

1 September

Stress
Policy

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www.sefton.gov.uk

School: Cambridge Nursery School

**Signed by Chair
of Governors:** Mrs Julie Cliffe

**Signed by Head
Teacher:** Mrs Debbie Clark

Date: 1.9.19

Background

Why we need to tackle stress

Stress related absence is a significant cause of sickness within Sefton Schools. 60% of cases referred to Occupational Health are related to stress. Obviously there are likely to be other employees who suffer with stress but are not necessarily referred to Occupational Health and therefore the figure could be higher.

Introduction

The School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

What is stress?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other type 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.

More background information can be found on the HSE website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>

Symptoms

Stress can cause physical, behavioural and emotional changes in those experiencing it and can manifest itself in a wide range of symptoms that can develop over time.

The Head teacher and line managers should be aware of changes in the way people behave that could be linked to excessive pressures. Early intervention can be taken before the pressure becomes a problem. This may make it easier to reduce and eliminate the cause.

For more information on how to recognise stress in yourself or others open the following link on HSE's website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/furtheradvice/signsandsymptoms.htm>

Policy

The School will

- promote a culture to prevent stress and where it exists do all that is reasonable to resolve such work related stress problems.
- take all reasonably practicable steps to Identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- consult with employees and TU Safety Representatives on all proposed actions relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- provide training for all supervisory staff in good management practices.
- assist any employees who may be affected by such stress.
- provide support to enable managers to implement an agreed stress management strategy which will include reference to the HSE's management standards. - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm>. Further information is given in Appendix 1.

This policy will apply to everyone in the School. The Head teacher and line managers are responsible for implementation and the provision of the necessary resources.

For more detailed information open the link below:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/furtheradvice/signsandsymptoms.htm>

Relevant Legislation

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires an employer to ensure so far as is reasonable practicable the health safety and welfare of their employees.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires an employer to assess the risks to their employees from the hazards inherent in the work; work related stress is one of those hazards.

The Working Time Regulations 1998, the **Employment Rights Acts 1996** (if stress is involved in any dismissal case) and the **Equalities Act 2010** (for severe cases) may also be relevant in some circumstances.

The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended); and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended) also require employers to consult with and inform staff about health and safety risk assessments including the risk of work related stress.

Responsibilities

Head teachers / Managers

- conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within your area of control. As with any other health and safety hazard it is useful to follow the standard 5 steps approach to risk assessment starting with the common risk factors are relevant to your section. The following link starts the process:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/step1/> More information on the Management Standards is given in the Appendix 1
- 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 development opportunities
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their area of control.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work eg bereavement or separation.

Health and Safety Team

- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress
- Provide support to managers on implementing stress risk assessments.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Inform the School of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

Occupational Health

- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
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- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialists as required.

Human Resources Team

- Give guidance to managers on the stress policy
- Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational health where appropriate.
- Liaise with health and safety advisers where appropriate.

Employees

- Raise issues of concern with your line manager
- accept opportunities for counselling or other support and intervention when recommended.

Trade Union Safety Representatives

- safety 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 work place surveys
- Must be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process
- Should be allowed access to collective and anonymous data from HR
- Should be provided with paid time away from normal duties to attend TU training relating to workplace stress.

Safety Committee

- The Corporate Health and Safety Committee will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is implemented
 - And will oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the policy and other measures to reduce and promote workplace health and safety.
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Reminder of the risk assessment process

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require risk assessments of all work activities – not all necessarily written down.

Workplace stress is simply another risk. HSE has designed the Management Standards approach to help employers manage the causes of work-related stress. It is based on the familiar '5 steps to risk assessment' model requiring management and staff to work together. The Standards refer to six areas of work that can lead to stress if not properly managed.

The six Management Standards cover:

- **Demand** - work load, work patterns and the work environment
- **Control** - how much say we have in the way we work
- **Support** – the encouragement and resources provided by the organisation line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships** – promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role** - whether people understand their role at work and ensuring that they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change** - how well organisation change (large or small) is managed and communicated)

Risk assessment in relation to individuals must take account of any additional needs due to disability, medical conditions, susceptibilities and capabilities.

This includes circumstances that arise outside work but for which temporary or permanent adjustments to work demands may be necessary to avoid work contributing unnecessarily to the individual's stress.

Each Head teacher/manager will need to:

- identify sources of workplace stress and how they may affect the individual
- identify any unreasonable or unnecessary demands associated with the job
- implement any reasonably practicable preventative measures

Some ideas on preventive measures are:

- adjustment in workload or work allocation
 - alteration to rotas, work teams or systems
 - review of physical working conditions, communication systems, reporting arrangements and/or management structures
 - additional resources (equipment, staff, etc...)
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- provision of training or coaching
- provision of supervision

Some ideas on action in relation to an individual employee are:

- provision of aids or equipment for disabled employees
- temporary or permanent adjustment to duties
- support via special leave, flexible working arrangements, etc.
- referral for external advice or support e.g. medical referral to Occupational Health
- referral for counselling

Stress Indicator Tool

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/downloads.htm>

This is essentially a set of 35 tick box questions, each linked to one of the 6 management standards, to determine the level of support, control etc.

For example, *'I am given supportive feedback on the work I do'* would be answered somewhere in the *'never'* to *'always'* range.

Questionnaires are distributed in small groups, with each group under a common management.

The results are analysed, again using the web based analysis tool that is part of the total HSE package. This identifies the strength of each of the areas of stress management.

Action plans are then developed using focus groups.
