



Igniting the Future' Deal Education Alliance Learning Trust



Deal Parochial C.E.P. School

Policy for managing Stress at work

Kindness, Trust, Friendship, Respect, Courage, Forgiveness

Vision statement

Our School is built on the teachings of the Bible and inspired by The Gospel Values of Faith, Hope and Love.

Our Christian ethos is upheld by respecting humanity fostered through our community that is welcoming, inclusive and forgiving.

Together we flourish through courageous learning, friendships and generosity.

TO BE THE BEST THAT I CAN BE – THE WAY GOD INTENDS

January 2020

Head teacher: Ms J Brown

Deputy Head teacher: Mrs K Porteous

Inclusion Lead teacher: Mrs M Hogben

Chair of Governors: Mrs M Heard with role for supporting staff well being.

1. Introduction

Kent County Council formalised its approach to recognising and managing stress in the workplace by launching a specific policy in 2003. The policy focused on the reality of stress, typical causes, the individual's ability to cope with situations faced in the work environment and risk assessment. Since then the policy has continued to be supported by a succession of activities, policies and services designed to raise awareness and give employees the skills and confidence to manage their working lives better and help managers to manage well.

This revision picks up on those advances and places greater emphasis on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards, incorporating the principles into a simple assessment format, useful for individuals and teams (see appendix 2). The use of other options such as the HSE's on-line indicator tool

(section 9c) is encouraged where appropriate. It also contains information and advice on how to recognise, reduce and deal with work-related stress in the setting of familiar practices and support arrangements available in Deal Parochial C.E.P. School.

2. Statement of intent

Kent County Council values its workforce and seeks to manage and control work-related stress actively through:

- good line-management practices and procedures
- raising awareness and appreciation of stress in the context of work
- people management policies and practices
- supporting the development of personal resilience and capacity skills
- provision of support to individuals

Individuals are encouraged to be open about what's happening at work, to seek support and advice, and aim for a sensible work-life balance.

3. Aim

To reduce the incidence and impact of work-related stress through good management of people and activities, helpful information, clear guidance and effective support.

4. Objectives

- to acknowledge the existence and effect of work-related stress on individuals and services
- to reduce detriment to health and well-being and promote personal effectiveness
- to raise awareness of the causes of work-related stress, acknowledging the relationship with personal and external factors, so that preventative and reasonable steps can be taken to offset or control stress at an early stage
- to provide and maintain suitable means of support and encourage individuals to trust and make use of such support
- to reduce any stigma associated with disclosure of stress by creating a climate for tackling the issues surrounding stress at work

5. Scope and limitations

People respond to pressure in different and individual ways. Much will depend on an employee's personality, experience, motivation and the support available from managers, colleagues, family and friends. It is obvious that difficulties faced outside of work will have an impact on someone's ability to cope, or get on well at work and this needs consideration. The guidance and procedures/arrangements referred to in sections 9, 11, 12, 13 and appendix 1 to this policy will help managers to recognise when people are having difficulty coping and offer advice on how to build resilience.

This policy will not resolve all work-related difficulties nor should it be expected that feelings of 'stress' will never be a feature in any working day. The policy concentrates on the appreciation and prevention of foreseeable health risks through raising awareness and securing good standards of management.

It is accepted that occasional, exceptional effort may be needed to meet deadlines or to cover for temporary resource difficulties. Such short-term experience is not the

focus of this policy although it may be picked up within the general risk-assessment or management review process.

6. Setting the context

i) What is stress? What are the causes and consequences?

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) definition is:

“Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”.

This distinguishes stress from the pressures or challenges that provide the motivation for everyday living. Being under pressure can often improve performance yet when demands and pressures become prolonged and excessive they can lead to stress. Intense pressure without the opportunity to 'recover' can be a critical factor and everyone's capacity to cope will vary and be prone to shift.

