



Ombersley Endowed First School and Pre-School Stress Management Policy

Introduction

The Governing Body is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of school employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. This policy will apply to everyone in the school. The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy and the Governing Body will provide the necessary resources to implement the policy.

Definition of stress

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

The Governing Body recognises that there are workplace stressors specific to staff who work in schools. These stressors can include: teacher/student ratios, violence, class discipline, student attitudes, workload, and parental expectations.

Policy

- The Governing Body and Headteacher will identify all workplace stressors and ensure that risk assessments are conducted to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- The Governing Body will consult with staff and their Trade Union Safety Representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- The Governing Body will support training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- Staff affected by stress caused by work factors will be advised of the confidential counselling service provided through Occupational Health.
- The Governing Body will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the school's agreed stress management strategy.

Responsibilities

Headteacher / Line Managers

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment are not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to any member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Where appropriate, seek advice (e.g. from Human Resources) on supporting staff who are experiencing stress or who are off sick as a result of stress.

Employees

- Be aware of possible causes of stress at work and impact on well-being.
- Raise issues of concern with your line manager or Headteacher.
- Accept opportunities for counselling and support when recommended.
- Accept appropriate support from colleagues and line managers.
- Attend relevant training, as required.

Safety representatives

Where there are accredited Trade Union Safety Representatives in school, they:

- must be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress
- must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting any workplace surveys
- must be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process
- should be provided with paid time away from normal duties to attend any Trade Union training relating to workplace stress.

Signed by:

Signed: *L Whitby*

Date: November 2021

Policy Review Date: November 2023

Appendices:

1. HSE Management Standards
2. Risk Assessment process
3. HSE Indicator Tool

The Management Standards

Demands

Includes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work;
- People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and
- Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

Control

How much say the person has in the way they do their work.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work;
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work;
- Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work;
- The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills;
- Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken; and
- Employees are consulted over their work patterns.

Support

Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees;
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff;
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues;
- Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it;
- Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job; and
- Employees receive regular and constructive feedback.

Relationship

Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness;
- Employees share information relevant to their work;
- The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour;
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour; and
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour.

Role

Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible;
- The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities;
- The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear; and
- Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

Change

How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change; and
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes;
- The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals;
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs;
- Employees are aware of timetables for changes;
- Employees have access to relevant support during changes.

Appendix 2: Risk assessment process

Stress Risk Assessment

The stress risk assessment is a combination of the employee's and manager's perceptions of workplace stressors compared against the HSE's management standards.

Although some stress risk assessments will be retrospective, i.e. following a case of stress, it is recommended that the assessment becomes part of the normal performance management process. Managers will then be able to work proactively with staff to manage workplace stressors.

STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

PART ONE: Employee Perception of Workplace Stressors

Employee Name:

Date:

Demands	Examples	Possible Solutions
Work planning Excessive working hours Unrealistic deadlines/ performance targets Working beyond competence Flexible working and leave		
Control		
Timing and pace of work Input into work scheduling and delivery Task priorities		
Role		
Understanding role in team Work matches job description Performance standards		
Relationships		
Bullying or harassment Unacceptable behaviour		
Support		
Management support Work-life balance Regular appraisals		
Change		
Communication of changes Involvement in change process Opportunity to voice opinions		

STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

PART TWO: Manager Perception of Workplace Stressors

Manager Name:

Date:

Demands	Examples	Possible Solutions
Work planning Excessive working hours Unrealistic deadlines/ performance targets Working beyond competence Flexible working and leave		
Control		
Timing and pace of work Input into work scheduling and delivery Task priorities		
Role		
Understanding role in team Work matches job description Performance standards		
Relationships		
Bullying or harassment Unacceptable behaviour		
Support		
Management support Work-life balance Regular appraisals		
Change		
Communication of changes Involvement in change process Opportunity to voice opinions		

STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

PART THREE: Action Plan

Issue	Action to Resolve Issue	Action By	Date Completed
1. Demands			
2. Control			
3. Role			
4. Relationships			
5. Support			
6. Change			

Action plan developed by:

Date:

Agreed by (Line Manager):

Date:

Appendix 3 HSE Indicator Tool and Analysis Tool

HSE's Management Standards Indicator Tool is a 35-item questionnaire relating to the six primary stressors identified in the Management Standards for Work Related Stress. The items are based on the best available evidence linking work design to health outcomes. It has been designed to support the process described in the Management Standards by providing a broad indication to organisations of how well their workforce rate their performance in managing the risks associated with work-related stress.

The Indicator Tool can be used as a standalone measuring device, or alternatively, the items can be included in another question set, such as a pre-existing staff survey. It is recommended that the HSE Management Standards Analysis Tool be used to score the responses, regardless of whether it is used as a standalone measuring device or incorporated into a wider staff survey. The results from the HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool should be confirmed by discussing the findings with employees, and also by considering other data that is available within the organisation, such as sickness absence rates, employee turnover.

MANAGING WORK-RELATED STRESS

Who is this guidance intended for and why has it been produced?

