

# DERBYSHIRE LA

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# MANAGEMENT OF STRESS POLICY

**PARWICH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

# CONTENTS

## Section

1. Introduction
2. Policy
3. Implementation
4. Monitoring
5. The Management Standards approach

APPENDIX 1 Headteachers & Managers Guidelines

APPENDIX 2 Employee Guidelines

APPENDIX 3 Context & Legal Background

# **POLICY STATEMENT**

**DERBYSHIRE LA**

**PARWICH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MANAGEMENT OF STRESS**

## **1. Introduction**

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.

## **2. Policy**

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.

### **3. 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 (APPENDIX 3), 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 be responsible for monitoring and evaluating 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 to be applied as a cycle: -

i. 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 (section 13, Headteachers' and Managers' Guidelines – APPENDIX 1).

ii. 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.

iii. Evaluate the Risks and Take Action

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

iv. 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.

#### v. 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>

# DERBYSHIRE LA

## MANAGEMENT OF STRESS

### Headteachers' & Managers' Guidelines

# CONTENTS

## Section

1. Introduction
2. Your Role
3. What is Stress
4. How can Workplace Stress be identified?
5. Factors which cause and changes which may reduce stress in the workplace
6. How do I recognise stress
7. Resolving issues
8. Training
9. Who can help with my stress
10. Management of Stress Flowchart
11. Specimen letters
12. Individual Stress Risk Assessment
13. Generic Risk Assessment

# **HEADTEACHERS' AND LINE MANAGERS' GUIDELINES**

## **1 Introduction**

In its policy statement, the Governing Body stated its commitment to reducing the risk to the Health and Safety of its employees from stress at work.

Much of the implementation of that commitment will fall to the Headteacher and other Line Managers as part of their day to day line management responsibilities.

These guidelines are intended to assist you in your responsibilities in that process.

## **2**

### **a) Your Role**

As a manager you have a responsibility for the health and safety of employees who you manage as well as yourself. When identifying the hazards employees face you should also consider the effects of stress and take appropriate action to monitor and reduce this as far as is reasonably practicable by: -

- i) assessing employees and their work in relation to stress, just as you assess any other potential hazard.
- ii) taking all reasonable measures to reduce the risks from stress.
- iii) being supportive and encouraging.

When dealing with stress in the workplace you must consider your legal responsibilities and bear in mind other policies and procedures agreed by the Governing Body, which may be helpful when you are seeking solutions to problems. Whatever strategies are used to identify potential levels and causes of workplace stress it is very important that these lead to action. Collecting the information alone is insufficient to demonstrate that the issue has been addressed.

### **b) Your Skills**

The management of stress is a part of your normal general management activities. There is no single approach to the management of stress which is effective, a variety of skills are required. These are some examples of good management skills: -

- be a good role model
- treat team members with respect
- act calmly in pressured situation
- take a consistent approach to managing

- clearly communicate objectives
- monitor team workload
- prioritise future workloads
- deal rationally with problems as they arise
- gives the right level of responsibility
- provides regular team meetings
- acts as mediator in conflict situations
- deal objectively with conflicts
- support employees
- take ultimate responsibility if things go wrong
- speak personally rather than using email
- be available to talk to
- be willing to laugh at work
- take an interest in the team
- treat all with equal importance

### c) Prevention

By utilising these skills and by addressing the issues detailed in the risk assessment, work-related stress should be reduced to a minimum.

Although measures should have been put in place to reduce work related stress, it is not possible to reduce all the stresses in an employee's personal life. You must therefore be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in your staff and provide appropriate support either by yourself or with help from others. This should help to reduce the impact on their work performance and/or attendance.

### d) Understanding your Staff

Generally, the best way to be aware of another's stress is to understand an employee's normal performance levels, general demeanour and behaviour at work. Then, when there is a change in any of these patterns it could be a sign that he/she is starting to feel the effects of stress.

## 3 What is Stress?

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as:

**“The reaction that people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them. It arises when they worry that they can't cope”.**

Another definition is “A state we experience when the demands that are made of us cannot be counter-balanced by our ability to deal with them”.

A distinction should be made between pressures or challenges which can be

stimulating and stress which is the reaction to too much pressure. The motivation to achieve challenging goals can test an individual's skill and resourcefulness in a stimulating and positive way. But when an individual, team, or workforce perceives the demands on their skill and abilities are greater than the professional and personal skills which they have, then stress may result.

In physiological terms, stress is a condition where the amount of physical and mental energy used by the body to cope with pressures is greater than the body's ability to restore that energy.

