St John's CE Primary School

Staff Mental Health and Well-being policy

	ODBST	
Policy Level:	2	**ODBST Statutory and Mandatory Policy** All schools must adopt these policies with local amendment strongly discouraged. These policies are centrally amended and binding on LGBs from the date of Board approval. They must be displayed on the School's website. Approval for all proposed local amendments must be sought from the ODBST Governance Lead prior to Local Governing Body resolution.
Other related ODBST policies and procedures:	Health & Attendance policy and procedure Equality & Diversity in the Workplace Dignity at Work	
Committee responsible:	FRAPP	
Approved by:	FRAPP	
Date Approved:	23rd March 2023	
Date for Next Review:	Spring term 2026	

In reviewing this policy the Trust Board has had regards to the Equality Act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assessment. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST) seeks to maintain a positive and supportive working environment for all employees. To demonstrate the ODBST's commitment to staff well-being the Trust has signed up to the Department for Education's Staff Well-being Charter and provides regular updates to staff. It accepts that stressors in the workplace can have a detrimental and negative impact on the organisation and employees – affecting health, morale, absenteeism and work performance. This policy aims to establish an effective and consistent approach to the prevention and management of occupational stress. The ODBST has adopted the approach recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which is based on a set of 'Management Standards' primarily concentrating on 6 key areas; Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change.

2. DEFINITION

Understanding the difference between pressure and stress is essential to enable employees and managers to determine the severity of hazards, situations or events.

Stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as:

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

2.1. STRESS

Stress, in itself, is not an illness, but prolonged exposure to excessive pressures can lead to psychological conditions such as anxiety or depression. There are also physical ill-health conditions such as skin conditions that can be aggravated or caused by stress.

2.2. PRESSURE

Pressure is the positive, motivating or driving factor that inspires people to perform to their full potential. A reasonable amount of pressure is necessary to ensure staff perform to their capabilities and achieve their goals. Consistently high levels of pressure can lead to staff developing stress related symptoms that can impact negatively on workplace performance and personal well-being.

2.3. STRESSORS

Stressors are the cause of stress and can be defined as:
- An event or context that elevates adrenaline and triggers the stress response because it throws the body out of balance and forces it to respond.
- It is accepted that any job can cause stress and also that it is not just about overwork. Boredom and monotony can also be stressful.

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2.4. PRESENTEEISM

Presenteeism is when staff attend work when they are either unwell or have work or non-work-related issues on their mind which prevents them from working effectively. Presenteeism has a similar impact on the workplace as sickness absence, as it affects productivity and morale.

3. PREVENTION

The ODBST recognises that personal stress, which is unrelated to the work environment is beyond the organisational control, it does however recognise that personal stress can have an adverse effect on staff well-being and therefore the school/trust as a whole. The ODBST will therefore make every effort to support staff in managing stress irrespective of its source.

The ODBST will promote the mental well-being of all staff through:

- Clear policies and guidance on topics such as flexible working.
- The ODBST values
- The DfE Staff Well-being Charter commitments
- Well-being Ambassadors across the Trust promoting well-being resources and initiatives and supporting colleagues
- Well-being newsletters
- Pre-employment health screening
- Continuously listening to staff, through informal mechanisms and an annual all-staff survey with follow up actions
- Access to a 24/7 confidential Employee Assistance Programme and resources
- Training
- Empowering staff in their work
- Appropriate Occupational Health services.
- Ensuring that all staff, at all levels, are aware of the steps that they can take to minimise the effects of stress on themselves.
- Ensuring staff are aware of their duty of care and raise concerns with their line managers
- Completion of a stress risk assessment where appropriate.
- Consideration of reasonable adjustments for staff with stress-related or mental-health related issues.
- Monitoring and recording of stress related sickness absence.

4. HEADTEACHER/SENIOR LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

Headteachers, managers and senior leaders will:

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- Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their school/office;
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes;
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties;
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities;
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded or under-utilised;
- Discourage work-related contact with staff outside normal working hours or whilst on holiday;
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking; monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement;
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated in the workplace;
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff experiencing stress outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Promote the well-being resources available to staff

5. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees are responsible for

- Raising issues of concern and seeking help from their line manager at the earliest opportunity;
- Completing work-related stress risk assessments, as appropriate, and following recommended actions;
- Following advice, utilising appropriate well-being tools and being open to opportunities for support.

