



Management of Stress Policy

Approved by:	Headteacher (S Houseman)
Date:	20.09.22
Minute no:	Not applicable
Version:	v2
Review cycle:	3 years/as required
Publication:	Internal & Public

VERSION CONTROL			
VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
V1	March 20	SH	
V2	Sept 22	SH	Reviewed by headteacher. Reformatted. No change to content.

1. Introduction

The Governing Body is committed to promoting the good health and well-being of its employees which it sees as its most valuable asset.

The Governing Body recognises that stress is an issue which could potentially affect all employees. It is committed to supporting the management of stress in the workplace.

Nationally, the incidence of stress-related illness at work is increasing and this has prompted the Health and Safety Executive to publish six management standards which they have identified as the key areas for focus in relation to work-related stress. The detailed guidance forms the basis of the school's approach to managing the potential for workplace stress.

The school recognises that excessive stress at work may affect any of its employees, undertaking any role at any time, anywhere within the organisation.

Through the consideration of the six stress management standards and the school's policy, with its associated control strategies, it is intended to reduce the exposure and effects of excessive stress within the workplace to acceptable levels wherever reasonably practicable.

2. Policy

To reduce the risk to the health and safety of its employees from undue stress at work to the lowest reasonable and practicable level, the Governing Body alongside the Headteacher agrees to:

- ☐ Apply the principles of Risk Assessment to all activities to identify undue stress levels and implement control measures to mitigate the risk. These principles are:
 - avoid risk wherever possible;
 - carry out a risk assessment to evaluate risks that cannot be avoided;
 - take action to reduce risks to ALARP (as low as reasonably practicable) levels;
 - reduce risks at source wherever possible.
- ☐ Monitor levels of work-related stress in the School and carry out a stress assessment of any employee who has been identified as suffering from excessive stress at work.
- ☐ Develop safe systems of work and introduce practical preventative measures where unacceptable risks of undue stress are identified.
- ☐ Provide appropriate training for managers to help them recognise the symptoms of stress and give practical guidance on the measures that may be taken to assist individuals suffering from potentially stress-related symptoms.
- ☐ Provide information to all employees and training where appropriate to enable them to recognise the symptoms of stress and the appropriate measures that may be adopted.
- ☐ Provide appropriate support or guidance to any employees who suffer undue stress at work.
- ☐ Monitor and evaluate absence levels due to stress-related illness.

3. Implementation

The Headteacher shall be responsible for ensuring that all employees are made aware of the procedures laid out in this policy and for taking action to identify potential workplace stress causes.

Trade Union and Professional Association representatives will be provided with relevant information concerning this policy.

The Governing Body will monitor the workforce for indicators of excessive stress at work and take all reasonable steps to reduce exposure to the identified causes of stress.

4. Monitoring

The Governing Body will monitor and evaluate the policy and its implementation.

5. The management standards approach to managing workplace stress

The Management Standards for Work-Related Stress have been formulated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and provide a comprehensive, strategic approach.

The following steps are to be applied as a cycle:

A. Understand the Standards and use them to identify potential stress risk factors.

Familiarise senior leaders, governors, and TU/Professional Association Representatives with the 6 areas where risk factors can occur. Key leaders/managers/governors need to be involved and committed.

The Areas are:-

- **Demands:** workload, work patterns and the environment.
- **Control:** how much say the person has in the way they work.
- **Support:** encouragement, line management, colleagues, resources.
- **Relationships:** culture, positive approach, addressing conflict or unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role:** clarity and understanding of role within the school and avoidance of conflicting roles.
- **Change:** how changes are managed and communicated within the school.

B. Gather Data

Some information is readily available and should be regularly and systematically collected and analysed.

- Sickness absence data
- Employee turnover and exit interviews
- Generic issues gleaned from appraisal meetings

Leaders and managers will seek to secure the involvement of all employees, or representative employees, to obtain rounded information.

Use all available sources of information

- Informal meetings
- Feedback from team meetings – regular agenda item
- Focus group(s) (could be each team or representatives drawn from across the workforce) fill in generic stress risk assessment to identify their issues.

C. Evaluate the Risks and Take Action

Identify hot spots – e.g. particular groups of employees, certain activities, correlate hard/soft data, and identify strengths too.

Feedback the analysis to the teams/representatives to seek their prioritisation – to inform management's action.

Identify what can be changed/amended and what can only be counterbalanced.

Individuals and teams invited to suggest potential ways to address "stressors"

Promote a feeling of ownership throughout the staff (managers do not have all the answers). Foster personal and collective responsibility, the understanding that each person can make a difference, for themselves and others.

Do some groups and individuals have successful approaches to share?

What can be learned from colleagues from wider professional networks and dedicated websites?

Leaders to bring relevant staff together to spread good practice and successful coping strategies. Leaders' involvement is important, to enable the pursuit of solutions and show commitment.

D. Action Planning

Give priority to:

- Any quick wins that can soon show action will be taken.
- Identifying measures that will address shared issues and/or most critical issues.
- Identifying those interventions which should be pursued but will take a medium to long term.
- Giving named individuals responsibility for progressing each action and have reporting method/timeframe built in.

Important to keep everyone informed regularly.

E. Embed the Approach

- Management of Stress needs to be part of everyday routines, practise and leaders' strategies.
- Use Action Plans to deliver according to defined outcomes and build evaluation/review into existing processes. Build responsibilities into team and individual's plans and objectives.
- Share lessons learned – create continuous feedback loop (regular agenda item).
- Recognise some demands are inherent in the school workplace, but can be ameliorated by a collaborative/supportive culture and activities that promote a reasonable work-life balance.
- Seek ways to identify effectiveness of interventions on organisational performance and staff well-being. Use these to either build further improvement or adapt strategies.
- Use same surveys/data collection activities annually at the same time in the year, to identify changes, trends, and patterns.

6. Summary

To be effective, the strategic approach needs to be incorporated into existing school improvement and staff management mechanisms.

- Leadership – sustained commitment to recognising the importance of assessing and managing stress and keeping it on the agenda are vital.
- Staff – consultation, involvement, and communication are key.
- Understanding that solutions are everybody's responsibility is central.

The organisational culture is most important and can be facilitated and reinforced through the development of all leaders/managers/supervisors in line with the HSE Management Competencies.

(<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.htm>)

More information on the background and detail of the HSE approach can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>