

The **co-operative** academies trust

Stress at Work Policy

**Approved by Trust Board 21 April 2016
Applicable from 01 May 2016**

The Co-operative Academies Trust

Stress at Work Policy

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Credits: the annexes to this policy have been adapted from:

- *Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Stress Policy for school's managed staff and centrally employed teachers*
- *the NUT, GMB, Unison & Unite publication "Guidance for School Leaders on preventing work-related mental health conditions by tackling stress"*
- *SchoolSHARE's whole school generic risk assessment*

The Co-operative Academies Trust

Stress at Work Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Co-operative Academies Trust is committed to promoting a healthy and supportive working environment. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.
- 1.2 This policy will apply to everyone employed by the Trust. The Director of the Trust, Headteachers / Principals, line managers and governors have a duty of care to their staff and are responsible for the implementation of the policy. The Trust and its Academies are responsible for providing the necessary resources and appropriate training.
- 1.3 This policy, through the proactive management of stress, aims to reduce the occurrence of work related stress related conditions among staff, thus enhancing the education provision for children and providing a safer working environment for all staff.
- 1.4 This policy has been developed in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards for Stress, and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 1.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Supporting Attendance Policy where stress (whether personal or work related) leads to absence from work.

2 Definition of stress

- 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”.
- 2.2 This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.
- 2.3 It is important to remember that some level of stress is a normal aspect of everyday life. However, the harmful effects of stress, particularly when chronic, are now regarded as having a significant negative impact on the overall physical and psychological well-being of individuals. In addition, it can undermine performance at work and is costly to the school.
- 2.4 This policy focuses on work related stress, however, it is recognised that excessive pressure and demands outside of work – or conflicting demands of work and home – can also play a part. It is difficult to control outside stressors, but to manage work related stress effectively the importance and interaction of work and home problems must be recognised.

3 Policy Statement

- 3.1 Our academies will identify all significant workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to minimise stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be reviewed should the process or circumstances change.
- 3.2 Our academies will consult with local Trade Union Representatives on any proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.

- 3.3 Our academies will provide training for line managers in good management practices.
- 3.4 Our academies will give staff access to confidential counselling to alleviate stress caused by either work-related or external factors.
- 3.5 Our academies will make available adequate resources to implement their agreed stress management strategy.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Bodies (LGB), Headteachers / Principals and Line Managers

- Ensure that their academy adheres to this policy (LGB / Head / Principal).
- Has a nominated governor who leads on Health & Safety.
- Conduct, implement and monitor recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties (Head / Principal), including appropriate training for line managers to enable them to discharge their responsibilities under this policy
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities (Head / Principal).
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement (where applicable).
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within the Trust.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Discuss the issue of stress with staff and their representatives to find out causes of stress and seek suggestions on how to improve if necessary (see also Annex 2; organisations may be able to provide advice and support to managers, and/or directly to staff).
- Carry out, where appropriate, stress risk assessment of posts in the Trust, including the role of the Governors. It is the Governing Body's responsibility to conduct such assessments for the Headteacher / Principal's post (and the Chair of the Trust Board's responsibility for the Director of the Trust). (LGB / Head / Principal / Director of the Trust)
- Line Managers should report concerns to the Headteacher / Principal / Director of the Trust.
- Liaise with the Trade Union Representative(s) on matters related to health & safety (Head / Principal).
- The Trust Board & Director of the Trust will have an over-arching accountability for the implementation of this policy as part of their wider health & safety responsibilities.

4.2 Occupational Health and Safety Staff

- Provide specialist advice on stress.
- Advise and support academies in implementing stress risk assessments.

- Support Heads / Principals to support individuals who have been off sick with stress.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Advise Heads / Principals on monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Inform the employer of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

4.3 Human Resources *(including in-school HR, bought-in HR support, and Trust's Head of HR)*

- Give guidance to Heads / Principals / Line Managers on the stress at work policy.
- Assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics and other evidence.
- Advise on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to line managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational counsellors where appropriate.

4.4 Employees

- Should raise issues of concern with their Headteacher / Principal, line manager, Union Representative, or occupational health, such as workload concerns, working excessive hours, or training needs.
- Consider and accept, if appropriate, opportunities for counselling when recommended.
- Discuss and agree appropriate measures to reduce stress.
- Report Harassment and Bullying whether as a victim or witness.
- Comply with workplace policies.
- Should be encouraged to participate in the proactive management of stress.