6. PERFORMANCE/CONDUCT CONCERNS

Occasionally managers are required to address poor performance or conduct issues through formal procedures. It is recognised that the prospect of formal proceedings or the proceedings themselves may be stressful for the staff involved. This should not in itself prevent managers from undertaking appropriate management action as indeed undue delays in dealing with these procedures can result in an exacerbation of symptoms, equally not addressing the issue of workplace stress with an employee can also have an adverse effect.

7. RISK ASSESSMENTS

The ODBST has a legal duty under the Management of Health and Safety in the Workplace Regulations to undertake risk assessments to identify hazards in the workplace. Where cases of workplace stress are identified, headteachers/managers should seek information from the individual as to the contributory factors perceived by the individual and possible solutions. Individuals should complete a work related stress risk assessment (appendix 1) to aid this process.

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The HSE has identified six key "Management Standards" that cover the primary sources of stress at work and it is these factors that the ODBST's stress risk assessment process focuses on.

The six Management Standards are:

Demands – Workload, work patterns and the working environment;

Control – How much say someone has in the way they do their work;

Support – Staff receive adequate information and support from line managers and colleagues;

Relationships – Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour;

Roles – Clarity and understanding of the role itself, how to carry it out; how it relates to the school and trust;

Change – Communication, consultation and management of change.

In addition external factors can impact on an individual's ability to cope with work pressure.

8. **MONITORING AND REPORTING**

The HR team will be responsible for reviewing the stress policy and for monitoring its effectiveness by measuring:

Staff sickness levels

Staff turnover

Use of Occupational Health Services

Employee surveys

Exit interviews

Working hours and patterns

Incidence of work-related stress

Complaints of harassment and bullying

Engagement with well-being initiatives

Feedback on the Staff Well-being Charter

APPENDIX 1

STRESS AT WORK: A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES

Pressure is good for us to help meet life's challenges, but stress can harm our physical and mental well-being. People vary widely in how they respond to stress and the way they cope. The ODBST is committed to dealing with stress at an organisational level rather than rely on individuals to adapt and deal with stress in isolation. If you feel that there are organisational matters which are contributing to or causing you stress talk to your headteacher, manager, well-being ambassador and/or colleagues as soon as possible so that something can be done. You can use the Stress Hazard Checklist in appendix 3 as a prompt on the issues that may be affecting you. You may find the guidance below helpful in increasing your resilience to stress.

WHAT CAUSES STRESS?

This will vary from person to person but commonly would result from one or a combination of:

Work - too much or too little, interpersonal relationships, change and job uncertainty, insufficient training, unclear roles and responsibilities, harassment.

Home - health, money or family worries.

Individual Personality - high expectations of self and others.

Environment - noise, overcrowding, commuting.

HOW TO RECOGNISE STRESS?

The effects vary and may include:

- poor sleep, fatigue, irritability
- lack of concentration
- feelings of loneliness, helplessness
- over or under eating
- headaches, muscular aches and pains
- digestive disorders
- anxiety, depression, other psychological problems

Long term stress may also lead to or contribute to more serious ill health. Admitting that stress is having an adverse effect on your health or well-being is not a sign of weakness or failure, but the first step towards doing something positive to manage stress.

MANAGING STRESS

The OBDST recognises that the work our staff do can often be stressful and has introduced guidance for managers to make sure that stress problems are recognised and tackled.

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Managers have a responsibility to identify the sources of stress in the workplace and take action to prevent or control them using a risk assessment approach.

STRESS SELF-HELP

There are things that you can do to help yourself and others:

For Others:

- Be aware of the effects of your own actions on others - you may be a source of stress yourself!
- Learn to recognise the effects of stress in others and how to help them.

For Yourself:

- Take regular exercise which will help relieve mental and physical tension.
- Learn to switch off from work and relax.
- Ensure a good balance of work and home life; it is too easy to let work dominate. Develop interests outside work, a hobby or activity you enjoy.
- Learn to share your problems with friends, family or colleagues.
- Do not set yourself unrealistic targets or goals, set priorities, delegate where possible, and manage your time.
- Learn to say no and do not be afraid to ask for help.
- Improve your interpersonal/ assertiveness skills through training or other means.
- Review your expectations of yourself and others. Are they realistic?
- Avoid harmful ways of coping - drinking, smoking, drugs and overeating, these just mask underlying feelings.
- Seek help when you need it.

