Stress Policy Wincle CE Primary School

Version: APPROVED

Updated: June 2025

Date updated:	Brief summary of changes:
June 2025	No changes

Our school's vision:

*Wincle School provides an enriching and outstanding rural education. We nurture the whole individual: body, mind and soul, inspiring rounded, happy, courageous children **who shine in all that they say and do**. Our children exhibit a passion for learning, a confident faith, a loving concern for community and an inclusive respect for all.*

Our school vision encompasses the responsibility of the school to ensure that all staff are happy and that we nurture each member of staff as a whole individual: mind, body and soul. We develop a loving concern for all members of the school community and offer help and support when required.

We encourage our staff and pupils to 'Shine like Stars' (Philippians 2:15) and to do this run with the following acronym:

S	Service	⭐ No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." Aesop ⭐We would like our pupils to have the confidence to know that they can make a difference: have hope for the future. ⭐ We encourage our pupils to challenge injustice and inequality
T	Theology	⭐Our principles are founded on the truth that we are loved by the Father, Saved by the Son and Sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ⭐ We want to ignite passion and curiosity for learning, providing an exciting curriculum to inspire all learners to be the best they can be.
A	Attitude	⭐ We encourage our pupils to show integrity ⭐ We would like our pupils to have the courage to fight for what is important ⭐ When things are challenging, we would like our pupils to display perseverance and not give up. ⭐ Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow" Albert Einstein
R	Relationships	⭐ We nurture the whole individual: body, mind and soul ⭐ We encourage the pupils to respect every living creature and show compassion. ⭐We would like our children to treat other people as they would like to be treated following Jesus' example. We are all unique We help all children build trusting relationships ⭐ Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.' (Colossians 3:12)
S	Shine like stars	⭐I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." (John 8:12) ⭐ We would like our pupils to shine in their behaviour, attitudes, relationships and learning.

Stress Policy

Introduction

Wincle CE Primary School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. This policy will apply to everyone in school. The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation and the school is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

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". 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
• Wincle CE Primary School will identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
• Wincle CE Primary School will consult with Trade Union Safety Representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
• Wincle CE Primary School will provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good Management practices.
• Wincle CE Primary School will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
• Wincle CE Primary School will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the school's agreed stress management strategy.

Responsibilities
Head Teacher
• Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
• 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 developmental 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 jurisdiction.
• Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
• Liaise with the Chair of Governors and/or the Chair of the Welfare Subcommittee regarding own stress levels if required.

Occupational Health (Optima)
• Train and support managers in carrying out stress risk assessments and implementing the required actions.
• Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise their management on a planned return to work.
• Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
• Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
• Inform the employer and the health and safety committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

Human Resources
• Give guidance to managers on the content and implementation of 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 workplace counsellors where appropriate.

Employees
• Raise issues of concern with Line Manager, Human Resources, Occupational Health or Safety Representative as appropriate.
• Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.
• To work positively with management; to co-operate with their Managers, Human Resources and Occupational Health to seek out solutions to work related issues of concern.

Stress Risk Assessment

The factors that place employees at risk of developing stress should be assessed in the same way as any other hazard found in the workplace and can be included as part of general task/job risk assessments. Managers are only required to assess those hazards which are found in work. They are not obliged to make searching enquiries of employees as to the causes of any non-work stress. Where work-place stressors are identified, these should be avoided where possible, but where this is not possible, the risk should be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable.

Jobs are not expected to be stress risk assessed, because no job should itself be inherently stressful. However, each job/task general risk assessment should cover suitable controls if there are inherent hazards likely to cause additional stress i.e. working with violent or aggressive people.

The interaction of a person with their job, and how the individual perceives this interaction, can result in stress. A job may be stressful for one person, but not another, so the key is matching the individual to the job. Where stress manifests itself amongst a group of employees', managers may wish to assess for stress, the common tasks undertaken by a group of employees.

There are five steps, which may be used in a formal stress risk assessment, and these are as follows:-
o Identify if there is a problem.
o Identify who may be harmed and how.
o Evaluate the risk.
o Record findings.
o Review and revise.

