Policy For Staff Well Being

Statement of Principles

This policy forms part of Watermill’s general Health & Safety policy arrangements as well as contributing to the promotion of good health. It encompasses such matters as smoking, alcohol and drugs, nutrition, physical activity & stress. The school is committed to providing a working environment and management practices which promote employee wellbeing and good health. Middlehurst recognizes the important and constructive role which the recognized trade Unions play to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of staff as indicated by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

Legal Compliance

All employers have a legal responsibility under the health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. This includes minimising the risk of stress – related illness or injury to employees.

Middlehurst will full fill its commitment by:

- Identifying potential hazards or circumstances which might contribute to inappropriate levels of work-related stress and conduct risk assessments to eliminate or control the risks from such stress. These circumstances and risk assessments will then be kept under review
Consulting with relevant trade union safety representatives and other stakeholders on issues relating to staff wellbeing

Increasing awareness and understanding of stress related issues and the importance of general good health and wellbeing through identification, prevention, control and subsequent monitoring of causes of stress at work including where appropriate training and health promotion

Providing enhanced training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices appropriate to this policy

Providing a confidential counseling service for staff whose wellbeing is adversely affected by stress

Ensuring that appropriate resources are provided to enable managers to implement the schools agreed staff wellbeing strategy

2. This policy will apply to all staff and Governors and recognizes that all involved people have a duty of care and are responsible for the implementation the policy. As such they will be encouraged to take a responsible approach to health and wellbeing issues, including assisting those conducting risk assessments relating to well being in the workplace.

3. The School recognizes that organizations that adopt an organisational approach to improving Health and Wellbeing may achieve substantially reduced costs associated with

   Absenteeism
   Staff turn
   Risk management

And increases in

   Staff moral
   Job enrichment
   Quality of work life
   Continuous improvement of educational achievement

This leads to Improved productivity and overall school performance

4. The policy is to be read in conjunction with school polices on Health & Safety and also Respect and Dignity at Work.

Definitions

The Health & Safety Executive define stress as being

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

However it is important that the difference between “pressure” and “stress” be acknowledged as subjective - pressure does not necessarily give rise to stress and pressure can sometimes motivate. Whilst acknowledging that pressure and stress may also be caused by a range of issues external to the workplace, the schools prime responsibility is to address work related stress.

The harmful effects of stress particularly when chronic are regarded as having a significant negative impact on the overall physical and psychological well being of individuals so undermining well being and impacting on the individuals life and hence work performance.
2. **Policy Objectives**

The school is mindful of “the HSE Management Standards for Work Related Stress” (see appendix A) as such -

1. The aims of the policy are to:
   - Provide advice and information about minimizing risks to health
   - Outline specific responsibilities
   - Educate staff about the causes, effects and management of stress
   - Develop in partnership with the trade unions strategies intended to improve health at work.
   - Provide relevant support to staff, in particular ensuring managers are both proactive and respond in a timely manner to concerns raised by staff and unions. In doing so will improve the well being of all staff, thus enhancing the provision for children and provide a safe working environment for all staff in the education setting.

2. To achieve these objectives the school will:
   - Ensure the school adheres to the Well Being Policy
   - Ensure good communication between Management and Staff, most especially at time of organization and procedural change.
   - Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
   - Incorporate a Stress Identification Checklist into the annual staff review interview & make it available to staff at any other time as they see fit.
   - Carry out risk assessments to identify health and wellbeing issues related to work
   - Implement appropriate control measures to minimize risks to health and wellbeing
   - Monitor and audit arrangements in an effort to improve the quality of the working environment
   - Raise awareness of the causes, signs and symptoms of stress and stress-related illness, and of the ways in which the University supports individuals
   - Provide training to all managers on the Health & Wellbeing Policy and how to use it effectively
   - Educate employees in techniques for recognizing and coping with potentially stressful situations
   - Provide information about appropriate available welfare services to all employees and provide access to confidential counselling to alleviate stress caused by work related or external factors. ( Care First 0800 174319 / Teacher Support Network 0800 056 2561 )
   - Refer at all times to the SOTCC “Stress Policy & Guidance for Schools Managed Staff and Centrally Employed Teachers” which is embedded in the schools policy documentation.

