



Staff Stress Management Policy

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Vale of Evesham School
a specialist school for cognition and learning - enabling inclusion in the community

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Statement of intent

Advance Trust is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. Stress and its prevention is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of the school's staff, which remains a key priority. In light of this, the school understands the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause our employees to become stressed.

The purpose of this policy is to define stress, outline the responsibilities of the school's staff and to advise employees on how to deal with and prevent stress.

1. Definition

- 1.1. The Health and Safety Executive define stress as: “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.” The Health and Safety executive also points out that; “this makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.”

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. To be able to handle and avoid stress, members of staff, the Headteacher and governing body will all be expected take extra care and precautions.
- 2.2. Individual members of staff are responsible for:
- Being able to recognise the early signs of stress in themselves and their colleagues.
 - Supporting co-workers if they become stressed. This may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
 - Undertaking additional training and personal development opportunities.
 - Reporting any incidents of stress, e.g. over-working.
 - Be willing to openly discuss stress.
- 2.3. The Headteacher is responsible for:
- Organising proper inductions for new starters, explaining the school’s policies and code of conduct.
 - Ensuring all staff have up-to-date, regular training and that they are confident in their ability.
 - Conducting and implementing the recommendations of risk assessments, taking into account the causes of stress.
 - Having regular communication with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
 - Monitoring the employee’s workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring staff aren’t over-worked.
 - Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example for staff.
 - Ensuring that all staff read and understand the policy.
 - Staff affected by stress caused by work factors will be advised of the confidential counselling service provided through our well being support packages.
- 2.4. The governing body is responsible for:
- Encouraging stress awareness throughout the school, promoting stress as a serious issue, rather than a weakness.
 - Consulting the Headteacher on measures to manage stress, including them in any decisions that need to be made.

- Ensuring Headteacher puts measures in place to support staff with stress.
- Actively trying to eliminate stressors in school.

3. Causes of stress

3.1. The school recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and that different people can become stressed throughout their working lives. Because of this it is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues stress.

3.2. The following sources of stress can often be attributed to work:

- Over-working or work that doesn't match the employee's skills and ability
- Fear of change and trying to cope with change, e.g. advancements in technology
- Insufficient workload or not being able to use skills
- Lack of job security
- Poor relationships with colleagues and a lack of involvement
- Harassment or bullying
- Crisis management
- No long-term plan in place

3.3. The school recognises staff can also experience stress outside of school, home and personal lives can also prove stressful; bereavement, separation, financial and family problems make people more vulnerable to stress at work. It is common that a combination of stress at home and work can make people stressed.

4. Identifying a stressed colleague

4.1. In order to help stressed colleagues, identifying the symptoms of stress is very important. Someone may be suffering from one or more of the negative effects; however, they may not be stressed. When a stressor persists over a longer period of time the indicators become more obvious and acute.

4.2. The school will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy work place.

4.3. The school has a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress. The stress assessment in Appendix 2 should be completed by an individual's line manager of an employee is displaying symptoms of work-related stress.

- 4.4. All members of staff will look out for the following symptoms when identifying a colleague with stress:
- Mood swings and consistently bad moods, such as feeling angry or depressed
 - Low self-esteem, loss of confidence, feeling lonely, worthless or overwhelmed
 - Attitude and behaviour, including low morale, feeling unmotivated, poor concentration, lower quality of work, bad timekeeping, difficulty concentrating
 - Noticeable change in behaviours; using drugs, smoking, drinking more alcohol, eating disorders
- 4.5. All members of staff will also look out for physical indicators of stress, which include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Low energy, including fatigue and tiredness.
 - Upset stomach, including diarrhoea, constipation and nausea.
 - High blood pressure, heart disease and ulcers.
 - Frequent colds and infections, due to a weakened immune system.
 - Aches, pains and tension in joints and muscles.

5. School Management

- 5.1. In order to positively impact levels of stress in the school, Headteachers and the governing body will have to make changes to the whole school, changes will be implemented to positively affect all staff. Advance Trust has carried out a risk assessment (see Appendix 1) for all employees.
- 5.2. To help manage stress the Headteacher will:
- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a life outside of work.
 - Make the most of team bonding; using training opportunities to build relationships as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier.
 - Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads; one of the main contributors to stress is over-working; helping staff manage their workload will make them more relaxed.
 - Reach out to staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. a bereavement, allowing sufficient time off and supporting them when they return to work.

6. Self-management

- 6.1. Staff can also make changes to avoid and prevent stress, stress is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored
- 6.2. Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they're feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.
- 6.3. Staff will take action in order to manage their own stress, these actions will include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity and any negative feelings, exercise will also help to clear thoughts and deal with problems more calmly.
 - Managing their workload, establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life is vital.
 - Prioritising work, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference.
 - Avoiding unhealthy habits, such as drinking and smoking, these may provide temporary relief; however, in the long term unhealthy habits will only create more problems.

7. Monitoring and review

- 7.1. This policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Principal who will consult with Headteachers.
- 7.2. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 7.3. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.
- 7.4. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2019.

Appendix 1: Staff Risk Assessment – this risk assessment assesses risk across all Advance Trust Schools, however, should an individual indicate they are suffering from stress, the stress risk assessment in Appendix 2 should be carried out.