The physical and behavioural effects of stress are a natural result of excessive pressures or demands. These are usually short-lived and cause no lasting harm. When the pressures recede, there is a quick return to normal. Stress is a part of everyday life and is only a problem when it is excessive and prolonged.

Information on the effects of stress and how individuals can reduce these is included in the Employee Guidelines, APPENDIX 2.

#### **4 How can Workplace Stress be Identified?**

This is an ongoing process, monitoring staff and identifying individuals or groups who may be suffering from stress

Stress may be recognised in one of four ways or by considering some elements of all four: -

##### **i) Personal Discussion/informal monitoring**

The first way to discover whether an employee has problems is to ask them. This is most likely to be through informal conversation. Alternatively, it may arise as part of performance management for teachers or any management supervision processes for support staff which are already in place.

At these meetings there must always be a discussion about the individual employee and their work, which explores how they are coping with the demands of the role. Managers should record any problems identified and actions agreed.

Return to work meetings, where stress is given as a reason for absence, should always include discussion of the issues, action taken and support provided. Know your team, their individual skills, personalities and how they respond to pressure. Use this as a yardstick.

##### **ii) Sickness Absence Analysis**

The second way of recognising stress is by analysis of sickness absence returns. Formal analysis should be routinely scheduled in the Governing

Body's calendar of meetings. You should also consider as a part of that process whether or not stress may be a factor.

You should consider: -

- a) individual problems - where there may be increased rates of either short or long term absences; or possible stress related diagnosis.
- b) whether there may be group problems - where there are numbers of employees with increased sickness absence rates or with possible stress related diagnoses.
- c) looking at medical certificates for stress as a specific reason for absence. If this is the case, you will need to ascertain as part of the return to work interview whether or not this is work-related.

### **iii) Stress Risk Assessment**

You may wish to carry out an individual stress risk assessment (Appendix 2).

The Generic Risk Assessment may also be utilised to identify particular issues experienced by groups and to support the identification of actions aimed at reducing the risk of workplace stress.

Section 5 of these guidelines is a 'Management of Stress Flowchart' which details the steps involved in identifying and resolving individual workplace stress. Within this process it is your responsibility to review the situation at regular intervals and at least at each performance management or supervision session.

**It is important that a record of any analysis or discussion is made and kept for future reference. This applies regardless of the circumstances or outcome.**

## **5 Factors Which Cause and Changes Which May Reduce Stress in the Workplace**

There are many factors which could cause workplace stress. A combination of these factors may have a greater effect than individual factors. Some causes may affect individual employees and others may affect a number or group of employees.

It may be possible to prevent or reduce workplace stress by considering organisational factors such as:

- Encourage a culture of stress awareness/openness
- task redesign
- reorganised work schedules and physical environment

- employee development
- participation in decision making
- clarification of role
- feedback on performance
- peer support and team building.

The causes of workplace stress and actions to alleviate them must always be considered and discussed with the employee concerned.

Although not an exhaustive list the following are the most common:

**i) Factors Relating to the Job.**

- ***job content:***  
if difficulties are caused by any aspect of the job, provide appropriate guidance, training and support.
- ***long hours/shift work:***  
consider any legal requirements in relation to VDU workers, working time directive  
alternative shift or working patterns and rotas  
ensure appropriate breaks are taken  
ensure annual leave is taken at regular intervals.
- ***use of technology:***  
ensure appropriate information and consultation under local agreements prior to any new installations, ensure prompt appropriate training, with follow up for updated versions.
- ***anxiety owing to danger of injury or infection:***  
provide sufficient information and/or training regarding risk factors, appropriate work practices and use of personal protective equipment.
- ***workload:***  
examine the organisation and distribution of work
- ***repetitive tasks:***  
consider job rotation; between individuals consider alternative working methods/technology.
- ***multiplicity of tasks:***
- ***challenging behaviour:***  
ensure appropriate training; with prompt sympathetic action in emergency situations.
- ***use of machinery:***

ensure regular maintenance, effective operation, and that it is suitable for its intended purpose.

- ***changes in responsibility/curriculum/working practices***  
ensure appropriate briefing, training and support.
- ***OFSTED Inspection:***  
ensure all staff are well briefed, trained and receive appropriate support.

## ii) **Factors Relating to the Environment**

- ***noise:***  
consider whether it is 'nuisance noise' or whether a formal assessment is required in relation to the Noise at Work Regulations.
- ***temperature/ventilation:***  
if there are any problems with temperature and/or ventilation, look first at simple methods, such as opening windows, use of desk fans, warm clothing.
- ***lighting:***  
consider any recommendations for specific tasks such as VDU work, otherwise ensure adequate illumination levels for the type of work being undertaken.
- ***space:***  
consider the layout of the working area, ensure adequate storage space and adequate personal space.
- ***ergonomic design:***  
ensure there is a minimum amount of fatigue associated with the work being undertaken.

