



St. Margaret's C of E Primary and Nursery School

Stress Management Corporate Guidance

Written: January 2020

Date for review: January 2023

Head Teacher's signature _____

Chair of Governor's signature _____

Aim

The aim of this Corporate Guidance is set out how the West Sussex County Council (the Council) will comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Application

This guidance applies across all areas of service throughout the West Sussex County Council (the council) wherever services are delivered including schools.

Who can help?

Email the healthandsafety@westsussex.gov.uk, or call on 01243 752025.

Introduction

Our workforce is our most important and valued asset. Staff who are motivated and free from excessive pressures and demands are more productive, likely to have less sickness absence and are less likely to leave the organisation. Work colleagues may also be adversely affected if one or more of their colleagues are diagnosed as suffering from stress.

The recognition and management of stress is integral to the schools staff care responsibilities and to the role of Line Managers / Head teachers. This guidance seeks to enable an organisational culture where negative wellbeing issues are identified, minimised and managed before they affect the wellbeing of staff.

What is Stress?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as:

'The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed on them'.

When stressed, staff may find it difficult to cope and may be unable to carry out their duties effectively. Some degree of pressure may be stimulating and can help staff derive a sense of achievement from their work, but too much pressure, (or even in some cases too little pressure), may result in stress, under performance and long periods of sick leave.

Stress can also arise from the pressures people experience in their home and personal lives. This can make people more vulnerable to stress at work. Often, stress related illnesses are triggered by a combination of work and personal matters. Individual thresholds may vary and may depend not only on the nature of the job, but also on the context in which the work is undertaken.

Stress Management Standards

Line Managers / Head teachers should where possible identify and deal with stress in themselves and their staff, via the school's various pastoral care processes i.e. daily monitoring, 1-2-1, supervision, task centred monitoring and performance reviews and appraisal. The school follows the HSE guidance on the management of stress and has adopted the 'stress management standards' as detailed below. These standards classify the possible causes of stress and outline the standards to be reached to effectively manage each area.

Demands – staff indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should Line Manager / Head Teacher do?

- Provide employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work, review and adjust objectives throughout the year to ensure they remain achievable;
- Ensure staff skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;
- Ensure jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of staff;
- Address staff concerns about their working environment should they arise.

Control - employees indicate that they are able to have a say in the way they do their work and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should Line Manager / Head Teacher do?

- Ensure staff have some element of control over the pace of their work, where possible, continually review and adjust throughout the year;
- Encourage staff to use their skills and initiative to do their work;
- Encourage employees to undertake new challenges and pieces of work, working towards developing their skills;
- Monitor staff work patterns to ensure safe working practices and regular breaks are taken.

Support - staff indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and line managers and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should Line Manager / Head Teacher do?

- Ensure adequate support of staff at all levels;
- Communicate to staff what systems are in place for support, how and when they can access them;
- Ensure staff understand how to access the required resources to do their job;
- Ensure employees receive regular and constructive feedback. Discuss wellbeing during regular 1-2-1 conversations. See Staff Special Circumstances Support Policy for advice and guidance on how to support employees with life events, e.g. bereavement, menopause, domestic abuse.

Relationships - employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should Line Manager / Head Teacher do?

- Ensure positive behaviours at work are promoted and Line Managers / Head teachers should lead by example to avoid conflict and ensure fairness.
- Ensure staff share information relevant to their work e.g. work procedures, or collaborative working.
- Ensure unacceptable behaviour is dealt with.
- Liaise with Human Resources when dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Ensure staff can report unacceptable behaviour or personal issues in a confidential environment.

Role – employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities and that systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should Line Manager / Head Teacher do?

- Ensure that the different requirements the council places on individuals are compatible with each other.
- Ensure adequate information is given to staff for them to understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure that all requirements, role and responsibilities are made clear to staff.
- Ensure staff can raise any concerns they have in terms of their role and responsibilities and that these concerns are addressed and/or escalated where appropriate.

Change – staff indicate that the school engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should Line Manager / Head Teacher do?

- Ensure timely information is given to staff to enable them to understand the reasons for change.
- Ensure proper consultation with staff on changes giving the chance for employees to influence proposals where appropriate.
- Ensure staff are aware of the probable impact of any job changes.
- Ensure staff are given sufficient training to support the change in job role/activities.
- Ensure staff are aware of timetables for changes.
- Ensure staff have access to relevant support during changes.

Process

Risk assessment - Line Managers / Head teachers must assess the risk proactively. The risk assessment process will assist in identifying the primary cause(s) of an individual's wellbeing and stress levels whether-

Work related

- Personal
- Combination of work and personal issues

Risk assessment - generic team

- To be carried out where it is foreseeable that high levels of pressure or demands will be made on a group of staff / team or where historically people undertaking this type of work in the past have suffered from stress at work.

Risk assessment - individual

- when a member of staff reports, or it is foreseeable that an individual is / will be experiencing high levels of stress or where historically an individual role has been identified as stressful

Or

- A risk assessment must be completed prior to the return to work of any member of staff who has been off work with a stress related illness whether or not it is claimed to be work related.

Assessments must be implemented and regularly monitored to ensure they remain relevant. Line managers/ Head teachers should act on the outcome of the risk assessment and take action to mitigate risks i.e. by making reasonable adjustments either temporary or permanent. Assessment should be reviewed regularly and the length between reviews should be determined by the level of risk.

Model stress risk assessment

Schools – go to *WSSfS* risk assessments models page>stress risk assessment

Training

All new staff receives a planned induction that prepares them fully for their employment with the school. As part of the induction programme, the Stress Corporate Guidance should be discussed, and employees advised from the outset where they can turn to for help and support. It is recommended that Line Managers / Head teachers complete the stress management e-learning courses and if applicable their staff should also complete the relevant course – see training matrix.

Training

Schools *WSSfS go to Training Program page>click training induction for matrix

Additional Support for Managing Stress

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - is an independent confidential counselling service that County Council employees can access 24 hours a day 7 days a week and 52 weeks a year. The EAP provides support not only work-related issues but also for a wide range of personal problems. The website also has a range of self-help action plans and information, including an online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy tool.

Occupational Health Service - will provide advice to management on the capability of staff who have been diagnosed as suffering from a stress related illness especially with regard to return to work planning.

Human Resources -can provide advice and guidance to managers on managing performance and sickness absence; help with identifying sickness absence triggers, return to work planning, reasonable adjustments and rehabilitation.

A mindfulness app '[HeadSpace](#)' is available free from the staff normal app store.

Further guidance

Schools go to *WSSfS and access Employee Assistance Program and Occupational Health pages via resources

***School staff Link to WSSfS** at [West Sussex Services for Schools](#)

Log in select Resources, then HR, then Health and Safety, then select page indicated

Glossary	
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
WSSfS	West Sussex Services for Schools

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Reviewed and approved by members of the HSW Representatives Committee on 16.09.19