

Stress Management Policy

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Approved By	Hamwic Education Trust Board
Approval Date	Summer 2018
Policy Review Date	September 2021

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Purpose

- 1.1 Hamwic Education Trust (HET) values its employees and accepts that the well-being of its employees and the environment in which they work are essential requirements for the efficient and effective performance of the organisation.
- 1.2 To meet its legislative obligations, HET undertakes, through its Health and Safety Policy, to provide systems of staff management and a working environment which seeks to avoid harming individuals and actively promotes a sound and sustainable approach to work.

HET provides a range of support for staff and Line Managers to deal with and manage stress as well as supporting employees' health and wellbeing.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all schools within HET. For the purposes of this policy the term "staff" means all members of staff including permanent, fixed term and temporary staff.

3. Policy

- 3.1 HET is committed to:

- Managing the causes of stress at work and maintaining well-being amongst its employees
- Increasing the awareness and understanding of stress in the workplace
- Communicating the procedures and resources dedicated to the prevention and management of detrimental stress
- Eliminating or minimising the impact of detrimental stress on all HET employees, thereby maintaining the health and well-being of all staff
- Adoption of the Health and Safety Executive Management standards approach to managing stress
- Supporting staff and monitoring the impact of Health and Wellbeing in schools by encouraging staff to complete an annual Health and Wellbeing questionnaire
- Encouraging Health and Wellbeing Workplace Representatives and members of the Senior Leadership Team to support staff, work with them signposting information available on the Trust intranet pages and discuss referral to professional services as appropriate
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Definition

The Health and Safety Executive defines work related stress as:

"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them".

- 3.2 It is recognised that everyone needs a certain amount of pressure to remain alert, motivated and productive. Therefore, appropriate and reasonable pressure at work is desirable for efficiency. It is when demands and pressures are excessive or prolonged that some people find their ability to cope is challenged. This creates a vulnerability, which can manifest itself in a range of ill health effects for the individual and can have negative consequences for the organisation in which they are employed.
- 3.3 A person experiences stress when they perceive that the demands of their work are greater than their ability to cope. Coping means balancing the demands and pressures placed on the individual (i.e. the job requirements) with the skills and knowledge (i.e. individual capabilities and capacity).

3.4 Stress can also result from having too few demands, as people will become bored, feel undervalued and lack recognition. If they feel they have little or no say over the work they do or how they do it, this may cause them stress.

4. Risk Assessment

4.1 Risk assessment is a vital component of this policy. It is only when the possible causes of stress have been identified that preventative or management strategies can be effectively put in place.

4.2 Trained Managers must carry out a risk assessment for any employee who has identified symptoms, or has been absent due to work related stress. Please see point 22 for symptoms and Appendix 2 for further guidance. Managers must complete the risk assessment form available in Appendix 3 with their member of staff and then agree the action plan at Appendix 4.

4.2.1 Health Assured Day 1 Stress Intervention programme

In addition, when an employee informs the school of an absence stating stress or if they submit a fit note for stress, employers can refer the member of staff to the Health Assured Day 1 Stress Intervention programme. This is not a replacement for Occupational Health - it is to complement it in the very early stages. The Active Care Guide provides an overview, the referral process to be followed and a form for completion should a referral need to be made (Please refer to Health Assured Active Day Care Manager's Guide for further information about this service).

4.3 In carrying out risk assessments, Managers should be aware that:

- Stress at work can result from a single incident or an accumulation of incidents over time, and should seek to minimise both types of risks
- Stress related ill health might be caused by personal circumstances, which in turn may have a detrimental effect on an individual's ability to cope with work demands
- Employees with sensitive or confidential personal issues that could cause stress should be referred to an Occupational Health Service

4.4 HET recognises that some of the duties and responsibilities undertaken by its employees have the potential to put those employees under stress. For example, (but not limited to) dealing with disturbed and aggressive students, organisational change, facing emergency situations, excessive work-loads, staff shortages and procedural deadlines.

4.5 Employees may have aspects of their personal lives that make them more vulnerable to stress at work or have a temporary influence on their work performance. For example: illness, family issues i.e. bereavement, financial difficulties.

4.6 The subsequent legislation which relates to stress are the:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Working Time Regulations
- The Equality Act 2010

4.7 Schools will monitor and record stress-related sickness absences for all employees and where applicable gain the support from Occupational Health or Health Assured Day 1 Stress Intervention (for proactive intervention as may be appropriate).