The stress response is natural and not in itself an illness. Its effects are often short lived and cause no longer term harm. It is, however, well established that for some people excessive or prolonged periods of stress can result in physical and psychological illness such as anxiety; depression; raised blood pressure and heart disease; back pain; gastrointestinal disturbance and various minor illnesses.

ii) Why do we need a policy statement about managing stress at work?

There are legal, ethical and economic reasons for taking action. It is evident that prolonged periods of stress, as opposed to motivational pressure, can have an adverse effect on health. So it is important that all staff are aware of the things that can lead to real stress so that causes can be seen and tackled before long term damage is done.

Deal Parochial C.E.P. School. prides itself on the quality and efficiency of the services it provides to the local community and relies on employees to keep up those standards.

Managing stress is a shared responsibility through good management of people alongside the awareness and responsibility of individuals to look after themselves.

The point of this policy is to reflect the good practice and complementary policies and arrangements that help people function well at work and prevent stress from being an unwanted bi-product of busy lives.

iii) Why it matters to Kent County Council and individuals

By keeping our services running efficiently and with staff functioning well we see:

- less absenteeism and more productivity and creativity
- fewer accidents / incidents where human error can be a factor
- better quality of services and customer care
- better employee relations and working relationships
- improved morale and lower staff turnover
- fewer ill health consequences and compensation claims being pursued
- more recognition of success from the Health and Safety Executive and stakeholders
- better image and reputation

iv) Summary of legal position

There is a legal duty to reduce and where possible prevent work-related stress impacting on the health of any employee. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Deal Parochial C.E.P. School has a general duty to look after the health, safety and welfare of employees and, specifically, to assess risks associated with work. This means employers must identify signs of stress and the foreseeable risk to employees' health.

Where risks are significant Deal Parochial C.E.P. School has a responsibility to protect people from harm.

Employees have clear responsibilities to look after their own health and safety too. In civil law, the 'duty of care' similarly extends to mental health as well as physical debility arising from work-related stress. The Equality Act 2010 will also apply in some cases. This may involve requiring reasonable adjustments to be made, arrangements introduced to help an individual function better, and helping to prevent the deterioration of a person's health.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

i) Managers - should refer to this policy and associated guidance to appreciate and respond to:

- causes and consequences of stress
- recognition of stress, in themselves and others
- work factors, including management style, that can contribute or lead to problems
- good practice and support already in place

In particular, managers need to:

- assess risks to staff and take appropriate steps to control any significant risks to health and well-being (see section 9 about approaches to assessing and managing risk factors)
- make sure staff know about the policy, its intentions and the wide range of services and support arrangements
- identify and meet training and development needs
- consult with staff and trade union safety representatives or employee representatives to explore the possible impact on health and safety from proposed changes at work
- treat individuals appropriately
- offer support to individuals where needed and let them know where this support is available
- support team success through appropriate interaction and behaviour

ii) Individual employee - Individuals have a responsibility to:

- let their manager know about work concerns. It is, therefore, important that employees feel encouraged, through the reassurance of managers at all levels, to disclose difficulties such as coping with workload and tensions / difficulties in relationships
- look after their own well-being and seek advice and support
- raise their development needs with their manager in order to fulfil their role and build resilience
- co-operate with their manager in implementing the outcomes of a relevant risk assessment
- support team success through appropriate interaction and behaviour

8. HSE guidance for managing work-related stress - using the Management Standards as a useful framework for managing well

i) The HSE has produced a framework called the 'Management Standards' to help

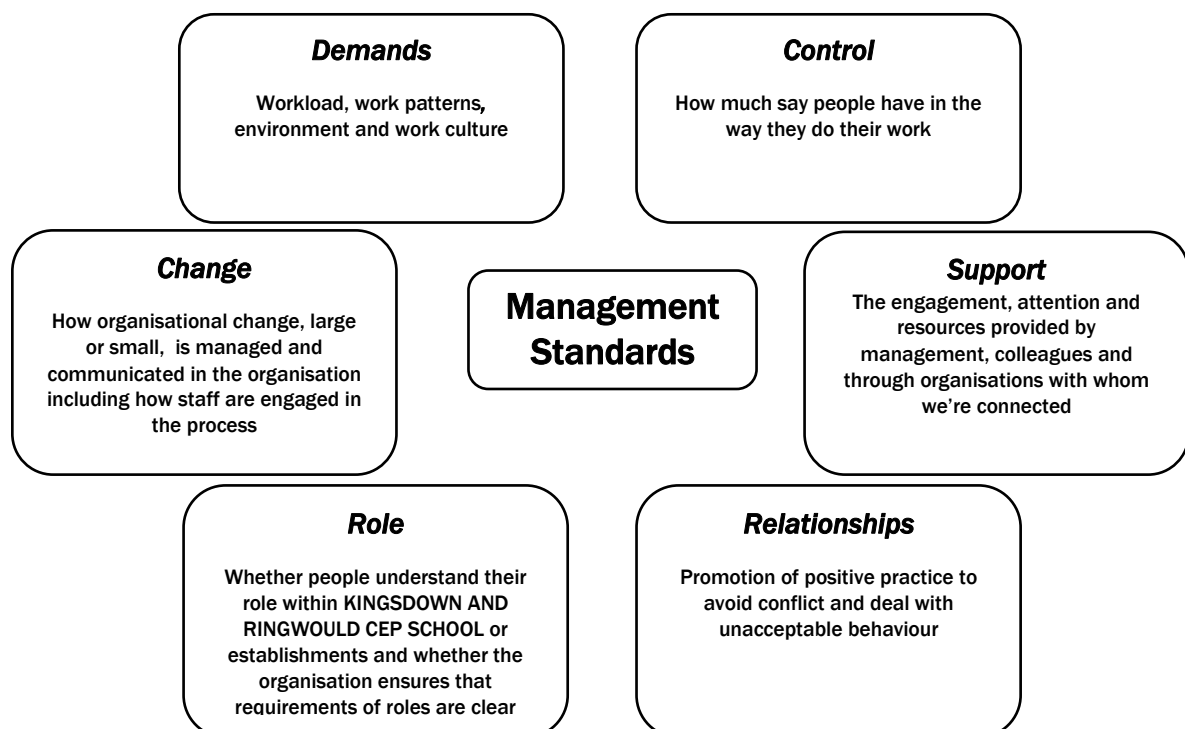
organisations measure performance relating to people management. The Standards are used in Deal Parochial C.E.P. School to evaluate how well the organisation as a whole is doing by drawing on feedback from sources such as Human Resources, Staff Care Services, staff surveys and investigations / assessments.

Since the Standards feature factors that make up our common experience of working life they also provide a useful framework for looking how things are going for teams or individuals and help managers to assess what's working well and what could be improved or changed. Section 9 covers some examples of how the Standards can be used in this way.

ii) What exactly are they?

Quite simply the Standards are a range of workplace factors that research and experience have identified as critical aspects of working life that contribute significantly to people's well-being at work. If these are managed well then people are more effective, happier and able. When these factors are poorly managed over time, work-related stress may result, having a damaging impact on individuals and the services they help deliver.

These are the six standards and what they mean. A full outline of the Standards can be viewed on the KNet Health, Safety and Wellbeing page and on the HSE website.



The consistency of this approach makes it easier for managers, advisers and trades union colleagues to work in partnership to address work-related stress.

9. Assessing working conditions and managing well

What can managers do?

People as individuals, and at any one time, vary in their capacity to cope with pressure, so managing and assessing whether stress is a real concern needs flexibility and responsiveness to change. Examples of times where such assessment is useful include; preparation or review of changes, introduction to new ways of working, as a periodic feature of team meetings or appraisal of individuals.

- i) There are many useful ways of looking at what's happening in teams or to individuals. As an organisation we make good use of a wide range of ways to monitor and get feedback from the workforce including one to one conversations; team meetings; service review meetings; staff surveys and audits. All these approaches contribute to on-going risk assessment and are part of good management practice. There are times when a more structured and focussed approach is necessary and managers should be prepared to undertake risk assessments to check on the demands and pressures facing teams or individuals. There's no single way to tackle risk assessment so it's good to approach the evaluation of work pressures with choices not rigidity. Whatever approach is used what matters most is that sufficient connection and communication is achieved to know where adjustments are needed to protect people from excessive demands and pressures that can lead to ill health if not reviewed responsibly and contained.

Action required

Typical times when an assessment might be appropriate for teams are:

- when it is recognised that people are displaying signs of stress (see guidance to raise awareness and recognition of stress - appendix 1)
- as part of a periodic review of the team's capacity and wellbeing
- as part of assessing the overall impact of planned or unplanned changes and for individuals
- when an employee or their colleagues have raised concerns about the pressures they are facing
- following a significant event that might have diminished their capacity to cope with work pressures
- as part of a planned return to work following a long period of sickness absence associated with stress, anxiety or related conditions

To help the assessment process and to neatly embrace the Management Standards as a reasonable framework to capture what's happening at work, the pro-forma described below and at appendix 1 will help managers to highlight any significant factors that need looking at or reassure them that things are reasonable and acceptable. This and other ways of tackling review are suggested below.

- ii) Useful tools for assessing and managing pressures at work:

a) Deal Parochial C.E.P. School Pressure Management: a framework for assessment and action planning:

template (appendix 2) - the Deal Parochial C.E.P. School.

Pressure Management template has been successfully used across a wide range of services and teams and helped them agree sensible, realistic solutions for managing their working lives. The template follows the HSE Management Standards introduced in Section 8 and helps structure thoughts and lines of enquiry. The most important benefit of this framework is that it promotes communication

between individuals and the team seeking an understanding of what areas of work design are going well and what could be improved. It is flexible and easy to use.

Appendix 2 can be used as a preventative or reactive way of weighing up what's good and not so good for the team or individuals. It can also be used as a helpful guide to some of the things that matter when you are preparing someone for return to work after prolonged absence for any reason. What's really important is that two-way conversation is a key part.

It is not a 'stress risk assessment'. It is a general assessment of working practice including people's capacity to cope and acknowledges that stress may be an outcome if working life and demands are not managed well and reasonable in scope and scale.

Note: Research by the Department for Work and Pensions indicates that work is good for long-term well-being. While everyone's recovery from mental illness or other conditions can be different, working can be an important part of someone's recovery or management of their condition. So assessing working conditions to keep someone able to continue working productively or to return with the help of a personalised plan is a good thing.

Managers are not restricted to using the format and are encouraged to adapt the approach and make use of the other tools summarised below.

b) Deal Parochial C.E.P. School general risk assessment pro-forma: the pro-forma is used to capture significant risks to health and safety and identify solutions for identified risks. It can be useful for noting and responding to any substantial sources of difficulty or pressure and it is suggested it would be useful to consider the 6 Management Standards as a helpful guide for drawing out what's happening and give an easy structure to the process.

c) HSE indicator tool - the HSE have designed a tool that can be used to assess work-related pressure for teams of 10 or more.

The process is simple and objective. Firstly team members receive a link to an anonymous management standards electronic survey comprising of 35 questions. The questions focus on the 6 Management Standards; demands, control, support, relationships, role and change. On the agreed deadline date these results will be sent to the Health and Safety team who will then produce a report based on the results of the survey.

The results give a range of 4 findings ranging from 'urgent action needed' to 'doing very well'. Focus / discussion groups can then agree a reasonable action plan to work towards improvements and it is important to note that even when 'doing very well', on-going action is required to make sure this remains the case. This is a very useful tool and has been appreciated by many teams across Deal Parochial C.E.P. School.