Where to go for further help:

- Your headteacher/line manager - particularly if stress is work related.
- One of the Trust's well-being ambassadors (a list is available from the HR team)
- The Chair of Governors, line manager's manager or the ODBST HR team - if you cannot talk to your line manager.
- Friends, family, colleagues.
- The ODBST Employee Assistance Programme
- External agencies - your GP (health centres often have a counselling service), Citizens Advice, specialist agencies such as RELATE, Teacher Support Line. A list of resources is available below
- Occupational Health provider – referral through Headteacher or Manager

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Additional resources

- NHS One You – Every Mind Matters - https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou then click on 'Every Mind Matters'
- Samaritans – www.samaritans.org 116 123 (24 hours) Shout (free 24/7 text service) Text Shout to 85258
- Healthy Minds Bucks oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/healthyminds
- CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) www.thecalmzone.net 0800 585 858 (7 days a week 5pm-midnight)
- MIND www.mind.org.uk 0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm)
- PAPYRUS (Prevention of Young Suicide) – www.papyrus-uk.org 08000 684 141 (Mon-Fri 10am-5pm + 7pm-10pm, weekends 2pm-5pm)
- Youth Concern **-** http://www.youthconcern.org.uk01296 431 183
- Kooth (online support for young people) - https://www.kooth.com/
- Young Minds - https://youngminds.org.uk/
- Childline (national agency) -www.childline.org.uk
- Time to Change (national agency) -www.timetochange.org.uk
- Buckinghamshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - 01865 901 951

Buckinghamshire Adult Mental Health Services - 01865 901 600

STRESS AT WORK: A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS/HEADTEACHERS

These guidelines are intended to help managers/headteachers identify and deal with workplace stress which may be having an adverse affect on the work of the school, the trust or individuals within it.

YOUR ROLE AS A MANAGER

As a manager you are responsible for identifying the sources of stress in the workplace and where possible taking action to prevent or control them. You will know your staff, how they work and interact and are in the best position to notice any changes which may indicate that they are over stressed.

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

Because of the serious effects that stress can have on an organisation it is important that managers are able to identify and manage stress-related problems in the workplace.

Organisational effects include high staff turnover, poor or deteriorating sickness absence records, discipline problems, declining outcomes and poor team working.

Individual effects include poor work performance and working relationships, changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or irritable.

Information about whether and where stress problems are occurring should be obtained through monitoring sickness absence records for trends and patterns and discussion with staff during appraisal meetings, one to ones and team meetings. This information can be used to identify particular sources of stress and enable action to be taken to control them where possible.

NON-WORKPLACE STRESS

Obviously not all stress is work related, staff may have personal, health, family or other problems which may affect their well-being and work performance and make them more vulnerable to workplace stress.

Staff should be encouraged to raise such problems with their manager and then sources of any appropriate help or support can be identified. Temporary arrangements may be needed to allow staff time to sort out problems or seek help.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Workplace stress can be a risk to the health and well-being of staff and as such should be assessed and eliminated or controlled like any other risk as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work

Regulations 1999.

Risk assessment provides a framework for effectively identifying and evaluating the risk stress presents to staff in the workplace and for identifying the measures necessary to eliminate or control it to a reasonable level.

Stress may be linked to other risks to health and safety such as working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE), excessive noise or violence.

A School/Trust risk assessment should be carried out by the Headteacher/Manager, identifying any risk factors particular to that group of employees and local actions needed to reduce the risk. The Stress Hazard Checklist can be used as a prompt (see appendix 3).

It is not necessary to carry out a stress risk assessment for each individual employee however there may be circumstances where their manager together with the employee should carry out an individual risk assessment. This includes where an individual

- Is having personal problems outside work
- Has suffered from past stress related ill health
- Is exhibiting signs of stress or is reporting that they are having stress related problems
- Returns to work after stress related sickness absence.

Workload and other stress related issues should be discussed at one-to-ones and appraisal. Employees can often feel isolated and unable to share their problems with others. Creating a supportive culture can help eliminate feelings of having to cope alone and reduce stress. The aim is to create an environment in which stress is not seen as an individual weakness or failure. The Stress Hazard Checklist (appendix 3) can be used as a prompt for these discussions.

EMPLOYEE APPRAISAL

At employee appraisal the opportunity should be taken to encourage employees to raise any problems arising from work which may be creating stress such as conflicting priorities, excessive workload, lack of job satisfaction, training needs and discuss ways of resolving these.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Not all stresses will be within your control, many arise from external influences. However, how you deal with these will influence the amount of stress they create for you and your staff. Effective communication is of particular importance. Change and uncertainty can often be a cause of stress the effects of which need to be anticipated and minimised.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

Studies have shown that one of the groups most vulnerable to stress are those who have little influence over their work and are not involved in decision making processes. Wherever possible involve employees in organising work, setting goals, deciding priorities etc. and in particular when identifying the sources of workplace stress and developing solutions to them.

SEVERE/CHRONIC CASES

Where stress leads to a severe medical problem resulting in the inability of the employee to undertake the duties of their post, and it is not reasonable or possible to alleviate the cause(s), the situation should be fully explored with the employee and where necessary the School/Trust's Health and Attendance policy should be used.

FURTHER ACTION

If you feel that you are unable to eliminate or control stress to a reasonable level particularly if the problem is an organisational one outside your own influence, then notify your own line manager, a Trust well-being ambassador, the ODBST HR team or the Local Governing Body or Trustees outlining the problem and any suggested solutions. This will ensure that problems are recognised and dealt with at an appropriate level.

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

There may be instances where action, help or support by a manager and colleagues is inappropriate or ineffective. In these cases, referral to specialist help may be necessary. The route of referral will depend on the particular problems experienced, but help is available from:

- The ODBST HR team
- The ODBST Employee Assistance Programme
- External agencies such as General Practitioners, Citizens Advice, RELATE, Samaritans.
- Occupational Health Provider. Employees should be referred by their line manager/headteacher.

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APPENDIX 3

STRESS HAZARD CHECKLIST

This checklist can be used in a variety of ways

- At return to work interviews and one-to-ones where an individual has indicated or is showing signs of a work-related stress problem.

- By individuals who feel they may have a work-related stress problem to help identify causes for discussion with their manager.

- By teams to help them assess the risks from stress in their team and identify action which needs to be taken to reduce the risk.

- By managers when reviewing or creating new job vacancies, to check the job scope and content does not have inherent factors which could contribute to stress

- Before a major change is introduced

Hazard
Demands – workload, work patterns and work environment
Are demands on employees achievable within agreed hours of work?
Are demands matched to people's skills and abilities?
Is the physical environment comfortable – temperature, lighting, furniture, layout etc?
Are employees exposed to the threat of verbal or physical violence from clients, pupils or members of the public?
Control – how much say a person has over the way they do their work
Are employees able to control the pace and how their work is done?
Are employees encouraged to show initiative and use their full range of skills?
Are employees encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work?
Are employees consulted over their work patterns?
Do employees have a say over when breaks can be taken?
Support – encouragement, sponsorship and resources
Are systems in place to enable and encourage managers to support employees?
Are employees able and encouraged to support to their colleagues?
Do employees know what support is available and when and how to access it?
Do employees know how to access the required resources to do their job?
Do employees receive regular and constructive feedback?
Relationships – positive working, avoiding conflict and unacceptable behaviour
Are managers able and encouraged to deal with unacceptable behaviour?
Are employees able and encouraged to report unacceptable behaviour?
Are openness, honesty and respect encouraged within teams?
Role – understanding role and lack of conflicting roles
Are conflicting demands placed on employees?
Do employees understand their role and responsibilities e.g. induction procedure, clear job descriptions and person specifications?
Are employees able to raise concerns about uncertainties and conflict they have in the role and responsibilities?
Change – how organisational change is managed and communicated
Does the organisation ensure that employees understand the reasons for changes?
Are employees consulted on change and are opportunities provided for employees to influence the proposals?

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Hazard
Are employees made aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs and If necessary are given training to support any changes in their jobs?
Do employees have access to relevant support during changes?

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APPENDIX 4

STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

NAME:

SCHOOL/TEAM: **NAME OF ASSESSOR(S):**

DATE OF ASSESSMENT:

What are the Hazards? (Causes of Stress)	Who might be harmed and how? (Who is at special risk?)	What are you already doing? (Current control measures, including those for people at special risk)	What further action is necessary? (Further Control Measures)	Action by whom	Action by when	Done	Control measures acceptable (taking into account all controls) Yes / No

SIGNED: …………………………………………   DATE: ……………………..

Further controls need to be in place and monitored as satisfactory before finally signing off this assessment   Revision date: …………………

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