

especially concerning given the high proportion of women in the workforce.

Destigmatising reproductive health, and embedding menopause-friendly and inclusive wellbeing practices, is vital for retention and equity in education. Without intentional support, schools risk losing experienced teachers and leaders.

Wellbeing is Multi-Faceted

Wellbeing cannot be siloed. Financial, mental, physical, and emotional health are interconnected. For example, 66% of people with poor financial health also report mental health struggles, while 50% of those with mental health issues also experience sleep problems.

For schools, this means wellbeing policies should be holistic and flexible, providing staff with options that are tailored to their needs — whether financial planning, counselling, fitness, or community support. A one-size-fits-all approach won't work; personalisation is key.

Key Takeaway for Schools

Investing in staff wellbeing isn't a "nice to have." It directly impacts retention, productivity, and pupil outcomes. By aligning staff benefits with what employees truly need — from nutrition and sustainability to reproductive health and flexible wellbeing support — schools can create healthier, happier, and more resilient teaching environments.

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