



# HAMPRESTON CE (VA) FIRST SCHOOL

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*To love God and to love one another*

Policy Agreed: February 2021

Review Date: February 2023

## Stress Management Policy 2021 - 2023



## 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy and the accompanying documents have been developed in consultation with Head Teachers and the recognised trades unions. The aim of the policy is to deal with and offer guidance across a range of issues related to the management of stress at work, with a view to reducing the incidence of work related stress within Hampreston First School.

1.2 Hampreston First School recognises its duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees. This policy, procedure and guidance take into account the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and appropriate Regulations under the Act.

## 2. Scope

2.1 The policy and the accompanying documents apply to all employees within the school. It is recommended to school and academy Governing Bodies for formal adoption. This recommendation recognises the corporate responsibility of employers to provide appropriate support and protection to its employees, including those based in schools and academies.

## 3. Definition

3.1 Stress is defined as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them' (Health & Safety Executive).

3.2 Pressure can improve performance, but when demands and pressures become excessive, this can lead to stress. As a result individuals, teams and schools may suffer.

3.3 Hampreston First recognizes that stress related illnesses are rarely the result of work issues alone and that there are often other contributory factors over which the school has no control or influence but which nevertheless may affect performance/attendance at work.

3.4 Work related stress is defined as that which is typically caused by factors emanating from work practices/environments. The Health and Safety Executive has identified the following factors that can have an impact on stress:

- Job Demands – such as workload and exposure to physical hazards;
- Control – how much say an individual has in the way they carry out their work;
- Support – support from peers and line management, training to enable the employee to carry out their duties and catering for individual differences, e.g. disability;
- Relationships – with other colleagues, covering issues such as bullying and harassment;
- Change – how organisational change is managed and communicated within an organisation;
- Role – whether the individual understands their role and whether the organisation ensures individuals do not have conflicting roles.

## 4. Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body of Hampreston First School will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy and ensuring that the policy is implemented effectively within the School. This will include arranging for appropriate training to be provided to teachers and managers and the monitoring of sickness absence and employee turnover.

4.2 Head Teachers / Line Managers will:

- undertake appropriate training;
- ensure employees undertake appropriate training;

- ensure all teachers and managers are trained as necessary to undertake risk assessments and are aware of their responsibilities within this policy;
- ensure that the policy and procedure is effectively implemented within their school;
- ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken as a result of a risk assessment or the stress reporting procedure being initiated;
- ensure that employees have the skills and tools necessary to carry out their duties;
- monitor sickness absence;
- provide a supportive 'open-door' policy to employees who wish to discuss and/or report work related stress;
- monitor workloads and working hours;
- ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated;
- ensure employees are aware of other supportive mechanisms in place, e.g. contact details for Dorset County Council's Counselling Service, the national Teacher Support Network, and Headline (the support line for Dorset Head Teachers); and
- identify posts where there are potentially high levels of stress, and ensure that additional support is put in place so that high pressure levels will be alleviated, as far as is reasonably practicable.

#### 4.3 Individual employees will:

- be responsible for ensuring their own health, safety and welfare as far as is reasonably practicable;
- initiate the reporting procedure(s) as soon as they recognise that levels of stress are becoming unacceptable to them, and understand that the school would not consider this to be a sign of weakness;
- participate in finding solutions to problems of perceived stress; and
- assist the Hampreston First School by reporting areas for improvement and ensuring their own individual behaviour is appropriate.

#### 4.4 Recognised Trades Unions will:

- co-operate with the Hampreston First School and Dorset County Council in the promotion of health, safety and wellbeing;
- assist in identifying high risk areas where priority action may be required;
- assist in monitoring progress towards achieving a reduction in work related stress and in the review of the policy; and
- participate, where appropriate, in finding solutions to problems of perceived stress.

#### 4.5 The County Council will:

- ensure the recommendation of the policy to schools;
- provide appropriate training which can be accessed by Head Teachers and others which will include the recognition and management of stress in themselves and others;
- ensure the Employee Wellbeing Team, which includes Occupational Health and the Counselling Service, offers appropriate support and guidance to employees.

## 5. Review

5.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Hampreston First School Governing Body.