An Individual Stress Risk Assessment may be conducted as stand-alone assessment following a referral from occupational health or incorporated into an existing procedure e.g.: return to work interview, supervision interview, staff appraisal etc.

To assist the Managers to undertake Stress Risk Assessments, proforma's have been developed and can be found at Appendix 4 - Departmental Stress Risk Assessment and Appendix 5 - Individual Stress Risk Assessment.

The risk assessment forms are based on the HSE six stressors and the Manager should answer yes, no or unsure for each question. The Manager in consultation with the employee(s) should then identify what action will be taken, by whom and by when, in order to resolve the issues identified.

Training

Human Resources and Occupational Health will arrange training for Managers on recognising the signs and symptoms of stress within their teams, and how to carry out a stress risk assessment, where necessary.
Stress Awareness Sessions / Managing Personal Stress Sessions should also be held as appropriate for employees, which covers how to identify and manage personal/work stress.
Additionally, Cheshire East Council may commission specialist training via Occupational Health where required.

References

In compiling this policy, the following documents have been referred to:

• HSE Guidance Note – HSG65
• HSE Guidance Note – HSE INDG163 – Five Steps To A Risk Assessments
• HSE Guidance Note – HSG 218 - Tackling Work-Related Stress
• HSE Information Leaflet. - Working Together To Reduce Stress At Work – A Guide For Employees
• HSE Information Leaflet – Tackling Stress: The Management Standards Approach
• HSE Information Leaflet - Real Solutions Real People

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This document shall be monitored, and reviewed annually (or more frequently as necessary) to evaluate its effectiveness. The review will ensure that the documents comply with statutory requirements and corporate policy. After this review, the document's issue and next review dates will be amended.

APPENDIX ONE – SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Stress.

PHYSICAL	MENTAL	BEHAVIOURAL	EMOTIONAL
• Headaches/Migraines/ Dizziness/Blurred Vision • Tearfulness • Gastrointestinal e.g. Constipation, Diarrhoea, Indigestion, Nausea. • Unexplained weight gain or loss • Back Pain – aching neck and shoulders • Chest pain – palpitations, breathlessness • Edginess/inability to relax • Depressed immune system e.g. frequent infections, allergies, and recurrence of previous infections. • Skin rashes • Tiredness • Alteration of the menstrual pattern in women. • Raised heart rate • Increased sweating • Fainting.	• Difficulty in concentrating. • Poor memory. • Persistent negative thoughts. • Excessive worry. • Making mistakes. • Inability to make decisions and hasty decisions. • Diminished or exaggerated fantasy life. • Lack of attention to detail.	• Unsociable and anti-social behaviour. • More accident-prone. • Erratic behaviour and driving. • Covering up mistakes by lying. • Poor appearance. • Reduced reaction times. • Eating disorders. • Excessive smoking/ drinking. Use of drugs. • Reduced work productivity. • Taking work home/ working longer hours. • Difficulty in sleeping/ Change in sleep pattern. • Inability to deal with normal everyday tasks. • Too busy to relax. • Weepiness. • Loss of interest in sex. • Withdrawal from supportive relationships. • Impaired speech • Nervous laughter	• Low mood state. • Irritable. • Mood swings. • Lack of motivation and enthusiasm. • Reduced self-esteem. • Feelings of futility, cynicism, suspicion and alienation. • Loss of confidence. • Anxiety. • Worrying more. • Feeling of helplessness. • Lack of concentration. • Withdrawal into daydreams. • Feeling tense. • Depression or general unhappiness.

APPENDIX TWO – CAUSES OF STRESS

Possible Causes of Stress.