The tool has a number of advantages

- the process is quick and simple
- the results are objective
- employees are able to contribute anonymously and confidentially
- the process can be repeated at a later date and the results be compared to previous surveys

Where larger groups use the HSE Indicator tool it can be used along with the Deal Parochial C.E.P. School Pressure Management Action Plan to capture agreed action points if it seems helpful. For more information please contact the Health and Safety team.

- d) Model assessment tool: Assessing and managing work related pressures and stress (appendix 3).

Some managers have found it useful to work through the listed suggestions in this generic assessment to question how aspects of working life are being managed and moving them, and individuals or their teams, towards what else could be achieved. It represents a starting point for risk assessment which should be supplemented with other elements as relevant to specific circumstances and experiences.

- e) Individual self-assessment: Pressures and pressure points profile (appendix 4). This form encourages a simple review of what's having an impact on an individual at any one time and moves them towards self-defined solutions or a pathway to a manager or others' involvement.

All these approaches to risk assessment help us meet our legal obligations and make it easier to check and manage the risk associated with work related stress.

10. Reporting and recording work-related stress

There is a huge difference between events that cause reactions such as temporary upset and situations where stress is a reality with long term consequences. There are well established ways to discuss disputes, relationships and work pressures including informal conversations, meetings and more formally through grievance hearings, case management approaches and workplace mediation. Where such situations arise an appropriate record should be made by the manager and/or others involved and steps taken by all responsible to deal with the matter.

- a) When is it appropriate to use the accident/incident report form HS157 to record stress?

Stress is not a type of accident/incident and the use of the report form would only apply where traumatic stress is the result of a significant event or in the context of physically violent behaviour. The causes of stress response are generally multiple by nature, building over time. Apart from where extreme trauma is a factor, it would therefore be inappropriate to use HS157 as a device for recording, what some people interpret as, an upsetting or stressful situation which should be responded to by everyday management approaches as described above.

- b) Is stress reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)?

No. Neither work related stress nor stress related ill health are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR. The need to assess and manage the risk of work related stress and ill health are, however, statutory duties which is why this policy and guidance sets out HORNBEAM PRIMARY SCHOOL's commitments and offers practical aids to the assessment and management of working conditions.

11. Complementary policies, services and initiatives that support the prevention and management of work related stress

National strategies linked to our approach:

- HSE - Health and Work Strategy
- Sensible Risk Management campaign
- Working for a healthier tomorrow: Dame Carol Black's report and government action programme
- Improving health and work: changing lives (the government's response to Dame Carol Black's review of the health of Britain's working-age population)
- Mental Health Strategy (no health without mental health - September 2011)
- Health at work - independent review of sickness absence - Dame Carol Black and David Frost - November 2011

12. Sources of advice and training

Human Resources, Occupational Health and Health and Safety Advisers and trade union colleagues provide support and advice on managing stress at work and relevant training arrangements including those listed in Section 11 and Section 13 of this policy.

Training courses designed to help individuals cope with circumstances and pressures of life are available through Learning and Development. Examples of topics on offer include:

- Mental health first aid
- Mental health lite
- Conflict resolution and personal safety
- Personal resilience
- Emotional intelligence
- Managing difficult conversations
- Managing change
- Mindfulness

13. Support systems / employee assistance

Deal Parochial C.E.P. School General Policy Statement on Health, Safety and Welfare acknowledges the duties placed on Deal Parochial C.E.P. School as an employer to safeguard employees' health, safety and welfare at work.

This is supported by commitments in the Organisation and Development People Plan and related policies, arrangements and services, particularly Support Line, a confidential counselling service for staff. Some are listed below and contribute to the goals of good management and support for staff.

- Support Line - counselling
- Work and Wellbeing framework
- work-place mediation
- coaching and mentoring
- Human Resources options e.g. confidential disclosure, case management approach, supporting rehabilitation and return to work
- referral to Occupational Health
- activities of trades union / employee representation at hearings
- health promotions / health indicator checks
- schools wellbeing programme
- Dignity and Respect at Work policy
- Help Fund
- staff diversity groups