

# Staff Wellbeing Strategy

2024–27



# Strategy on a page

We are focused on **3 key priorities** to improve the wellbeing of our staff.

## Supporting our staff

All staff should work in a safe and supportive environment, built around a strong culture of trust, respect and inclusion that supports them to achieve their best throughout their career.

## Leading our people

Where our leaders work in a safe and supportive environment and are respected, capable and trusted to make complex and challenging decisions, in the best interests of staff, students and school communities.

## Streamlining our work

With clear and streamlined work, we can effectively manage sustainable workload for all staff, implement change appropriately, and be clear on our strategic direction to support teaching and learning outcomes.

### Who

This strategy will support the wellbeing of all staff across the department.

### Why

The wellbeing of all staff across our schools, workplaces and services is our priority and key to everything that we do, so our staff are able to perform at their best to deliver positive outcomes.

### When

The strategy will run across 4 years from 2024–27, aligned to [Our Plan for NSW Public Education](#)

### How

The strategy will be accompanied by an implementation plan so all staff can clearly see the deliverables against the strategy and how we will work together to improve staff wellbeing.

In addition, our Staff Wellbeing Team will work with schools and workplaces to support our leaders to foster positive wellbeing environments.



# Letter from the Secretary

The wellbeing of all staff across our schools and workplaces is of the utmost importance. We know through a wealth of research and evidence that positive staff wellbeing underpins strong school performance and teaching and learning outcomes.

The challenges we face as an education department are not unique to NSW or Australia, however they are not small by any means.

This strategy is a critical step in acknowledging the systemic issues being faced across the department, and the trust that is critical to rebuild between our school-based staff, education support teams and services, by creating a unified workforce who value and respect each other's professional expertise and contribute to the system.

It will place the department in a pivotal position of leading the way in supporting staff wellbeing and implementing creative approaches to addressing our challenges.

To do this, we need to acknowledge our challenges and our mistakes. We need to ensure that the issue of workload is addressed, that our staff work in a culture based on trust, where leaders are trusted to make decisions and staff are treated fairly and equitably through robust processes. We need to fix the systems and processes that are no longer fit for purpose and address the significant impact that community behaviours and violence is having on our staff in schools and workplaces.

We want all staff to feel trusted and respected.

This strategy will:

- improve the safety and wellbeing of our staff
- make changes where it is most needed
- focus on our outcomes and not the quantity of our outputs
- streamline and strengthen our structure to support the needs of schools
- be agile to respond to our ever-changing needs and challenges.

**Murat Dizdar**  
Secretary, NSW Department of Education



# What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is fluid and allows people to manage the normal stressors of life, work and learn productively, realise their potential, and participate in their community.

For the department, the wellbeing of all staff is our priority. We know that when our staff are well, trusted, respected and supported, they function well and in turn our staff and students thrive.

Staff wellbeing relates to all aspects of working life.

From the quality and safety of our physical environments, effectively mitigating and managing our psychological risks, emotional and social connections within our workplaces and communities, and the support available to all staff.

# Our purpose

To build a culture based on trust, where staff thrive through the provision of safe, respectful and inclusive schools, workplaces and services, with safety and wellbeing underpinning optimal working and learning outcomes.



This strategy supports the delivery of [Our Plan for NSW Public Education](#) and the key focus area of strengthening trust and respect for the teaching profession and school support staff.

# Our priorities

## Supporting our staff

Supporting the wellbeing of all staff across the department is integral to this strategy.

The aim of this priority is to:

- Strengthen employee engagement, consultation and collaboration and address the challenges being faced by staff to continue to improve their wellbeing.
- Ensure all staff across the department are provided access to wellbeing programs, services and support tailored to meet their personal needs.
- Strengthen systems and support that impact on the individual wellbeing of all staff in a workplace.

From teachers in front of our classrooms, school administration staff, leadership teams, education support units and services; all staff should work in a safe and supportive environment, built around a strong culture of trust, respect and inclusion that supports them to achieve their best throughout their career.

Goal	What are we going to do?	What are we going to achieve?	Why?
<b>1.1</b> Strengthen engagement and collaboration with all staff.	We will establish employee engagement and feedback mechanisms with all staff through routine and consistent approaches to address challenges being faced and improve collaboration.	Rebuild trust across all staff, by ensuring a deeper understanding of the challenges faced on a consistent and frequent basis. Through working together we will design interventions and actions at a local and systemic level.	To provide the department with evidence informed understanding of the challenges staff are facing and to gain feedback to inform and prioritise interventions and actions to address.
<b>1.2</b> Improve the physical and psychological health and wellbeing of all staff.	We will align staff wellbeing programs, services and support to meet the needs of all staff. This will ensure alignment to different operating contexts and provision of inclusive initiatives to improve the physical and psychological health and wellbeing of staff.	Ensure staff wellbeing programs, services and support are aligned to the needs of all staff, including looking for opportunities to further improve and expand services.	To provide all staff across the department with access to a range of wellbeing programs, services and support to enable them to manage their personal wellbeing.
<b>1.3</b> Strengthen systems and support that impact on staff health and wellbeing in the workplace.	We will strengthen the systems and support that are critical to support individual wellbeing in a workplace, from staff onboarding and career development to role clarity and recognition.	Improved systems and support for all staff, where everyone feels respected, valued, safe and included.	To ensure all staff are valued and recognised for the contributions they make and are provided with clear support and opportunities throughout their work with the department.

## Leading our people

The leaders in our schools and workplaces are at the centre of driving workplace culture and fostering safe working and learning environments.

The aim of this priority is to:

- Strengthen support for our leaders in managing their schools and workplaces and wellbeing of their staff.
- Strengthen physical and psychological safety of our schools and workplaces by understanding the critical risks to support in proactive management and mitigation.
- Rebuild trust and support in our leaders in making complex and challenging decisions.
- Address the impact of occupational violence and community demands on our schools and workplaces.

We respect, trust and support our leaders to make complex and challenging decisions in the best interests of staff, students and school communities.

Goal	What are we going to do?	What are we going to achieve?	Why?
<b>2.1</b> <b>Strengthen support for our leaders.</b>	We will review and update our leadership programs, training, resources and support to determine gaps and opportunities for improvement, including embedding practical skills and wellbeing support into practice.	Ensure our leaders have the best practical and tailored leadership programs to support them in leading the wellbeing of their teams.	Our leaders are critical in shaping the culture of our schools and workplaces, for staff, students and school communities and need to be supported in managing their workplaces, the wellbeing of their staff and complexity of issues faced.
<b>2.2</b> <b>Strengthen the physical and psychological safety of our workplaces.</b>	We will work across the department to develop and review frameworks to effectively manage the physical and psychological hazards and risks impacting on the wellbeing of all staff.	Ensure the department has frameworks in place to manage the physical and psychological hazards and risks, across different operating contexts. This will include an understanding of department specific psychosocial hazards and risks, in addition to ensuring the design and development of our physical environments, creating healthy, inclusive, accessible and productive environments.	To ensure the department is managing psychosocial risks, including providing support for school and workplace leaders in managing local level hazards and risks.  To provide the highest quality fit for purpose environments to improve the wellbeing of our staff and students through the quality of their working and learning environments.
<b>2.3</b> <b>Address occupational violence and community demands impacting on school and workplace communities.</b>	We will develop and implement a program to address occupational violence in education to build and support positive school and workplace communities and keep our staff safe from violence in the workplace.	Ensure schools and workplaces are supported in building and maintaining positive communities and focus on rebuilding the respect for teachers and staff working within our schools and workplaces.	To address the challenges schools and workplaces are facing daily with occupational violence from our students, parents, and the community, including the increasing demands placed on schools.

## Streamlining our work

Streamlining and strengthening our work is critical to improving the wellbeing of all staff.

The aim of this priority is to:

- Align and simplify policies, systems, processes and communications to meet the needs of our schools.
- Implement and manage change through structured engagement and collaboration.
- Reduce the workload burden on our schools by streamlining our work and removing ambiguity.

With clear and streamlined work, we can effectively manage sustainable workload for all staff, implement change appropriately, and be clear on our strategic direction to support teaching and learning outcomes for schools.

Goal	What are we going to do?	What are we going to achieve?	Why?
<b>3.1</b> <b>Strengthen the department's governance framework for managing change.</b>	We will review the department's central coordinated governance framework to ensure all existing and in development policies, programs and initiatives are consistently implemented and endorsed, with resources and funding focused on the right priorities.	Ensuring proposed work programs support the department's strategic direction and are implemented within schools at an appropriate time, with the change clearly managed.	To decrease unnecessary workload burden on schools, ensuring that an appropriate level of change or programs are rolled out per term with streamlined communications.
<b>3.2</b> <b>Simplify policies, systems and processes.</b>	We will review and update all existing policies, systems and processes across the department to improve and simplify, determining where alignment to the different operating contexts of schools is required, and opportunities for improvement.	Ensure all policies, systems and processes align to the overarching strategic direction of the department and are developed to support the different operating contexts of schools.	To ensure policies, systems and processes are evidence-informed and meet the needs of schools and workplaces, making it easier for staff to do their jobs.
<b>3.3</b> <b>Improve our communication methods with schools and workplaces.</b>	We will implement a central coordinated approach to the release of communications and access to information.	Improve the access to information for staff across the department through our intranet and streamline the delivery of communications through a central and coordinated approach.	To ensure staff can access information, services and support to do their job when they need it and are aware through central communications what is available across the department.

# Governance

The Staff Wellbeing Strategy is the responsibility of all areas of the department. However, to ensure there is effective management of the strategy, the Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing Directorate will be responsible for the operational oversight across the 4-year period.

