

Dear Colleagues

Management of Stress Policy

The following policy is a model developed by the Local Authority in formal consultation and negotiation with the accredited professional associations and trade unions representing staff employed in Derbyshire schools.

The Management of Stress Policy replaces the previous LA Model Policy dated March 2001, and is recommended to Governing Bodies for adoption.

The policy is complemented by a further 3 documents (Context and Legal Background, Employee Guidelines, Headteachers' and Managers' Guidelines) which together, provide comprehensive information and advice. The format of providing 4 separate documents follows feedback from some colleagues that a combined policy, information, advice and guidance, can become unwieldy in size. We will evaluate feedback on the new approach adopted for this policy at the time of review.

The purpose of the documents is to advise schools of their statutory duties and responsibilities to manage workplace stress effectively and to provide a draft policy for how they may do this. The policy promotes a systematic and pro-active strategy for identifying and managing any workplace stress, based on the Health and Safety Executive approach.

Schools may wish to amend or elaborate section 5 of the policy document to incorporate and reflect their particular content.to incorporate/reflect their own context.

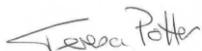
It is recognised that different phases, sizes and categories of school may need to contextualise the activities and personnel involved at each of the steps in the cycle. As long as the overall structure and principals of the Management Standards approach is retained, the school will not need to consult again with the county union representatives. However, it would be sensible and good practice, to share/consult with school staff/representatives regarding such adaptations. Headteachers and Governing Bodies should also ensure that staff are made aware of the Employee Guidelines.

It is advised that the implications for the responsibilities of middle and senior leaders for implementing the policy, promoting the welfare of their teams and the wider organisation culture are built into their induction, appraisal and training.

It is hoped that promoting this cyclical approach will enable the management of workplace stress to be incorporated into existing established cycles and routines in the school for gathering data, analysis, action planning, and evaluation. One of the strengths of the approach is that all staff are encouraged to contribute and share ownership, so that minimising the potential for, and effects of, workplace stress becomes part of the culture of the school.

Any queries about the policies, information and guidance may be raised to the schools' team at CAYA HR Service (01629 535734 – email CAYAHR.service@derbyshire.gov.uk). Thank you.

Yours faithfully



Teresa Potter - Children & Young Adults Department
Senior HR Officer

Management Of Stress

The Governing Body is committed to promoting the good health and wellbeing of its employees which it sees as its most valuable asset. The Governing Body recognises that stress is a problem which could potentially affect all employees. It is committed to managing 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.

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

- Apply the principles of Risk Assessment to all activities, to identify undue levels of stress and put in place control measures to mitigate the risk.
- 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 through undue stress at work.
- Monitor and evaluate absence levels due to stress related illness.
- Evaluate and review the effectiveness of the Policy and procedures as required.

Implementation

The Headteacher shall have responsibility for ensuring that all employees are made aware of the procedures laid out in this Policy and for taking action in relation to identified potential causes of workplace stress.

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

Through the control measures identified in the Managers' and Employees' Guidelines, 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.

Monitoring

The Governing Body will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Policy and its implementation.

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 to be applied as a cycle:

- 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.
- Practical examples within each category are given on the generic risk assessment.
- 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
 - Stress Risk Assessment pro-forma
- 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 Dept/team meetings – regular agenda item
 - Focus group(s) (could be each team or representatives drawn from across workforce) fill in generic stress risk assessment to identify their issues.
- Evaluate the Risks and Take Action
 - Identify hot spots – e.g. particular groups of employees, certain activities, correlate hard/soft data, identify strengths too.
 - Feed back 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 counter-balanced. Groups/teams invited to suggest potential ways to address “stressors”? Promote 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/individuals have successful approaches to share? What can be learned from colleagues from wider professional networks/dedicated websites.

- Leaders to bring relevant staff together to spread good practice and successful coping strategies. Leaders' involvement important, to enable pursuit of solutions and show commitment.
- 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 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. Larger organisations may need a Communication Plan. Use existing structures, regular communication routines.
- 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/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 same time in year, to identify changes, trends, patterns.

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/managing stress and keeping it on the agenda are vital.

Staff – consultation, involvement, 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. (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.htm>)

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

Employee Guidelines

In its policy statement, the Governing Body has stated its commitment to reducing the risk to the Health and Safety of its employees from stress at work. The Policy is available in School.

Staff Role/Responsibility

You or your colleagues may suffer at sometime in your working life from stress at work. It is important that you are able to recognise factors in the workplace which may cause stress. It is also helpful if you recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in yourselves or others around you in order to be able to take positive action.

