

## Balance Before Burnout: Practical Workload Strategies for Teaching staff





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Effective planning is at the heart of successful teaching. For teachers in the UK, balancing lesson preparation, marking, assessments, meetings, and pastoral responsibilities can quickly become overwhelming without a clear strategy in place.

Thoughtful workload planning not only supports high-quality teaching but also protects staff wellbeing and helps prevent burnout. In this issue of Wellnews, we explore practical time and workload management strategies across the academic year, highlight why these are essential for teacher wellbeing, share five helpful podcasts and videos on the topic, and demonstrate how artificial intelligence (AI) can be used as a powerful tool to streamline planning, marking, and organisation.

Whether you're a new teacher or an experienced practitioner, these insights can help you work smarter—not harder—throughout the school year.

## Year-Round Strategies

### 1. Prioritise with Purpose:

- Use the Eisenhower Matrix (urgent vs. important) to sort tasks.
- Focus on high-impact activities (like lesson planning) rather than perfection in everything.

### 2. Use Planning Tools:

- Digital tools like Google Calendar, Trello, or Microsoft To Do help visualise workload.
- Colour-code by task type (planning, marking, meetings, etc.) for clarity.

### 3. Batch Similar Tasks:

- Mark a class set of work in one sitting where possible.
- Group admin tasks like emails or data entry to specific time slots.

### 4. Delegate When Possible:

- Share resources and lesson planning with department members.
- Use teaching assistants effectively for preparation and support.

### 5. Set Boundaries:

- Establish start/end times for work each day.
- Avoid checking work emails outside of work hours.



## Term-by-Term Breakdown

### Autumn Term (Sep–Dec)

- Frontload Planning: Prepare schemes of work early while energy is high.
- Establish Routines: For behaviour, homework, marking - saves time later.
- Use INSET Days Wisely: Organise key assessments and resources.
- Stay Organised: Create digital folders for each class and topic.

### Spring Term (Jan–Apr)

- Streamline Assessment: Use marking codes and feedback strategies like whole-class feedback to save time.
- Revise and Review: Begin revision planning with exam groups early.
- Plan Ahead for Reports: Schedule report writing in chunks to avoid last-minute stress.

### Summer Term (May–Jul)

- Leverage Student Independence: Encourage independent work to free time for 1:1 support.
- Reflect and Evaluate: What worked well this year? Start drafting improvements for the next.
- Prep Ahead: Begin groundwork for next year's planning before the break.



## Why This Plan Helps Prevent Burnout

### 1. Controls Overwhelm

Teaching is a profession with never-ending tasks. Having a clear structure and priorities helps teachers focus on what really matters, preventing the feeling of drowning in work.

### 2. Supports Mental Health

Time and workload management reduce chronic stress — a major contributor to burnout. When teachers carve out time for rest, hobbies, and family, they're more likely to stay emotionally balanced.

### 3. Promotes Sustainable Working Habits

Teaching is a marathon, not a sprint. Spreading workload across the year avoids last-minute cramming or all-nighters during reporting and exam season.

### 4. Maintains High-Quality Teaching

Burnout leads to fatigue, reduced patience, and lower-quality lessons. Managing workload ensures teachers have the energy and clarity to deliver engaging, effective teaching.

### 5. Reduces Attrition

The UK faces high teacher dropout rates, especially in the first 5 years. A proactive approach to workload helps retain passionate professionals in the field longer.



## Without Good Workload Management...

### Teachers may experience:

- Exhaustion and cynicism.
- Decreased job satisfaction.
- Trouble sleeping or switching off.
- Diminished classroom performance.
- Increased sick leave or leaving the profession.

A solid workload strategy isn't just about productivity — it's about wellbeing, professional longevity, and sustaining a love for teaching. It turns a chaotic job into a more controlled, manageable profession.

Final thoughts - Why not try picking just one of these areas to focus on during the next term or take some time to reflect on the year so far and think about what you might focus on changing next year? Incremental change can be powerful and lasting – start small and see what improvements this brings to your energy levels.

We would love to receive your feedback on this, or maybe you can share your own workload management tips to help colleagues who are starting out in their career.

## Workload Management session by Alex Moore - Free event for CELT staff 17th May 2025

We also have an awesome event on 17 May which is free for CELT staff. AI in education - Alex More (the main speaker) will be sharing hints and tips on workload management for all staff (not just teachers). Here's a sneak peek at one of his sessions:

### Session 1: AI to reduce workload (Entry level):

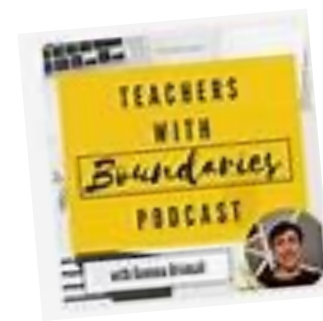
1.5 hours Discover how to harness AI in the classroom: explore innovative tools, enhance student engagement, personalise learning experiences, and streamline administrative tasks through a series of prompts, tools and approaches. Transform your teaching with practical AI applications and strategies designed to save you time.

CELT staff can attend for free using the code INSPIRECELTSTAFF at time of booking. [CLICK HERE](#)



## Want to learn more?

Here some helpful online resources that discuss the area of teacher workload management.



### Teachers with Boundaries Podcast

Hosted by Gemma Drinkall, this podcast offers insights into creating boundaries, reducing teacher guilt and stress, and achieving a sustainable teaching career. Apple Podcasts



### How I Manage My Teacher Workload UK Teacher Advice

In this YouTube video, a secondary school science teacher shares practical methods for managing classroom responsibilities and workload. [CLICK HERE](#)



### The Teacher Burnout Podcast

This podcast explores challenges leading to teacher burnout and offers practical strategies to overcome them, aiming to help educators rediscover their passion. Apple Podcasts



### Time Management: Practical Ways to Make Your Teaching Life Easier

This video provides advice on effective time management techniques tailored for busy teachers. [CLICK HERE](#)



### Podcast 128: Teacher Workload and Wellbeing Policy

This episode discusses the importance of a school's wellbeing policy and its impact on managing teacher workload. [CLICK HERE](#)

These resources offer valuable perspectives and practical strategies to help UK teachers manage their workload and maintain a healthy work-life balance.