

## Focus: Autonomy/Control

The emotion needs audit asks this question: Do you feel in control of your life most of the time?

In both their personal and professional lives teachers need to be able to control what happens around them and to them. In the ASE SOS Pilot Study (May 2021) a feeling autonomy and in control of at least one major aspect of their lives midway in the ranking (ranked 5 out of 10). Teacher autonomy appears to be decreasing and impacting well being (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Green, 2021) <sup>1</sup>, so it is an important factor to consider.

### ***What does this mean?***

Professionally teachers need autonomy when it come to making decisions about how they manage their time and do their job. This impacts their personal lives as well, as many teachers have to manage their personal life around work.

Teachers already have fixed times that they must work day to day and throughout the year. They have no control over those hours. However, there are elements of the job where they do have autonomy of when and where they do the job e.g. planning, marking

Teachers rarely have autonomy of what they teach (the curriculum), and little say on when it is taught (the timetable, scheme of learning), but they do have professional autonomy on how they teach their subject and classes.

Change needs to managed with staff to allow it to happen successfully, with as little disruption as possible.

### ***Life (Issues external to work)***

All teachers have a personal life where they have autonomy of how they use that time. Making changes to that time can have a negative impact e.g. changing the times of the school day, term times, moving the time/date of meetings with short notice can have an impact on that.

### ***Work place issues***

- Sudden change in meeting times/dates or new meetings at short notice impact autonomy
- Rigid schemes of learning, where lessons must be taught in a particular way or order
- Changes made in any aspect of a job: teaching room; timetable; year group; new topics; teaching out of specialism etc.

### ***What can you do?***

Give staff some choice in what is happening to them:

- Involvement in decisions that affect their work department level
- Balancing individual needs with departmental needs
- Balancing individual needs with whole school needs
- Space to work: own desk space (avoid hot desking) , own teaching room (minimise movement between rooms)

Departmental considerations:

- Involvement in discussions about timetabling
- Open communication during times of change
- Managing change so that when something new is implemented, something else is removed.
- When change is imposed, give responsibility to colleagues for part of that change.
- Let teachers know what opportunities there are in the department and school in the short and medium term.

Whole school considerations:

- Ensuring that science teachers have some say in change
- Managing change together
- Let teachers know what opportunities there are in the department and school in the short and medium term.

## Relevant RISE tools and resources

### *Wellbeing / emotional needs*



Supporting Sign-Posts



Supporting colleagues with mental health issues



Latham's One-to-Ones's – Guidance

### *Job Satisfaction*



Establishing support networks



Managing working relationships

### *Career Intentions*



Individual Career Planning



Ensuring your staff leave happy



Progression Planning



Department size and shape (short, medium and long term)

<sup>1</sup> Pearson, L. C., & Moomaw, W. (2005). The relationship between teacher autonomy and stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. *Educational research quarterly*, 29(1), 38-54.