

Stress Policy

Introduction

The Board of Trustees are committed to protecting, so far as is reasonably possible, the health, safety and welfare of all employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. This policy will apply to everyone in the school. The CEO is responsible for implementing the policy and Board of Trustees will provide the necessary resources.

Definition of Stress and Symptoms of Stress

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

The Board of Trustees recognises that there are workplace stressors specific to staff who work in schools. These stressors can include: teacher/student ratios, violence, class discipline, student attitudes, workload, and parental expectations.

All staff should be alert to possible symptoms of stress in others which may include:

- Increase in sickness related absence, particularly short term absence.
- Decrease in work performance.
- Decrease in decision making ability.
- Changes in work relationships, e.g. conflict between colleagues.
- Decrease in staff motivation/commitment.
- Working longer hours but with diminishing effectiveness.
- Lack of enthusiasm.

Symptoms to be alert for in recognising stress in yourself include:

- Fatigue, disturbed sleep, aching muscles.
- Loss of appetite, indigestion.
- Dependence on alcohol or drugs.
- Headaches.
- Inability to relax.
- Sense of not being in control.

- Poor concentration and indecisiveness.
- Increased irritability.
- Change in attitude to work/colleagues.
- Anxiety/depression.

Each member of staff should be alert to these symptoms either in themselves or in colleagues and to take appropriate action to address the issue in accordance with the steps set out in this policy

Policy

The Board of Trustees will:

- Identify workplace stressors and ensure that risk assessments are conducted, so far as is reasonably practicable, to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- Consult with staff on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- Support training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- Offer staff affected by stress, caused by work factors, confidential counselling services.
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the Academy's agreed stress management strategy. This will include the provision of Mental Health First Aiders.

Responsibilities:

Senior Management (Board of Trustees, CEO, Principal and School Business Manager)

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.

Occupational Health and Safety Consultant:

- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.

- Inform the employer and the health and safety committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

School Leaders:

- Give guidance to staff on the stress policy.
- Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Consult with SLT managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counsellors where appropriate.

Employees

- Be aware of possible causes of stress at work and impact on well-being.
- Raise issues of concern with your line manager or Principal.
- Accept opportunities for counselling and support when recommended.
- Accept appropriate support from colleagues and line managers.
- Attend relevant training, as required.

Safety representatives

Health and Safety Committee Representatives:

- Must be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress
- Must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting any workplace surveys
- Must be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process

Counselling Services

The services listed below enable residents of Coventry and Warwickshire, and Birmingham to refer themselves to gain support for their individual needs, or via a GP referral.

IAPT/Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust – telephone 02476 671090
Kingland Road
Coventry
CV1 4DW

Birmingham Healthy Minds Service - Telephone 0121 301 2525
Shenley Field Centre
15 Shenley Fields Drive
Northfield
Birmingham
B31 1XH

Signed By; CEO Estelle Dimelor _____

Date _____

Next Review; September 2022