5 Function of Trade Union Representatives

- 5.1 Trade Union Safety Representatives (or other workplace union representatives, if identified health & safety representatives are not in place) must be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that may precipitate stress.
- 5.2 Representatives must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting any workplace surveys.
- 5.3 Representatives must be allowed to be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.
- 5.4 Representatives should be allowed access to collective and anonymous data from the Trust where available.
- 5.5 In line with the Trust's Management of Health & Safety Policy Statement, Representatives may conduct joint inspections of the workplace to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.
- 5.6 Representatives should be encouraged to highlight areas of concern to Headteachers / Principals as and when they arise, and to participate in the proactive management of stress in the school.
- 5.7 Representatives will be allowed paid time away from normal duties to attend relevant Trade Union training in accordance with the Trust's Trade Union Recognition & Facility Agreement.

6 Recommended procedure for managing stress

- 6.1 Academies should consider:
- How they can promote a healthy and supportive working environment
 - How they can proactively develop a working culture where the risks from work related stress are being effectively controlled
 - Who will be responsible for leading on the implementation of this policy, so that stress and the causes of stress are identified and managed
- 6.2 A number of documents are included as annexes to this policy and may be used for guidance and/or management tools. These cover situations which may be reactive or proactive, and at an individual, group or whole-school level. Each set of circumstances is likely to be different and the approach should be flexed as appropriate.
- 6.3 Where an academy is being advised or supported by a third party, such as through a local authority HR service level agreement or occupational health service, alternative documentation (e.g. for a workplace stress risk assessment) may be used. Similarly, an academy may choose to use other similar and externally recognised self-assessment tools.

7 Monitoring & Review

- 7.1 Under the Trust's agreed Management of Health & Safety Policy Statement, our academies will ensure that H&S matters are discussed in a formally documented meeting to which local TU representatives are invited, at least annually and ideally on a termly basis. This forum will oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the policy within an academy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety. This is in addition to termly H&S reviews, which the school's trade union representatives should be invited to attend.
- 7.2 The Trust Board / JCNC will have a role in oversight as part of their overall health & safety review process.
- 7.3 This policy will be reviewed on a biannual basis, or when required due to changes in legislation

Annex 1**Guidance for managers on management of stress at work****Introduction**

The Health & Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.

“Stress” is a term that tends to be used quite broadly ranging from situations when someone is feeling particularly busy at work, is finding their job difficult for some reason, or is worried about having their performance managed more closely due to concerns about under-performance, to situations where working conditions, relationships, change, or other factors place demands on an employee which could be considered unreasonable. Regardless of ‘which end of the spectrum’, the key factor is the ability of the employee to cope / the employee’s reaction.

This can be quite challenging for managers to deal with. Very broadly the areas to consider and “untangle” are (1) what are the pressures & demands at play in this situation, are the pressures / demands reasonable and being applied in a considered manner, (2) regardless of whether the demands are considered ‘reasonable’, what could be done to help the employee cope better with the situation in order to help them minimise the “adverse reaction”, (3) is there anything else that can be done for the employee concerned, or the academy generally, to address the underlying concerns being raised?

Stress is not an illness, but, if experienced for a prolonged period, can result in psychological illness such as anxiety or depression, or physical symptoms such as headaches or digestive disorders. If particularly severe, it is thought to be able to contribute to physical illnesses such as high blood pressure or heart disease, and susceptibility to frequent minor illnesses.

Developing coping strategies such as taking exercise and finding ways of relaxing can help to combat the effects of pressures which could lead to stress. Unfortunately the nature of stress leads people experiencing it too often adopt negative coping strategies such as drinking too much alcohol or caffeine, eating too much “comfort food” or skipping meals, and smoking, all of which can compound the problem.

Reducing stress can lead to less sickness absence, improved performance and lower staff turnover. This reduces the costs associated with the loss of trained staff plus replacement and recruitment costs. Other indirect effects, such as reduced quality of education and increased demand on health service resources, are difficult to measure but need to be recognised.

Signs that may point to a stress related problem

These could include:

- Reduction in output / performance, an increase in errors or lack of sound judgement
- Loss of motivation / commitment, erratic time keeping or working increasingly long hours (possibly for diminished returns)
- Tension, conflict, poor relationships with colleagues / parents / pupils or students
- Increase in overall sickness, particularly frequent short spells of absence
- Other physical symptoms such as headaches, tiredness / problems sleeping, bad temper, dizziness, aching neck and shoulders, skin rashes.