3. The following have been identified as appropriate measures of employee performance and wellbeing for the purposes of managing health & wellbeing in the workplace -
   - Absences will be recorded and monitored for developing patterns
   - Exit questionnaires will be used and followed up with exit interviews where appropriate
   - Use of the City Councils Occupational Health and Counseling service will be monitored without breaching confidentiality
   - Other forms of data gathering will also be used to include self-referral and Trade Union referral.

4. **Key Indicators / Considerations for the school**
There are many psycho-social factors which influence personal health and wellbeing. Mental health promotion in the workplace can prevent stress as well as being away of promoting an understanding of mental illness. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Existence and quality of an ongoing mental health promotion/education programme for staff to consider changes and adjustments, managing change, stress management, assertive communication, problem solving, time management, loss and grieving, other – e.g. financial management)
- Existence and quality of flexible working arrangements to cater for family
- Existence and quality of staff support systems/s in school
- Tolerance of diversity among staff
- Existence and quality of effective communication systems

**Causes of stress**

5. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has identified six primary areas of risk in the causes of stress. The following HSE chart identifies the main causes of stress and provides a brief indicator of what can be done to manage these risks:

6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of Stress</th>
<th>What can be done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demands</strong></td>
<td>Employees often become overloaded if they cannot cope with the amount of work or type of work they are asked to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
<td>Employees can feel disaffected and perform poorly if they have no say over how and when they do their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>Employees can feel isolated and stressed if they feel they cannot speak with their line managers or if they do not feel they have adequate support or provided with constructive feedback and advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Employees can often experience problems relating to bullying, harassment or discipline as a result of poor working relationships or lack of recognition or reward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role</strong></td>
<td>Employees can feel anxious if there is ambiguity regarding their role or where there is a lack of clarity in terms of what is expected of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change</strong></td>
<td>Changes in market demands, technology and organisational structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Responsibilities**

1. All staff have a responsibility to comply with Health & Safety measures instituted by the school. The following people will have an involvement as follows:

2. Senior Management are responsible for ensuring:
   1. The engagement of management at all levels in the importance of managing staff wellbeing.
   2. Allocation of appropriate resources to enable managers to deliver the agreed strategy proactively, use of the counselling service and health referrals for expert opinion.
   3. That the identified proactive initiatives, behaviours, systems and policies are embedded in the culture of the organisation.
   4. That the strategy is driven via collective responsibility at Senior Management level.
   5. That the Governors have an overriding responsibility to monitor delivery and alert the Senior Management Team to any concerns.

**Heads of Departments**

In addition to the general duties of all managers detailed below, Heads of Departments and Sections influence the culture in their part of the organization. Their specific responsibilities include:

- Active implementation and promotion of the principles and behaviors contributing to positive staff wellbeing.
- Alertness to employees’ personal circumstances and offering additional support where appropriate to members of staff experiencing risks to their wellbeing derived from outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Ensuring effective communication between management and staff.
- In particular, ensuring effective communicating where there are organizational and/or procedural changes which can give rise to increased levels of stress in the workplace.
- Ensuring that bullying, harassment and discrimination are not tolerated in the school.

**Senior Staff**

Request the designated person to carry out stress risk assessments when it is identified that an employee is suffering from stress or where there is a perceived risk of stress and ensure that any reasonable measures identified are implemented.

Ensure that employees are consulted at all times over all aspects of their employment that may cause stress or impact on their health and well-being when changes affecting them are planned.

Ensure that employees receive appropriate training and resources to carry out their duties.

Ensure that staff are provided with appropriate developmental opportunities.
Manage absence in accordance with the Absence Management Policy
Consider workloads to ensure jobs are realistic and manageable.

Monitor working hours, overtime and holidays to encourage individuals to take breaks as required by legislation.

Familiarize themselves with the Dignity & Respect at Work Policy concerning bullying and harassment and ensure that employees are aware that this is not tolerated by the school.

Recognize that employees may have experiences in their personal lives that may make them vulnerable to pressures at work and which may have a temporary influence on their work performance e.g. health issues or personal circumstances

Treat all discussions with employees around personal stress as confidential unless it is necessary to involve others to deal with the issue and the employee gives written agreement for disclosure.

Where appropriate discuss issues around stress with their Health and Safety Officer, HR Representative, or Trade Union rep.