## 6. Associated Policies

6.1 Associated policies and procedures to be followed by Hampreston First School are:

- Work Management of Attendance

## PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING WORK RELATED STRESS

### 7. Aim

7.1 Hampreston First School recognises that excessive levels of stress can have a negative effect on mental and physical health. It will therefore seek to take all reasonably practicable steps to protect employees from high levels of stress and support them as appropriate.

7.2 Hampreston First School recognises that stress related illnesses are rarely the result of work issues alone. There are often other contributory factors over which the school has no control or influence but which nevertheless may affect performance or attendance at work. In these circumstances there may be temporary adjustments to working patterns, for example, which would assist in reducing stress. Head Teachers have the discretion to agree such adjustments at any time. Hampreston First School also has statutory obligations to comply with, such as Parental Leave and Time Off for Dependants.

7.3 Where pressures have been identified on particular posts which may lead to stress, Hampreston First School will ensure that additional support is put in place and that high pressure levels will be alleviated, as far as is reasonably practicable.

7.4 The aim of this procedure is to ensure that issues of work related stress are raised by employees as soon as possible, appropriate action is taken at an early stage, and that employees and managers together arrive at solutions.

7.5 Hampreston First School will not consider the reporting of work related stress as a weakness, but a mechanism to ensure support through a systematic managed process.

### 8. Step 1 - Completion of the Pro-forma for reporting Work Related Stress – (for school information only unless linked to another HR process)

8.1 In order to report work related stress the Pro-forma for Reporting Work Related Stress should be completed by the individual and passed to the Head Teacher or Line Manager (see Appendix 1). An informal meeting should be arranged with the employee so that a discussion can be held and an action plan agreed and recorded on the form.

8.2 Where possible this should be done whilst the employee is still at work, i.e. well before the point at which any individual is contemplating the need to take sick leave due to the effects of stress.

8.3 Every effort should be made to include the Line Manager/Head Teacher as the first point of contact/discussion when issues are raised. However, in the event that the Line Manager is identified as contributing to the symptoms, then the form should be sent by the employee (or on behalf of the employee) to the Head Teacher. Where the Head Teacher is the line manager and is identified as contributing to the symptoms, then it should be sent to the Chair of Governors.

8.4 Where a Head Teacher identifies stress, the form should be sent to the Chair of Governors who will be required to undertake appropriate consultation with the HR Officer to determine the necessary action to be taken. However, should the Chair of Governors be identified as contributing to the symptoms, then Part A can be sent to another Governor who is advised to liaise with HR.

8.5 If necessary, the pro-forma can also be completed on behalf of the employee (e.g. by a manager or Trades Union Representative).

## **9. Step 2 - Completion of Stress Risk Assessment**

9.1 Where the informal approach is not successful in resolving the stress-related issues that have been raised, the employee should complete the Stress Risk Assessment at Appendix 2 and send it to the Employee Wellbeing Team at County Hall. It is important to remind staff that the information will be treated in confidence, although it is also important that they provide all relevant information as requested on the form to enable the team to get back to them.

9.2 Contact will be made with all employees who have completed a Stress Risk Assessment, both with the outcomes of the assessment and to ensure that they are aware of any additional support that can be provided, such as the Counselling Service.

9.3 The Employee Wellbeing team will assess the form and send the completed risk assessment analysis to the employee and to the line manager/Head Teacher named on the form.

9.4 On receipt of the risk assessment analysis, the Line Manager/Head Teacher should arrange to meet with the employee to complete the Stress Risk Assessment Action Plan shown at Appendix 3. Employees are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting. The Line Manager/Head Teacher is advised to take advice from HR, who may also attend the meeting. A copy of the completed action plan should be given to the employee and a date for a review should be set. Both parties should retain a copy of the form.

9.5 In seeking to find solutions to any problems of perceived stress, the employee should be encouraged to participate in any discussion with the Head Teacher/Line Manager, and will be invited to contribute solutions that are suitable for them and the school. If solutions are to be effective then they must be mutually acceptable. Each employee has their own threshold for handling stress and this threshold may vary in different situations and at different times.

9.6 Where the school has not purchased the Health and Wellbeing Service, there will be a small administrative charge from the Employee Wellbeing Team to process the Stress Risk Assessment.