Causes of possible stress in the Education Sector

People’s experience of stress at work is affected by various factors, which include:

- The level of **control** they have over the pressures of work (e.g. curriculum changes, OFSTED, HMI inspections, redundancies, lesson observations, examinations, pupil behaviour)
- The **support** they receive from others in meeting pressures (e.g. line managers, governors, parents, trade unions, employee support helplines)
- The **strategies** they use to respond to work pressures, some of which will help more than others (e.g. taking allocated breaks, not taking excessive work home, effective time management, positive work/life balance, seeking support from others)

Causes of stress for individuals or groups of staff may vary, but researchers have identified a number of work-related factors, any combination of which may result in feelings of stress. Some of these causes can be found in any organisation, not just in education. However, education related staff have had to adapt to major changes, which in itself is a source of pressure.

Areas of concern that could create pressure, leading to stress, might include:

Staff relationships with pupils (class size; actual or potential violence; disruptive pupils; uncertainties about limits of discipline; poor student motivation; teaching low ability students without appropriate resources, support or training)

Staff relationships with colleagues (poor communication; “personality conflicts”; unfair distribution of work; bullying or harassment)

Management issues (redundancies; poorly handled recruitment processes; poorly managed change; not being involved in the decision making process; change in management style; lack of leadership; prolonged conflict or uncertainty; lack of support from management; too many after-school meetings; work overload, covering for absent colleagues, teaching unfamiliar subjects; career development difficulties; over/under promotion; failure to recognise that different people adapt to change at different rates; management failure to acknowledge long hours of working at home; poor working conditions; performance evaluation; unsupportive performance/management issues; inadequate training or experience)

Societal issues or external influences (poor perceived status of education sector employment; role ambiguity, uncertainty about limits of authority; changing societal expectations and concern about roles of school; dealing with anxious, aggrieved or aggressive parents and students; community cohesion issues; OFSTED / HMI expectations; concerns about the financial situation of the school; parental expectations; fluctuating Government policy).

How to manage stress

Through the proactive management of stress a school can significantly improve the working environment of its employees. Though often a challenging and long term commitment, a school will benefit from improved staff attendance, reduced mental health problems, and consequently fewer performance related problems.

The approaches outlined below, when implemented either independently or simultaneously, act to protect both the school and employee from stress, and are recommended as good practice. Each situation is different, and Heads / Principals should feel able to adapt the process / tools to best fit the circumstances. **Please note every effort should be made for confidentiality to be observed.**

A - Whole School Well-being

A genuinely proactive approach will help to highlight issues that may be hidden from management, either because individuals are not aware of the problem and don't actually recognise it themselves, or are aware but feel that mentioning it might be a sign of weakness.

Whether or not they perceive there is a problem to be addressed, an academy may choose to carry out an employee survey (the “wellbeing ready reckoner” in Annex 3 can be used – adapted as necessary). The results could then be taken forward by a “change team”, staff council, well-being focus group (etc.) within the academy (see point C below), perhaps as part of wider health & well-being activities.

B - The Individual Approach

Every effort should be made by the school to resolve individual cases proactively and within a supportive environment, which encourages employees to raise concerns and make suggestions for improving the school and the management of stress.

- An individual highlights a concern
- The Headteacher / Principal / line manager has an initial discussion, and (if appropriate) provides the employee with a copy of the stress action check list (**Annex 4**)
- Following completion of the checklist the Headteacher / Principal / line manager has a further discussion with the employee (including a trade union representative where appropriate) about the findings of the checklist, and consider if the employee should be referred to Occupational Health, counselling or another support service (**Annex 2**).
- Guidance notes for managers accompany the stress action checklist to help provide solutions (**Annex 5**)
- The Headteacher / Principal / line manager should work with the employee to create an action plan (which may include the completion of further risk assessment) – see **Annex 6** - and agree a timeframe for action, with another meeting scheduled to discuss progress.
- Stress-related sickness absences should be managed sensitively and pro-actively in line with the Management of Sickness Absence Procedure, and Heads / Principals should ensure that contact with the individual is maintained during their absence.

C - The Group Approach

- Either a group of staff indicate concerns, or the Headteacher / Principal / line manager has concerns and/or decides to take a proactive approach in response to a forthcoming event.
- By distributing the stress action checklist to either specific areas of the school or to the staff as a whole, areas of concern can be identified
- For example, identify a group of staff to involve – this might be a particular team / department if there are concerns, or a focus group consisting of a variety of staff members from different areas and levels of the school staffing structure, with a trade union representative present where available
- Group members complete the stress action checklist and review and discuss the collated results, or they use the stress action checklist as a starting point for a focus group discussion without necessarily completing it on an individual basis.
- The group then meet to create solutions / action plan, and where appropriate carry out stress risk assessments
- Following the implementation of a solution(s) the group should endeavor to obtain feedback from colleagues.

