

# FLUSHING C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL STRESS POLICY

## Introduction

The Governing Body is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of the school workforce and recognise work-related stress as an organisational issue. The Governors acknowledge the requirement under the Management of Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Regulations, to assess and control the risks arising from work-related stress.

This policy will apply to all school employees. The Governing Body will delegate to the Headteacher the responsibility for the implementation of the policy and ensuring there are the necessary resources available.

## Definition of stress

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as:

*“the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them. It arises when they worry that they can’t cope”*

This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress, which can be detrimental to health.

## Policy

- Following the HSE guidance HSG218 - “Tackling work-related stress” the school will proactively identify workplace stressors and provide suitable strategies to eliminate or minimise the risk of stress amongst the school workforce.
- After a stress risk assessment has been carried out, the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce stress will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- All staff will be encouraged to consult with their trade union representatives around issues relating to work-related stress.
- Training will be undertaken by designated school staff on stress awareness and how to carry out a stress risk assessment.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Governing Body

The Governing Body will be responsible for ensuring that the school has a Stress Management Policy and that the Headteacher has sufficient and suitable resources to enable effective delivery of this policy.

### Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors will be responsible for arranging and conducting a stress risk assessment for the Headteacher. Following the stress risk assessments the Chair will ensure that an action plan is jointly agreed between the Headteacher and the chair of governors to reduce work-related stress factors.

## **Headteacher**

The Headteacher will:

- develop and encourage a positive style of management, which is supportive towards all school staff affected by both work-related stress factors as well as external stress factors e.g. divorce or bereavement.
- be responsible for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all school staff.
- attend training on stress risk awareness and where appropriate stress risk assessments along with other senior members of the school's management team.
- carry out and ensure the implementation of measures to minimise employee exposure to stress.
- Ensure that the physical working environment is free from stressors as far as is possible.
- Ensure effective communication between management, trade union representatives and employees, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure school staff are appropriately trained and resourced to effectively carry out their duties.
- Ensure that through performance management and Supervisory systems all staff are provided with appropriate developmental opportunities.
- Ensure that workloads are realistic and manageable.
- ensure that employees are aware that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within the school.
- Recognise that from time to time, staff may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work and which may have a temporary influence on their work performance e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Ensure the school's sickness monitoring information is up to date and identifies any stress related illness whether work related or as a consequence of external stress.
- Treat all discussions with staff around personal stress factors as confidential unless the member of staff gives written agreement for disclosure.
- Upon identifying that an employee is suffering from stress or a stress related illness, carry out a stress risk assessment around that individual and associated work-related stress factors.
- Following stress risk assessments for individuals, ensure that an action plan is jointly agreed between the Headteacher and the member of staff involved to reduce work-related stress factors.
- review the action plan at regular intervals agreed between the two parties to ensure the effectiveness of any control measures put in place.

## **Seek assistance from the Local Authority for**

- training for school staff in stress awareness and the control of stress factors through the risk assessment process.
- support and guidance to schools in completing the sickness absence returns.
- details of courses staff can access on how to identify and manage their own individual stress factors.

### **Seek assistance from the Personnel Provider for**

- Supporting individuals who are stressed and advise them and their manager on support available.
- support in cases of long term sickness absence due to stress, this may include a planned/phased return to work. At the request of the Headteacher or individual employees make referrals to Occupational Health and / or external counsellors as appropriate.
- support through the At Risk procedure to those employees who have been medically identified as unable to continue their normal duties or substantive posts.

### **The Governing Body**

- Will monitor the implementation of the stress policy through requesting updates from the Headteacher.
- will receive reports from the Headteacher on stress-related sickness absence within the school.
- Will review the policy every two years.

### **School Staff**

- will have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and should therefore co-operate with management in stress reduction measures including attending any training provided.
- Where staff recognize that they may be suffering from stress, either work-related or due to external stress factors, which may impact upon their work performance, they should raise this with the headteacher or their line manager or alternatively with their trade union representative.
- Where staff feel it inappropriate to discuss issues around stress with their Headteacher, line manager or trade union representatives, they have the option to self-refer to a confidential counselling service provided by Occupational Health or the personnel provider's Welfare Officer.
- Will accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

This policy will be reviewed according to the policy cycle.