



# Mental Wellbeing Policy

## for Academy based employees

**Adopted By:** Sunnyside Academy

**Date:** October 2018

Review Date	Reviewer	Comments
October 2018	HT	Added Staff Insurance details. HT has replaced the named lead professional for promoting mental health.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The academy has a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work and recognises that their wellbeing is important to its success.
- 1.2 The academy has a duty of care to protect the mental health and wellbeing of its employee's whilst they are at work. The academy recognises that work related stress could cause ill health, and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing stressors in the workplace, in line with the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Guidance and HSE Management Standards.

## **2.0 Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the academy meets its obligations under Health and Safety legislation and to support staff in carrying out their role effectively.
- 2.2 The academy will take measures that are reasonably practicable to preserve the mental health and wellbeing of employees while they are at work.
- 2.3 The academy aims to show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues and seeks to ensure appropriate help and support is given.

## **3.0 Scope**

- 3.1 The Mental Wellbeing Policy applies to all employees of the academy.

## **4.0 Definition of Stress**

- 4.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as:
  - “The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.
- 4.2 This definition makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be motivating if managed correctly, and stress which is the reaction to demands or pressures that a person perceives they cannot cope with and can be detrimental to health. Stress can be caused by pressures at home or at work, or a combination of both.
- 4.3 The HSE advises that everyone can in principle, experience stress, as no one is immune. Work-related stress exists where people perceive they cannot cope with what is being asked of them.

## 5.0 General Principles

### 5.1 The academy is committed to:

- Identifying potential stressors in the workplace and, where necessary, conducting risk assessments in order to eliminate, reduce or control the risks from stress, paying particular attention to the six broad categories of risk factors as set out in the HSE's Management Standards, namely:
  - Demands – this includes workload, work patterns and the work environment
  - Control – how much say a person has in the way they do their work
  - Support – this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the academy, line management and colleagues
  - Role – whether people understand their role within the academy and whether the academy ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
  - Change – how academy changes (large or small) are managed and communicated
  - Relationships – promote positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- Ensuring employees have the opportunity to acquire the skills and competencies to help them meet changing work demands through appropriate training and development.
- Providing resources and training to managers on how to prevent, recognise, minimise and manage stress in the workplace.
- Providing access for line managers to information and training about managing mental health in the workplace.
- Ensuring employees who have, or have had, symptoms of stress are treated responsibly, appropriately and in an understanding and confidential manner.
- Ensuring at least one member of a recruitment panel has completed appropriate safer recruitment training.
- Making it clear in the recruitment process and the pre-employment occupational health process that people who have experienced mental health issues will not be discriminated against and that disclosure of a mental health issue will enable both the employee and employer to assess and provide the right level of support or adjustment.

## **6.0 Early Intervention - Recognising signs of stress and mental ill-health**

6.1 It is important for Managers to be alert to the potential workplace triggers for distress, such as:

- Long hours and no break
- Unrealistic expectations or deadlines
- High pressure environments
- Poor working environment
- Unmanageable workloads or lack of control over work
- Negative relationships or poor communication
- Workplace culture or lack of management support
- Job insecurity or change management
- Lone working

6.2 Some potential indicators to recognise signs of stress or mental ill health at an early stage may include:

- Headaches and/or fatigue
- Appetite and weight changes
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Visible tension or trembling
- Mood changes, tearfulness, feeling low
- Indecision, lapses in memory
- Illogical or irrational thought processes
- Loss of motivation, resigned attitude
- Irritability, anger or aggression
- Impaired or inconsistent performance
- Uncharacteristic errors
- Increased sickness absence
- Poor timekeeping

6.3 If one or more of the above signs are observed, this does not automatically mean the employee has a mental health problem. It could be a sign of another health issue or something else entirely. It is extremely important not to make assumptions and speak to the employee directly.

6.4 If mental health is suspected or disclosed, it is crucial that managers facilitate an early conversation about the employee's needs, to identify and implement appropriate support or adjustment.

## **7.0 Support Mechanisms**

7.1 To assist in addressing some of the issues related to stress, depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue, the academy may provide a number of support mechanisms for employees:

- A management referral to the Occupational Health service, who provide access to independent doctors and a nurse and advice on a number of issues.

- A referral to the employees GP for counselling or the academy's counselling service (Towergate Health Assist).
- Conduct an individual stress risk assessment as a pro-active measure or as part of the return to work process as indicated by Occupational Health. This will help to determine reasonable adjustments in order to minimize risk.
- Any provisions the academy may have in line with Insurance.
- Flexible Working request.
- Childcare voucher salary sacrifice scheme to help working parents afford good quality childcare.
- Tees Mental Health Training Hub offer a range of accredited mental health training to groups working with members of the public across Middlesbrough, funded by Public Health. Contact 01642 296052.

7.2 Support is also available by self-referring to the following services:

- The Education Support Partnership is a UK charity offering support and counselling to staff working within the education workforce via their confidential helpline, 08000 562 561.
- Middlesbrough and Stockton MIND (01642 257020) provide a range of confidential services for people experiencing emotional or mental health problems.

## **8.0 Responsibilities for the implementation of the Mental Wellbeing Policy**

### **8.1 Responsibility of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Mental Wellbeing Policy in their academy and for ensuring that the policy is given the necessary priority, resource and support.

### **8.2 Responsibility of the Headteacher/Line Manager**

The Headteacher/line manager is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and proportionate measures are in place to manage stress in the workplace, and they publicise these appropriately to employees they have responsibility for. They must also:

- As part of the appraisal process consider the nature and complexity of work and ensure employees have received the necessary instruction and training to enable them to perform their duties effectively.
- Review workloads as part of day to day management to ensure employees are not overloaded and take regular lunch breaks, avoiding lunchtime meetings, wherever possible.

- Ensure that they provide employees with adequate information and support to enable them to carry out their work.
- Ensure that employees understand their role and responsibilities and what is expected of them.
- Monitor working hours to ensure that employees are not working excessive hours.
- Make sure employees receive regular communications and are involved when undergoing organisational changes.
- Be aware of signs and symptoms of stress and attend stress management/awareness training, as appropriate.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated.
- Be vigilant and offer support as appropriate to any employees known to be experiencing stressful situations outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Undertake individual risk assessments where indicated in Occupational Health Reports or where there are concerns an employee may be showing signs of stress.
- Support employees experiencing sickness absence in relation to poor mental health, in line with the Managing Attendance Policy.

### **8.3 Responsibilities of Employees**

In order to promote mental wellbeing at work and manage stress effectively employee involvement is essential. Employees will:

- Be responsible for ensuring their own health, safety and welfare as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Co-operate with managers in the introduction and maintenance of any mental wellbeing initiatives.
- Seek support if they are experiencing stress, or feel they are at risk of stress by approaching their manager or Trade Union for support in the first instance.
- Accept opportunities for support if made on their behalf e.g. Occupational Health or Counselling.

### **8.4 Responsibilities of Human Resources (Kier)**

Human Resources will:

- Act as a point of contact and provide advice regarding Occupational Health referrals.
- Provide guidance to the Headteacher on attendance management.
- Provide guidance to the Headteacher on appraisal and performance capability.
- Assist managers in supporting and helping employees return to work after a period of long term sickness absence, including attending the return to work meeting where the phased return is discussed, if appropriate.

## **9.0 Confidentiality**

9.1 All information disclosed by employees should be kept confidential and this is especially important to those who are experiencing mental health

difficulties. The academy has an obligation to respect individuals privacy and the need for sensitivity and have certain responsibilities under the Data Protection Act. However, there may be circumstances in which it is necessary to breach confidence if the individual is thought to be a risk to themselves or to other people. It may be appropriate to inform an individual that confidentiality is not guaranteed. If there is a conflict in deciding the appropriate action to take **the safety of the individual and/or the safety of other employees or children takes priority over confidentiality.**

## **10.0 Equality Statement**

- 10.1 The Mental Wellbeing Policy must be applied fairly to all employees irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.