



STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Date approved by Directors
9th July 2019

TENTERDEN SCHOOLS TRUST

Stress Management Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years

DATE OF POLICY: JULY 2019

DATE OF REVIEW: JULY 2022

Member of staff responsible for Policy:

Chief Executive Officer & HR Director

Signed



Chief Executive Officer

Signed



Chair of the Trust Board

TENTERDEN SCHOOLS TRUST
STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

This policy is published in accordance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and takes account of the School's obligations under the Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999, Employment Rights Act 1996, Protection from harassment Act 1997, Working Time Regulations 1998 and Equality Act 2010. Guidance from the DfE Workload Reduction Tool Kit was also taken into account when drafting this policy. It is to be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy.

1. General Statement of School Policy

1.1 Tenterden Schools Trust aims to promote a positive culture in which all staff are valued and supported and feel that they can make an effective contribution to the life and success of the organisation. The Trust will try to minimise any unnecessary and damaging stress within the work environment, as far as is practicable, to support this aim.

1.2 The Trust in its Health and Safety Policy makes clear its commitment to providing a healthy and safe workplace for all its employees. This commitment extends to all aspects of occupational health and safety including the effects of stress.

1.3. Tenterden Schools Trust accepts that it has a duty to take reasonable care to ensure that an employee's health is not placed at risk through excessive and sustained levels of stress arising from the way his or her work is organised, the way people deal with others or from day to day demands placed upon staff members.

1.4 The Trust is taking the following steps to tackle the causes of occupational stress and to provide support to staff members:

1.4.1. Communication

The Trust will continue to follow procedures to ensure that staff members are kept informed of any developments that directly or indirectly affect them at work. Systems designed to enhance the flow of communication throughout the organisation will continue to be developed.

1.4.2. Working environments

Regular inspection and monitoring of health and safety arrangements will be undertaken. Risk assessments will be carried out as appropriate.

1.4.3 Work-life balance

The Trust is committed to promoting a fair and reasonable work-life balance for its staff. Its practices are informed by the 2003 Workload agreement.

1.4.3. Information and Advice

The Trust has published guidelines for managers and staff that give information on the signs and symptoms of stress (see Appendix 1). Advice can be sought from the Teacher Support Line on 08000 562 561. Their website www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk gives excellent advice and access to support via telephone or e-mail. Associate Staff are invited to contact the Human Resources department where any concerns/referrals will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

1.4.4. Sickness Absence

The procedure for dealing with Sickness Absence is designed to assist with the identification of stress as a factor that may have led to sickness absence or unsatisfactory performance, and also gives guidance on how to support staff.

1.4.5. Advice and Support

If a member of staff has been affected by stressful situations and wishes to consult a counsellor, the Trust will provide details of professional counselling services and is able to refer staff for six free counselling sessions. The Trust's Occupational Health Adviser can provide advice and support to staff members experiencing the effects of stress at work. This will include guidance on how to return to work after periods of absence as a result of stress related ill health.

For any Trust School senior leaders there is also the opportunity offered for chaplaincy support through the Canterbury Diocese.

1.4.6. Education and Training

The Trust will support this policy by offering appropriate training designed to educate managers and staff in how to recognise, minimise and manage stress whilst at work.

1.4.7

The Trust will undertake a stress management risk assessment from time to time (Appendix 4). For staff, using the employee stress risk assessment to inform the risk assessment meeting is attached at Appendix 2. A similar form to assist line managers during a risk assessment meeting is attached at Appendix 3.

1.4.8 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important part of this policy. Every member of staff is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required, whether they are suffering from stress, supporting a colleague who is suffering from stress or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a policy or procedure dealing with stress.

Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action. However, there are occasions when matters reported by a member of staff suffering from stress may have to be put to third parties. For example, where duties need to be reallocated or where, as the result of reported bullying or misconduct, a disciplinary investigation and/or proceedings take place. If this is the case, matters will be discussed with the member of staff concerned before any action is taken.

2. Implementation

The success of the Trust's Stress Management Policy and the achievement of a safe and healthy environment are dependent upon all members of staff adopting a positive attitude towards its implementation. A commitment to the policy must exist at all levels of the organisation with everyone accepting the responsibilities associated not only with their post but also with themselves as individuals. Regular monitoring will take place to identify improvements that might be achieved in the policy and its implementation.

3. Signs and Symptoms of Stress

Key message

Stress can cause changes in those experiencing it. In some cases there are clear signs that people are experiencing stress at work and if these can be identified early, action can be taken before the pressure becomes a problem. This may make it easier to reduce and eliminate the causes.

It is important that everyone looks out for changes in a person's or a group's behaviour. However, in many cases the changes may only be noticeable to the person subject to the stress and so it is also important to look at how you are feeling and try to identify any potential issues you may have as early as possible and take positive action to address them; this may be raising the matter with a line manager, talking to an occupational health professional or your own GP.

Stress can show itself in many different ways - see below. Some of the items in this list may not be signs of stress if people always behave this way. Managers may need to manage staff exhibiting some of these signs differently. You are particularly looking for changes in the way people behave that could be linked with excessive pressures

Signs of stress in teams

There may be signs of stress in a team, like:

- arguments
- higher staff turnover
- more reports of stress
- more sickness absence
- decreased performance
- more complaints and grievances

Signs of stress in individuals

If you are suffering from some of the following symptoms it may indicate that you are feeling the effects of stress. If you find that work or aspects of your work bring on or make these symptoms worse, speak to your line manager, trade union representative or your HR department. It may be that some action taken at an early stage will ease the stress and reduce or stop the symptoms.

Emotional symptoms

- Negative or depressive feeling
- Disappointment with yourself
- Increased emotional reactions - more tearful or sensitive or aggressive
- Loneliness, withdrawn
- Loss of motivation commitment and confidence
- Mood swings (not behavioural)

Mental

- Confusion, indecision
- Can't concentrate
- Poor memory

Changes from your normal behaviour

- Changes in eating habits
- Increased smoking, drinking or drug taking 'to cope'
- Mood swings effecting your behaviour
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Twitchy, nervous behaviour

- Changes in attendance such as arriving later or taking more time off. Please note these are indicators of behaviour of those experiencing stress. They may also be indicative of other conditions. If you are concerned about yourself please seek advice from your GP. If you are concerned about a colleague try to convince them to see their GP.

APPENDIX 1

This information is taken from the Health and Safety Executive guidance. For further information, visit the HSE web-site at www.hse.gov.uk

What is stress?

HSE defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'.

Employees feel stress when they can't cope with pressures and other issues. Employers should match demands to employees' skills and knowledge. For example, employees can get stressed if they feel they don't have the skills or time to meet tight deadlines. Providing planning, training and support can reduce pressure and bring stress levels down.

Stress affects people differently – what stresses one person may not affect another. Factors like skills and experience, age or disability may all affect whether an employee can cope.

There are six main areas of work design which can effect stress levels. They are:

demands
control
support
relationships
role
change

Stress is not an illness but it can make you ill.

Recognising the signs of stress will help managers within the Trust to take steps to stop, lower and manage stress in the workplace. The earlier a problem is tackled the less impact it will have. If you think that an employee is having problems, encourage them to talk to someone, whether it's their line manager, trade union representative, Human Resources or their GP.

Appendix 2 Employee Stress Risk Assessment

Existing workplace Hazards	Nature of Risk	
Work Demands	How much work is there? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you feel comfortable with the amount of work?• Are there set time scales for workload?• Are these too much/too little time to achieve?	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the intensity of the workload too great for individuals? • Is there consistency and clarity in the job role? <p>Do you feel able to do your job?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you received appropriate training in order that you can do your role effectively? <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel comfortable in raising concerns? • What are your thoughts on inter-colleague communication/managerial support? • Do you feel that you are kept informed about current needs/developments/reasons for some actions taken? <p>Environment</p> <p>Are there any issues regarding your work environment that is impacting on how effectively you can do your role?</p>	
<p>Control</p>	<p>Do you feel enabled to have your say?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel you are involved in deciding what to do and when and how to do it? • Is the work repetitive or do you have a variety of activities to complete? • Is your working time flexible? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you decide when to take breaks? <p>Skills and abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel your skills are being used appropriately? • Is there room to develop new skills if you wanted? • Does your work require initiative? If so, do you feel you are encouraged to use it? • Do you feel you are considered when planning the work? <p>Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your work regularly monitored? Do you feel this is too much/too little? • Does your line manager meet with you to see how your work is going? 	
<p>Support</p>	<p>How supportive is your employer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel you are being offered adequate managerial support with new work issues, everyday work issues or personal issues if needed? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel well supported from your colleagues? <p>Team/working time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your employer support a health work/life balance? <p>Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does your employer listen to staff? Do you think this occurs? 	
<p>Relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any issues concerning workplace relationship conflicts within your team? • Do you have any problems with bullying/harassment? • Are you aware of staff policies where you can raise concerns about another member of staff? <p>Does the organisation care?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel that the organisation as a whole (managers and colleagues are caring/trusting?) 	

