

St Chad's Patchway CE VC Primary School

Staff Well-being Policy

'Learning to love, loving to learn'

1. Introduction

The School, as employer, has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' physical and mental well-being, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the School's control.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as:

'the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'.

There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate, and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

This policy recognises that there are many sources of work related pressures both unreasonable and reasonable, and these can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees or students.

The Health and Safety Executive has produced a number of **Management Standards** which cover the primary sources of pressures at work that, if not properly managed become stress, and then can lead to poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands** – workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control** – how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- **Support** – the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships** – promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change** – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation.

There are, therefore, many aspects of both our working and personal lives that may place pressure on us. Whilst some degree of pressure can actually improve performance, each of us has a different ability to cope with it and this can fluctuate depending on our personal situation.

Some pressure is inherent in the very nature of the work we do and the size of the organisation. Each job within the organisation carries with it a performance level that the employee is expected to meet. *When staff take up posts with additional responsibility they must expect that with them comes extra pressure.*

It is important therefore that individuals attempt to pre-empt pressure and take steps themselves to avoid or reduce it *before* it becomes a problem. If, however, pressures increase beyond an individual's ability to cope, it can then become stress.

Individuals suffering from stress can be affected:

- emotionally, (e.g., irritability, depression, anger);
- physically (e.g. raised blood pressure, tiredness, headaches);
- mentally (e.g. concentration, memory);
- interpersonally (e.g. relationships become more difficult); or
- in their work (e.g. poor time keeping, accidents, erratic attendance).

2. Statement of Intent

Governors and the School's Leadership Team acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote employee well-being as far as reasonably practicable.

The Governors and the School's Leadership Team are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

The Governors and the School's Leadership Team recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on employees' well-being, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at a school level.

The Staff Well-being Policy expands upon the School's Health and Safety Policy – Section 15 'Well-being', and South Gloucestershire Council's Department for Children and Young People's Health and Safety Manual - Appendices 6 & 7, in setting out how the School will promote the well-being of employees by:

- Creating a working environment where, as far as practicable, potential work-related stressors are avoided, minimised or mitigated through good management practices, effective personnel policies and staff development,
- Increasing managers' and employees' awareness of the causes and effects of stress,
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health,
- Developing the competence of all leaders so that they manage staff effectively and fairly,
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships both within teams and across the School,
- Establishing working arrangements whereby employees feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance,
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and well-being through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives (healthy eating, using PPA effectively, reasonable demands on time outside of work hours, such as evening performances, Fairs etc),

- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

3. Responsibilities for implementing the Staff Well-being Policy

The Governors and the School's Leadership Team must:

- Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect within the School,
- Encourage good management practices and the establishment of a work ethos within the School which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables employees to maintain a reasonable 'work life balance',
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements,
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being.

Leaders and supervisors must:

- Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and dignity, and must promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams they manage. They must not permit unacceptable behaviour and must take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention,
- Ensure that there is good communication within their team and there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work, seeking advice from Schools' Personnel and / or the Health and Safety Section at an early stage where concerns are raised,
- Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress,
- Co-operate with Schools' Personnel and the Health and Safety Section to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken for roles or working practices that may give rise to work-related stress,
- Encourage their staff to participate in any events or initiatives organised by the School to promote well-being and more effective working,
- Take action in the interests of all their colleagues where performance by a member of staff may cause stress to their colleagues.

Employees must:

- Treat colleagues and all other persons with whom they interact during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity,
- Co-operate with the School's efforts to implement the Well-being Policy, attending briefings and raise their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress on health,

- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being,
- Take responsibility for their own health and well-being by adopting healthy lifestyles,
- Take responsibility for their own development skills as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce of the risk of stress,
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, thus helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

4. The Well-being Policy – important considerations for all Staff

If you feel the pressure of work is beginning to affect your health or performance, it is important to take action early, especially if you cannot foresee it lightening in the near future.

Whilst the school will try to be sensitive when external pressures are affecting a member of staff, it cannot usually play a role in dealing with those pressures, but it is committed to trying to eliminate or reduce the factors within the school that may affect the health of its employees.