## iii) **factors relating to the organisation culture**

- ***involvement in decision making:***  
Employees work best in a culture where they are involved in the decision making process.  
where the management style is confident, consistent, caring, competent and communicative, where they have responsibility for their work, control over work content and where effective performance is recognised and valued.
- ***excessive administration:***  
administrative tasks which may detract from the main job purpose, should be reduced to a minimum. Administrative systems and processes should be as efficient and effective as practicable.

- **over emphasis on targets and objectives:**  
whilst these are an effective management tool in a successful organisation too many or where they are unachievable will reduce effective performance. This may lead to stress.

**iv) factors relating to employee development:**

- **training needs:**  
these need to be assessed on a regular basis.
- **job security:**  
where possible changes are to be considered, keep employees informed on a regular basis.

**v) Other Factors**

- **verbal or physical abuse:**  
provide immediate support as appropriate.
- **harassment or bullying:**  
refer to the Governing Body's agreed procedure for dealing with these cases.
- **home/work interface:**  
fatigue - causes may be severe physical effort, night/shift work, intense concentration, or interaction with personal/home difficulties. This may be particularly so for vulnerable groups.
- **relationships with colleagues:**  
identify source of the problem and take appropriate action.
- **vulnerable groups (young/older/pregnant employees):**  
Mental and physical fatigue during pregnancy require specific consideration when carrying out a pregnant employee's risk assessment. You should refer to the Management of Health and Safety at Work (Amendment) Regulations 1999.

With some of these issues, you may feel you need further assistance. A list of those able to provide help and advice is given in Part 10 of this Section.

## **6 How do I recognise Stress?**

The effects of prolonged stress, which may be from events in one's personal life; from events in work life or from a combination of these, may be manifested in three areas – physical, emotional, and/or behavioural.

Please refer to details in Employees' Guidelines, Section 5.

It is not suggested that every symptom will be seen in everyone with stress problems, or that every time someone has these symptoms they have a stress related illness.

Generally, the best way to be aware of another's stress is to understand a colleague's normal performance levels and general demeanour and behaviour at work. Where there is a change in any of these behavioural patterns, it could be a sign that he or she is starting to feel 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 since such changes are likely to be noticed first by family and colleagues.

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

## **7 Resolving Issues**

### **i) By Yourself:**

Many issues related to workplace stress will be straightforward with a solution easily reached in discussions between you and the employee, e.g. workload, environment, relationships, communication etc.

For example:

- if tasks are repetitive, introduce job rotation if possible;
- if there are difficulties with use of technology, ensure training and support is made available;
- during periods of change provide training and support;

**If significant changes to working arrangements or patterns are proposed, thorough consultation should take place the actions should be documented with agreed review dates.**

### **Personal Issues**

Pressures may arise outside the workplace. Employers do not have a legal duty to prevent ill-health due to stress arising from circumstances outside work. However, external pressures including domestic circumstances may make

employees more vulnerable to stress at work as well as affecting their performance and judgement. Any assistance you can offer may lessen the impact.

Some other professional help may be required, but as a manager, you can take some basic steps which may go a long way to helping your employees.

- Ensure that you make time for members of your team when you can listen without being interrupted
- Be supportive, sympathetic and open
- Use policies already in place to assist with time off, e.g. flexi-leave, urgent. domestic leave etc.
- Be prepared to consider changes to work patterns
- Where you feel further help is required, you can discuss the issue with the Headteacher or, through them with local authority, other support mechanisms.
- You may wish to direct the employees, where appropriate, for Trade Union support and advice
- Suggest in the case of reaches, they contact Teacher Support Network.
- Consider whether the employee should attend a Coping with Stress course.
- Please remember that personal conversations must be kept in strict confidence, with information being given to others, only with the employee's consent.

#### **i) By Referral to Other Specialist Help:**

Where you and the employee are unable to resolve the issue and/or where you feel specialist help or advice is needed. HR Consultants in the LA CAYA Advice and Guidance team can be contacted on 01629 535734 and can provide support for school leaders.

The Authority's Employee Counselling Service, which provides **confidential** employee counselling is able to support employees **in confidence**, contact 01629 536954. The Occupational Health Physician, can carry out an In Service Medical and provide advice to Headteachers and Governors. This Service is available through CAYA HR Advice and Guidance Team.

Schools which have bought the LA's Comprehensive Personnel Service will automatically have access to this service. Other schools can purchase this separately.

Employees may also be referred to alternative independent welfare or counselling services, NHS or private medical services, for which the school or the employee may be charged.

