

**HASSENBROOK
SCHOOL
Specialist
Technology
College**



**STRESS MONITORING
POLICY**

HASSENBROOK SCHOOL

Introduction

The school is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. This policy is designed to assist staff affected by stress in a non-judgmental and supportive manner. The policy sets out the way in which the school will meet its obligations to monitor workloads and stress in the workplace.

This policy will apply to everyone in the School. The Governing Body of Hassenbrook School is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The Governing Body of Hassenbrook School is committed to managing stress through active intervention where necessary by:

- monitoring workloads;
- active supervision of staff;
- the provision of occupational health support services, such as counselling (where necessary);
- training of staff;
- career development and planning;
- identifying all workplace stressors and conducting risk assessments

The school recognises that stress (as opposed to the normal pressures of work) may have many potential causes and aggravating factors both inside and outside the working environment. **Difficulties** in one area may have consequences on perceived stress levels in another. Whatever the cause, the purpose of this policy is to manage workloads effectively to maintain staff welfare, reduce absence through ill health and promote a positive working environment.

This policy is non-contractual in effect and does not form part of normal terms and conditions of employment. The Governing Body of Hassenbrook School reserve the right to change the terms of this policy from time to time and to introduce a replacement procedure as may be required.

Definitions – What is stress?

Stress may be defined as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them” (HSE 2004). Pressure is part and parcel of all work and helps to keep us motivated, but excessive pressure can lead to stress which undermines performance and affects health.

Work related stress is an identifiable hazard within our working environment, and the Governing Body of Hassenbrook School have a duty to ensure good practice and safe systems of work are in place within the school. Although a commonly used term to indicate illness, stress is not in itself a clinically recognised condition or illness.

Occupational health doctors often describe stress as a reaction to a set of circumstances that may be temporary and often are not, solely, caused by issues in the working environment.

It is also important to recognise when stress may be developing in both self and others, as often the early warning signals of stress can be missed, or misinterpreted. Please see **Appendix A** (Identifying Stress – Tell tale signs)

Causes of Workplace stress

To be successful in tackling causes of workplace stress it is important to consider where stress can emerge. The table below identifies aspects that can result in workplace stress developing. Understanding what can affect stress levels will enable a thorough risk assessment to be conducted.

Purpose

Areas where stress can emerge

1. Employees	2. The Work Environment	3. The Job
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person fit with job role • Work life balance • Health (both physical and psychological) • Appropriate Training and development • Individual coping style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team functioning • Team communication style • The nature of the team’s task • Management styles • Availability of resources to complete task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSE categories identifying what is stressful for individuals at work:- • Demand • Control • Support • Relationships • Role • Change

Risk Assessment

The school is committed to ensuring that a general 'departmental risk assessment' is carried out across all areas; the risk assessment is aimed at achieving good workplace design and enhancing a positive working environment so all hazards are recognised and avoided.

We are accustomed to considering our working environment in terms of physical hazards, and 'stresses may initially seem difficult to quantify. If these are addressed and managed properly they can help significantly reduce or even avoid work related stress.

The school is committed to gathering evidence on potential workplace stress by:

- Sickness/absence monitoring
- Incident reports/Accident Reports
- Racial Incident Reports
- Turnover and vacancy rates
- Performance review feedback
- Overtime levels
- Staff Survey
- Talk to staff – focus group/departmental meeting
- Exit interview – feedback
- Bullying and Harassment reports
- Working Time Regulation compliance

Appendix A. Identifying Stress – Tell tale signs

What to look for in others

Poor performance at work, including:-

- Uncharacteristic errors
- Memory lapses
- Indecisiveness

Aggressive behaviour's-

- Bullying
- Criticising others
- Overly defensive

Withdrawal of interest or commitment:

- Arriving late
- Leaving early

Emotional behaviour such as:-

- Crying
- Sulking
- Bad temper
- Loss of sense of humour

Fixation, such as:-

- Repeating arguments in meetings
- Refusing to listen to suggestions
- Insisting in using inadequate solutions

What to look for in yourself

Physical Signs:

Headaches, Tension, Indigestion, Breathlessness, Rashes, Frequent colds, Recurrence of previous illness, Sleep disturbances, dizziness, and dry mouth.

Mental Signs: Inability to concentrate, worrying, mistakes, muddled thinking, persistent negative thinking, nervousness, memory losses and uncharacteristic work errors.

Behavioural Signs: Unsociability, restlessness, lying, reckless driving, increased drinking or smoking, change in appetite and unusual obsessive behaviours.

Emotional Signs: Irritability, tension, moodiness, alienation, dissatisfaction, tearful, anxious, and withdrawing from colleagues and friends.

Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team

- Monitor good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Monitor that all staff are fully trained in their role.
- Monitor that all staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that staff are not overloaded; ensuring regular line management meetings are conducted.
- Monitor that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Monitor risk assessments are implemented within every department.
- Be supportive to colleagues who may be experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.

Human Resources

- Give guidance to managers on the stress policy.
- Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advise managers on concerns highlighted in sickness absence monitoring.
- Advise on counselling services available.
- Treat all information confidentially.

Occupational Health

- Referral to Occupational Health if required.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and the Headteacher on a planned return to work

Employees

- Raise issues of concern with your Line Manager/SLT/Human Resources
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

**Where else to get help?
Contact/Support Information**

NHS Direct: Gives information about common health problems and numbers of your local voluntary groups. Tel: 0845 4647

NHS Smoking Helpline: Tel: 0800 169 0169

RELATE: For relationship problems
Telephone helpline: 0845 130 4010
Telephone counselling (to book) 0845 1304016
www.relate.org.uk

SAMARITANS: 24 hour national helpline Tel: 08457 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org.uk

Victim Support Helpline: Tel: 0845 3030900
www.victimsupport.org.uk

email: counselling@essex.gov.uk (see Appendix B)

www.bullyonline.org

www.workhealth.org

www.nhs.co.uk (take the stress test)

www.direct.gov.uk

APPENDIX B

THE COUNSELLING SERVICE 01245 434225

counselling@essex.gov.uk

If you work in a school that uses the services of Essex County Council's Human Resources Team, you can access the Staff Counselling Service at Essex County Council. This is a free, professional facility offering support, consultation and exploration in a safe and confidential setting in order to give you an opportunity to think things through.

What does the service offer?

You will be offered an initial appointment where you can talk confidentially about whatever you want to with a counsellor. You may then be offered a series of counselling sessions with one of the counsellors. Other possibilities may also be explored with you.

Confidentiality

What is said in counselling is confidential and does not go back to your manager or human resources. The exception to this is if the counsellor feels that you or someone else is seriously at risk, in which case they will raise the issue with you.

Where can I be seen?

Counselling can be offered either in Chelmsford or Colchester during office hours. The offices are conveniently located near to public transport links and provide a quiet and discreet setting for you to discuss your difficulties.

How long are the sessions?

Sessions will usually last for 50 minutes and can take place within work time. If you need the agreement of a line manager, it is your responsibility to discuss an appropriate time for you to be absent from your workplace.

Appointments are usually available from 9.00 am until 5.30 pm.

How do I access the service?

You can contact the Staff Counselling Service by phoning 01245 434225. If no-one is available to take your call, you will be asked to leave a message with your contact details indicating when you are most likely to be reached (such as between 12.00 and 1.00 pm). Someone will then contact you as soon as possible but please be patient as this may take a few days. Alternatively, you can e-mail your details to counselling@essex.gov.uk.

Name: (Optional)

Teaching Staff (please tick appropriate box)

Support Staff

It is recognised that working conditions affect workers' well-being. Your responses to this questionnaire will help us determine our working conditions now and enable us to monitor future improvements. This is seen as part of the school's long term commitment to managing work related stress and promoting work/life balance and addressing the issues in this area.

Areas that could be the cause of work related stress and may affect work/life balance	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
Support in the Workplace					
1) My line manager encourages me at work					
2) I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me at work					
3) I have adequate resources to do my job					
4) I have regular line management meetings with my line manager					
5) I am supported through emotionally demanding work					
6) I receive supervision within my role					
Demand					
1) I have achievable deadlines					
2) I am able to take sufficient breaks					
3) Different groups demand things from me that are hard to combine					
4) I neglect some tasks because I have too much work to do					
5) I am pressured to work long hours					
Role					
1) I am clear about what is expected of me at work					
2) I am clear about my duties and responsibilities are					
3) I am clear about the goals and objectives within my department					
4) I feel fully trained within my role					
5) I receive meaningful developmental opportunities					
6) I am given feedback on the work I do					
Control					
1) I have realistic time pressures					
2) I feel in control due to good team work and support					
3) I have sufficient opportunities to questions managers about change at work					
4) I receive adequate communication regarding change in the workplace					
Relationships					
1) My colleagues are willing to listen to my work related problems					
2) I get the help and support I need from my colleagues					
3) Relationships at work are supportive					
4) I am subject to bullying at work					