

Staff well-being at Vyners Learning Trust



As a Leading Edge school, Vyners is continually looking for ways to innovate and strive for excellence. Much work has been done on teaching and learning, professional development, behaviour for learning, raising standards and developing the curriculum, all of which continue to have positive effects on the School's ethos and culture. With life-balance and workforce remodelling at the top of the national education agenda, the School has turned some of its innovative energies towards staff well-being. Vyners was very quick to embrace the workforce remodelling agenda and prides itself on an outstanding team of support staff and systems to compliment the fantastic teaching staff. The School has invested a significant amount of time and money into the staff-wellbeing programme in recent years, including a £20,000 redevelopment of the staff room in 2016. In order to bring together current initiatives alongside some new ideas we have developed the 'Feeling Valued at Vyners' programme.

"Feeling Valued at Vyners' is much more than the staff letting their hair down once in a while. It is a complete package of benefits, events and initiatives to help staff feel supported and valued in the workplace. The package can be broadly categorised into well-being, benefits, partnerships and professional development.

Well-being – Through the 'Feeling Valued at Vyners' programme, we have a staff suggestions box in the staffroom, regularly seek staff opinion on a range of issues and operate staff focus groups to monitor well-being and work-life balance. Staff are very supportive of each other, new staff have a buddy or mentor. There are opportunities to get involved in Friday Fitness and 5-a-side football as well as use of the fitness suite which has a range of cardio equipment and free weights. Staff receive long service awards to reward loyalty at fifteen years and in five year intervals after that. Should you wish to, there is Secret Santa every Christmas, Thank you Raffles at the end of each term and random events such as flashmobs, staff dress-up day and the end of term panto!

Benefits – All staff have access to free tea and coffee throughout the day. The staffroom was fully refurbished in 2016 to provide staff with a professional space to relax or work including a bank of desktop computers and Google Chromebooks for use. Vyners subscribes to a scheme that enables us to offer Childcare vouchers, and other salary sacrifice schemes including bicycle purchase, low emission cars and the potential (for some) to buy back increased annual leave. NQTs are employed from the 1st July for a three week, paid induction programme before commencing full-time employment in September. As a high performing and significantly oversubscribed school, Vyners School offers staff preferential admission arrangements for their children to attend the school. Staff have the option of opting in to the 4/5 salary scheme which enables members to take a paid, one year, sabbatical after working for four years at the School. The School is able to offer season ticket loans for rail/ bus travel. Staff that complete a school year without missing a day through illness or medical appointments are recognised and awarded a half day extra holiday for the following academic year. Staff at Vyners are given seven professional learning days which is two more than most schools to enable effective team planning and moderation throughout the academic year.

Partnerships – The school has negotiated discounts for staff with local businesses, such as restaurants, private gyms and beauty therapists. We have set up 'time saver' initiatives with other businesses such as garages, car washing and dry cleaners. We also raise awareness of local and national benefits available to school employees when they arise.

Professional – All new staff to the school are given help settling in with mentors and support meetings. We have an excellent, comprehensive staff development programme which has been recognised as ‘Transforming’ by the SSAT. Staff are encouraged to continue their learning, with a number following Masters level study. We provide numerous opportunities to encourage staff to share good practice through the Teaching and Learning Community (TLC) that meets weekly, internal and external TeachMeets and an annual Teaching and Learning Conference with excellent keynote speakers.

At Vyners School we recognise that our staff work extremely hard to achieve the high standards we set ourselves, going above and beyond to ensure that the students here get a better deal than they would in any other school. ‘Feeling Valued at Vyners’ goes a small way to recognising that commitment and demonstrating how much we value the adults that work in our community. Please ask any member of staff for more details if you come to visit us.

James Heale
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