A Staff Wellbeing Steering Committee, reporting directly into the Secretary, will be established to:

- review and endorse the progression of reforms, programs and initiatives aligned to the strategy
- monitor the risks associated with successful delivery
- ensure appropriate consultation is taking place
- monitor and review quality and effectiveness
- provide strategic direction and make decisions based on strategic and operational requirements.

To support the Staff Wellbeing Steering Committee, a stakeholder working group will be established to ensure that staff continue to be engaged and consulted regarding the issues impacting their wellbeing.



## What success will look like:



The department is an employer of choice in education.

**How will we measure it:**

- Staff report an increase in job satisfaction and wellbeing.
- Staff report a positive shift in having the time to do their job well and decrease in high job demands.
- Staff report an increase in role clarity and expectations.
- Staff report an increase in confidence with objective, fair recruitment processes being taken.



Wellbeing is embedded into our decision-making processes.

**How will we measure it:**

- Staff report an increase in trust and support from the department.
- The quantity of changes being implemented across the department is kept to an agreed, acceptable level per term.
- Staff report an increase in being consulted with and their voices heard.



Safety and wellbeing are part of how we think, how we feel and what we do every day.

**How will we measure it:**

- Increased engagement with safety and wellbeing services and support.
- Improved response time for the reporting of incidents and injuries.
- Staff report an increase in access to training and support to conduct their roles.



Safe and supportive working environments where physical and psychological risks are addressed in a proactive and consistent manner.

**How will we measure it:**

- A reduction in work-related physical and psychological incidents and injuries.
- A reduction in allegations of bullying and harassment.
- A reduction in the number of staff complaints and grievances.
- A reduction of staff absence from the workplace due to work-related injuries.



Existing staff are retained, and new staff are attracted to the profession.

**How will we measure it:**

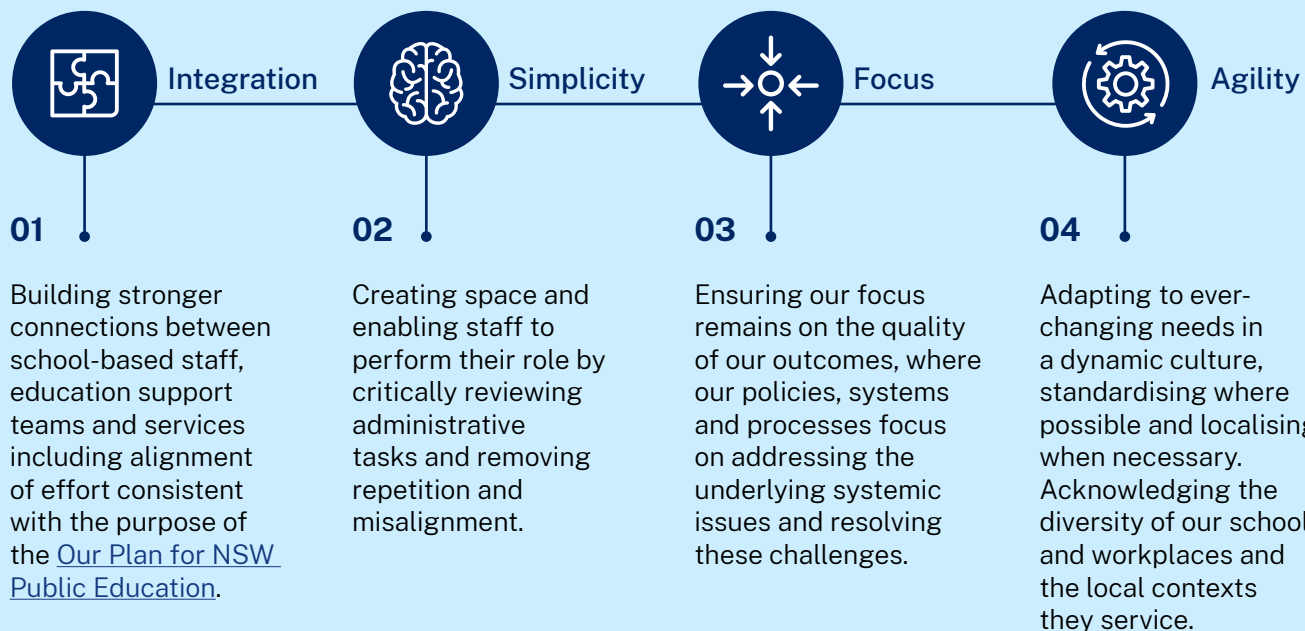
- Staff retention rates increase with specific focus on school-based employees.
- An increase in casual teacher numbers.
- An increase in beginning teachers entering the department from university.
- An increase in school-based staff applying for departmental roles from external organisations or interstate.

# Appendix



## Pillars

The strategy is developed with four design pillars in mind:



## NSW Department of Education

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and the places in which we live. We celebrate the First Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationship to Country, and their rich contribution to Australia. We pay respect to Ancestors and Elders past, present and future.

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### Say hello

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