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Leadership and teamwork in the early years

Agenda:

Agenda for Team Meeting:

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Members in attendance

Katie – Safeguarding Officer

Kelly – ALNCo

Jack – Wellbeing Officer

Lyndsey – Foundation Phase Lead

Molly – KS2 Teacher

Cerys – Parental Engagement Officer

- 3. Support and development for new staff- Kelly (ALNCo)
- 4. Reviewing safeguarding policy and safeguarding update- Katie (Safeguarding Officer)

- 5. Consistency of Foundation Phase classroom practice and environment- Lyndsey (Foundation Phase Lead)
- 6. Jack- The importance of wellbeing for staff and what steps to take. (Wellbeing officer)
- 7. New curriculum update- Molly (KS2 Teacher)
- 8. Update on parental support and action plan-Cerys (Parental Engagement Officer)
- 9. Any other business.
- 10. Recap.

Script:

Thanks. As the Wellbeing Officer, my main responsibility in this meeting is to explain how I'm going to support our new staff member when they join us. Wellbeing isn't just something we mention now and again; it plays a real part in how confident, capable and motivated staff feel. So, the way I lead in this role has a direct impact on how smoothly they settle in and how ready they are to contribute to the team.

When I think about leadership in my role, it's not about authority or telling people what to do. It's much more about the atmosphere I help create. Jillian Rodd talks a lot about

relationship-centred leadership in Early Years, where leaders support others by being approachable, communicative and consistent. I try to use that style of leadership in this role: listening carefully, checking in regularly, and making sure people feel valued rather than judged. Rodd's work reminds me that the emotional tone of a setting often starts with how we treat each other, and I want the new staff member to sense straight away that they're entering a supportive team. Fennies Nurseries (2024) states that Rodd believes that the most impactful leaders in Early Years are not those who seek power, but those who seek positive change, for children, for families and for their teams.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation Theory also shapes how I approach leadership in wellbeing. Nickerson (2025) explains that Herzberg's two-factor theory suggests that job satisfaction is influenced by two factors: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators, like recognition and achievement, lead to higher satisfaction and motivation. Hygiene factors, such as salary and working conditions, prevent dissatisfaction but don't necessarily motivate. According to Herzberg, both sets of factors are needed to create a productive work environment.

According to Herzberg, "hygiene factors" prevent dissatisfaction, while "motivators" actually help people enjoy their job. My leadership needs to support both. On the hygiene side, that means making sure the new staff member has clear information, a safe and organised working environment, and no confusion about expectations. Then, on the motivator side, it means helping them experience early success, giving them encouragement, and highlighting their strengths. By leading in a way that offers clarity and motivation, I can help them feel secure and optimistic about their role. Wisdom Wellbeing (2025) states that people who think positively about their situations are more likely to find workable solutions quickly and avoid a lot of stress. They are also able to cope better with high-pressure situations.

In practical terms, the first part of leading them well is simply welcoming them properly. The first day sets the tone for everything. I'll make sure they're introduced to everyone, shown around the setting, and guided through our routines. This may sound simple, but feeling ignored or unsure on day one can really knock someone's confidence. My role is to lead by creating a calm and reassuring start rather than letting them wander around trying to figure things out. This will be crucial because, according to Indeed (2025), feeling this way can

cause the new employee to make mistakes, knock their confidence and hinder their growth. This can lead to them viewing their work environment as stressful and overwhelming, which can result in poor job performance and poor mental health.

Another part of my leadership will be pairing them with a buddy in their corridor or workspace for the first two weeks. The buddy system isn't just about practical support, although that's important; it's about giving them a familiar face and reducing that feeling of being the "new person". In line with Rodd's ideas, this is a form of shared leadership: everyone helps each other, not just managers. I'll speak to the chosen buddy beforehand, so they understand the importance of being patient, approachable, and proactive in offering help.

To prevent the new member feeling overwhelmed, I'll also create a simple but realistic induction timetable. I will show my leadership skills here by providing clarity. A lot of early stress comes from not knowing what you should be doing or feeling like you're behind before you've even started. So, I'll break the first week into small, achievable tasks like supporting during dinner time and joining in with activities. These early "wins" help build confidence. Herzberg would classify this as tapping into motivation by offering achievement and meaningful responsibility. It also shows the new colleague that we believe in their ability. Self-belief is important for people in the workplace, as their success can lead them to take initiative, contribute positively, and resist pressures that could lead to unethical or counterproductive actions, according to Fida (2025).

Another important part of leadership in my role is maintaining open communication. Page (2018) states that good communication is an essential tool in achieving productivity and maintaining strong working relationships. I don't want the new staff member to feel they have to hide their worries or pretend everything is fine. So, I'll arrange a wellbeing check-in at the end of week one, and another around week four. These won't be formal or intimidating; they're a chance to ask how they're finding things, what they feel confident about, and whether anything is troubling them. This reflects Rodd's view that good leaders listen and respond rather than simply monitor. By offering these check-ins, I'm leading in a way that invites honesty and reduces stress.

I also see part of my leadership responsibilities as making sure they feel equipped. People feel anxious when they feel unprepared, so I'll make sure they have access to all the policies and procedures they need, including safeguarding and health and safety. I will also ensure they are booked onto key training straight away, such as safeguarding and first aid. This supports hygiene factors like structure and clarity, but it also ties into motivators by helping them grow professionally. When someone feels we're investing in them, their wellbeing and motivation naturally improve.

Overall, my approach and way of showing leadership in this role is grounded in support, clarity and care. I aim to lead in a way that makes the new colleague feel welcome, valued and safe to ask questions. By drawing on both Jillian Rodd's ideas about positive, relationship-based leadership and Herzberg's theory about motivation and job satisfaction, I'm shaping an induction that supports both their emotional and professional needs.

If we get this right, the new staff member will settle in much quicker, feel more confident, and begin contributing in a meaningful way from early on. And in the long run, supporting wellbeing in this way strengthens the whole team, improves communication, and ultimately benefits the children in our care. Thank you.

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