When specialist advice and support is requested, you should ensure any useful

background information or risk assessments which have already been carried out are available.

Teachers can ring **Teacher Support Network**. This is a **free confidential 24-hour** telephone counselling support and advice service available to all teachers. The number to call is 08000 562 561. (See Employees' Guidelines, Section 8)

## **8 Training**

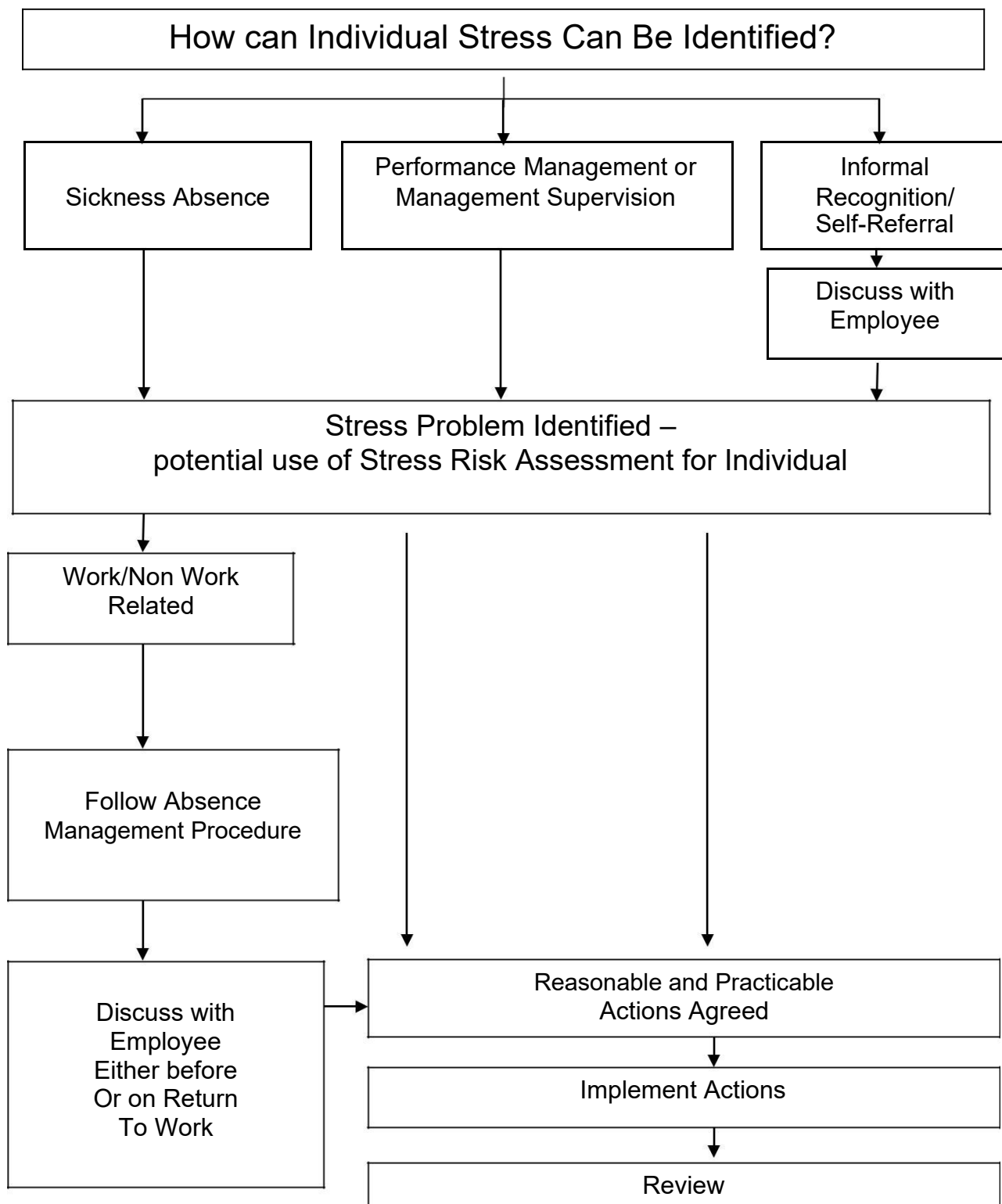
As part of a strategic approach to managing stress the Governing Body, through the Headteacher, will ensure appropriate training and development is provided for managers and employees.

## **9 Who can Help with my Stress?**

You are not only a manager but also an employee too, possibly with your own set of work and personal problems. It is difficult for you to support others if you are not prepared to look for support and help for yourself when it is required.