If you can identify any aspect of your working environment that is adding to your feeling of pressure, e.g. lack of or inappropriate resources, poor lighting, badly sited workstation, gossip about colleagues, these can sometimes be addressed fairly quickly.

If the pressure is caused by the nature of your work, the design of your job, or the organisational style, first try to think of a solution to the problem yourself, then discuss it with your line manager. It may be possible to make adjustments in the short or long term, to ease the pressure, and this is much easier to accomplish if you have thought about possible solutions yourself. This should be looked at in the light of the posts with additional responsibility staff have chosen to undertake.

Some work pressures are caused by being inadequately trained to do a job, or having insufficient knowledge. If this is the case you should raise the matter with your line manager. The school has access to training opportunities to support you.

When things can't be changed

As a publicly funded organisation, it is not always possible to get the resources or the environment we may wish, at the time we may wish, and that potentially adds to pressure. Every job comes with an inbuilt level of pressure and a school is no exception. Some jobs are just more pressured at some times than at others, so if it isn't possible to change the working practices, it is important to ensure that you are as prepared as possible to cope with that pressure.

5 Practical steps for the implementation of the Well-being Policy

The school will:

- Promote a culture of consultation, participation and open communication,
- Raise awareness for all staff on stress awareness and stress management to help them handle pressures they may encounter, and to recognise stress if it occurs, in themselves and others,
- Help staff identify internal and external sources of assistance,
- Provide information about confidential counselling services available to all staff – Interchange,
- Provide training and other opportunities directly linked to well being needs,
- Provide space where an employee can have some ‘time out’ if distressed,
- Make arrangements for religious observances wherever reasonable alongside normal duties,
- Implement initiatives designed to encourage staff to achieve a balance between their work and home lives, e.g. flexible working arrangements whenever reasonable and in line with other relevant policies,
- Monitor levels of absence due to stress,
- Endeavour to provide a pleasant, comfortable and safe environment – staffroom and washroom facilities,
- Have clear systems of line management,
- Recognise the value of each individual’s work.

Staff Responsibility to one another. Staff will:

- Express feelings in an acceptable manner to the appropriate people, in an appropriate and timely manner,
- Raise concerns in the correct forum, with a commitment to being part of the solution,
- Take advantage of training opportunities on stress management and well being,
- Report for work in a fit state to carry out duties,
- Help maintain a pleasant, comfortable and safe environment,
- Use facilities provided appropriately,
- Acknowledge that their actions affect others and work in a way to minimise other’s pressures by performing assigned duties in a professional and timely way, and working in a way that recognises we are all part of one team.

What staff can do out of work

Medical advice recommends:

- Eat healthily. Pressure can increase your requirements for certain vitamins,
- Exercise. Regular moderate exercise each day will help reduce levels of stress,
- Relax. It is important to set aside some time each week to spend doing something you enjoy and to keep a balance between work and leisure,
- Stop smoking. It doesn’t help, even if you think it does,
- Watch your caffeine intake,
- Talk to friends and /or family about what you’re feeling,
- Enjoy a drink, if that is what you like to do, but be sensible and be aware of recommended intake levels.

Interchange

A free and confidential staff counselling service available to all staff. This can be accessed via the South Gloucestershire LA website or an alternative is:

<http://teachersupport.info/about/index.php>

6 Consultation

- The Governors and Senior Leadership team will consult with staff on the Well-being policy and measures taken to implement the policy.
- The Well-being policy will be discussed with staff before being agreed by governors and new staff will be made aware of the policy.
- The views of individuals will be sought in areas or teams subject to local stress and shared with full SLT, where action will be agreed.
- Where a Safety Representative has been appointed by recognised Trade Unions under the provisions of Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977, the Safety Representative will also be consulted on the development of local stress risk assessments. At present we have no appointed safety representative.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The school will review this policy every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school and all members of staff will be given a copy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Single Equality policy and Health and Safety policy.

Signed Chair of governors Date.....

Signed..... Headteacher Date.....