4.8 Schools will monitor stress-related sickness absences and work with managers to ensure appropriate actions are being taken. For further guidance, please contact hr@hamwic.org

5. **Communication**

- 5.1 Poor communication can cause stress at work. Managers and employees are encouraged to adopt and adhere to effective two-way communication for the prevention and control of stress.
- 5.2 Employees should report to their Line Manager any issues of concern relating to excessive pressure or stress. Managers should listen to and give appropriate consideration to, comments and representations from employees and trade unions.

6. **Job Design/Workload Management**

6.1 Managers should:

- Analyse jobs to ensure a reasonable degree of variety and control for the post holder
- Avoid placing unreasonable demands on employees, by prioritising workload and delegating appropriately
- Respect others' time and seek to negotiate an efficient and effective solution to workload problems
- Ensure that employees take annual leave and work breaks in line with the working time Regulations and any additional breaks in order to avoid fatigue

7. **Recruitment**

7.1 Schools should:

- Provide adequate information for candidates as part of the selection process regarding working conditions, including special features of the job such as tight deadlines, shift working patterns and dealing with disturbed or aggressive, parents or students
- Appoint posts by reference to the job description and person specification, which should take into consideration, the ability to meet any special requirements of the role
- Provide adequate information to new recruits, through the induction process including details of emergency procedures and staff facilities, and nominate a colleague as a reference point for further support
- Make time available to meet new recruits promptly when they start and at regular intervals during their probationary period (support staff) and during the first six months for teaching staff.

8. **Learning and Development**

8.1 Line Managers will ensure that employees are:

- Adequately trained to fulfil their duties and responsibilities
- Trained, as appropriate, in dealing with any potential health and safety hazards that may be associated in their role
- Encouraged to develop stress and time management techniques. Further guidance can be sought on the SharePoint Health and Wellbeing intranet pages:

<https://hamwictrust.sharepoint.com/h&w/SitePages/Home.aspx>

9. Supervision

9.1 Line Managers will communicate appropriately with staff, so that staff feel more engaged:

- Agree clear SMART objectives with a reasonable timescale, taking care to explain how duties and responsibilities fit into the wider context
- Ensure regular supervision of employees in order to respond promptly to problems
- Provide positive feedback and recognition of good performance promptly and when appropriate
- Discuss poor performance promptly, honestly and constructively to agree appropriate action;
- Undertake regular staff development and performance review meetings

10. Recognising the Symptoms of stress

10.1 Some of the recognised symptoms of stress are (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Tiredness;
- Aching muscles
- Disturbed sleep
- Loss/increased appetite
- Stomach problems
- Increased use of or dependence on alcohol/drugs/smoking
- Headaches
- Inability to relax
- Poor concentration and indecisiveness
- Excessive worrying
- Increased irritability
- Feeling anxious
- Changes in attitudes to work and colleagues
- Increased incidences of short term sick leave

11. Recognising the signs of stress

11.1 Some of the possible signs of stress can include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Increases in overall sickness, particularly frequent short-term absences
- Low output or low quality of work
- Poor decision making
- Conflict between colleagues or with managers
- Poor relationship with colleagues/pupils
- Loss of motivation and commitment
- Poor time keeping
- High accident rates

12. Seeking Advice

12.1 Where stress is identified as being associated with a post, for example following risk assessments as indicated in Appendix 2, Managers should seek advice from the hr@hamwic.org, or HET's Occupational Health provider:

Occupational Health Consultancy
Farlyn House, Gaters Mill
Mansbridge Road

West End
Southampton
SO18 3HW

T: 02380 475000
E: support@occupationalhealthltd.co.uk
W: www.occupationalhealthltd.co.uk

13. Employee Counselling/Critical Incident Management

13.1 Line Managers will:

- Ensure that employees are aware of the support available to them
- Be aware of their own limitations in advising employees with problems
- Refer employees for counselling, where appropriate
- Provide training for employees who are likely, by nature of their jobs, to witness or have to deal with critical incidents or trauma
- Provide adequate and prompt critical incident debriefing and subsequent counselling where necessary. Normally this should be within a 72-hour period
- Occasionally, employees may experience post-traumatic stress disorder at a later stage and should be referred by the school to the HET Occupational Health provider for appropriate assessment and counselling and encouraged to contact their GP (if they have not already done so)

13.2 Employee counselling can be accessed by staff via the website www.healthassuredeap.co.uk, by staff downloading the mobile Health Assured EAP App (can be found in the app or play store), or by calling the confidential helpline on 0800 023 4742. The counselling service is available to all staff and is a confidential service.

Password/Username to log in for both online and mobile app:

- Username: Bright
- Password: EAP

14. Health and Safety/Health and Wellbeing services offered to staff

14.1 HET is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of its employees and offer a range of services to support this:

- Employee Assistance Programme/face to face and telephone counselling through Health Assured website or mobile phone app
- Workplace Health and Wellbeing Reps – Workplace reps are invited and encouraged to attend termly Health and Wellbeing meetings
- Staff benefits, including discounts and special concessions through local providers, including gym membership and health cash plans (available on the SharePoint Health and Wellbeing intranet pages)
- Health and wellbeing intranet pages offering a number of resources to support staff and Line Managers
- Health Assured Active Day Care Stress Management Intervention Programme
- Occupational Health Service – to support staff when joining the organisation as well as offering a provision to support any health concerns that arise at any point during employment

15. The following policies may be relevant, in relation to stress in the workplace:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Absence policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Employee Handbook

16. Monitoring

15.1 Schools should monitor and record stress-related sickness absences and liaise with HET's Occupational Health provider, where applicable.

17. Review

This policy is to be reviewed every 3 years.

18. Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Responsibilities
- Appendix 2: Risk Assessment
- Appendix 3: Risk Assessment Form
- Appendix 4: Risk Assessment Action Plan
- Appendix 5: Potential Psychological Hazards
- Appendix 6: Strategies for Preventing and Minimising Stress

Appendix 1: Responsibilities

1. The HET Managed Service Team, Senior Leaders and Senior Leadership Teams are responsible for:

Governors are responsible for overseeing Health and Wellbeing and Health and Safety in schools. The specific responsibilities of the HET Managed Service Team, Senior Leaders and Senior Leadership Teams are as follows:

- The provision of resources
- Familiarising themselves with the nature and causes of stress in the workplace
- Supporting, implementing and disseminating the principles and aims of the Stress Management Policy among their staff
- Ensuring trained managers undertake stress risk assessments and that they take action to deal with the issues identified and minimise the risks as far as is reasonably practicable (see Appendices 2, 3 and 4)
- Ensuring that their managers demonstrate the appropriate behaviours associated with the following competences:
 - Improving Performance
 - Decision Making
 - Personal Effectiveness
 - Strategic Awareness
- Actively promoting and maintaining systems of stress management and behaviour at work, which adhere to the principles, aims, and strategies of the policy
- Encouraging employees to aspire to a healthy lifestyle and supporting them to achieve this

2. Heads of Department and Line Managers are responsible for:

- Understanding the potential psychological hazards and applying the strategies for preventing and minimising stress at work as listed in Appendices 5 and 6
- Demonstrating the appropriate behaviours associated with the following competences:
 - Improving Performance
 - Decision Making
 - Personal Effectiveness
 - Strategic Awareness
- Understanding the behaviours likely to give rise to stress in the workplace
- Familiarising themselves with the nature and causes of stress in the workplace and working proactively to prevent them
- Being aware of risks, for example any traumatic events, health problems, disciplinary action, complaints about overwork and bullying, organisational change and ensuring that staff have access to appropriate support and are encouraged to contact their Trade Union
- Referring employees who are absent due to stress to the Occupational Health Service at an appropriate time
- Carrying out a risk assessment for any employee who has identified symptoms due to work related stress or has been absent due to work related stress. See Appendix 2 for further guidance. Trained managers must complete the risk assessment form at Appendix 3 with their member of staff and then agree the action plan as outlined in Appendix 4
- Seeking advice for complex issues from hr@hamwic.org
- Taking steps to reduce the risks once a manager has been alerted to a risk by, for example, discussion or referral to Occupational Health. This must not be left to the employee alone to solve

Undertaking risk assessments where:

- The levels of stress related sickness absences and/or staff turnover are significantly high
- There are significant hazards such as violence, heavy workloads or poor working conditions
- There are high or increased levels of formal/informal employee complaints
- A Union representative, Occupational Health provider, or staff group requests this to be done
- Monitoring and recording stress-related sickness absences and liaising with hr@hamwic.org, Occupational Health and Health Assured Active Day Care for proactive intervention as may be appropriate

3. Individual employees are responsible for:

Demonstrating the appropriate behaviours associated with the following competences:

- Improving Performance
- Decision Making
- Personal Effectiveness
- Developing a balanced and responsible approach to work and their personal lives to ensure they are able to work
- Being aware of the signs and causes of stress in the workplace (and in their personal lives), and raising any concerns they have about any of their health or work related issues which are impacting on their role in school
- Understanding the Stress Management policy and co-operate with managers and colleagues in the prevention and control of stress
- Recognising that dealing with stress is not a weakness, it is a natural reaction which can be both positive and negative
- Reporting matters of concern relating to their or a colleague's health and safety at work to an appropriate manager
- Supporting colleagues who are experiencing stress
- Informing their manager when personal stress is affecting their work and accepting or considering pursuing opportunities for support and or counselling when recommended
- Attending Occupational Health appointments when advised it may be of benefit
- Consulting their GP

Appendix 2 - Risk Assessment

Stress is the single highest reason for sickness absence from work. Risk assessment is the cornerstone of managing stress at work. It is when we look at the potential causes of stress that it can be proactively managed.

- Risk is defined as the chance that someone will be harmed by a hazard
- A hazard is defined as anything that has the potential to cause harm

Guidance from Health & Safety Executive encourages a risk assessment for psychological risks in broadly the same way as assessments for physical risks.

The key steps in a risk assessment are to:

1. Identify the potential hazards in the job
2. Determine the risk – are the potential hazards likely to have a harmful effect?
3. Evaluate the risk by identifying what action you are already taking, deciding whether it is enough, and if it is not, decide what you need to do
4. Record the significant findings of the assessment, take the actions identified
5. Review the assessment at appropriate intervals

For a simple to follow risk assessment, see Appendix 3.

In undertaking risk assessments, the ‘how’ and ‘why’ particular hazards cause particular kinds of harm in particular workplaces or work groups should be explored. Also, individual differences in the way people perceive psychological hazards at work should be borne in mind. One person’s stimulating challenge could be another’s high stress factor. In addition, stress induced ill-health may be caused by non-work related issues, which may in turn have a detrimental effect upon work performance.

Action

Once a risk assessment has been carried out, trained managers and employees should take appropriate and agreed steps to eliminate, control and monitor risks.

Appendix 3 – Individual Stress Risk Assessment Form

Individual Stress Risk Assessment Form (it is recommended that this form is circulated to staff on an annual basis, or sooner if a change is identified)

This risk assessment form includes questions that relate to six potential psychological hazards that can be the causes of stress at work. These are job demands, control, support, relationships, role and change.

Employees should complete this form and discuss with their Line Managers. Line Managers should analyse the findings of this risk assessment with the employee concerned, identify potential risk factors, agree an action plan, take action, record, evaluate and review.

Line Managers should use the ‘stress action plan’ form at Appendix 4 to agree, plan, implement and review the relevant actions. All risk assessments are confidential but a copy is to be forwarded to hr@hamwic.org and kept on the individual’s file.

**Stress Level 0 represents no stress and 10 represents the highest level of stress*

Potential Hazards	Response Please tick			*Stress Level 0 - 10
Job Demands	Yes	No	N/A	
1. Is the amount of work excessive/not enough?				
2. Do you have to work very fast or intensively?				
3. Are you able to cope with the demands of your role?				
4. Do you feel that you have a good deal of say over how you do your work?				
5. Does your work provide you with a variety of tasks?				
Control	Yes	No	N/A	
6. Do you have a good deal of say over decisions about your work?				
Support	Yes	No	N/A	
7. Do you feel that you are adequately supported?				
8. Do you get support from your immediate Line Manager when you are having problems at work?				
9. Do you feel that you get help and support from your colleagues when needed?				
Relationships	Yes	No	N/A	
10. Do you feel part of a team in which you are respected and valued?				
11. Do you feel that your team relate to each other in a productive and co-operative way?				
12. Are you subjected to unacceptable behaviour at work such as bullying and harassment?				
Role	Yes	No	N/A	
13. Do you have a clear plan of work which is agreed by you and your Line Manager?				
14. Do you understand how your work fits in to the overall aim of the organisation?				

15. Do you feel encouraged to talk to your Manager at any early stage if you are not clear about your priorities or the nature of the task to be undertaken?				
Change	Yes	No	N/A	
16. Do you receive information about planned organisational change?				
17. Are you given information to enable you to understand why organisational change needs to happen?				
18. Do you have the opportunity to comment or ask questions about organisational change?				
19. Do you have a personal, health, family relationship or finance problem?				
Additional Information				
In your view, are there any roles that are of particular concerns in terms of work related stress? If YES, please explain:				
.....				
Please list what you consider to be the 3 best aspects of work in your area/team:				
1. 2. 3.				
Please list what you consider to be the 3 main causes of stress in your area/team:				
1. 2. 3.				