D - The Risk Assessment Approach

A stress risk assessment (**Annex 7**) may be carried out as an assessment of the overall situation in a school, for example as part of a regular health & safety inspection process. This document is not intended for an individual situation (see above).

Health & Safety Executive – Stress Management Standards

The HSE website provides information on Management Standards which define the characteristics, or culture, of an organisation where the risks from work related stress are being effectively managed and controlled to help combat work related stress. The stress action checklist is based on these standards, which are summarised below.

Standard 1: Demands Includes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment
The standard is that: • Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and • Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening / states to be achieved: where applicable • The organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work; • People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands; • Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and • Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.
Standard 2: Control How much say the person has in the way they do their work
The standard is that: • Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work; and • Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening / states to be achieved: where applicable • Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work; • Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work; • Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work; • The organisation encourages employees to develop their skills; • Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken; and • Employees are consulted over their work patterns.
Standard 3: Support Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
The standard is that: • Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and • Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening / states to be achieved: where applicable • The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees; • Systems are in place to enable and encourage line managers to support their staff • Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues; • Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it; • Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job; and • Employees receive regular and constructive feedback.
Standard 4: Relationships Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behavior
The standard is that: • Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and

Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening / states to be achieved: where applicable - The organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness; - Employees share information relevant to their work; - The organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour; - Systems are in place to enable and encourage line managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour; and - Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour.
Standard 5: Role Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles
The standard is that: - Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and - Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening / states to be achieved: where applicable - The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible; - The organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities; - The organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear; and - Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.
Standard 6: Change How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organization
The standard is that: - Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change; and - Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening / states to be achieved: where applicable - The organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes; - The organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals; - The organisation conducts a stress risk assessment when considering a change to the school's structure - Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs; - Employees are aware of timetables for changes; - Employees have access to relevant support during changes.

What about stress at home?

From: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/furtheradvice/stressathome.htm>

Key message

A person can experience excessive pressure and demands outside work just as much as they can at work. Stress tends to build up over time because of a combination of factors that may not all be work related. Conflicting demands of work and home can cause excessive stress.

Problems outside work can affect a person's ability to perform effectively at work. Stressors at home can affect those at work and vice versa. For example, working long hours, or away from home, taking work home and having higher responsibility can all have a negative effect on a person's home life – something which is supposed to be a 'buffer' against the stressful events of work. In the same way, domestic problems such as childcare, financial or relationship problems can negatively affect a person's work. The person loses out – as do their family and their employer. It becomes a vicious circle.

It is difficult to control outside stressors, but you need to take a holistic approach to employee well-being. To manage work related stress effectively, you need to recognise the importance and interaction of work and home problems.

Causes of stress outside work

Many things in people's lives outside work can cause them stress, for example:

Family

- Death (of a loved one)
- Divorce or separation from a partner
- Marriage
- Pregnancy
- Holidays
- Changes in health of a family member or close friend
- Trouble with in-laws
- Family arguments
- Children leaving home
- Childcare
- Remarriage of a family member
- Caring for other dependents, such as elderly relatives
- Family reunion
- Relationship breakdown or having a long-distance relationship

Personal or social issues

- Change in financial state, or debt or money worries
- Changes in personal habits such as giving up smoking, going on a diet.
- Problems with weight
- Experiencing prejudice or discrimination
- Lack of friends or support
- Personal injury or illness

Daily hassles

- Traffic jams
- Public transport
- Time pressures
- Car troubles

Other

- Moving house, including taking out a mortgage
- Difficulties with neighbours
- Living with someone with an alcohol, drug problem or other addiction.
- (If studying) a deadline for coursework, exam results or trying to balance work and study
- Unemployment
- Poor living environment

Do I have to do anything about stress outside work?

You don't **have** to, but it's good if you do. If you think about people's personal lives and outside stressors, you will be able to anticipate stressful times.

Your employee is not obliged to tell you their personal problems, but there are some practical things you could do to support them:

- **Be sympathetic and proactive.** Arrange a confidential meeting with the person, allowing them the opportunity to discuss any problems they wish and allowing you time to voice your own concerns. It may help to clarify whether the person's problems are work related or personal.
- **Be flexible.** Consider offering the person more flexible working hours, or even offer them some paid time off to deal with their problems.
- **Offer outside support.** If appropriate, you could suggest they visit their doctor and allow them time off to do so. You could also suggest support groups.
- **Outline the support and services your organisation offers.** For example, your organisation may have a work–life balance initiative in place. These are benefits, policies, or programmes that help balance out job demands and a healthy life outside work. They can include:
 - childcare services;
 - flexible working arrangements;
 - family leave policies;
 - employee assistance programmes; or
 - fitness programmes.