You are encouraged and expected to contribute to any approaches adopted by the School aimed at identifying and managing the causes of the potential for workplace stress. Your contribution is vital in identifying the relevant factors that may cause undue stress and in seeking measures to reduce, avoid or manage the risks.

Legally you have a duty under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Regulation 12 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 to take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your acts or omissions whilst at work.

If you feel your work is causing undue stress then you should talk to your Headteacher or your line manager who will discuss what actions may be taken to help reduce the source of the problem.

What is Stress?

Stress is a natural human reaction to excessive pressure; it is not a disease. It is only when stress is excessive and goes on for a long time that it may lead to mental or physical ill-health. A reasonable and acceptable degree of pressure often promotes motivation and stimulation at work leading to job satisfaction. It is only a problem when it is unreasonable and prolonged.

The Effects of Stress

Instant Response (Fight or Flight)

This is the reaction to a situation which enables individuals to take appropriate action; sometimes known as the fight or flight response. Within the body many activities are increased. The heart beats faster, muscles tense, and extra cholesterol and sugar are found in the blood. Other activities such as digestion and immune responses slows. Therefore, energy is diverted to systems which we need to maximise our efforts.

This response is a reaction to short term crisis and is not intended to be prolonged. The solution is to get rid of these built up energies on a regular basis, letting the body recover and return to normal, and therefore prevent long term health problems.

Different people perceive different events as stressful. Therefore stress may be experienced as a result of exposure to a wide range of work demands and in turn contribute to an equally wide range of health issues.

How is Stress Recognised in an Individual?

The effects of prolonged stress may be caused by events in an individual's personal life, work life, or from a combination of these. These effects may affect an individual in a physical, emotional, and behavioural way. Although not an exhaustive list some examples symptoms that may be stress related are:

- Physical Signs

- Shoulders, neck and back pain
- General muscle tension, eg sufferers sit in one position and clench muscles
- Cramps, skin rashes
- Palpitations
- Chest pain
- Breathing difficulties (hyperventilation)
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Visual disturbance
- Nausea/stomach disorders
- Dizziness
- Unexpected weight loss or gain
- Emotional signs
 - Intolerance and irritability
 - Withdrawal from social contact
 - Not taking the lead in work projects
 - Tearful response to minor issues
 - Loss of libido (sex drive)
 - Sleep disturbance and nightmares (often an early sign of stress is difficulty getting to sleep and early morning waking)
 - Low self-esteem
 - Guilt
 - Panic
 - Mood swings
 - Extreme anxiety
- Behavioural signs
 - Smoking - increased or begin after successfully stopping
 - Alcohol - stopping for drinks on the way home to wind down or drinking to cope
 - Nail-biting
 - Changes in eating habits - eating more or not at all, developing food cravings
 - Evading deadlines - tends to interact with absenteeism
 - Making excuses
 - Daydreaming and lack of concentration
 - Indecision
 - Complaining unreasonably
 - Lying or cheating to 'cover up'
 - Absenteeism with poor excuses
 - Erratic mood changes
 - Avoidance of essential action
 - Apathy

It is not suggested that every symptom will be seen in everyone with stress problems nor that every time someone has these symptoms they have a stress related illness.

Generally the best way to identify your own or a colleague's stress is to be aware of normal performance levels, general demeanour and behaviour at work. Where there is a change in any of these behavioural patterns it could be the effects of stress.

No one expects you or your colleagues to act as doctors but it is helpful to be able to recognise changes in performance and ability, particularly as family or colleagues are likely to be the first people to notice these changes which are often not acknowledged by individuals themselves.

No two people react to events in the same way so pinpointing the causes of stress can take time. Any change to usual routines can cause stress. It is often not a particular situation but their reaction to it which makes an individual feel stressed. Also, what is stressful to one person may be stimulating to another and individuals vary in their reaction over time; some days it is easier to cope than others.

What do I do if I Feel Stressed?

You should be reassured that there are procedures in place to help your Headteacher or line manager and you to resolve workplace stresses.

If you feel that there are aspects of your work which are causing you to feel excessively stressed you should discuss your concerns with your Headteacher or line manager who will try to help you to resolve the situation.

They may also ask you if you have any problems related to stress, either as part of performance management or management supervision or absence management procedures.

If your problems are related to home or of a personal nature you may also wish to discuss these with your Headteacher or line manager. They may be able to assist with emotional support or practical help such as urgent/domestic leave.

Your Headteacher or line manager will keep any personal conversations in strict confidence. Information will only be given to others with your consent.

How can I Reduce the Effects of Stress?