WORK RELATED	NON-WORK RELATED
- Responsibility. - Work Load - Conflict/Relationships with Colleagues. - Career Development. - Job Threat/Security. - Organisational Culture. - Organisational Structure. - Organisational Change. - Job Change/Redeployment. - Morale. - Autonomy over work. - Participation. - Harassment and Bullying. - Violence/Verbal Abuse - Ambiguity of job role. - Shift Work. - Poor Working Environment. - Excessive Working Hours. - Lone Working. - Discrimination.	- Financial Stability. - Caring Responsibilities. - Death of Close Relative/Partner/Friend. - Relationship Breakdown. - Moving House. - Family Problems. - Alcohol or Substance Misuse. - Domestic Violence.

APPENDIX THREE – FIVE STEPS TO A RISK ASSESSMENT

STEP 1 – INDENTIFY THE HAZARDS.

According to the Health and Safety Executive's commissioned research, major causes of stress can be catergorised into six key areas –

• Demands
• Control
• Support
• Relationships
• Role
• Change

The rationale being that if these are not managed effectively in an organization, then staff are at risk of suffering from work-related stress. It is therefore important that all employees are familiar with and understand these stressors.

Most of the arrangements that will assist Managers to identify, control and manage workplace stressors, should already be in place these should include:

• Induction programmes
• Informal discussions between managers and staff.
• Regular team meeting – such as team briefing sessions.
• Staff appraisal and/or supervision sessions.
• Performance measures e.g. an employee performing below expectations.
• Training and development.
•General Risk Assessments.
• Sickness absence monitoring.
• Return to work interviews.
• Exit interviews and staff turn-over rates.

Managers may find from using the above methods that they can determine if there is a problem before or as it becomes apparent.

STEP TWO – IDENTIFY WHO MAY BE HARMED AND HOW.

No employee is immune from work-related stress (pressure) and no job is stress-free (pressure-free), however some individuals may be more vulnerable at certain times when they are facing other stressors, which may or may not be work-related. Exposure to the stressors identified in step one may create a risk when the pressure from one or more stressor exceeds the individual's ability to cope. Other factors may lead to increased vulnerability, such as wider organisational change or restructuring, or personal issues such as bereavement, relationship breakdown, health issues etc.

STEP THREE – EVALUATE THE RISK.

Each of the potential key areas or stressors identified in step one should now be evaluated by determining:
8

• Whether there are preventative measures already in place to control the risk.
• Whether these are sufficient to control the risk to an acceptable level.
• If the risks are still too high, what more can be done to reduce the risks to an acceptable level.

As outlined in step one, some of the issues that may require consideration are as follows:

• Demands: Workload (too much or too little), work patterns, and the work environment and including guidance on what should be happening.
• Control: Lack of control over the job, including responsibility, ability to delegate and development of decision making.
• Support: From line management and colleagues – a sense of belonging within the Council as a whole, employees new to the role and issues relating to individual strengths, team-working and work-life balance.
• Relationships: Conflict within teams and across departments, bullying and harassment, systems for responding to any individual concerns. Does the council promote positive behaviours and ensures fairness?
• Role: Employees understand what is expected of them and how their role fits in with other colleagues. Realistic goals, targets and clear objectives in line with the authorities' aims and objectives.
• Change: Change and how it is managed and communicated through the Council.

STEP FOUR – RECORD YOUR FINDINGS.

Work with employees to decide on improvement targets and actions. Develop action plans in consultation with employees and their representatives. The record may be on paper or stored electronically, but must be retrievable and available for inspection. It must be remembered though that confidentially of individual details must be respected. Risk assessment templates are available from the Headteacher

STEP FIVE – REVIEW AND REVISE.

Risk assessments must be reviewed when circumstances change or if there is other evidence that the assessment is no longer valid. It will depend upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in place, and should be reactive to any changes in relation to the factors involved, such as changes in the duties attached to the post, a different post holder or other changes that may have an impact.

Although the risk assessment process takes a collective, proactive approach, individual differences and problems will exist. Managers therefore need to develop rapport with staff through regular meetings and informal chats. They need to be familiar with where to go for help and what to do to help an individual if the need arises. Employees also need to be encouraged to raise concerns and need to be informed of where they can go for help