Programmes of this kind can work effectively to retain staff, improve morale, reduce sickness absence and stress, and increase productivity and commitment.

Annex 2

ORGANISATIONS OFFERING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Reproduced from the NUT, GMB, Unison & Unite publication “Guidance for School Leaders on preventing work-related mental health conditions by tackling stress”

MIND

MIND is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales, providing information and support to those affected by mental distress, as well as campaigning to improve policy and attitudes.

Mind Infoline: 0300 123 3393; Email: info@mind.org.uk

Legal Advice Line: 0300 466 6463; Email: legal@mind.org.uk

020 8519 2122 (England); 029 2039 5123 (Wales) www.mind.org.uk

Mind Model Mental Health Policies and Fact Sheets are available from:

<http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/>

STRESS

Teacher Support Network is an independent charity that provides practical and emotional support to trainee, serving and retired teachers and their families

24/7 Support Line: 08000 562 561 (UK); 08000 855 088 (Wales)

Email: support@teachersupport.info www.teachersupport.info/

ALCOHOL

Alcoholics Anonymous offer area support meetings

National Helpline: 0845 769 7555

Email: help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/

Drinkline offers advice, information and support to anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drinking

Telephone Helpline: 0300 123 1110 www.patient.co.uk/support/drinkline

BEREAVEMENT

Cruse Bereavement Care helpline for bereaved people and those caring for bereaved people

Telephone Helpline: 0844 477 9400

Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

DEBT

StepChange Debt Charity provides help for anyone in debt or concerned they may fall into debt

Freephone 0800 138 111 www.stepchange.org

(including all mobiles)

Email: www.stepchange.org/Contactus/Sendusanemail.aspx

DRUGS

UK National Drugs Helpline is a free 24-hour service for drug users and solvent mis-users, their families, friends and carers

Helpline: 0800 776 600 www.urban75.com/Drugs/helpline.html

Email: www.urban75.org/blog/contact/

GAMBLING

Gamcare offers confidential counselling, advice and information for anyone affected by a gambling dependency

Helpline: 0808 802 0133 www.gamcare.org.uk

HOUSING

Shelter offers confidential advice on housing problems

Helpline: 0808 800 4444 www.shelter.org.uk www.sheltercymru.org.uk

MEDICAL

Terrence Higgins Trust offer advice, practical support and counselling for HIV and AIDS

Telephone: 0808 802 1221 www.tht.org.uk

Email: info@tht.org.uk

Bi-Polar UK is a national user-led organisation and registered charity for people whose lives are affected by Bi-Polar.

Telephone: 020 7931 6480 www.bipolaruk.org.uk

Email: info@bipolaruk.org.uk

Rethink Mental Illness (formerly **National Schizophrenia Fellowship**) is the largest mental illness charity in the UK and is dedicated to improving the lives of everyone affected by severe mental illness, whether sufferers, carers or professionals working in the mental health field

Advice Line: 0300 5000 927 www.rethink.org

Supporter Care: 0121 522 7702

Email: advice@rethink.org

PARENTING

Family Lives offers support for anyone parenting a child, including grandparents and step-parents

Helpline: 0808 800 2222 www.familylives.org.uk

Email: www.familylives.org.uk/how-we-can-help/email-support/

The Information, Advice and Support Services Network (formerly **Parent Partnership**) offers support and advice to parents with children who have particular needs in schools across England.

Telephone: 0207 843 1900 <http://www.iasnetwork.org.uk/contact-us/>

Email: iassn@ncb.org.uk

RELATIONSHIP COUNSELLING

Relate offer relationship counselling and mediation for individuals and couples **Telephone: 0300 100 1234 www.relate.org.uk**

SUICIDE AND EMOTIONAL CRISIS

SANE offer emotional and crisis support for people suffering from mental health problems, their friends and families

Telephone: 0845 767 8000 www.sane.org.uk

Email: www.sane.org.uk/resources/contact_us

Samaritans offer 24-hour confidential and emotional support for anyone in crisis

Telephone: 08457 909090 www.samaritans.org.uk

Email: jo@samaritans.org

SMOKING

Quit offers friendly help, advice and support on how to stop smoking

Telephone: 020 7553 2100 <http://www.quit.org.uk/>

Email: stopsmoking@quit.org.uk

Annex 3

“Well-Being Ready Reckoner”

Reproduced from the NUT, GMB, Unison & Unite publication “Guidance for School Leaders on preventing work-related mental health conditions by tackling stress”

This questionnaire may be used by school management as the starting point for a stress risk assessment. The findings will give an indication of general levels of stress, and can then be used to identify the most likely causes of stress. Wherever evidence of stress emerges – the earlier it is tackled, the easier it is to put right.