If you are having difficulties discuss these initially with your Headteacher, or Line Manager, to try to resolve them. If your problem is with your Headteacher or Line Manager, discuss it with the Chair of Governors or your Headteacher respectively or with your Trade Union or Professional Association representative. You should then seek other appropriate advice and support through the formal and informal support networks set out in Section 8 "Employees Guidelines".

## MANAGEMENT OF STRESS – FLOWCHART



**If the employee does not agree to any offer of specific action at any stage this should be recorded and reconsidered at the next review meeting.**

# **SPECIMEN LETTER TO EMPLOYEE TO ARRANGE STRESS ASSESSMENT**

(To be amended as appropriate)

**Letter to Employee from Headteacher  
Or  
From Chair of Governors to Headteacher**

Dear

## **Stress Risk Assessment**

I was concerned to hear you feel you are experiencing stress at the present time.

As we agreed at our meeting on [Date], I have asked **[your line manager]** to arrange to see you/or *I would like to meet with you on.....* to conduct a stress risk assessment.

This will provide an assessment of the reasons for the stress you feel at the present time and enable a discussion of possible recommendations to reduce the causes. You may, if you wish, find it helpful to be accompanied by a friend or by your trade union representative.

I will arrange to see you again when I have received the outcome of the assessment from **[your line manager\*]**. *Or please confirm whether these arrangements are suitable.*

Yours sincerely

*\* In certain circumstances you may wish to request the assessment is conducted with a Local Authority Officer.*

## **INDIVIDUAL STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT**

<b>Department/section</b>					
<b>Name/job title of employee</b>					
<b>Name/job title of manager/supervisor</b>					
	<b>CULTURE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>REQUIRED ACTION/COMMENTS</b>
1	Are you (or have you previously) suffered from stress related illness?				
2	Do you take your annual leave entitlement?				
3	Do you regularly work excessive hours?				
4	If you report that you are suffering from stress is action taken?				
5	Are there good, open and regular communications between staff up and down the management line at all levels?				
6	Is there a feedback process in place for your comments and/or complaints?				
	<b>DEMANDS</b>				<b>REQUIRED ACTION/COPMMENTS</b>
7	Are your skills and ability matched to the job?				
8	Is the allocation of work to duties monitored by your manager?				
9	Have you received induction and job training?				

	<b>DEMANDS (continued)</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>REQUIRED ACTION / COMMENTS</b>
10	Were your working hours agreed on recruitment?				
11	Do you understand the reasons for temporary increases in work?				
12	Do you have any problems with working environment factors? (noise, vibration, ventilation, humidity etc.) ?				
13	Are there adequate resources to do the required work?				
14	Is there sufficient, suitable equipment available to do your job?				
	<b>CONTROL</b>				<b>REQUIRED ACTION / COMMENTS</b>
15	Do you plan your own workload?				
16	Do you plan your own work schedule (i.e. timescales/deadlines)?				
17	Is there an element of flexibility in duty allocation and hours of work?				
18	Do you and your manager get together regularly to make decisions on how work problems should be tackled?				
	<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b>				<b>REQUIRED ACTION/COMMENTS</b>
19	Are you aware of the policy on bullying/harassment?				
20	Are you able to discuss relationships with colleagues with your manager (or someone else)?				
	<b>RELATIONSHIPS (continued)</b>				<b>REQUIRED ACTION/COMMENTS</b>
21	Are you consulted and involved in changes that may affect you?				
22	Are you kept informed during periods of change?				
23	Do you receive a regular appraisal/review?				

24	Do you have a clear job description?				
25	Is the correct training available for all jobs you do?				
	<b>SUPPORT/TRAINING/OTHER FACTORS</b>				<b>REQUIRED ACTION/COMMENTS</b>
26	Are you aware of the services of the Occupational Health Unit?				
27	Do you wish to discuss this assessment with anyone else?				
28	Has the process for training and career development been explained to you?				
29	Are you aware of the process for transfer or promotion?				
30	Do you wish to undertake stress awareness training?				
31	Are there any other workplace factors which should be taken into account?				

Signed ..... (Manager)

Date .....

Signed ..... (Employee)

Date .....