The ABC of handling stress. On a personal level it is useful to be able to analyse and examine your reactions to stress and to be able to reduce the effects as much as possible. Your chosen methods of reducing stress are as individual as the causes of it. Notice what causes you stress and how you react. Understanding what you can cope with will prepare you to take control of the situation.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| A Awareness | What causes your stress? How do you react? |
| B Balance | How much can you cope with? What helps you feel satisfied, successful and secure? |
| C Control | What helps you feel more in control of your situation? |

Stress Busters

There are many things which can help you take responsibility for improving your situation, to gain short term symptom relief, and to provide long term protection against undue stress :

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Appreciate: | The present rather than dwelling on the past. |
| Avoid: | Things which cause more side effects than the stress such as alcohol, smoking, caffeine, overeating, aggression. |
| Be Positive: | See the positive side of yourself, and others. |
| Physical Activity: | Uses up the energy created by the stress response. Helps to restore balance and build fitness. |
| Relaxation: | This opposes the stress response and helps the re-balancing process. |
| Sleeping Well: | Adopt regular sleep patterns. |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Communicate: | Sharing your concerns helps to clarify your thoughts. This can be with friends, colleagues, managers, Trade Unions/Professional Associations' and other 'Advisers'. |
| Develop Good Points: | Both in yourself and other people. |
| Use Time Well: | Use time positively. Have a balance between work and recreation. |
| Be Assertive: | Stand up for yourself |
| Eat Well: | The basis for good health which helps you handle the pressures of stress. |
| Define Priorities: | You can't do everything! Deal with the important satisfying things. |
| Friendships: | A circle of friends gives you the opportunity to talk and share. |
| Emotional Release: | Laughing, crying and talking helps release some of the tensions of stress rather than keeping them bottled up. |

Sources of Help

There are a number of people/organisations both internal and external to your school who are able to help you on a confidential basis.

INTERNAL

Speak to your Headteacher, line manager or colleagues initially. If you consider that it is your Headteacher or line manager who is causing you to be stressed, speak to your Chair of Governors or Headteacher respectively.

The Authority has an employee Counselling Service, which provides confidential employee counselling. Contact 01629 536954.

The Occupational Health Service is available to provide advice to Headteachers and Governors on the management of individual's workplace stress. This service is available through CAYA HR Advice and Guidance Service on 01629 535734. Schools which have bought the LA's Comprehensive Personnel Service will automatically have access to this service. Other schools can purchase separately. Employees, as well as managers, are provided with a copy of the In-Service Medical report.

You may also wish to contact your Trade Union or Professional Association representative for support and advice. Their websites provide a range of information advice and contact details. In addition these organisations can often supply useful leaflets.

EXTERNAL

In addition to the statutory agencies such as the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS), and the National Health Service (NHS), there are many organisations which provide information, advice and practical help, usually in relation to specific problems: eg Alcoholics Anonymous, Relate. The Authority's Employee Welfare Officer or your Trade Union or Professional Association can provide advice and assistance regarding these. Many GP surgeries now offer counselling services which staff may prefer to access.

Teachers can ring Teacher Support Network. 08000 562 561 (Teacherline)

Teacher Support Network is the national counselling, support and advice service for teachers. It has a free confidential 24-hour telephone counselling service, called Teacherline, available every day, for teachers who need support for either work or personal issues. The service is already used extensively by teachers, and has a positive role in the lives of thousands of teachers.

Teacher Support Network (TSN) is a national charitable organisation for schoolteachers. It is an independent, not for profit, network of charities working for all teachers and lecturers. TSN has launched a number of initiatives aimed at supporting teachers in their professional and personal lives. Since successfully launching Teacherline, TSN has become a major authority on the pressures within education. It has data and evidence on the issues faced by teachers today, the medical effects of those issues, professional and personal, as well as outcomes and solutions.

Teacherline has been supported widely within the education sector. Funding has been provided by the Department for Education (DfE). Other partners include teaching unions, employers' organisations, school governors, parent-teacher associations and others. Teacher Support Network has an Advisory Group, comprising these organisations.

The main features of Teacher Support Network are:

A free, 24-hour, service, available every day of the year.

Staffed by qualified professional counsellors (whom meet British Association of Counselling accredited standards) with a background as teachers or in education.

Confidential – between the counsellor and the caller.

Freephone 08000 number – creates full anonymity.

Also available online www.teachersupport.info

Open to all teachers in England and Wales.

Callers can use it as often as they need to – including arranging telephone counselling sessions with the same counsellor if preferred.

Independent – of employers, government or trade unions.

Provides teacher specific resources, such as contact details for LA services, local trade union contacts, community services, voluntary agencies.

Will direct caller to an appropriate resource or source of ongoing support.

Provides practical advice as well as counselling.

Can deal with critical situations as well as minor problems and everything in between.

TO CONTACT TEACHER SUPPORT NETWORK– RING 08000 562 561