

## TOLL BAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

# STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council and all its schools are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees and recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.
- 1.2 Schools will identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress where it is identified. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- 1.2 This policy will apply to all employees in schools.

## **2. Definition of Stress**

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

## **3. Policy Statement**

In seeking to ensure the effectiveness of this policy, the School will:-

- 3.1 ensure that legal requirements are complied with as far as is reasonably practicable
- 3.2 promote best practice, and improve knowledge and skills in stress management
- 3.3 identify, as far as is reasonably practicable, all workplace stressors, and conduct risk assessments to eliminate or reduce stress, or control the risks from stress. Risk assessments will be regularly reviewed
- 3.4 consult with staff representatives on the implementation of all proposed school wide action relating to the prevention of workplace stress
- 3.5 provide adequate resourcing to ensure the implementation of this policy

- 3.6 maintain a robust risk management process to ensure that principal risks are reported to the Governing Body

#### **4. Legal Framework**

- 4.1 Although there is currently no specific statutory legislation dealing with stress, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 employers must take all reasonably practicable measures to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees at work. There is, however, a growing legal framework in which the courts and tribunals have adjudicated on stress cases.
- 4.2 Additionally, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess health and safety risks and to introduce prevention and control measures based on those risk assessments.

#### **5. Management Standards**

- 5.1 In 2005 the Health and Safety Executive introduced 'Tackling Stress: The Management Standards Approach'. The Management Standards cover six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. In other words, the six Management Standards cover the primary sources of stress at work. These are:
- **Demands** – such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.
  - **Control** – such as how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
  - **Support** – such as the encouragement and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
  - **Relationships** – such as 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 in the organisation.
- 5.2 Both the Stress Action Plans and Risk Assessments are based on the above six Management Standards.

#### **6. Role and Responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities for the effectiveness of this Policy are set out below. It should be noted that, in each instance, the list is not exhaustive:-

##### **6.1 School's Responsibilities**

- 6.1.1 Conduct and implement recommendations of action plans and risk assessments within their area of responsibility
- 6.1.2 Utilise the Health and Well Being Service and Staff Counselling Service for both advice and referrals
- 6.1.3 Ensure good communication with employees, particularly where there are, for example, service provision and procedural changes
- 6.1.4 Monitor workloads with reference to the potential impact on individual employees' stress levels
- 6.1.5 In accordance with the School's Managing Attendance Policy, conduct "return to work interviews" immediately after all periods of sickness absence
- 6.1.6 Monitor working hours and overtime, taking account of the provisions of the Working Time Regulations
- 6.1.7 Attend training related to good management practice and health and safety in general
- 6.1.8 In accordance with the School's Bullying and Harassment Policy, ensure that such behaviour is not tolerated within their area of responsibility, also ensuring that the provisions of the policy are fully implemented
- 6.1.9 Be vigilant and offer support to an employee who is experiencing both work and/or non work-related stress
- 6.10 To try to identify 'hot spots' within school that need urgent intervention and/or support.

## **6.2 Employee's Responsibilities**

- 6.2.1 Take personal responsibility for seeking to manage stress at a personal level, for example by managing their workload as far as possible within the constraints of their job and not work excessive hours on a regular basis
- 6.2.2 Be vigilant and offer support to a colleague who is experiencing both work and/or non-work related stress
- 6.2.3 Raise issues of concern through, for example, their manager, a health and safety or trade union representative
- 6.2.4 Use policies and procedures such as Grievance, Bullying and Harassment in order to raise concerns and issues

- 6.2.5 Participate in the Performance Development Review process, and engage in meeting identified training needs and their Personal Development Plan
- 6.2.6 Utilise the Health & Well Being Service at the instigation of the manager
- 6.2.7 Access the Staff Counselling Service on a self-referral basis by telephoning 01302 737045
- 6.2.8 Utilise any other training and support offered by the School
- 6.2.9 Not cause unnecessary and/or unreasonable stress to others.