## General Health and Safety Risk Assessment for (Description of workplace/activity being assessed)

			<b>REVIEWS</b>			
Section/Establishment Name			Next Review Date	Reviewed by	Date	Changes Made Yes / No
Location						
Employees Consulted						
Trade Union Reps Consulted						
Name of Person Undertaking Assessment						
<i>Signature of Person Undertaking Assessment</i>						
Date of Assessment						
Name of Manager Confirming and Agreeing Assessment						
<i>Signature of Manager Confirming and Agreeing Assessment</i>						
Date of Issue						



Description of work place / activity being assessed: - \_\_\_\_\_

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Existing Control Measures	Yes	No	N/A	Further Actions	Priority for further action H / M / L	Person Responsible for further actions and completion date
<b>Stress</b>	<b>All: Culture</b>	1.	Is sickness absence monitored for signs of stress related illness?					
		2.	Is annual leave monitored to ensure that staff take their entitlement?					
		3.	Are staff discouraged from working excessive hours?					
		4.	Are reports of stress investigated and action taken?					
		5.	Are there good communication procedures in place so that staff are kept well informed?					
		6.	Is there a feedback process in place for staff comments and/or complaints?					
	<b>Demands</b>	7.	Does the recruitment process correctly match skills, and ability to the job?					
		8.	Is the allocation of work to duties monitored by managers?					
		9.	Is induction and job specific training given?					
		10.	Are working hours agreed on recruitment?					

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Existing Control Measures		Yes	No	N/A	Further Actions	Priority for further action H / M / L	Person Responsible for further actions and completion date
	<b>Demands</b> (cont.)	11.	Do staff understand the reasons for temporary increases in workloads?						
		12.	Is there a reporting and review system for working environment factors? (noise, vibration, ventilation, humidity etc.)						
		13.	Are there adequate resources to do the required work?						
		14.	Is there sufficient, suitable equipment available for all jobs?						
	<b>Control</b>	15.	Is the job evaluation process followed for all new jobs?						
		16.	Are the Working Time Regulations complied with and work patterns controlled?						
		17.	Where possible do staff get an opportunity to plan their own work?						
		18.	Is there an element of flexibility in duty allocation and hours of work?						
		19.	Is there an employee/ management feedback process?						

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Existing Control Measures	Yes	No	N/A	Further Actions	Priority for further action H / M / L	Person Responsible for further actions and completion date
	<b>Control</b> (cont.)	20. Do management and staff get together regularly to make decisions on how work problems should be tackled?						
		21. Are employees encouraged to use their skills and initiatives to do their work?						
		22. Are employees encouraged to develop new skills?						
	<b>Relationships</b>	23. Are staff aware of the policy on bullying/harassment?						
		24. Are staff aware of the drug/ alcohol policy?						
		25. Is the equal opportunities policy complied with?						
		26. Is the attendance management procedures used correctly?						
		27. Are employees encouraged to share information relating to their work?						
	<b>Change</b>	28. Are staff consulted and involved in changes that may affect them?						
		29. Are employees provided with timely information regarding reasons for proposed changes and timetables?						
		30. Is 'change' risk assessed in terms of the impact on health and safety?						

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Existing Control Measures	Yes	No	N/A	Further Actions	Priority for further action H / M / L	Person Responsible for further actions and completion date
	<b>Change</b> (cont.)	31. Are employees provided with training to support changes in their jobs?						
		32. Do employees have access to relevant support during changes?						
	<b>Role</b>	33. Is the employee personal development review process followed correctly?						
		34. Do all staff have clear job descriptions?						
		35. Do informal discussions between managers and staff take place?						
		36. Is the appropriate training available for all jobs?						
	<b>Support/ Training/ Other Factors</b>	37. Are staff aware of the EAP scheme?						
		38. Are staff aware of the services of the Occupational Health Unit?						
		39. Are there opportunities for career progression?						
		40. Has the process for training and career development been explained to staff?						
		41. Is there a process for assessing skills and competencies?						

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Existing Control Measures		Yes	No	N/A	Further Actions	Priority for further action H / M / L	Person Responsible for further actions and completion date
	Support/ Training/ Other Factors (cont.)	42.	Do staff undertake stress awareness training?						
		43.	Do management hold regular team meetings?						
		44.	Are there any other workplace factors which should be taken into account?						

**H – Immediate action required**

**M – Action as soon as is reasonably practicable**

**L – Action required within \_\_\_\_\_ months**

# DERBYSHIRE LA

# MANAGEMENT OF STRESS

## Employee Guidelines

# CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>		<u>Page</u>
1. & 2.	Introduction/Role	3
3. & 4.	What is Stress/Effects of Stress	3
5.	How is stress recognised	4
6.	What do I do if I feel stressed	6
7.	How can I reduce the effects of stress	6
8.	Sources of help	7

## **EMPLOYEES' GUIDELINES**

### **1 Introduction**

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.

### **2 Your 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.

### **3 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.

## **4 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.

## **5 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: -

### **i) Physical Signs**

- Shoulders, neck and back pain
- General muscle tension, e.g. 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

### **ii) 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

### iii) 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.

## 6 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.**

A list of other sources of help and **confidential** services is given in Part 8 of this document.