<p>Role</p>	<p>Role ambiguity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you clear about what is expected of you? • Do you have a clear plan of work which is agreed with your line manager? • Do you feel encouraged to talk to your manager at an early stage if you feel unclear of priorities of a particular task to be undertaken? • Are you struggling with multiple/conflicting roles? • Do you understand how your role fits into the overall aims of the school? 	
<p>Change</p>	<p>Change Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel you receive adequate and regular communication and consultation about organisation change when occurring? • Do you feel you understand why organisational change needs to occur? 	

Appendix 3 Line Management Stress Risk Assessment

Existing workplace Hazards	Nature of Risk	Control measures to consider
<p>Work Demands</p>	<p>How much work is there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel comfortable with the amount of work? • Are there set time scales for workload? Are these too much/too little time to achieve? • Is the intensity of the workload too great for individuals? • Is there consistency and clarity in the job role? <p>Do you feel able to do your job?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you received appropriate training in order that you can do your role effectively? <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel comfortable in raising concerns? • Do you feel that you are kept informed about current needs/developments/reasons for some actions taken? 	<p>Seek management or help employee with advice on priorities.</p> <p>Consider renegotiating deadlines if able.</p> <p>Can workloads be covered when staff are absent?</p> <p>Adjust work patterns to cope with peaks (need to be fair and agreed with employees).</p> <p>If people are 'under loaded', think about additional tasks/responsibilities.</p> <p>Develop personal work plans to ensure that staff know what their job involves.</p> <p>Review training needs.</p> <p>System to keep training records up to date to ensure employees are competent and comfortable in undertaking the core functions of their job.</p> <p>Encourage staff to talk at an early stage if feeling they are unable to cope.</p> <p>Take time to talk to the team regularly and update them on business aspects.</p> <p>Take time to understand the challenges the team are facing.</p> <p>Discuss sensible ways of sharing work and agree a way forward.</p> <p>Gain an understanding and commitment to unplanned tight deadlines and need</p>