### **6.3 Health and Well Being Service**

- 6.3.1 Provide support and advice on the implementation of actions arising from stress risk assessments
- 6.3.2 Advise managers of those staff who fall within the Disability Discrimination Act as a result of a stress-related problem
- 6.3.3 Support employees absent from work with stress and provide advice to both them and, with the employee's permission, the appropriate manager on any underlying work-related causative factors and remedies
- 6.3.4 Provide advice on how to plan and implement a phased return to work
- 6.3.5 Refer employees to any identified specialist agencies as required
- 6.3.6 Participate in monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the policy and procedure
- 6.3.7 Communication of any changes and developments in the field of work-related stress.

### **6.4 Counselling Service**

- 6.4.1 Provide a free and confidential counselling service for employees experiencing work and/or non-work related stress
- 6.4.2 Liase with Health and Well-Being and other areas of the Council to provide support and advice on the implementation of actions arising from stress risk assessments
- 6.4.3 Participate in monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the policy by maintaining statistics relating to the numbers of staff contacting the Service with stress-related issues.

## **6.5 Human Resources & Organisational Development**

- 6.5.1 Provide guidance to managers on the policy and procedure
- 6.5.2 Assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress e.g. through monitoring reasons for absence
- 6.5.3 Provide advice on training requirements and provision
- 6.5.4 Provide continuing advice and support on the implications and impact of change
- 6.5.5 Encourage referral to the Health and Well-Being Service and Staff Counselling where appropriate.

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| <b>7. Procedure</b> |
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- 7.1 The procedural section of this policy provides guidance on the completion of employee surveying, action plans and risk assessments.
- 7.2 It is accepted that any job can cause stress and also that it is not just about overwork. Boredom and monotony can also be stressful. Some of the most common causes of stress are:
  - dealing with clients or the public
  - reduction in resources, reorganisations and lack of job security
  - poor working conditions
  - threats of violence, harassment and bullying
  - lack of childcare or flexibility
  - lack of control over work
  - too demanding a job or too high a workload
  - monotonous or boring work
  - lack of training
  - excessive hours and shift work
  - working in isolation
  - working relationships
  - unreasonable expectations

The above list is, however, not exhaustive.

- 7.3 The Appendices to this policy contain an Action Plan format and a Risk Assessment Tool (Appendices 1 and 2).

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| <b>8. Staff Survey</b> |
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- 8.1 If appropriate, Annual staff surveys will include a number of questions to help identify stress levels of staff. These statistics will then be used to identify any 'hot spots' within schools which require particular advice and/or intervention.

- 8.2 The results of the staff surveys will be analysed and the results communicated back to employees, specifically identifying common stressors across schools.
- 8.3 The analysis will also identify hot spots, where possible.
- 8.3 Following the analysis of the results, focus groups will be set up to explore how schools can tackle identified stressors. Focus groups will contribute to the creation of a school stress action plan.

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| <b>9.</b> | <b>Action Plans</b> |
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- 9.1 The School will be required to complete a Stress Action Plan following analysis of the survey data. Support will be provided by the authority in terms of supporting the production of Action Plans between schools or school sectors.
- 9.2 The action plan should be completed taking into account feedback and consultation with staff.
- 9.3 The action plan will be broken down into the 'desirable states' within the six Management Standards.
- 9.4 A copy of the completed Action Plan must be forwarded to the Headteacher and the Local Authority.

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| <b>10.</b> | <b>Individual Stress Risk Assessment</b> |
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- 10.1 Where managers are concerned about an individual's level of stress, e.g. highlighted by high sickness absence, stress documented as the reason for absence by a General Practitioner, or if an individual identifies that they are under undue stress, they should work with the individual to identify the possible causes, where these are work related, and to develop an individual action plan.
- 10.2 The impact of different circumstances or potential stressors will vary from person to person based on their individual 'stress threshold'. This should be taken into account when considering what the potential stressors are for the individual.
- 10.3 The manager and individual should then agree who will take what action in order to address the causes of any work-related stress.
- 10.4 It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that all agreed actions are followed up by the agreed date. If actions or stressors are beyond the control of that manager, they should ensure that these issues are passed up through the line management structure.

- 10.5 Actions to be taken in order to reduce the stressor(s) should be documented on this tool and reviewed in accordance with the timescales agreed.
- 10.6 On the agreed review date it will be necessary to consider whether all action points have been met. Where they have not, then a further review date and actions should be agreed.
- 10.7 All documents should be retained in the individual's personal file.

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| Original Approved By: Toll Bar Primary School Governors 23/10/08 |
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