City Council Human Resources will:

Provide support and guidance to staff on the Health & Wellbeing Policy
Provide guidance to concerned staff on the implementation of the policy to include the appropriate management of individual workloads
Will advise, guide and support school in carrying out stress risk assessments by trained individuals as requested by line-managers.
Provide support to employees experiencing stress and advise them and their line-managers of the support available.
Make referrals to the Occupational Health Service or Counsellor in accordance with the Absence Management Policy
Raise awareness amongst all staff of the importance of work/life balance and the opportunities to achieve this within school

Employees will:

Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and co-operate with Management in any measures taken to reduce stress

Be committed to avoiding causing health and wellbeing problems for other employees, including acting in accordance with the principals of the Dignity & Respect at Work Policy

Be proactive in identifying occasions when they may be suffering from health and wellbeing problems, either work-related, or due to external factors, and alert their line-manager to these where appropriate.

Where employees feel unable to discuss the issues with their managers, they are encouraged to discuss it with their Health & Safety Officer, HR representative, or their Trade Union
Representative. The school recognizes that, as with Dignity and Respect at Work, where the manager may be seen as a cause of stress, in part or in full, concerns over stress can be immediately taken to a more senior manager.

Take advantage of opportunities for counseling and training when recommended.

**Trade Unions will**

Work with the school to raise awareness and promote the importance of health and well-being in the workplace.

Where aware of concerns, identify these to the Human Resources Department and work with the school in resolving the issues.

Share the development of policy via appropriate joint consultation, negotiation and agreement.

In matters relating to stress, the school recognises that the Trade Unions hold specific responsibilities as set out by the HSE and indicated in Appendix A of this policy.

**Actively managing employee wellbeing**

The school’s efforts will be concentrated on the promotion of health and wellbeing in the workplace. This will include deploying other school policies and procedures as appropriate (for example, the policies on Absence Management, Dignity & Respect at Work, Flexible Working Policy, etc. In addition, recognizing and managing health and wellbeing issues will be incorporated into training for managers.

**Stress Risk Assessments**

The school is obliged to assess the nature and scale of risk to the health of its staff in order to implement appropriate preventative and protective steps.

The policy recognizes that employees’ tolerance thresholds differ and that non-work factors may play a part in determining an individual employee’s response.

It is of paramount importance that employees share with the school any relevant information which might impact upon their ability to cope with reasonable pressures at work, to include issues such as Disability etc.

Details of the factors likely to lead to work-related stress, methods of assessment and guidance on the completion of a risk assessment is available for all line-managers from the Human Resources Department of SOTCC.

**Training courses – Staff Development Office**

A variety of courses may be accessed through SOTCC Insurance Section or HR Section which can contribute to individual’s ability to be proactive in managing factors which could lead to health and wellbeing problems.

**Counseling Service**

Counselling offers an employee an opportunity to work with an experienced and impartial mental health professional to clarify and understand their difficulties and to find more helpful ways of coping and dealing with them. The University retains the services of an independent counsellor. This service is a confidential one and no details are shared with the University without the explicit consent of the individual involved.
Counselling should be made available to employees who are suffering from issues impacting upon their work performance and that are exceeding their ability to cope. All referrals are made through the Human Resources Department.

**Exercise & Nutrition**

**Physical Health**
Studies have shown that regular, daily light or moderate exercise is beneficial for the prevention of heart disease, stress and anxiety and disorders. The provision of opportunities for physical activity is one way school can contribute to promoting health and preventing illness:

- Existence and quality of fitness/exercise activities available for staff (suggested action – conduct a survey to gauge interest in a programme including staff interests)
- Availability of regular individual health assessment for staff (suggested action – consider networking with local health assessment service agencies, G.P.’s and other providers)
- Existence and quality of an ongoing staff health promotion/education programme covering physical health issues

**Work Life Balance**

Stoke on Trent City Council and Middlehurst School offers a range of policies which can provide opportunities for staff to develop a good work/Life balance listed below.

- Flexible Working Policy
- Maternity Policy
- Paternity Policy
- Adoption Leave Policy
- Parental Leave
- Respect & Dignity at Work Policy

**Policy Review**

The School Business Manager will co-ordinate a review of the Schools Health & Wellbeing Policy on a annual basis (or more frequently as necessary) to maintain compliance with legislation and good practice.

The review will be undertaken in liaison with the Health & Safety Committee and the recognized trade unions and any proposed amendments will be submitted to Staffing Committee for approval.

The policy will be Equality Impact Assessed by the Equal Opportunities Advisor particularly in respect of the
DDA 1995. All EIAs will include trade union participation as necessary.