	<p>Environment</p> <p>Are there any issues regarding your work environment that is impacting on how effectively you can do your role?</p>	<p>for additional hours.</p> <p>Lead by example.</p> <p>Ensure risk assessments are up to date.</p> <p>Consider environmental factors that may impact on efficiency of work demands.</p>
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<p>Control</p>	<p>Do you feel enabled to have your say?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel you are involved in deciding what to do and when and how to do it? • Is the work repetitive or do you have a variety of activities to complete? • Is your working time flexible? • Can you decide when to take breaks? <p>Skills and abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel your skills are being used appropriately? • Is there room to develop new skills if you wanted? • Does your work require initiative? If so, do you feel you are encouraged to use it? • Do you feel you are considered when planning the work? <p>Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your work regularly monitored? Do you feel this is too much/too little? • Does your line manager meet with you to see how your work is going? 	<p>Can you consider giving staff more control by enabling them to plan their own work, make decisions on how their work should be completed?</p> <p>Can tasks be varied if repetitive to make day more interesting?</p> <p>Are they able to decide when to take a break?</p> <p>Can their working hours be flexible?</p> <p>Employees may feel more enriched if able to use a variety of skills to get tasks completed.</p> <p>Are employee's skills being used to full potential?</p> <p>Consider how employees can be part of work planning – assign projects/give objectives and goals.</p> <p>Only monitor employees output if essential.</p> <p>Encourage employees to share with managers how work is going and raise any concerns at an early stage.</p>
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<p>Support</p>	<p>How supportive is your employer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel you are being offered adequate managerial support with new work issues, everyday work issues or personal issues if needed? • Do you feel well supported from your colleagues? <p>Team/working time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your employer support a health work/life balance? <p>Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does your employer listen to staff? Do you think this occurs? 	<p>Give support and encouragement to staff, even when things go wrong.</p> <p>Encourage staff to share any concerns with you.</p> <p>Hold regular team meetings to discuss any pressures/issues.</p> <p>Hold one to one meetings to talk about any merging issues/pressures.</p> <p>Ask them how they would like to access managerial support – open door/agreed one to one sessions, etc.</p> <p>Ensure induction programmes are undertaken for new staff.</p> <p>Review on-going training needs.</p> <p>Guide staff if they have conflicting priorities.</p> <p>Encourage staff to take their annual leave at regular intervals.</p> <p>Ensure staff have appropriate meal breaks.</p> <p>Consideration for flexible working if there are domestic situations/commitments.</p> <p>Ensure you listen and agree a plan of action when staff are discussing issues with you.</p> <p>Encourage staff to do their bit – identify problems and then listen to them – agree a way forward.</p> <p>Identify if there are any supportive measures available through the organisation if an individual is experiencing personal issues eg counselling/occupational health/fit for work advice line/human resources.</p>
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<p>Relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any issues concerning workplace relationship conflicts within your team? • Do you have any problems with bullying/harassment? • Are you aware of staff policies where you can raise concerns about another member of staff? <p>Does the organisation care?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel that the organisation as a whole (managers and colleagues are caring/trusting? 	<p>Ensure employee knows where the policies so that situations can be managed if they arise.</p> <p>Agree and implement procedures to prevent or quickly resolve conflict at work – refer to school policies. Can mediation assist – speak to human resources.</p> <p>Encourage team achievements and recognise the contributions of all team members.</p> <p>Develop skills in the team for listening/coaching/mentoring if appropriate.</p> <p>Identify ways to celebrate success.</p>
<p>Role</p>	<p>Role ambiguity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you clear about what is expected of you? • Do you have a clear plan of work which is agreed with your line manager? • Do you feel encouraged to talk to your manager at an early stage if you feel unclear of priorities of a particular task to be undertaken? • Are you struggling with multiple/conflicting roles? • Do you understand how your role fits into the overall aims of the school? 	<p>Make sure staff have clear job descriptions and clear job plans which enables them to understand exactly what their role is.</p> <p>Encourage staff to communicate at an early state if unsure about aspects of their role/nature of a task.</p> <p>Meet with staff so they are clear about what is expected of them.</p> <p>Review work plans at least annually – check if they understand what is expected of them if roles change.</p> <p>Give guidance/advice on any work conflicts/deadlines for different projects.</p> <p>Display team targets/objectives to help clarify the role of individuals and organisation aims.</p>

<p>Change</p>	<p>Change Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel you receive adequate and regular communication and consultation about organisation change when occurring? • Do you feel you understand why organisational change needs to occur? 	<p>Ensure you communicate regularly and at all stages when change is likely to/is in the process of occurring.</p> <p>Ensure you communicate even if you feel there is nothing to tell – sometimes it is easy for people to think the worst if nothing is said.</p> <p>Communicate new developments quickly to avoid spreading of rumours.</p> <p>Where possible, involve employees in the change management process/get their ideas so that change is accepted more readily.</p> <p>Consider the impact on the role and ensure this is clarified after a change of process so that there are no role ambiguity issues arising.</p>
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- You can use this stress risk assessment questionnaire as a guide for asking questions with individuals or on a wider scale in a team meeting. Do a basic frequency count of yes's and no's from your team members responses.
- Conduct team discussions/ focus groups to explore any areas that seem to be higher risk (i.e. more negative than positive responses to the questions). You can also use the HSE stress questionnaire tool for more detailed analysis. Please seek advice from Human Resources department.
- When you have completed the stress risk assessment, develop an action plan (Appendix 4) with your team to address any areas of concern or high risk and review this on a regular basis.

Appendix 4: Stress Risk Assessment – Action Plan

Department Name:		Manager:		Signature:	
Risk Assessment for:		Date Completed:		Employee Signature:	
Stress Categories	Specific causes of workplace stress identified within each category	Existing workplace precautions already in place	Additional Workplace precautions to be implemented for individual	Will the precautions implemented avoid workplace stress or reduce the causes of stress? Please describe.	
Demand					
Control					
Support					
Relationships					

Role				
Change				