## **10. Responsibility of Head Teacher**

10.1 The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that any issue of work related stress is dealt with speedily and effectively for all staff. The Chair of Governors is responsible for ensuring that any issue of work related stress is dealt with speedily and effectively for the Headteacher. They may arrange for an appropriate line manager to undertake actions within this procedure but cannot delegate the overall responsibility of ensuring that each issue is dealt with appropriately i.e. the Head Teacher is responsible for determining what reasonable action can be taken to reduce any unacceptably high levels of stress.

10.2 The Head Teacher must ensure that any additional notes or documentation (to that of the proforma) are kept for audit/evidence purposes, and copied to the employee.

## **11. Support**

11.1 Headline Headline is a confidential support service for Dorset Head Teachers staffed by experienced clinical psychologists. They specialise in supporting Head Teachers through stressful periods and aim to help them in the management of stress and the development of personal resilience. The aim is to maintain strong leadership in schools and reduce absences through stress related illness. This service is funded by Dorset County Council and is therefore free to Dorset Head Teachers. Contact telephone number - 07502226328

11.2 Teacher Support Network A national Teacher Support Line is available to all serving and trainee teachers, which offers information, support or concentrated short term counselling to help employees cope with the demands of teaching. Contact details are – 08000 562 561 / [www.teachersupport.org.uk](http://www.teachersupport.org.uk)

11.3 The County Council Support for school employees who report work related stress can be provided by the counselling service, where the schools buy into the Health and Wellbeing Service. Where the school does not buy in, arrangements may still be available for access to the counselling service on a pay as you go basis. Further information is available from [staffcounselling@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:staffcounselling@dorsetcc.gov.uk) or telephone 01305 224266. Ultimately, it is an employee's decision whether or not to seek support from the counselling service. Training is available as part of the Service Level Agreement for Health and Wellbeing. The course explains recognition and strategies to deal with stress in both proactive and reactive ways. Information is also available for all staff on how to manage their own stress levels.

## GUIDANCE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND MANAGERS ON WORK RELATED STRESS

### 1. What is Work Related Stress?

Work related stress is defined as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them. It should also be recognised that on occasions insufficient demands can also be stressful.

There is an important distinction between the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure (which can be stimulating and motivating) and work related stress, which is a distressing reaction to demands or pressures that the individual perceives as unreasonable and/or that they cannot cope with at a given time. Work related stress is not an illness but, if prolonged or intense it, can lead to increased problems with ill health for employees.

Everyone can experience work related stress in principle. No one is 'immune'. Individuals react differently to different pressures at various times so what one employee may find unacceptable may not affect another employee in the same way.

### 2. What effect can stress have on individuals?

Stress can manifest itself in a number of ways:

- behaviour - e.g. jumpy, moody, aggressive, drug or alcohol abuse;
- thinking style - e.g. indecisive, negative, rigid, low concentration, paranoid;
- emotional reactions - e.g. drained, phobias, depressed, irritable, withdrawn, defensive;
- physical symptoms - e.g. headaches, infections, back and neck pain, blurred vision, palpitations, insomnia; and
- actions - e.g. missing deadlines, absenteeism, poor time-keeping, long hours, stockpiling work, low productivity.

### 3. What are the implications of work related stress for the School?

It is essential that managers are trained to deal with stress related cases. As well as direct costs in terms of days lost through stress related illnesses, there are also many indirect costs. Although clearly there will be costs involved in initially solving the issues of stress in the short term, there will be savings in the long term such as preventing:

- reduced morale and commitment to work;
- poor relationships with colleagues (the absence of one employee may in turn lead to increased workloads for others thus causing a 'domino' effect);
- reduced performance and productivity;
- increased accidents;
- higher staff turnover;
- the time and cost of intervention; and
- the time and costs associated with any claims and subsequent impact on insurance premiums.

### 4. Risk Assessments

The purpose of carrying out a risk assessment is to establish if existing control measures are sufficient or if more needs to be done to minimise the identified risks to the lowest reasonably practicable level. Completing a risk assessment will not in itself reduce work related stress, but the actions taken as a result should do so.

The County Council has adopted the HSE's five step approach to risk assessment of work related stress:

- Step 1 Identify the hazards
- Step 2 Establish who might be harmed and how
- Step 3 Develop an action plan
- Step 4 Take action
- Step 5 Evaluate and share your work

A programme of training is provided as part of the service level agreement for Health and Wellbeing for all relevant managers to ensure that they are competent to carry out risk assessments in relation to work related stress.

All managers will have access to the HSE publication "Tackling Work Related Stress – A manager's guide to improving and maintaining employee health and well-being" which identifies seven categories of risk factors for work related stress.

Managers responsible for carrying out risk assessments should ensure that each of the seven factors are adequately assessed and seek advice and/or assistance from the Health and Safety Team, an HR Officer or Occupational Health as appropriate.

#### 5. Employee absence due to work related stress

Assessment and preventative action is aimed at reducing work related stress but, however effective the risk assessment process might be, there may still be occasions when an individual employee suffers ill health as a direct result of work related stress. Where the Head Teacher becomes aware that an employee is absent from work as a result of ill health caused by work related stress, the circumstances should be investigated as a matter of urgency. Although this task can be delegated, ultimately the responsibility falls on the Head Teacher.

The aim of the investigation will be to determine which risk factors are involved, what changes have already been made (if any), and what changes need to be made in order for the employee to return to work. The results should be communicated to the employee and, as in other cases where issues of work related stress are raised, an action plan should be drawn up in agreement with the individual. It will be the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that the action plan is monitored and the outcomes are effective.





Employee Wellbeing



Dorset County Council

**Stress Risk Assessment – schools (Step 2)**

A stress risk assessment is a step by step approach designed to identify what is contributing to an individual's stress in the work environment. The attached stress risk assessment has been developed by the Health and Safety Executive and is based on research, identifying a number of potential stressors in a workplace.

On receipt of the completed questionnaire, the Employee Wellbeing Team will provide both you and the manager named below with a copy of the outcomes. These outcomes should be used as part of a further discussion with your manager and help in the completion of a stress action plan where appropriate.

All information will be treated as confidential by the Employee Wellbeing Team.

<b>Name of staff member:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Workplace/School:</b>	
<b>Contact email:</b>	
<b>Contact telephone no.:</b>	
<b>Name of manager/supervisor:</b>	
<b>Contact email of manager/supervisor:</b>	
<b>Date of completion:</b>	

Please complete the questionnaire and return to:

Restricted/Confidential  
 Employee Wellbeing Team  
 Human Resources  
 Dorset County Council, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

[employee wellbeing@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:employee wellbeing@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

01305 225701/224095

		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I am clear what is expected of me at work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2	I feel responsible for what I do at work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3	Different people at work demand things from me that are hard to combine	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
4	I know how to go about getting my job done	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
5	I am subject to personal harassment from pupils in the form of unkind words and behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
6	I have unachievable deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
7	If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
8	I am given supportive feedback on the work I do	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
9	I have to work very intensively for more than 50% of my working time	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
10	I have a say in my own work speed	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
11	I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
12	I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
13	I am clear about the goals and objectives for my department	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
14	There is friction or anger between colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
15	I have a choice in deciding how I do my work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
16	I am unable to take sufficient breaks	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
17	I understand how my work fits in to the overall aim of the school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
18	I am pressured to work long hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

20	I have to work at a pace that can feel out of control	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 5	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Often <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 1
21	I feel bullied by colleagues	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 5	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Often <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 1
22	I have unrealistic time pressures	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 5	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Often <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 1
23	I can rely on my colleagues to help me out with a work problem	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Seldom <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Often <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
24	I get help and support I need from colleagues	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
25	I have some say over the way I work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
26	I have sufficient opportunities to question the senior team about changes at work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
27	I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
28	Staff are always consulted about change at work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
29	I can talk to my manager/supervisor about something that has upset or annoyed me at work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
30	My working time can be flexible	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
31	My colleagues are available to listen to my work related problems	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
32	When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
33	I am supported through emotionally demanding work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5
34	Relationships at work are strained	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 5	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 1
35	The senior team encourage me at work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Agree <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> 5

**Thank you for completing the questionnaire**



# Stress Risk Assessment – Action Plan

to be jointly completed by employee and Line Manager

Often an **informal discussion** provides an effective and agreed solution to the identified sources of work related stress.

Outcome of discussion and agreed action plan including review dates:

Signed (employee):  
Name (print):

Date:

Signed (Line Manager):  
Name (print):

Date:

Review Date: