



Staff Stress Management Policy

Author/Owner	HR Manager
Version Number	Version 5
Date Approved/Reviewed	November 2023
Date of Next Review	September 2024
Approved By	Finance and Operations Committee

Policy Category (Please Indicate)	1	Academy to implement without amendment
	2	Academy specific appendices
	3	Academy personalisation required (in highlighted fields)

<u>Contents</u>	Page
Statement of Intent	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Definition	4
3. Responsibilities	4
4. Causes of Stress	5
5. Identifying an Individual under Stress	5
6. Exceed Learning Partnership and Academy Management	6
7. Self-Management	6
8. Procedure	7
9. Risk Assessment	7
10. Action Plans	8
11. Monitoring and Review	8
Appendix A: Generic Risk Assessment Form	10
Appendix B: Individual Stress Risk Assessment Form	12
Appendix C: Supporting Employees following Stressful Incidents	18

Version Control

Version	Revision Date	Revised by	Section Revised
V4	April 2022	L Burton	Page 5 added in additional sources of support, added in menopause as a source of stress Page 6 Added in Wellbeing representatives and Mental Health First aiders
V5	September 2023	L Burton	No Revisions Made

Statement of Intent

Exceed Learning Partnership is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. Stress and its prevention is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of the Academy's staff, which remains a key priority. In light of this, we understand the importance of trying to reduce and deal with stress, and the factors that may cause our employees to become stressed.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that all staff in the Trust enjoy a reasonable balance between their working life and the demands of home, family and other commitments. An acceptable work life balance will be different for each employee and will be different at different times in careers. It is not in the interest of either the Trust, the Academy or the individual member of staff to work to the detriment of his/her health. Staff wellbeing is important in maintaining a positive atmosphere in the workplace.

The purpose of this policy is to define stress, outline the responsibilities of the Trust's staff and to advise employees on how to deal with and prevent stress.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Exceed learning Partnership are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees and recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stress.
- 1.2 We will identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate unhealthy stress or control the risks from stress where it is identified. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed
- 1.3 This policy will apply to all employees of Exceed Learning Partnership

2. Definition

- 2.1. The Health and Safety Executive define stress as: "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them." The Health and Safety executive also points out that; "this makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health."

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. To be able to manage and avoid stress, members of staff, the Exceed Learning Partnership Board, the CEO/Academy Principal will all be expected take extra care and precautions.
- 3.2. Individual members of staff are responsible for:
 - Being able to recognise the early signs of stress in themselves and their colleagues.
 - Support co-workers if they become stressed. This may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance.
 - Undertaking additional training and personal development opportunities.
 - Reporting any incidents of stress, e.g. over-working.
 - Be willing to openly discuss stress.
- 3.3. The CEO and Principal are responsible for:
 - Organising proper inductions for new starters, explaining the academy's policies and code of conduct.
 - Ensuring all staff have up-to-date, regular training and that they are confident in their ability.
 - Conducting and implementing the recommendations of risk assessments, considering the causes of stress.
 - Having regular communication with staff, encouraging them to be open when discussing stress.
 - Monitoring the employee's workloads and holiday entitlement, ensuring staff aren't over-worked.
 - Attending all necessary training, keeping skills current and setting a good example for staff.
 - Promoting the use of available support such as Occupational Health and Staff wellbeing resources offered through our Staff Absence Insurance providers as well as accessing freely available on-line resources from organisations such as the NHS, Mind and anxiety UK.
 - Supporting staff to attend face to face appointments such as group therapy, talking shops and independently sourced counselling
 - Ensuring that return to work meetings following any absence related to illness are carried out as soon as possible on return so that any issues related to stress are identified and supported
 - Ensuring that all staff read and understand the policy
- 3.4. The Directors and Governing Board is responsible for:
 - Encouraging stress awareness throughout the Trust and its academies, promoting stress as a serious issue, rather than a weakness.
 - Consult with the CEO or Principal as appropriate on measures to manage stress, including them in any decisions that need to be made.
 - Ensuring the CEO and Principal puts measures in place to support staff with stress.
 - Actively trying to eliminate stressors in Academy.

4. Causes of Stress

- 4.1. Exceed Learning Partnership recognises that individuals will react differently to stressful situations and that different people can become stressed throughout their working lives. Because of this it is important that staff understand the different factors that may cause themselves or their colleagues stress.
- 4.2. The following sources of stress can often be attributed to work:
 - Over-working or work that doesn't match the employee's skills and ability
 - Fear of change and trying to cope with change, e.g. advancements in technology
 - Insufficient workload or not being able to use skills

- Lack of job security
- Poor relationships with colleagues and a lack of involvement
- Harassment or bullying
- Crisis management
- No long-term plan in place

4.3. The Exceed Learning Partnership recognises staff can also experience stress outside of Academy, home and personal lives can also prove stressful; bereavement, separation, menopause, financial and family problems make people more vulnerable to stress at work. It is common that a combination of stress at home and work can make people stressed.

5. Identifying a Stressed Colleague

- 5.1. In order to help stressed colleagues, identifying the symptoms of stress is very important. Someone may be suffering from one or more of the negative effects; however, they may not be stressed. When a stressor persists over a longer period of time the indicators become more obvious and acute.
- 5.2. The Trust and its academies will strive to identify and deal with symptoms of stress quickly in order to maintain a healthy work place.
- 5.3. The Trust and its academies have a legal requirement to actively respond where any employee displays symptoms of work-related stress.
- 5.4. All members of staff will look out for the following symptoms when identifying a colleague with stress:
- Mood swings and consistently bad moods, such as feeling angry or depressed
 - Low self-esteem, loss of confidence, feeling lonely, worthless or overwhelmed
 - Attitude and behaviour, including low morale, feeling unmotivated, poor concentration, lower quality of work, bad timekeeping, difficulty concentrating
 - Noticeable change in behaviours; using drugs, smoking, drinking more alcohol, eating disorders
- 5.5. All members of staff will also look out for physical indicators of stress, which include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Low energy, including fatigue and tiredness.
 - Upset stomach, including diarrhoea, constipation and nausea.
 - High blood pressure, heart disease and ulcers.
 - Frequent colds and infections, due to a weakened immune system.
 - Aches, pains and tension in joints and muscles.

6. Exceed Learning Partnership and Academy Management

- 6.1. In order to positively impact levels of stress in the Exceed Learning Partnership and its academies, CEO, Principals and Governing Bodies will have to make changes to the whole Academy, changes will be implemented to positively affect all staff.
- 6.2. To help manage stress the CEO and Principal will:
- Lead by example and encourage staff to be open if they feel stressed, to take breaks and to have a life outside of work.

- Make the most of team bonding; using INSET days to build relationships as feeling comfortable amongst colleagues will make discussing stress easier.
- Assist with work and help to manage employees' workloads; one of the main contributors to stress is over-working; helping staff manage their workload will make them more relaxed.
- Reach out to staff during difficult points in their personal lives, e.g. a bereavement, allowing sufficient time off and supporting them when they return to work.
- Provide staff with external points of contact such as self-referral to Occupational health and access to services provided by our staff absence insurers Schools Advisory Service and other agencies
- Having staff wellbeing representatives in each academy to provide support and activities to promote healthy lifestyles and activities
- Having fully trained and accredited Mental Health First Aiders in all academies in the Trust

7. Self-Management

- 7.1. Staff can also make changes to avoid and prevent stress, stress is a problem that should be tackled and not ignored
- 7.2. Staff should be prepared to speak to their colleagues and senior staff if they're feeling stressed in their personal lives or at work.
- 7.3. Staff should act in order to manage their own stress, these actions will include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Keeping active as a way of releasing emotional intensity and any negative feelings, exercise will also help to clear thoughts and deal with problems more calmly.
 - Managing their workload, establishing and maintaining a healthy balance between work and life is vital.
 - Prioritising work, leaving the least important tasks until the end of the day and concentrating on the work that will make the biggest difference.
 - Avoiding unhealthy habits, such as drinking and smoking, these may provide temporary relief; however, in the long-term unhealthy habits will only create more problems.
 - Being prepared to access support at the earliest opportunity

8. Procedure

- 8.1. the procedural section of this policy provides guidance on the completion of the risk assessments and action plans
- 8.2. It is accepted that any job can cause stress and also that it is not just about overwork. Boredom and monotony can also be stressful. Some of the most common causes of stress are:
 - Dealing with parents, pupils
 - Reduction in resources, reorganisations and job security
 - Poor working conditions
 - Threats of violence, harassment and bully
 - Lack of childcare or flexibility
 - Lack of control over work
 - Too demanding job or too high a workload
 - Monotonous or boring work
 - Lack of training
 - Excessive hours
 - Working in isolation

- Working relationships
- Unreasonable expectations

The above list is, however, not exhaustive.

9. Risk Assessment

- 9.1 Where Principals are concerned about an individual's level of stress e.g. highlighted by high sickness absence, stress documented as the reason for absence by a General Practitioner, or if an individual identifies that they are under undue stress, they should ensure that they meet with the individual to try to identify the causes of the stress.
- 9.2 Actions should be agreed between the individual and their principal to attempt to address the causes of stress. Where the stressors are external to work then this may include consideration of flexible working.
- 9.3 It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that all agreed actions are followed up by the agreed date. If actions or stressors are beyond the control of the principal, they should ensure that these issues are passed up to the CEO.
- 9.4 Actions to be taken in order to reduce the stressor(s) should be documented and reviewed in accordance with the timescales agreed.
- 9.5 On the agreed review date it will be necessary to consider whether all actions points have been met. Where they have not, then a further review date and actions should be agreed.
- 9.6 All documented information should be retained in the individual's personal file.

10. Action Plans

- 10.1 Action plans can contain a wide range of interventions such as counselling, stress management training, physical exercise and other "self-help" activities as well as modifications or adaptations in the workplace which may be feasible. Examples of possible strategies to reduce stress in the work place include:
 - Implementing flexible approaches to work activities, working time, how activities are carried out and when.
 - Allowing staff to prioritise their work activities
 - Discouraging staff from working long hours.
 - Encouraging a participative approach to problem solving, planning etc.
 - Provide sufficient resources to complete tasks e.g. time, materials, personnel training, information, authority.
 - Encouraging efficient open communication between all levels of staff
 - Encouraging regular communication and discussion between teams/phases
 - Encouraging a team approach to work activities.
 - Developing a supportive and trusting environment so that staff feel able to make suggestions or take decisions without fear of recrimination.
 - Planning to cope with staff absences to avoid work overload.
 - Ensuring there is a comprehensive induction for all new staff such that they fully understand their role, responsibilities, level of authority and sources of support etc.
 - Coping with change – explaining to staff why change is necessary; providing a timetable for change where possible; communicating new developments quickly to avoid rumours' providing opportunities for questions and discussions.


Staff should be advised that they can self-refer to the confidential Counselling Service within the Occupational Health Section by telephoning 01302 737045 or seek support via the Principal/Academy Business Manager from our Staff Absence Insurance provider. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have developed six management standards which cover primary sources of stress at work these can be accessed by pressing control and clicking on the following website - [What are the Management Standards? - Stress - HSE](#). HSE have also developed a Talking Toolkit (available on the HSE website) which can be used as a framework to help Line Managers have simple and practical conversations with staff.

11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1. This policy is reviewed **annually** by **Exceed Learning Partnership**
- 11.2. Any changes made to this policy by **Exceed Learning Partnership** will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 11.3. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.

Policy Reviewed November 2023

Signed CEO:



Signed Chair of Directors:



Policy to be reviewed: September 2024

Appendix A Managing Attendance at Work – Stress Risk Assessments

Generic Stress Risk Assessment

A Generic Stress Risk Assessment should be completed by managers within the Trust/Academy if stress is raised by an individual. The risk assessment should be completed by a senior manager, considering the following:

- Discussion with individuals
- Sickiness absence records and reasons
- Return to work discussions
- Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) and One-to-Ones

Further information on generic risk assessments can be provided by contacting the Corporate Health & Safety team on (01302) 736903 or email safety@doncaster.gov.uk.

Individual Stress Risk Assessment

When an individual member of staff identifies that they are experiencing symptoms of stress, or a manager has concerns or notes a change in behaviour and it is indicated that work may be a contributory factor, then the individual should be encouraged to complete the individual stress risk assessment form. For each question the employee should state whether it is a stressor and identify the level of risk as outlined below:

KEY: **H**=High Risk

M=Medium Risk

L = Low Risk

Probability of Reoccurrence					
Almost certain	M	M	H	H	H
Likely	M	M	H	H	H
Possible	M	M	M	H	H
Unlikely	L	M	M	H	H
Rare	L	L	M	H	H
Severity	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Serious	Catastrophic

On completion this should be discussed by the individual and their manager and an action plan formulated on how both parties can reduce the identified stressors within the workplace. CEO/Principal have a duty to take appropriate action to reduce stress as far as is reasonable and practical. Timescales and review dates should be set and agreed by both parties. Individuals can also seek advice and support from their trade union representatives.

Action Plans

Actions plans can contain a wide range of interventions such as counselling, stress management training, physical exercise and other “self-help” activities as well as modifications or adaptations in the workplace which may be feasible. Examples of possible strategies to reduce stress in the workplace include:

- Implementing flexible approaches to work activities, working time, how activities are carried out and when. Allowing staff to prioritise their work activities. Discouraging staff from working long hours.
- Encouraging a participative approach to problem solving, project planning etc.
- Providing sufficient resources to complete tasks e.g. time, materials, personnel, training, information, authority.
- Encouraging efficient open communication between all levels of staff, encouraging regular communication and discussion between teams or sections of staff, encouraging a team approach to work activities.
- Developing a supportive and trusting environment so that staff feel able to make suggestions or take decisions without fear of recrimination.
- Planning to cope with staff absences to avoid work overload.
- Requiring comprehensive induction for all new staff such that they fully understand their role, responsibilities, level of authority and sources of support.
- Coping with change – explaining to staff why change is necessary; providing a timetable for change; communicating new developments quickly to avoid rumours; providing opportunities for questions and discussion.

Staff should be advised that they can self-refer to the confidential Counselling Service within the Occupational Health Service by telephoning 01302 737045 or emailing occupationalhealth@doncaster.gov.uk.

Staff can also access support from our Staff absence Insurers, by contacting the Principal or Academy business Manager

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) developed six management standards which cover the primary sources of stress at work therefore, a Stress Management Good Practice Guide has been developed which uses these six standards, giving practical advice to managers to effectively respond and manage stress in their teams. Please contact your HR Representative for further information on the six management standards or visit the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/.

Also available on the HSE website Talking Toolkit, a resource for Line Managers to support positive conversations with employees



Appendix B: Individual Stress Risk Assessment Form

Are the following areas identified stressors?	YES or NO	If, yes is the risk high, med or low	Action to be taken to reduce stressor	Action to be completed by (name)	Date completion or review
DEMANDS & CONTROL					
Expectations of you at work					
Conflicting demands that are hard to combine					
Deadlines for work to be produced					
Intensity of work					
Speed at which you are expected to work					
Understanding of duties and responsibilities					
Understanding of individual goals and objectives					
Ability to plan own work load and how to do it					
Pressure to work long hours					
Involvement in decisions effecting job					
High workload fluctuation					
Distribution of workload					
Normal workload too low					
Opportunities to delegate work					
Level of interruptions during working day					



Are the following areas identified stressors?	YES or NO	If, yes is the risk high, med or low	Action to be taken to reduce stressor	Action to be completed by (name)	Date completion or review
ROLE					
Unclear job description					
Lack of job description					
Responsibility for managing people					
Responsibility for managing budgets					
Requirement to attend high number of meetings					
Contact with customers, members of the public					
Risk of violence/threatening behaviour					
Exposure to:					
Frequent repetitive tasks					
Lone or isolated working					
Long uninterrupted periods at a VDU					
Noise					
Vibration					
Bad weather					
Monotonous work					



Are the following areas identified stressors?	YES or NO	If, yes is the risk high, med or low	Action to be taken to reduce stressor	Action to be completed by (name)	Date completion or review
RELATIONSHIPS					
Understanding of team goals and objectives					
Friction between colleagues					
How your role fits into the overall aims of Exceed Learning Partnership					
Bullying or harassment in workplace					
Ability of colleagues to offer support					
Respect received from colleagues					
Relationships with colleagues					
Ability to talk openly to colleagues					
Vacant posts in team unfilled for long periods					
SUPPORT					
Feedback received on work undertaken					
Ability of line manager to help with work problems					
Availability of line manager to discuss work					
Emotional support at work					



Are the following areas identified stressors?	YES or NO	If, yes is the risk high, med or low	Action to be taken to reduce stressor	Action to be completed by (name)	Date of completion or review
Encouragement at work					
Few or no training opportunities					
No time allocated for training or development					
Level of training received to undertake duties					
CHANGE MANAGEMENT					
Consultation on changes at work					
Opportunities to question and input to change at work					
Understanding how changes will be implemented					
WORK ENVIRONMENT					
Crowded workplace					
Ability to take regular breaks					
Inappropriate noise levels					
Unable to adjust chair or desk to suit you					
Poor ventilation					
Inappropriate lighting levels					
Uncomfortably hot or cold					



Are the following areas identified stressors?	YES or NO	If, yes is the risk high, med or low	Action to be taken to reduce stressor	Action to be completed by (name)	Date completion or review
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE					
Over-competitive culture					
Expected to put job before self or family					
Managers adopting confrontational approach					
Toleration of discrimination/harassment					
Pressure to attend work even when ill					
Employees feel undervalued					
Blame culture					
Absence of management training					
Poor communications					
Tight deadline are the norm					
Pressure to achieve without adequate resources					



Exceed Learning Partnership
• EVERY CHILD • EVERY CHANCE • EVERY DAY •

Any further comments

Employees Name: _____

Senior Manager's Name: _____

Employee's signature: _____

Senior Managers signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date agreed for next review meeting: _____

Appendix C: Supporting employees following stressful incidents

Introduction

From time to time employees will be involved in stressful incidents. There is no expectation that managers should be qualified to carry out a psychological assessment of suicide risk assessment. The following guidelines assume a lay-person's recognition only of signs that a fellow human being is distressed or in need of support.

What to look out for

Normal short-term responses to very stressful events include crying, shaking, feeling sick, feeling numb, saying strange things. The events will be replayed mentally many times and falling asleep is difficult. All this is unpleasant but normal and usually subsides over the following days.

What action should a manager take?

When it comes to a manager's attention that something out-of-the-ordinary, and possible stressful has occurred they will want to reassure themselves regarding the well-being of the employee(s) involved. They may be in a position to meet with the employee(s) or, if not, make telephone contact to enquire whether support is needed.

Wherever possible the manager should thank the employee(s) for doing their best in the circumstances and let them know there will be a chance to discuss any issues arising at a later date. The awareness that the manager is supportive and acknowledges the difficulty of the situation is always helpful.

Practical support at the time may take many forms e.g. a cup of tea, box of tissues and a quiet area to sit down, making sure the employee gets home safely, group debriefing or individual counselling. Generally, the employee(s) will know what support they require and the manager will only have to ask. In many cases the support of colleagues, family and friends is sufficient, but occasionally professional intervention is desirable or necessary.

Additional sources of help

If the employee(s) request group debriefing or individual counselling during office hours (8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday) they can contact Occupational Health on 01302 737045, or the manager can request one of the Advisors or Counsellors to contact those involved.

The nurse or counsellor will then be in a position to assess the level of distress and degree of urgency before deciding what intervention is appropriate.

What to do if an incident happens when the department is closed

If the incident occurs when Occupational Health is closed then the manager needs to check with employees whether they feel able to manage until this source of support is available. Where the behaviour of an employee gives the manager serious cause for concern regarding their safety the following should be considered:

- Is there a partner or relative who will take responsibility for the employee?
- Can an emergency appointment with the GP be arranged? If so, someone may have to ensure that the employee gets there.
- NHS Direct may be able to offer advice – telephone 1111
- Accident and Emergency Department, Doncaster Royal Infirmary, is available 24 hours a day – telephone 01302 366666.
- The Samaritans offer a 24-hour listening service – telephone 01302 327474 or 116 123.