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR: All Advance Trust Schools			What are you risk assessing? STRESS The potential for stress to staff whilst carrying out their day to day role or following a period of intensive or potentially distressing activity or change within the school NB – if an individual advises that they are suffering from stress or has a period of ill health absence due to stress a separate assessment must be carried out.
Establishment: Advance Trust	Assessment by: Alison Young, Business Director, Advance Trust		Date: September 2018
Risk assessment number/ref:	Manager Approval: Liz Hayward, Executive Principal, Advance Trust	Date: September 2018	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Are there excessive job demands Workload, work patterns and work environment Dealing with bad behaviour Ofsted inspections	Staff Ill health (depression, anxiety) leading to absence from work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management process in place • Regular meetings with staff, both team meetings and one to one/ performance management which would discuss and anticipate workload. • Ensure that skills and abilities are correctly matched to job (person spec and job description) • Head / Managers monitor sickness absence data and staff turnover rates. • Work environment concerns, e.g. temperature, ventilation, noise, are taken seriously and investigated. • Times and lengths of meetings agreed and adhered to. A limit to after-school meetings as far as reasonable. • Staff have an opportunity to take a genuine break at lunch time. • Ensure teachers and middle leaders in particular maintain a reasonable work life balance. • Governing bodies have considered how they can support the headteacher in terms of work-life balance, new models of leadership, leadership time, career coaching and professional development opportunities. 				

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?
Control – how much say a person has in the way they do their work	Employees Ill health (depression, anxiety) leading to absence from work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work. • Staff encouraged to develop new skills to help them, undertake new and challenging pieces of work. • Staff consulted over their work patterns or changes to their work patterns. • Consideration of the workload impact of each new initiative before it is introduced. • PPA time in operation, reliable and can be completed offsite. • Scope for flexible working arrangements considered. 		
Support – includes the encouragement and resources provided	Employees Ill health (depression, anxiety) leading to absence from work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees are supported through school policies and procedures. • Regular team meetings / one-to-ones to discuss emergent issues. • Staff are aware of the support that is available to them • Staff receive regular constructive feedback as part of their performance management • Identification of any training needs conducted through performance management • Staff can access CPD on a fair and equitable basis • Mentoring and coaching available where necessary • Each schools has an employee wellbeing package in place. 		
Role – whether people understand their role and the school ensures there are not conflicting roles	Employees Ill health (depression, anxiety) leading to absence from work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff understand their role and are suitably trained. • Performance management used to help individuals clarify their role and priorities. • Standards of performance agreed. • New employees receive adequate induction into their role and objectives. • Recruitment process in place with Job Descriptions and Person Specifications. • Effective system of induction for new and supply staff. 		

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?		
Change – how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated	Employees Ill health (depression, anxiety) leading to absence from work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff made aware of why change is happening and key steps for change • Realistic timetable set out for change • Individuals directly affected are involved in the change process • Regular communication and consultation with all those affected • ‘Open door’ policy to help individuals who have concerns • Training provided for new / changed roles 				
Relationships – promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour	Employees Ill health (depression, anxiety) leading to absence from work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school promotes positive behaviours: School behaviour policy robust and adhered to • Discipline, grievance and bullying/harassment procedures in place and accessible to staff • Managers are encouraged to deal with and staff encouraged to report unacceptable behaviour • Training provided to help staff deal with difficult situations • Identify ways to celebrate success • Explore team building exercises • Whole school / departmental activities / events held 				
Undetected / poorly managed stress Failure to recognise signs leading to more serious ill health Repeated ill health through poor management	Employees Ill health (depression, anxiety) leading to absence from work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All incidents of potential / actual work related stress reviewed • Advice from HR and/or Occupational Health sought • Sickness absence policy in place and adhered to, return to work interviews held remedial action taken as appropriate. • All staff encouraged to pro-actively raise issues / concerns with their manager / head. • School has participated in the wellbeing programme for schools or undertaken HSE survey tool • Exit interviews held 				

Appendix 2: individual Stress Assessment

If an individual advises that they are suffering from stress or has a period of ill health absence due to stress the following separate assessment must be carried out – parts one, two and three.

The stress risk assessment is a combination of the employee's and manager's perceptions of workplace stressors compared against the HSE's management standards.

PART ONE: Employee Perception of Workplace Stressors



Employee Name:

Date:

Demands	Examples	Possible Solutions
Work planning Excessive working hours Unrealistic deadlines/ performance targets Working beyond competence Flexible working and leave		
Control		
Timing and pace of work Input into work scheduling and delivery Task priorities		
Role		
Understanding role in team Work matches job description Performance standards		
Relationships		
Bullying or harassment Unacceptable behaviour		
Support		
Management support Work-life balance Regular appraisals		
Change		
Communication of changes Involvement in change process Opportunity to voice opinions		

PART TWO: Manager Perception of Workplace Stressors

Manager Name:

Date:



Demands	Examples	Possible Solutions
Work planning Excessive working hours Unrealistic deadlines/ performance targets Working beyond competence Flexible working and leave		
Control		
Timing and pace of work Input into work scheduling and delivery Task priorities		
Role		
Understanding role in team Work matches job description Performance standards		
Relationships		
Bullying or harassment Unacceptable behaviour		
Support		
Management support Work-life balance Regular appraisals		
Change		
Communication of changes Involvement in change process Opportunity to voice opinions		

PART THREE: Action Plan

Issue	Action to Resolve Issue	Action By	Date Completed
1. Demands			
2. Control			
3. Role			
4. Relationships			
5. Support			
6. Change			

Action plan developed by:

Date:

Agreed by (Line Manager):

Date: