



Staff Stress Management Policy

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Statement of intent

My Schools Together is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. Stress and its prevention is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of the schools' staff, which remains a key priority. In light of this, the school understands the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause our employees to become stressed.

The purpose of this policy is to define stress, outline the responsibilities of the schools' staff and to advise employees on how to deal with and prevent stress.

1. Definition

- 1.1. The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as: “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.” The Health and Safety executive also points out that; “this makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.”

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. To be able to handle and avoid stress, members of staff, the SLT and governing body will all be expected to take extra care and precautions.
- 2.2. Individual members of staff are responsible for:
- Being able to recognise the early signs of stress in themselves and their colleagues.
 - Supporting co-workers if they become stressed. This may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
 - Undertaking additional training and personal development opportunities.
 - Reporting any incidents of stress, e.g. over-working.
 - Be willing to openly discuss stress.
- 2.3. The Executive Headteacher, SLT & Business Manager are responsible for:
- Organising proper inductions for new starters, explaining the schools’ policies and code of conduct.
 - Ensuring all staff have up-to-date, regular training and that they are confident in their ability.
 - Conducting and implementing the recommendations of risk assessments, taking into account the causes of stress.
 - Having regular communication with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
 - Monitoring the employee’s workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring staff aren’t over-worked.
 - Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example for staff.
 - Ensuring that all staff read and understand the policy.
- 2.4. The governing board is responsible for:
- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the school, promoting stress as a serious issue, rather than a weakness.
 - Consulting the Executive Headteacher on measures to manage stress, including them in any decisions that need to be made.
 - Ensuring the Executive Headteacher puts measures in place to support staff with stress.
 - Actively trying to eliminate stressors in school.

3. Causes of stress

- 3.1. The school recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and that different people can become stressed throughout their working lives. Because of this it is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues stress.
- 3.2. The following sources of stress can often be attributed to work:
- Over-working or work that doesn't match the employee's skills and ability
 - Fear of change and trying to cope with change, e.g. advancements in technology, change of leadership etc
 - Insufficient workload or not being able to use skills
 - Lack of job security
 - Poor relationships with colleagues and a lack of involvement
 - Harassment or bullying
 - Crisis management
 - No long-term plan in place
- 3.3. The school recognises staff can also experience stress outside of school, home and personal lives can also prove stressful; bereavement, separation, financial and family problems make people more vulnerable to stress at work. It is common that a combination of stress at home and work can make people stressed.

4. Identifying a stressed colleague

- 4.1. In order to help stressed colleagues, identifying the symptoms of stress is very important. Someone may be suffering from one or more of the negative effects; however, they may not be stressed. When a stressor persists over a longer period of time the indicators become more obvious and acute.
- 4.2. The school will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy work place.
- 4.3. The school has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress.
- 4.4. All members of staff will look out for the following symptoms when identifying a colleague with stress:
- Mood swings and consistently bad moods, such as feeling angry or depressed

- Low self-esteem, loss of confidence, feeling lonely, worthless or overwhelmed
- Attitude and behaviour, including low morale, feeling unmotivated, poor concentration, lower quality of work, bad timekeeping, difficulty concentrating
- Noticeable change in behaviours; using drugs, smoking, drinking more alcohol, eating disorders

4.5. All members of staff will also look out for physical indicators of stress, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Low energy, including fatigue and tiredness.
- Upset stomach, including diarrhoea, constipation and nausea.
- High blood pressure, heart disease and ulcers.
- Frequent colds and infections, due to a weakened immune system.
- Aches, pains and tension in joints and muscles.

5. School management

5.1. In order to positively impact levels of stress in the school, the SLT and Governing Body will ensure any changes to the whole school will be implemented to positively affect all staff.

5.2. To help manage stress the Executive Headteacher and SLT will:

- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a life outside of work.
- Encourage team building; using INSET days to build relationships as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier.
- Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads; one of the main contributors to stress is over-working; helping staff manage their workload will make them more relaxed.
- Provide an employee assistance scheme and work with staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. Schools Advisory Service

6. Self-management

6.1. Staff can also make changes to avoid and prevent stress, stress is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored.

- 6.2. Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they're feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.
- 6.3. Staff will take action in order to manage their own stress, these actions will include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity and any negative feelings, exercise will also help to clear thoughts and deal with problems more calmly.
 - Managing their workload, establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life is vital.
 - Prioritising work, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference.
 - Avoiding unhealthy habits, such as drinking and smoking, these may provide temporary relief; however, in the long term unhealthy habits will only create more problems.

7. Monitoring and review

- 7.1. This policy will be delegated to the Business Manager for review bi –annually. .
- 7.2. Any changes made to this policy by the Business Manager will be authorized by the Executive Headteacher and then will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 7.3. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.
- 7.4. The next scheduled review date for this policy is April 2020