## **7 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.

## 8 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

- i) 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.
- ii) The Authority has an employee Counselling Service, which provides **confidential** employee counselling. Contact 01629 536954.
- iii) 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.
- iv) 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: e.g. 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](http://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**

# DERBYSHIRE LA

## MANAGEMENT OF STRESS

### **Context & Legal Background** (for Governing Body and School Leaders)

# CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>		<u>Page</u>
	Legal Background	3
	Case Law	4
	Management of Stress	7
	Other Policies & Procedures	7

# **Workplace Stress – Implications for Employers**

## **ii) The Legal Background: -**

Employers have a legal duty under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. This duty includes seeking to protect employees from undue stress at work.

Nationally, the incidence of stress related illness at work is increasing. The financial costs of stress related illness to employers and personal implications for individuals is significant and should not be underestimated. There are, therefore, significant cost benefits for all concerned if stress is effectively managed. This document is the LA's Guidance and Advice to Governing Bodies, Headteachers, other Senior Managers and Teachers in Schools. It is based on guidance from the Health and Safety Executive. It includes a model Management of Stress Policy.

## **ii) Statutory Provisions**

Managers have a general duty for the health and safety of employees for whom they are responsible. This duty includes dealing with stress related issues and taking appropriate action.

It is also important that managers are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in employees and take appropriate action.

Employees 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 1999, to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by acts or omissions at work. This includes mental hazards such as workplace stress as well as physical hazards.

The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document (STPCD) provides further detail on Section 21 of Education Act 2002 which put a responsibility on the relevant body (Governing Body) to have regard to the work-life balance of the Headteacher. School Staffing (England) (Consideration) Regulations 2009 incorporated this duty for the relevant body to have regard for the work/life balance of the Headteacher.

Headteachers must have regard to the desirability of all teachers being able to achieve a satisfactory work/life balance.

- Working Time Regulations.

The Working Time Directive came into force on 1 October 1998. When you are looking at the hazards relating to stress and the prevention and reduction of stress, managers should consider working hours and patterns.

- Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act, a person is disabled if they have a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

Employees who experience temporary and short-term cases of stress related illness will not fall with the scope of the Act. Other forms of stress related conditions such as past history of long-term depression may be covered by the Act.

**Managers may need to seek further advice regarding a possible requirement to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.**

The employer must make reasonable adjustments where the existence of a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. The Headteacher/Governors may need to consider changes to working hours, altering the physical environment or providing auxiliary aids, if relevant.

### **iii) Case Law**

Liabilities at law will arise where an employer does not demonstrate reasonable care towards an employee and it is reasonably foreseeable to the employer that injury will (and does) result as a consequence. ‘Injury’ can be interpreted as either mental or physical. Stress is not an injury in itself but a mental illness (such as a nervous breakdown) arising out of stress can be.

### **Walker v Northumberland County Council**

In this highly publicised case, Mr Walker was a social worker who suffered a nervous breakdown in 1986. It was accepted that his troubles were caused by problems at work due to increased workload. When Mr Walker returned to work, he was assured that he would receive assistance with his current workload and the backlog which had accumulated during his lengthy absence; but this assistance was intermittent and short-lived (one month). Mr Walker suffered a second breakdown and was retired on the grounds of ill-health.

The critical issue was that the employer knew about and accepted that the ill-health absence was due to work related stress, but then allowed the situation to continue and this precipitated a second breakdown.

### **Sutherland v Hatton (2002)**

**Landmark judgment given in four joined stress cases:**

- 1) Sutherland v Hatton
- 2) Barber v Somerset County Council
- 3) Sandwell Metropolitan BC v Jones

#### 4) Baker Refractories v Bishop

The judgment sets out guidelines on employers' common law obligations in relation to workplace stress-related illnesses

In 3 of the cases the employers were not liable. Liability was found in the 4<sup>th</sup> case. The Court of Appeal gave some general guidance in the judgment:

- The threshold question is whether this kind of harm to this particular employee was reasonably foreseeable. This has 2 components (a) an injury to health which (b) is attributable to stress at work
- Foreseeability depends upon what the employer knows, or ought reasonably to know about the employee. An employer is usually entitled to assume that the employee can withstand the normal pressures of the job unless he knows of some particular problem or vulnerability.
- The test is the same whatever the employment: there are no occupations which should be regarded as intrinsically dangerous to mental health.
- Factors likely to be relevant in answering the threshold question include (a) the nature and extent of the work done by the employee. Is there an abnormal level of sickness absence within a department/job type? Have several employees doing the same job experienced unacceptable levels of stress? (b) Signs from the employee of impending harm to health ... has he a particular problem or vulnerability? Has he already suffered from illness attributable to stress at work?

