Rainow Primary School

Caring, Learning, Achieving.

Stress / Wellbeing Policy

Members of staff responsible: Date policy approved: Date policy to be reviewed: Headteacher Spring 22 Aut 23 (in line with CE)

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Revision Table

Issue Number	Date issued	Revision / change
2	September 2011	Minor changes to text
3	June 2015	Minor revision and reformatting to a guidance note
4	March 2020	Revision / change
5	August 2021	Revison / change

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees and will seek to reduce stress by:
 - Identifying workplace stressors and including these in general or specific risk assessments. Where necessary, Stress Risk Assessments can be undertaken
 - Consulting with Trade Union Safety Representatives on all proposed actions relating to the prevention of workplace stress
 - Providing training for all Managers and Supervisory staff in stress management practices
 - Providing confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
 - Providing adequate resources to enable managers to implement the recommendations of any stress risk assessment which has been prepared in line with the Schools stress management strategy

2.0 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 This guidance note should be read in conjunction with the following:
 - Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations

3.0 **DEFINITIONS**

3.1 Employers are required to identify hazards and to assess the level of risk to their employees whilst at work. This includes the risk of work-related stress. Although stress is not an illness, excessive or prolonged stress can result in mental and / or physical illnesses.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as:

'The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed on them.' (www.hse.gov.uk/stress)

Employees feel stress when they cant cope with pressures and other issues. Managers should match demands to employees skills and knowledge.

3.2 Stress is not considered to be a disease but a response to being under excessive pressure. It affects behaviour, emotions, thinking and actions and affects everybody differently (see Appendix 1 for a guide to the signs and symptoms of stress). It is recognised that too much stress can lead to physical and mental fatigue, with a consequential reduction in an employee's immunity that can then result in illness.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 **Senior Leadership Team Members** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that stress risk assessments are prepared when necessary and acting upon any recommendations.
- Ensuring that the findings of risk assessments are communicated to all employees who may be affected them.
- Monitoring workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded or overworking and that full holiday entitlement is taken.
- Attending training in stress management practice.
- Ensuring that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their service area.
- Being vigilant and offering additional support to any team members who are experiencing stress either inside or outside work of work e.g. bereavement or separation.

4.2 The **Occupational Health Manager** is responsible for:

- Advising managers of progress via assessment meetings with relevant employees.
- Supporting individuals who are affected by stress.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of measures put in place to reduce stress.
- Informing the School of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.
- Reviewing referrals and feeding back to the organisation any specific trends / areas of concern.

4.3 **Human Resources Advisers** are responsible for:

- Giving guidance to managers implementing the stress policy.
- Helping to monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advising managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Providing continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to the Employee Assistance Programme (at 4.1) where appropriate.

4.4 **Employees** are responsible for:

- Raising issues of concern with the Senior Leadership Team, Human Resources Advisers, Occupational Health colleagues and Safety Representatives (where appropriate)
- Contacting the Employee Assistance Programme either voluntarily or when advised by their Line Manager, Human Resources Adviser, Occupational Health colleague or Safety Representatives
- Working positively and co-operating with their Line Manager, Human Resources Adviser, Occupational Health colleague or Safety Representatives to seek solutions to work related issues of concern

5.0 STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 A stress risk assessment is based on the HSE Stress Management Standards which identify six workplace factors which can cause stress:
 - 1. Demands of the job- this is often the most significant factor
 - 2. Control lack of control over the job is often a cause of work-related stress
 - 3. Support, training and individual factors all staff need to feel that the Council, their manager and their colleagues support them. Training is essential to ensure that all staff are competent to undertake the tasks required of them, particularly in periods of change
 - 4. Relationships the two most significant factors are harassment and bullying
 - 5. Role employees must be aware of and fully understand what is expected of them and how their role fits in with other colleagues
 - 6. Change change is now a constant feature of working in local government and this needs to be carefully managed
- 5.2 The factors that place employees at risk of developing stress should be assessed in the same way as any other hazard found in the workplace and can be included as part of task / job risk assessments. Managers are only required to assess those hazards which are found in work (see Appendix 2 for a guide to the possible causes of work related and non work related stress). They are not obliged to make extensive enquiries of employees as to the causes of any non-work stress.
- 5.3 When identified, work-place stressors should be avoided where possible, but where this is not possible, the risk should be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable.
- 5.4 No employee is immune from work-related stress and no job is stress-free, however some individuals may be more vulnerable at certain times when they are facing other stressors which may or may not be work-related. An individual stress risk assessment should be undertaken when:
 - An employee informs their manager that they are feeling stressed due to work

