

STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy statement sets the overarching framework which guides our approach to the management of stress within the workforce across the Trust.
- 1.2 The Trust is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and well-being of employees and will strive to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.2 The Trust is committed to managing stress in the workplace and acknowledges the importance of a supportive environment, a positive working culture and identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them. Stress is not an illness but, sustained over a period of time, it can lead to mental and/or physical illness.
- 2.2 There is an important distinction to be made between working under pressure and stress. Certain levels of pressure are normal in every job and are a positive state if managed correctly, unlike stress which can be detrimental to health. Manageable pressure can improve performance and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it can result in stress.
- 2.3 Pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events can also result in stress or may compound normal workplace pressures resulting in stress.

3. Our commitment

- 3.1 The Trust is committed to identifying, tackling and preventing the causes of work-related stress and to providing appropriate support and consideration to employees who are suffering from stress.
- 3.2 In order to manage stress in the workplace the Trust will:
- Ensure that Stress Risk Assessments are carried out as appropriate to identify the causes of stress at work within schools / academies.
 - Tackle, monitor and report on stress related absence and take appropriate measures as a result of these findings.
 - Support schools / academies to introduce measures wherever possible to reduce work pressure.
 - Support schools / academies to deploy intervention measures when excessive pressures are identified.
 - Promote a culture of open communication, participation and encouragement in which stress is taken seriously and in which employees are encouraged to seek help and support.
 - To consider the impact of new work practices on stress and take appropriate preventative action.
 - Provide confidential counselling and support for those affected by stress.
 - Provide training to managers to support the management of stress.
 - Work collaboratively with employees and their representatives in relation to the prevention of work related stress.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Senior Leaders will:

- Conduct and implement recommendations from risk assessments
- Enable good communication between management and staff, particularly at times of change.
- Participate in a culture of open communication and encouragement
- Ensure that employees receive training in order to discharge their duties
- Monitor workloads and reallocate work where necessary
- Monitor absence levels due to stress at work
- Listen to employees
- Implement safe systems of work
- Provide support and guidance to employees
- Adopt a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment.

4.2 All employees must:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives.
- Plan and organise their working time with the aim of achieving a manageable workload.
- Speak to their manager Headteacher, or their trade union representative if they experience or are aware of a situation that is becoming a stress factor.
- Co-operate with support and reasonable advice / guidance.

5. Sources of support

5.1 The Trust has put measures in place to assist staff who may be suffering from stress including:

- A confidential helpline with access to specialist counsellors. The helpline provides help on a wide range of issues and is available 24/7. The helpline number is 0800 030 5182
- Access to a range of on-line wellbeing tools provided by Health Assured.
- Access to Occupational Health (employees may speak to HR to request a referral).
- Training / workshops on stress management which are run according to need.

6. Resolving cases of stress at work

6.1 If employees believe they are suffering from stress they should discuss this with their line manager or Headteacher in the first instance. If they cannot speak to their manager or Headteacher employees may discuss the situation with their trade union representative and gain support with next steps.

6.2 Once an issue affecting an employee's health comes to the attention of the school / academy steps will be taken on a collaborative basis with the employee with the aim of resolving the issue. Action taken will be rooted in the stress risk assessment process and could include:

- A workload review
- Reallocation of work
- Amending deadlines
- Changing the way in which work is undertaken
- Re-organising schedules
- Making changes to the physical environment
- Monitoring workload over time
- Mentoring
- Peer support
- Additional training
- Other measures which are appropriate to the circumstances of each case.

7. Confidentiality

- 7.1 Confidentiality is an important part of this policy. Every member of staff is responsible for observing an appropriate degree of confidentiality, including the highest level of confidentiality according to the circumstances when supporting a colleague who is suffering from stress.

8. General Data Protection Regulation

- 8.1 All data within this policy will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation.

Document management

Review cycle:	Every 2 years
Next review due:	January 2021
Policy owner	Head of Human Resources
Approving body:	Board of Trustees
Equality Analysis completed:	August 2018