Higher scores are suggestive of greater levels of well-being amongst those answering the questionnaire, whilst lower totals tend to indicate elevated degrees of stress/poor mental health. Please note that a score of 100 or more does not necessarily indicate the absence of a problem.

Instructions: For each of the following questions, enter the number matching the description which most closely represents how you feel.

1 – Not at all	2 = Not much	3 = Sometimes	4 = Mostly	5 = Very much so
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	Score
Do you feel able to concentrate on what you are doing at school?	
Do you feel that you are playing a useful part in school life?	
Do you feel capable of making decisions at school?	
Do you generally feel relaxed in your home and school life?	
Do you feel most problems you encounter at school can be overcome?	
Do you generally manage to keep your sense of humour?	
Do you feel happy at work, all things considered?	
Are you sleeping well?	
Are you eating well?	
Are you drinking sensibly?	
Do you cope well with changes to your job?	
Do you have a reasonable amount of energy?	
Do you feel in control of your job?	
Do you feel you are coping well in the classroom? <i>(if you do not work in the classroom, please answer this question on how you feel you are coping generally)</i>	

Do you get on well with pupils?	
Do you get on well with colleagues?	
Do you get on well with your managers?	
Do you feel free from the threat of bullying & harassment at school?	
Do you enjoy a reasonable degree of autonomy, unaffected by excessive monitoring regimes?	
Do you manage to leave work “on time” fairly regularly?	
Do you find your job satisfying and fulfilling?	
Do you enjoy a satisfying life outside of work?	
Do you intend to remain working in education for the foreseeable future?	
Do you look forward to returning to school after a weekend or holiday?	
NOW ADD UP YOUR SCORES	

More than 100 = low evidence of stress (but this does not necessarily indicate the absence of a problem)

51 to 100 = moderate evidence of stress

Up to 50 = high evidence of stress

Annex 4**Stress Action Checklist**

Name:	Academy:
Job Title:	Date Completed:
Manager:	Date received by Manager:

Please take some time to complete this checklist which will be used to assist you and your manager to agree an action plan to enable potential issues to be resolved. The checklist is based on the National Management Standards for Stress issued by the HSE, and has been developed from a questionnaire in the NUT, GMB, Unison & Unite publication "Guidance for School Leaders on preventing work-related mental health conditions by tackling stress"

Please note that this document is confidential and will not be shared with anyone else without your permission.

Instructions: rank the following statements from 1 to 5 where

1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Ambivalent, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

This document is intended to help identify and resolve the issues that you consider to be having the greatest impact on work related stress at the moment, so please try to use the range of responses available.

If the source of your stress / excessive pressure is coming from outside of work, please stop here and discuss alternative sources of help and support such as the counseling and information service.

	DEMANDS	1	2	3	4	5
1.	My physical working conditions are acceptable					
2.	Our rest facilities are clean and well maintained					
3.	My total working hours are satisfactory					
4.	The number of after school meetings is manageable					
5.	I have enough time to carry out all my tasks / deadlines and time pressures given to me are achievable and reasonable					
6.	Ofsted inspections do not cause me excessive pressure					
7.	The balance between work and home life is about right					
8.	My academy values the time I put in at home					
9.	I am able to take a proper break during the school day					
10.	<i>(if applicable)</i> Lesson planning requirements are realistic					
11.	<i>(if applicable)</i> Marking requirements are sensible and not overly bureaucratic					
	CONTROL	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I have opportunities to express my ideas and points of view					
13.	<i>(if applicable)</i> Classroom observation is not excessive					

14.	I am encouraged to use my initiative to do my work					
15.	I feel trusted by management to carry out my role					
	SUPPORT	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I receive appropriate training					
17.	My managers are supportive					
18.	I regularly receive positive feedback on my own work					
19.	There are enough support staff in the academy					
20.	The academy benefits from effective leadership					
21.	The appraisal system is supportive rather than critical					
	RELATIONSHIPS	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I have a good relationship with my line manager					
23.	I get on well with colleagues					
24.	Management promote positive behaviours to avoid conflict and ensure fairness					
25.	Staff are able to complain without risk of repercussions					
26.	I rarely have to deal with disruptive pupils					
27.	I rarely have to deal with violent pupils					
28.	I do not have to worry about violence from aggressive parents					
	ROLE	1	2	3	4	5
29.	I'm clear about what is expected of me at work					
30.	My skills are well-used					
31.	I feel valued in my role					
	CHANGE	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I find it difficult to cope with the pace of organisational or curriculum change					
33.	I find the introduction of new initiatives daunting					
34.	There is full staff consultation when any significant change is proposed					
35.	Changes are accompanied by appropriate support and training, where necessary					