#### **Settlements Out of Court**

##### Barber v Somerset County Council (2004)

- Claimant was a schoolteacher whose job involved increasing duties as a result of changes at the school.
- He had a period off work with depression, and on his return told the head teacher about the problem. A few months later, he suffered another breakdown at work and left. He did not return to work.
- The House of Lords took the view that the head teacher had been put on notice of the problem and should have enquired about his problems/reduced his workload, but nobody approached him.
- He arranged meetings with head teacher and deputies, but nobody was sympathetic and no steps were taken to improve his condition.
- His condition should have been monitored, with more drastic action if it did not improve.

- He sued his employer for damages for personal injury, and was awarded more than £100,000. This decision was overturned by the Court of Appeal which considered three cases together, known as *Hatton v Sutherland CC*, and provided clear guidance on when employers might be liable for employees' work-related stress. However, Barber appealed, and his case went to the House of Lords.
- Their Lordships found that after his first sickness absence, his employer should at least have made 'sympathetic enquiries' and considered what could have been done to help. A duty may arise as in this case, if any steps can be taken to assist an employee who is having difficulty coping. Barber's employer was found wanting and as such had breached its duty of care and was liable in negligence.

There have been a number of highly publicised cases of stress claims submitted by teachers which have subsequently been settled out of court with no formal judgement in law. These specific examples, which are not claims against Derbyshire County Council or Derbyshire Schools, are of a senior teacher from a secondary school who received £47,000, a teacher who received £254,000 and a teacher who worked with disturbed children who received £300,000. In the 2000 case of *Howell v Newport County Borough Council* a teacher was awarded £254,000.

Although each case is determined on its own merits the key issues in each of these settlements were:

- The employer's negligence exposed the employee to 'a foreseeable risk of injury'.
- Risk assessments were not carried out or recommendations were not implemented where it was practicable to do so.
- Representations made by employees were ignored by senior managers and employers.
- Appropriate professional or medical support was not identified or accessed

The employer has a common law duty to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of employees in the workplace. To make a successful claim, the employee has to show a breach of the duty of care owed, has taken place, that it was reasonably foreseeable that an injury would result and that loss in the form of personal injury occurred as a result.

#### **iv) Management of Stress**

It is therefore important that Governing Bodies, as employers, have a policy for stress management, which is implemented, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

The attached policy is based on the County Council's own policy for its employees and is recommended to Governing Bodies for adoption. The policy promotes a strategic approach and the school is recommended to incorporate the associated processes within the regular routines of the school. The framework for this approach

is detailed in Section 5 of the policy.

In the context of community and voluntary controlled schools the LA has a responsibility to ensure that Governing Bodies fulfil the duty to protect employees from undue stress.

The LA expects every Governing Body to adopt a Management of Stress Policy, either the LA's or an alternative, and monitor its effectiveness.

Situations where stress is not effectively managed may lead to claims for compensation. When a claim is made the LA will need to be confident that all reasonable steps were taken to avoid undue stress if the claim is to be successfully challenged. **If a Governing Body has been negligent in managing stress the Authority will consider whether to charge the cost of any compensation to the school's budget.**

#### v) Policies and Procedures:

Other policies and procedures agreed by the Governing Body which may also be relevant in cases of stress at work are: -

- Management of Sickness Absence Procedure

The Governing Body has adopted comprehensive guidelines for absence management and procedures for dealing with cases of long term absence. If an employee appears to be suffering from stress it may begin to affect their attendance at work. Managers should refer to these guidelines for advice on to how to deal with this situation.

- Competence Procedure (For Teachers)

The Governing Body's Competence Procedure provides a fair and consistent means of taking corrective action in a situation where an employee's performance does not meet the standard required. The procedure provides for the employee to be provided with support to improve their practice.

- Procedure for Dealing with Claims of Harassment

It is possible that if an employee appears to be suffering from stress they may be being harassed. The Governing Body's Harassment Policy provides a fair and consistent means for dealing with cases of harassment. Managers should refer to the procedure for guidance when dealing with these situations.

- The School's Health, Safety and Risk Management Handbook

The school has a Health and Safety Portfolio which is available in the school office. This includes Codes of Practice and reference documents which may be useful when

managing stress.

- Performance Management/Appraisal/Support Staff Review and Development Process

The School has a policy for the appraisal of teachers and for the Review and Development of Support Staff.

This has a significant part to play in reinforcing clarity in role, managing the demands of work and providing appropriate training/support.

**All employees should be familiar with these procedures. This applies particularly to managers when they are considering what to do or how to advise an employee who may be suffering from stress.**