Stress Management Policy

Sutton CoE (VC) Primary School

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Stress Management Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. The Governing Body has a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and recognises that their wellbeing is critically important to its success. The prevention and effective management of stress that is work related is central to the school's responsibility to its employees and to the role of managers and supervisors.

1.2. All employees have the right to expect that their working conditions and relationships will be such that they do not result in unnecessary anxiety or prolonged stress symptoms.

1.3. This policy statement is an indication that the school is committed to:

1.3.1. Preventing, in so far as is practicable, employee stress resulting from inappropriate work practices, excessive workloads or interpersonal relationships within the workplace.

1.3.2. Where work-related stress does occur, taking steps to minimise the impact of this stress on individuals.

1.3.3. Providing training and support to help managers and employees understand and recognise the nature, causes and management of work-related stress; and, for managers in particular, how to prevent or minimise work-related stress.

1.3.4. That we have met the legal duty to protect workers from stress at work, as defined by the Health and Safety Executive, by risk assessing and acting on the risk of stress, and its impact on mental and physical ill-health.

1.4. The Governing Body recognises that the pace of change across the education sector and pressure on resources increases the likelihood of work-related stress. Whilst it may not be possible to eradicate all work-based stress, the Governing Body wishes to create an organisational culture in which issues of employee stress are taken seriously and the wellbeing of employees is given a high priority.

2. Stressors

2.1. An overall stress risk assessment has been undertaken and will be reviewed on a regular basis in response to changes in the workplace.

2.2. The Governing Body cannot address all potential stressors and cannot eradicate all stress from the workplace. A demand-free school is not practicable and could not be effective.

2.3. The Governing Body recognises that stress may not be directly work related and can result from a range of causes, including domestic circumstances, external crises and conflicting demands between workplace and home. However, this policy outlines the Governing Body's intention to prevent and address work-related stress, where it is able to do so.

2.4. Employees are required to report matters of concern relating to health and safety, including stress at work, to an appropriate manager. Employees are encouraged to develop a balanced and responsible approach to work and their personal lives and to inform management where personal stress is affecting their work.

3. The Responsibilities of Managers

3.1. Prevention, recognition and management of work-related stress are critical parts of the management function.

3.2. Managers will try to create a working environment which avoids or reduces potential stressors. They will:

3.2.1. Ensure effective communication about school/department performance, change and proposed developments. This recognises that the impact of change can be reduced if employees feel they have been adequately prepared for it.

3.2.2. Establish reasonable workloads for individuals considering their post, experience and their capabilities and establish fair and equitable workloads across employee groups.

3.2.3. Ensure that work deadlines are reasonable and properly scheduled.

3.2.4. Ensure that all employees are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

3.2.5. Create a school/department culture in which bullying, and harassment will not be tolerated and deal promptly with those who are accused of inappropriate behaviour (see Policy on Bullying and Harassment)

3.2.6. Take seriously employee concerns about inappropriate pupil behaviour and ensure procedures to support employees are in place.

3.2.7. Create a culture where all employees know they can raise concerns and their concerns will be treated seriously and sympathetically; and which avoids a blame culture.

3.2.8. Recognise that employees need to balance their work and home lives and responsibilities.

3.2.9. Treat all employees equitably.

3.3. The senior management team will:

3.3.1. Ensure that employees are appropriately trained for the work they are required to undertake.

3.3.2. Be prepared to review individual workloads and objectives and ensure that work-life balance issues are addressed.

3.3.3. Consider flexible or part time working, where appropriate.

3.4. The employees line manager or senior manager as appropriate, will complete a stress risk assessment with the employee, when an employee is displaying possible symptoms of work-related stress or prior to returning to work from sickness absence relating to work-related stress.

4. Stress Absence Procedure

4.1. There may be occasions where stress impacts so negatively on health that individuals take time off work. It is the senior management team's objective to minimise sickness absence, to provide support for employees and to plan and implement a structured return to work where this is desirable.

4.2. It is important that individuals in such circumstances seek immediate advice from their GP to facilitate as speedy a return to work as possible. Where the employee consents, the Occupational Health Adviser will be asked to provide a report which will give the school guidance on the management of the problem in order to inform senior managers whether adjustments can or should be made to the individual's work. A senior manager will consider the circumstances of the employee's stress and will give consideration to an appropriate strategy for the individual to return to work, which may include:

4.2.1. Adjustments to the individual's duties, workload or place of work where this can reasonably be achieved, either on a temporary or longer-term basis, with consideration of any salary implications.

4.2.2. An initial return to work on a part-time basis.

4.2.3. The offer of a job at a lower level of responsibility with a correspondingly lower salary grade.

4.3. Where the circumstances leading to the employee's stress involves conflict with other employees, the appropriate senior manager will instigate an independent review to provide an objective analysis of the causes of the conflict and possible solutions. The Governing Body recognises its obligations to act in response to absences which result from work-related stress; to act supportively, but also to act speedily. In the event of the employee not wishing to reveal the cause of the illness to the School or not willing to be referred to the Occupational Health Adviser, a senior manager will remind the employee of the importance of this and will, where appropriate, consult with the employee's representative to better understand genuine reasons why an employee is not responding. However, if the School asks again for this information and the employee does not respond, the School would follow the sickness absence management procedures.

5. Sickness Absence Management Policy

5.1. This policy operates in conjunction with the Management of Sickness Absence Policy.

Appendix Stress Risk Assessment for School

Hazard or risk factor:	Control measures:	Further action needed:	Monitoring/review by who/when:
Demands of the job			
Personal control over work			
Support, training or specific individual needs			
Relationships at work			
Perception of role			
Change at work			