Selecting up to five statements, please indicate which factors listed above have the biggest impact on your workplace stress. Please list the numbers below:

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Please list any issues causing work related stress which are not addressed in the questions above (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

Thank you for completing this checklist. The next stage is for you and your manager to discuss areas where there may be issues and decide on an action plan to resolve them as far as possible

Annex 5**Stress Action Checklist – notes for managers**

This section gives guidance to managers on how to resolve issues identified in the Stress Action Checklist. Options need to be discussed with the member of staff, and agreed actions should be recorded on the Stress Action Plan.

The Individual Approach

This approach most likely to be taken reactively, in response to concerns being raised. Following the completion of the checklist by an employee, the Headteacher / Principal or designated member of staff should meet with the employee to discuss the factors that have or are causing the most stress to the individual – the “top 5” listed at the end of the checklist, and any others scoring a “1 = strongly disagree”.

In some cases these factors may have simple solutions and where this is the case the academy should act swiftly to rectify any problem. In other cases the solutions may not be straight forward and the Headteacher / Principal or member of staff should not feel as though they are personally responsible for finding the solution to the difficulties raised during the meeting.

The Group approach

The “wellbeing ready reckoner” (Annex 3) or “stress action checklist” (Annex 4) can be used proactively to assess the workplace stress experienced by all staff at an academy. By giving each member of staff (or a representative sample of staff) a copy of the questionnaire and allowing an anonymous return, the academy will benefit from knowing the root causes of stress in the school at a particular time. It can be tempting for the management team to believe that they are aware of the causes of stress in the school, however, this type of “stress audit” could reveal resolvable issues that management had not considered.

The academy may benefit from using a “change team” consisting of a variety of staff, including trade union and health & safety representatives, to address such issues as stress. By giving greater responsibility to members of staff to find solutions to issues such as stress, any divide between management and staff can be closed, improving working relations and team spirit. Trade union representatives and local officers will always be willing to work with school management when there is a genuine desire to tackle work-related stress.

Next steps

Possible actions and solutions to each question in the Stress Action Checklist are provided below. These are intended only as prompts, and the discussion should be guided by the circumstances in each case.

	DEMANDS
1	Physical working conditions: Is a risk assessment required? Can equipment be purchased or reorganised to rectify the problem?
2	Rest facilities: Can any improvements be made? Does the employee have any special requirements?
3	Total working hours: Discuss time management. Are there areas of training that could allow the employee to work more effectively? Is the employee being asked to work more hours to cover absent colleagues? Has PPA and if necessary management time been given?
4	After school meetings:

	Is the staff member's attendance required at all evening meetings? Can meetings be arranged to take place during the school day?
5	Deadlines & time pressures: Does the employee struggle to prioritise workloads? Are any deadlines moveable? Monitor workloads and deadlines. Discuss ways of setting more realistic deadlines, doing things differently or notifying staff earlier that work needs to be done.
6	Ofsted/HMI inspections: Has a stress risk assessment been carried out? Is an OFSTED due soon? Can any support be given to support the employee preceding the inspection? Additional planning time, mentoring etc.?
7	Home / work balance: Would the employee benefit from using the counselling service or Teacher Support Network? Which elements of work are being done at home and how long are they taking? Is the work undertaken a priority? Can work be reorganised to assist with personal issues at home?
8	Valuing time put in at home: Which elements of work are being done at home and how long are they taking? Is the work undertaken a priority?
9	Breaks during the school day: The school should ensure that all employees take a reasonable break during the working day. Is the employee taking reasonable breaks? Explore ways of allowing more frequent, short breaks, 'sudden' breaks, breaks from normal work etc. Issues may include pregnancy where frequent short breaks may be needed on a temporary basis. Where / when is PPA and management time to be carried out? Can it be adjusted?
10	Lesson planning: Discuss with the employee the most challenging aspects of lesson planning, and identify whether changes can be made. Is further development in lesson planning skills required?
11	Marking requirements: Discuss with the employee their particular concerns with marking requirements. Is this a concern amongst other staff? Is it an area where an individual employee would benefit from developmental support?
	CONTROL
12	Opportunity to express ideas & points of view: Can the school set up an in school consultation group to improve communication about decision making? Are staff meetings/briefings held? Does the employee feel that they would benefit from discussion about how targets are set? Can the employee be empowered further? Are they able to use their own initiative?
13	Classroom observation: Is the level of classroom observation in line with the performance management policy and/or capability procedure? Explore concerns with employee.
14	Encouraged to use my initiative: Does the employee have scope to make decisions about how they do their job? How does the employee think they could be better encouraged?