- An employee reports to their manager that they are working under excessive pressure or other demands which they perceive to be having an adverse effect on them
- A member of staff returns to work (or is about to return) after a period of absence due to stress issues
- A member of staff is suffering from stress due to personal life issues. Although staff may wish to keep both work related and personal issues separate, some stressors could affect their judgement, causing serious consequences and putting others at risk in the workplace. Managers should monitor the situation to ensure that they are fully supporting staff and enabling any action required to be taken at an early stage
- 5.4 An Individual Stress Risk Assessment may be conducted when an individual employee is showing signs of stress, as stand alone assessment following a referral from occupational health or incorporated into an existing procedure e.g.: return to work interview, supervision interview, staff appraisal etc.

The risk assessment must involve the employee (and Trade Union representative if invited by the employee) who can advise the assessor on the way in which they perceive the workplace stressors. As the objective of the risk assessment is to reduce the risk of harm to the employee, it is important that the risk assessment process involves an honest and open discussion. When evaluating the level of risk, the following should be determined:

- 1. Whether there are already preventive measures in place
- 2. Whether these measures are enough to control the risk at source
- 3. If the risk is too high, what more (if anything) can be done to reduce the risk
- 5.5 Where stress manifests itself amongst a group of employees who undertake the same work activities (e.g.: call center staff), managers may wish to assess the common tasks undertaken as a Team Stress Risk Assessment.
- 5.6 Guidance at Appendix 3 assists managers to undertake Stress Risk Assessments and a specific proforma is available at Appendix 4 (Team / Individual Stress Risk Assessment). Risk assessment forms are based on the HSE Stress Management Standards and should be completed by the Manager in consultation with the employee(s) to identify the action to be taken, by whom and by when, in order to resolve the issues identified.
- 5.7 The results of the risk assessment should be recorded on the Individual Stress Risk Assessment form and the employee(s) will also be given a copy.
- 5.8 It is crucial that the recommendations from the risk assessment are acted upon by the line manager and an action plan is put in place and reviewed on a regular basis. The organisation needs to make sure that the control measures have been embedded and the stressors are being controlled.
- 5.9 Risk assessments must be reviewed when circumstances change or if there is other evidence that the assessment is no longer valid. They should also be reviewed by the manager and employee(s) on a regular basis.

5.10 If an employee has been referred to a Occupational Health Unit, then the individual stress risk assessment should be shared with the Occupational Health Adviser.

6.0 TRAINING

6.1 Human Resources will arrange training for managers on recognising the signs and symptoms of stress within their teams, and how to carry out a stress risk assessment, where necessary.

7.0 REFERENCES

- 7.1 The following documents have been referred to:
 - HSE Guidance Note Education Talking Tool Kit
 - HSE Working Together To Reduce Stress At Work A Guide For Employees –
 INDG 424
 - HSE Tackling Stress: The Management Standards Approach INDG 430

8.0 DOCUMENT REVIEW

8.1 This document shall be monitored and reviewed biennially (or more frequently as necessary) to evaluate its effectiveness.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Signs and Symptoms of Stress

			I -
PHYSICAL	MENTAL	BEHAVIOURAL	EMOTIONAL
 Headaches/Migrai nes/ Dizziness/Blurred Vision Tearfulness Gastrointestinal e.g. Constipation, Diarrhoea, Indigestion, Nausea. Unexplained weight gain or loss Back Pain – aching neck and shoulders Chest pain – palpitations, breathlessness Edginess/inability to relax Depressed immune system e.g. frequent infections, allergies, and recurrence of previous infections. Skin rashes Tiredness Alteration of the menstrual pattern in women. Raised heart rate Increased sweating Fainting. 	 Difficulty in concentrating. Poor memory. Persistent negative thoughts. Excessive worry. Making mistakes. Inability to make decisions and hasty decisions. Diminished or exaggerated fantasy life. Lack of attention to detail. 	 Unsociable and anti-social behaviour. More accident-prone. Erratic behaviour and driving. Covering up mistakes by lying. Poor appearance. Reduced reaction times. Eating disorders. Excessive smoking/ drinking. Use of drugs. Reduced work productivity. Taking work home/working longer hours. Difficulty in sleeping/ Change in sleep pattern. Inability to deal with normal everyday tasks. Too busy to relax. Weepiness. Loss of interest in sex. Withdrawal from supportive relationships. Impaired speech Nervous laughter 	 Low mood state. Irritable. Mood swings. Lack of motivation and enthusiasm. Reduced selfesteem. Feelings of futility, cynicism, suspicion and alienation. Loss of confidence. Anxiety. Worrying more. Feeling of helplessness. Lack of concentration. Withdrawal into daydreams. Feeling tense. Depression or general unhappiness.