Date:	
Employee signature:	
Line Manager or person undertaking risk assessment signature:	

(The purpose of the Line Manager's signature is to confirm that he/she has seen and discussed responses on this form with the aim of agreeing problem areas and deciding, as far as is reasonably practicable, an action plan)

Appendix 4 – Individual Stress Risk Assessment Action Plan

Individual Stress Assessment Action Plan

Name:

Job Title:

Agreed action plan/control measures	Review date	Action plan/control measures effective? If not, consider alternative measure	Further review date

Date:	
Employee signature:	
Line Manager or person undertaking risk assessment signature:	

Appendix 5 – Potential Psychological Hazards

1. Demands

This includes issues like work overload/underload, work patterns and the work environment.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with demands of their jobs
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening:

- 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
- Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed

2. Control

Control refers to how much control 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
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening:

- 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

3. Support

This 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
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening:

- The organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage 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
- Employees receive regular and constructive feedback
- The risk assessment form is to be circulated to all staff on a yearly basis, or sooner if a change is identified

4. Relationships

Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours e.g. bullying at work
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concern

What should be happening:

- 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 managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour

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
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening:

- 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
- Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities

6. Change

This is how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

The standard is that:

- Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing organisational change
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

What should be happening:

- The organisation provides timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes
- The organisation ensures adequate consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals
- 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 and are encouraged to contact their Trade Unions

Appendix 6 – Strategies for preventing and minimising stress at work

1. The Senior Leaders, Senior Leadership Teams and Line Managers will:
 - Seek to manage and minimise the impact of proposed change on employees
 - Involve or inform employees and trade unions appropriately and promptly with a view to gaining their understanding and co-operation
2. Line Managers should undertake a risk assessment of the essential duties that are undertaken by staff in their area of work particularly where:
 - The levels of stress-related sickness absences and or staff turnover are significantly high
 - There are known hazards such as violence, heavy workloads or poor working conditions
 - There are high or significantly increased levels of formal/informal staff complaints
 - A union or safety representative or staff group requests this to be done
3. Line Managers should seek advice from Senior Leaders, and the Senior Leadership Teams to address the risks that have been identified, but ensure advice is taken from hr@hamwic.org at all times.
4. In carrying out risk assessments, managers should be aware that:
 - Stress at work can result from a single incident or an accumulation of incidents over time, and should seek to minimise both types of risk
 - Stress related ill health might be caused by personal circumstances
5. Poor communication (or a complete absence of it) can cause stress at work. Managers and employees are encouraged to adopt and adhere to effective two-way communication for the prevention and control of stress.
6. Employees should report to their Line Manager, or next appropriate person, any issues of concern relating to excessive pressure or stress. Managers should listen to, and give appropriate consideration to, comments and representations from employees and trade unions.

Job Design/Workload Management

Line Managers should:

- Analyse jobs to ensure a reasonable degree of variety and control for the post holder
- Avoid placing unreasonable demands on employees, by prioritising workload and delegating appropriately
- Respect others' time and seek to negotiate an efficient and effective solution to workload problems; Ensure that employees take annual leave and work breaks in line with the Working Time Regulations in order to avoid fatigue

Recruitment

Line Managers should:

- Provide adequate information for candidates as part of the selection process regarding working conditions, including special features of the job such as tight deadlines, shift working patterns and dealing with disturbed or aggressive clients/pupils/students
- Appoint posts by reference to the job description and person specification, which should take into consideration the ability to meet any special requirements of the job

- Provide adequate information to new recruits, through the induction process, including details of emergency procedures and staff facilities, and nominate a colleague as a reference point for further support
- Make time available to meet new recruits promptly when they start and at regular intervals during their probationary period

Learning and development

Line Managers will ensure that employees:

- Are adequately trained to fulfil their duties and responsibilities
- Are trained, as appropriate, in dealing with potential health & safety hazards that may be associated with the job that they do
- Are encouraged to develop stress and time management techniques

Supervision

Line Managers will:

- Agree clear SMART objectives with a reasonable timescale, taking care to explain how duties and responsibilities fit into the wider work context
- Ensure regular supervision (through 1 to 1 meetings) of employees in order to respond promptly to problems
- Provide positive feedback and recognition of good performance promptly and when appropriate;
- Discuss poor performance promptly, honestly and constructively and to agree appropriate action in managing performance improvement