





‘Broadening Horizons’

Stress Management Policy

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Policy Review Date:	September 2026	Headteacher Nitash Odedra	Signed 	25/09/2023
Ratified by Governing Body:				
Sue Welford (Chair of Governors)				25/09/2023

STRESS POLICY

Rushey Mead Primary School is committed to providing a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and well-being of all its employees.

The governing body recognises that stress is potentially a major cause of ill health amongst its staff. This policy is primarily concerned with stress related illness arising from work, although it is recognised that events occurring outside work may also impact on an employee's work.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty of care on employers to provide and maintain safe systems of work and a working environment which is, wherever possible, safe and without risk to health.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty of care to assess significant risk to health and safety and, where these risks cannot be eliminated, implemented control measures to minimise or reduce risk.

Aims

Through this policy we aim to:

- Deal with all employees fairly and consistently throughout the school
- Respect individual confidentiality
- Encourage open communication between managers and employees
- Minimise the number of days lost by stress-related absence
- Develop and implement procedures to manage problems that occur within the work place and to support individuals who are suffering from stress
- Monitor procedures and outcomes, and to assess the effectiveness of the policy

HSE Management Standard

The HSE stress 'Management Standard' is the desired goal for prevention, minimisation and management of stress.

Definition of stress

The HSE defines stress as:

'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'

Pressure can arise from an individual's personal life, as well as from work, and people vary in their capacity and ability to cope with different types of pressure. Some individuals will recognise that their health is affected and will seek help; others will not recognise or acknowledge that they are stressed, although it may be apparent to their manager and work colleagues. Although in itself, stress is not an illness, there is evidence that stress can lead to mental and physical ill health.

Causes of Stress

Within school there are times that are particularly stressful for staff e.g. OFSTED inspections, school re-organisation and redundancy, but there are also other factors that may cause stress:

- Bereavement
- Relationship breakdown
- Problems relating to children/parents
- Illness in the family
- Financial strain
- Personal issues
- Abuse
- Violence
- Moving house

Effects of Stress

The effects of stress can be short-lived provided appropriate action is taken. Early recognition is vital.

Effects on the Individual

If stress is prolonged or intense, it can lead to increased problems with ill health. It can also lead to other behaviours that are not helpful, such as fluctuations in weight, increased alcohol/caffeine consumption and smoking.

Effects on School

Stress can potentially have a substantial financial impact on the school:

- Increased sickness absence
- Reduced staff performance
- Reduced morale
- Increased staff turnover

Signs of Stress

Early recognition of the signs of stress is beneficial to both the staff and the school. Some of the common signs are:

Physical Signs	—————▶	Aches and pains Palpitations Dizziness Skin or sleep disorders
Behavioural Signs	—————▶	Concentration lapses Loss of creativity Making errors
Emotional Signs	—————▶	Intolerance and irritability Low self esteem Panic Depression Guilt Anger
Work Related Signs	—————▶	Increased short-term absence Poor work performance Poor decision making Conflict with colleagues Loss of motivation Poor time-keeping Longer hours with diminishing effectiveness

Roles and Responsibilities

Managerial/Supervisor/Responsibilities

The Headteacher and line managers have a particular responsibility to be aware of the legal duty as an employer and also to be aware of how to recognise early signs of stress in their employees.

It is important for the success of this policy that those with management responsibilities play an active role in its implementation.

The responsibilities include:

Role	Responsibility	Practical Actions
Management/Senior Management responsibilities	Commitment and support of stress policy	<p>Speak to staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to all staff, taking into consideration part-time and temporary staff • Share information • Pass on all briefings and information you receive <p>Ensure meetings happen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only rearrange if absolutely necessary <p>Carry out Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider training needs • Ask about things that prevent staff from working as effectively as they could • Are staff clear in their priorities? <p>Have 1:1 Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss workload issues and clarify priorities <p>Know what to do if a staff member says they are stressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake regular risk assessments • Identify sources of assistance for employees with stress • Ask the employee to complete a stress support plan • Undertake regular reviews <p>Act quickly and positively if someone is absent due to stress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not avoid contact with the staff member • If they are unwilling to be in contact with you, speak to the school's HR Advisor. <p>Be flexible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If someone has a problem in their home life that is affecting their work, consider what can be done to help.
	Ensure principles and approaches to managing stress are implemented	
	Offer support to staff who are experiencing stress outside of work	
	Conduct and implement risk assessment actions in their area of control	
	Ensure good communication between themselves and staff	
	Ensure staff are fully trained to undertake their duties	
	Ensure staff have access to training on recognising stress	
	Monitor workloads, working hours and absences	
	Ensure bullying and harassment is not tolerated	
	Observing and evaluating work performance	
	Ensuring that absences which may have been caused by stress are acted upon sympathetically, with understanding and monitored through the school's sickness management procedures	
	Act with sensitivity when dealing with individuals, either they suspect are suffering from stress or who have been diagnosed.	
	Contacting the school promptly when a GP medical certificate is received, which indicates that absence is possibly stress-related.	
Individual employees responsibilities	Support stress actions and initiatives	
	Recognise that you may cause stress to others	
	Attend training so you are better able to recognise and manage pressure and stress	
	Communicate openly and honestly with managers and colleagues	
	Identify causes of stress in the workplace and report them to your manager	
	If you are suffering from stress in your personal life, you may wish to contact your manager	
	Make use of counselling services when recommended.	

Stress Interventions

The following support mechanisms are available:

Corporate Team LA Health& Safety Team: Tel: (0116) 454 4300	Provide support and guidance on risk assessments
Occupational Health (Optima Health)	Provide medical advice on the impact of stress
Counselling Service (VivUp) Tel: 0800 023 9324 or 0330 800 658	Free confidential service available to all employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Additional counselling sessions can also be arranged through the school and the LA Corporate H & S Team
Training	Specific courses aimed at employees and managers are available
LCC Extranet Corporate H & S page	A variety of information and advice available for all employees on the H & S extranet page.
LCC Gym & Swim	Corporate monthly packages are available to all LCC staff. These are at a reduced rate.
Schools Advisory Service	<p>A health and well-being package is available to all staff who are employed at Rushey Mead Primary School, giving access to GP appointments, counselling - both telephone and face to face - and a variety of other services.</p> <p>There are also a number of apps that can be accessed – SAS Gym, Feeling Good, etc.</p>
Mental Health First Aider	There are a number of mental health first aiders in school: Natasha Jackson, Karen Sheerin and Hannah Brown. Their role is to act as a point of contact and reassurance for a person who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress and to guide the person to appropriate professional support. A mental health first aider does not diagnose mental health conditions and is not a trained therapist or psychiatrist.

The role of other policies and arrangements

Many other existing policies and arrangements relate, directly and indirectly, to the management of stress. These include:

- Appraisal and Supervision - These provide employees and managers with a valuable opportunity to get together and discuss work-related issues.
- Grievance Procedures - All employees have a right to raise any grievance relating to their employment and have it settled fairly and without undue delay.
- Absence Management Policy – The Absence Management Policy sets out the school's approach to managing absence.
- Capability Procedure – The purpose of the procedure is to provide a fair process for reviewing an employee's capability and dealing with any problems identified. The emphasis is not on punishment, but on helping employees to do their job to the required standards.

Recruitment & Selection

The full range of tasks and demands of the job will be set out clearly in the job description and will be fully discussed in the interview process. Areas of potential pressure will be identified.

All references must seek information about candidates, sickness and absence records for the previous 24 months and must comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Induction

All employees must receive induction into their new job roles. Starting a new job can be a stressful time and a planned induction will help to eliminate any concerns.

Attendance Management

The Business Manager/Headteacher will arrange appropriate communication mechanisms with an absent employee, upon receipt of a GP certificate, which identifies a stress-related illness, to discuss any underlying causes and to arrange support and assistance if the absence is likely to continue.

Return to Work

Before the employee returns to work, the Business Manager/Headteacher will agree a planned return to work with the member of staff.

Absence from work due to stress (whether work or non-work related) must also be reported in accordance with LCC's sickness absence reporting procedures.

Implementation, Monitoring, Audit and Review

This policy will apply to all employees at Rushey Mead Primary School.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the adherence and effectiveness of this policy.