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF STRESS

Possible Causes of Stress WORK RELATED NON-WORK RELATED • Responsibility. · Financial Stability. Work Load · Caring Responsibilities. • Death of Close Relative/Partner/Friend. • Conflict/Relationships with Colleagues. • Career Development. · Relationship Breakdown. • Job Threat/Security. • Moving House. Organisational Culture. • Family Problems. Organisational Structure. • Alcohol or Substance Misuse. • Organisational Change. • Domestic Violence. • Job Change/Redeployment. Morale. • Autonomy over work. • Participation. Harassment and Bullying. • Violence/Verbal Abuse • Ambiguity of job role. • Shift Work. • Poor Working Environment. • Excessive Working Hours. • Lone Working. • Discrimination.

FIVE STEPS TO A RISK ASSESSMENT

1.0 STEP 1 – INDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

- 1.1 According to the Health and Safety Executive, major causes of stress can be catergorised into six key areas:
 - Demands
 - Control
 - Support
 - Relationships
 - Role
 - Change
- 1.2 HSE rationale is that if these are not managed effectively in an organization, then employees are at risk of suffering from work-related stress. It is therefore important that all employees are familiar with and understand these stressors.
- 1.3 Most of the arrangements that will assist Managers to identify, control and manage workplace stressors should already be in place these should include:
 - Induction programmes
 - Informal discussions between managers and staff.
 - Regular team meeting such as team briefing sessions.
 - Staff appraisal and/or supervision sessions.
 - Performance measures e.g. an employee performing below expectations.
 - Training and development.
 - · General Risk Assessments.
 - Sickness absence monitoring.
 - Return to work interviews.
 - Exit interviews and staff turn-over rates.

2.0 STEP TWO – IDENTIFY WHO MAY BE HARMED AND HOW

- 2.1 No employee is immune from work-related stress (pressure) and no job is stress-free (pressure-free), however some individuals may be more vulnerable at certain times when they are facing other stressors, which may or may not be work-related.
- 2.2 Exposure to the stressors identified above may create a risk when the pressure from one or more of these exceeds the individual's ability to cope. Other factors may lead to increased vulnerability, such as wider organisational change or restructuring, or personal issues such as bereavement, relationship breakdown, health issues etc.

3.0 STEP THREE – EVALUATE THE RISK

- 3.1 Each of the potential key areas or stressors identified above should now be evaluated by determining:
 - Whether there are preventative measures already in place to control the risk
 - Whether these are sufficient to control the risk to an acceptable level
 - If the risks are still too high, what more can be done to reduce the risks to an acceptable level
- 3.2 As outlined above, some issues for consideration are as follows:
 - Demands workload (too much or too little), work patterns, and the work environment and including guidance on what should be happening
 - Control lack of control over the job, including responsibility, ability to delegate and development of decision making
 - **Support** from line management and colleagues a sense of belonging within the Council as a whole, employees new to the role and issues relating to individual strengths, team-working and work-life balance
 - Relationships conflict within teams and across departments, bullying and harassment, systems for responding to any individual concerns. Does the council promotes positive behaviors and ensures fairness?
 - Role employees understand what is expected of them and how their role fits in with other colleagues. Realistic goals, targets and clear objectives in line with the authorities' aims and objectives
 - Change change and how it is managed and communicated through the Council

4.0 STEP FOUR - RECORD YOUR FINDINGS

4.1 Work with employees to decide on improvement targets and actions. Develop action plans in consultation with employees and their representatives. The record must be retrievable and available for inspection. It must be remembered though that confidentially of individual details must be respected. The Team / Individual Risk Assessment proforma is available at Appendix 4.

5.0 STEP FIVE - REVIEW AND REVISE

- 5.1 Risk assessments must be reviewed when circumstances change or if there is other evidence that the assessment is no longer valid. It will depend upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in place, and should be reactive to any changes in relation to the factors involved, such as changes in the duties attached to the post, a different post holder or other changes that may have an impact.
- 5.2 Although the risk assessment process takes a collective, proactive approach, individual differences and problems may exist. Employees need to know where to go for help and managers must know what to do to help an individual if the need arises.

INDIVIDUAL STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

This risk assessment should be completed by the Manager / Supervisor or another person who has a full knowledge of the Team or Individual's role. Employee(s) should be advised that they can be accompanied either by a Union Health & Safety Representative or another colleague.

Manager / Supervisor's Name:	Employee's Name(s):
Manager / Supervisor's Job Title:	Employee's Job Title:
Do you feel able to talk to me as your Manager / Supervisor?	Yes / No
If 'No' then please provide the name and contact details of the Team / Individual's Grandparent Manager	

	DEMANDS	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
1.	Do you think your skills and abilities are matched to your job?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
2.	Is the allocation of your work monitored by your Manager?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						

	DEMANDS continued	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
3.	Have you received relevant induction and job training for your current role?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
4.	Were your working hours agreed during your recruitment?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done				1		
5.	Do your working hours cause you a problem? For example: taking breaks; taking holidays; unrealistic time pressures etc						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done				·		
6.	Do you understand the reasons for temporary increases / decreases in your work load?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
7.	Are you able to cope with any temporary increases in your work load?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
8.	Do you have to neglect some tasks because you have too much to do?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						

	DEMANDS continued	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
9.	Do you have any problems with your working environment such as noise, vibration, ventilation, humidity etc?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
10.	Are there adequate resources for you to do your work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
11.	Is there sufficient suitable equipment available for you to do your job?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
12.	If you have informed your employer that you have a disability, have adjustments been made as part to accommodate this?						
	(this may have been during Induction)						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
	CONTROL	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
13.	Do you have control over the pace of your work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done		,	1	•		,

	CONTROL continued	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
14.	Can you choose what you do at work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done				,		
15.	Can you choose how you do your work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done				ı	1	
16.	Can you choose when you take a break?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done				•		,
17.	Do you have control over the way you work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
18.	Can you delegate tasks?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
19.	If you have an issue with the control of your work, are you able to talk to someone?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						

	CONTROL continued	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
20.	If 'yes' to Q19, do you feel your concerns are listened to?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
21.	Are staff involved in identifying any stressors involved in their job?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
	RELATIONSHIPS	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
22.	Are you aware of the policy on Dignity at Work? Consider: bullying, harassment, conflicts etc						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
23.	Do you feel you are being bullied?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
24.	Do you feel subject to harassment due to gender, race, colour religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done	1	,	<u>'</u>			
25.	Do you feel supported at work? Consider activities such as lone working etc						

	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
	RELATIONSHIPS continued	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
26.	Do you know how to report any unacceptable behaviour which you have received from colleagues / your Manager / customers / members of the public etc?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
	CHANGE	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A		BY WHEN
27.	Are you consulted and involved in changes that may affect you at work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
28.	Are you kept informed during periods of change?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done		•				
29.	Do you know who to raise concerns about change?					BYWHOM	
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done			•	1		
	ROLE	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A		BY WHEN
30.	Do you have the opportunity to meet your Manager / Supervisor regularly to discuss your role?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done					BY	

	ROLE continued	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
31.	Do you have a clear job description?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done	I			1	1	
32.	Are you clear about what is expected of you at work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done			1			'
33.	Is the correct training available for all the jobs you do?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
	SUPPORT / TRAINING / OTHER FACTORS	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
34.	Are you aware of the support which the Occupational Health Unit can offer you?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
35.	Do you have the opportunity for training and / or career development?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done				•	•	•

	SUPPORT / TRAINING / OTHER FACTORS continued	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
36.	Do you feel able to talk to me as your Manager / Supervisor if you have a problem at work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
37.	How can we help you to alleviate the stress which you feel is caused by your work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
38.	Are there any other workplace factors which you feel should be taken into account as part of this assessment?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done				,		
39.	Are there good communication channels set up so that staff are kept well informed?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
40.	Is there a feedback process in place for staff comments and / or complaints?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done				,		
41.	Do informal discussions between managers and staff take place e.g.: Team Meetings?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						

	ADDITIONAL FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE INDIVIDUAL'S SITUATION	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	N/A	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
42.	Do you feel that ill health may be affecting your capacity to work?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
43.	Are you suffering now, or have you previously suffered, from a stress related illness?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
44.	Are there any current life events which you feel are affecting your ability to do your job?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
45.	What can you do to manage your stress?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done						
46.	What support do you need (from the Council) to help you to carry out these actions?						
	Action / Control Measures / Comments / Done				•	•	

	Final comments / observations fr	om the Manager:							
	Final comments / observations fr	om the Individual:							
	n their area of ability / remit, the Man nclude advising individual(s) to visit t								
Signed (Individuals):			Date:						
Sign	ned (Manager):		Date:						
		ACTIO	N PLAN						
NO.	ISSUE CAUSING STRESS	AGREED ACTIO	N TO TAKE	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	COMPLETED			