This guidance for schools is intended for Headteachers, Governing Bodies and School Managers to raise their awareness of the issue of work-related stress and their legal duty of care to ensure their employees are not harmed by work-related stress. It has also been produced to assist schools in drawing up a Stress Management Policy and carrying out risk assessments to minimise the incidence of work-related stress.

What is stress?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them". There is a clear distinction between pressure, which can be a motivating factor, and stress, which can occur when this pressure becomes excessive.

What are the work stressors for people who work in schools?

Potential causes of work-related stress in schools may differ from those encountered in other organisations and so may need managing differently, e.g:

- Organisational change, e.g. school closures or amalgamations
- Workload
- Management style
- Mismatch between job and person's abilities
- Class discipline and student attitudes and behaviour
- Parental expectations
- Child protection issues.

Why is it necessary to manage work-related stress?

1. To reduce sickness absence

HSE information shows that nationally:

- Work-related stress caused workers in Great Britain to lose 10.8 million working days in 2010/11. This represents a drop in working days lost since 2001/02 from 12.9 million days.

- The occupations that reported the highest rates of work-related stress in the last three years were health and social service managers, teachers and social welfare associate professionals.

2. To enhance the well-being of staff and benefit the school

Tackling stress can have a positive effect on:

- Employee commitment to work
- Staff performance and contribution
- Staff turnover or intention to leave
- Staff recruitment and retention.
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3. To comply with the law

Employers have duties:

- Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities; and
- Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to take measures to control that risk.

What are schools expected to do?

- Apply the HSE Management Standards as good practice and a framework for stress risk assessments
- Identify and support staff exhibiting signs of stress
- Consider the benefits of introducing a school stress management policy.

What are the HSE Management Standards?

The Management Standards cover six key areas of work design (Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role, Change) that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. The Standards help you to measure your school's performance in managing work-related stress. Each standard provides simple statements about good management practice in each of the six areas (see Appendix 1). It is recommended that each school assesses its management practices against the standard.

HSE does not expect every employer to meet all the Standards at their first attempt. The Standards are goals that employers should be working towards through an ongoing process of risk assessment and continuous improvement.

How do you carry out a stress risk assessment?

The HSE Management Standards provide a framework to enable you to identify, manage and control the risk factors which can cause work related stress. If any employees are exhibiting signs of stress, consideration should be given to carrying out an individual risk assessment with the person(s) concerned using the forms shown in Appendix 2.

How does this guidance relate to other policies, procedures and guidance for dealing with health and staff management issues?

Children's Services HR Guidance on Managing Sickness Absence – provides specific advice on dealing with sickness absence which could be stress related; (available from EduLink/Leadership and Management/Human Resources).

Children's Services Leave of Absence Guidelines – covers time off provisions for a range of statutory and discretionary reasons in support of staff; (available from EduLink, as above).

Worklife Support's Well-Being Programme - some schools have participated in this programme which the HSE recognises as an acceptable approach to managing stress levels.

Common mental health problems: Supporting school staff by taking positive action - advice leaflet available from DfE at www.education.gov.uk/publications, ref: DCSF-00380-2008.
Children's Services HR Guidance on Effective Working with Experienced Staff – available on EduLink - see section on 'Managing Health Concerns' which includes references to work-related stress.

School Staff Communication and Participation arrangements – schools should have clear procedures for raising concern, including the Grievance Procedure which should be adopted and made available within the school.

WCC Children's Services Handbook of Safety Information – available from EduLink (Leadership & Management – Health and Safety) - provides guidance on health and safety at work issues.

Guidance for Schools: Managing workplace stress - Appendix 2.

How do you produce a school policy on managing stress?

A model policy is attached as Appendix 3 which is based on an example provided by the Health and Safety Executive. It is recommended that the Governing Body of each school expresses its commitment to protecting the health, safety and welfare of school employees by working to the HSE Management Standards and considering the merits of developing a School Stress Management Policy. This can be achieved by personalising the attached model to the school and then the Governing Body formally adopting the policy.

If a policy is adopted it should be displayed in a prominent place in school and either a copy given to all staff or information provided on where a copy can be obtained.

Monitoring and Review – the effectiveness of introducing a policy should be monitored using information available, e.g. staff sickness absence. The policy should also be reviewed on a regular basis and revised as necessary. Any review should include seeking the views of staff.

Who can offer support?

Health and Safety Executive – the HSE website, www.hse.gov.uk/stress, has useful advice and case studies. In particular the Indicator Tool and Analysis Tool (see Appendix 4) can be used to gather information for risk assessment purposes.

Human Resources Advisers – (tel: 01905 766188) can provide advice on managing staff sickness absence and access to counselling via Occupational Health.

Teacher Support Network - offers practical and emotional support services to teachers. Its services can be accessed through its website www.teachersupport.info or by calling Teacher Support Line on 08000 562 561 (which provides confidential telephone counselling and coaching).

Trade Unions – contact the recognised trade unions and professional associations.