15	Feel trusted by management: Explore concerns raised by employee. What leads the employee to feel they are not trusted? Is it appropriate to make any changes?
	SUPPORT
16	Training: What areas of training does the employee feel they would benefit from? Is any training due to be given? Do employees have a facility by which they can request training? Does the employee have access to a mentor? Who would be the most appropriate person? Does the employee know in what direction they want to go with their career? Can the school provide skills either through training or experience that would benefit both the school and the employee in the short and long term?
17	Support from managers: Does the employee have regular meetings with line managers? Does the employee's job description match the expectations of the school? What support does the employee feel they would benefit from having?
18	Receiving feedback: How is feedback provided to staff? Does the employee have regular 'catch ups' with their manager to discuss how they are getting on? Have managers received training on giving feedback?
19	Support staff: Is the school carrying vacancies in support staff posts? Are the current support staff covering the areas needed by the school? Is a system in place for administration support to be provided?
20	Leadership: Does the Senior Management Team communicate its vision and its decisions? Does it work cooperatively with employees? Are employees updated on the position of the school including the financial outlook?
21	Appraisal system: Has the Trust's performance management policy been fully adopted by the academy?
	RELATIONSHIPS
22	Relationship with line manager: Does the employee understand the expectations of management? Assess the nature of the working relationship between the line manager and the employee. Is mediation needed?
23	Relationship with colleagues: Does the employee work directly with other colleagues where there has been conflict? Can their working arrangements be changed? Is mediation required? Has the counselling service been offered?
24	Promotion of positive behaviours: Have management shared the co-operative values with staff? What else could be done to embed these values as 'ways of working'?
25	Staff can raise complaints: Has the academy promoted and embedded the Trust's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy? Are staff aware of the Trust's Grievance Procedure? Have managers been briefed on how to handle complaints from staff?

	If the employee raises specific complaints around discrimination, bullying or harassment during the discussion – discuss with the employee and establish their feelings, then discuss with HR promptly before continuing the conversation.
26 & 27	Relationship with pupils / students: Can class groups be altered and specific children moved to other groups? Does the member of staff feel vulnerable? Can support staff be made available? Does the school have a behaviour policy and is it clearly communicated to parents and pupils? Is it adequately enforced?
28	Relationship with parents: Are the parents abusive towards the member or staff or towards the child? Is it a police matter? Has the counseling service been offered? Should the employee be exposed to these specific parents? Does the school have the relevant policies in place?
	ROLE
29	Clear what is expected of me: Does the employee have their job description? Is it up to date? Is the job required by the school? Is the employee aware of their objectives? Are they agreed and understood by the employee, realistic and achievable within the timescale set? Would the employee benefit from specific direction and targets? Can the Performance Management process be used to identify areas for development?
30	My skills are well used: What skills does the employee feel are under utilised? How can the academy incorporate these skills? What initiative would the member of staff like to see? How can new skills be developed?
31	Feel valued: Explore concerns raised by employee: what leads the employee to feel they are not valued? Does the employee have regular “catch-ups” with their line manager? Are team meetings and other channels used to recognise employee contribution?
	CHANGE
32	Coping with change: Can communication to employees be improved? Are staff kept informed and updated on changes? Do SMT and Governor decisions get relayed to staff in an effective way? Would the employee wish to participate in an academy “change team”? With curriculum changes: has relevant training been provided? Can the employee attend a refresher course? Can the employer have access to a mentor?
33	New initiatives: Has the employee received sufficient training? Who do they contact if they experience problems?
34	Staff consultation: Are staff aware of the consultation process? Enquire if the employee has any suggestions for improvement. Identify areas of required support.
35	Support & training during change: Is the employee being kept informed of proposed changes? Would they benefit from counselling or advice from the Teacher Support Network? What additional support or training do they think would be beneficial?

Annex 6

Stress Action Checklist - Action Plan

Question Number	Action Required	By Whom	Review date	Completion date

Action plan agreed:
Date agreed:
Member of staff:
Signed:
Manager:
Signed: