Luston and Shobdon Community Primary Schools Federation

including Luston Nursery

Stress in the Workplace Policy

Last reviewed	**24 Sep 2026**
Renewal due	**Sep 2027**

This policy was ratified by our Governors and disseminated to all staff.

Policy Statement

Stress is a complex and stressful issue that occurs when people become mentally, emotionally and/or physically distressed or disturbed, as a result of the ways a person perceives and reacts to pressures and demands. The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as, *the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed upon them*.

The Federation, in acknowledging that people are our most valuable resource, is committed to promoting a work environment that is safe and healthy, supports an acceptable work-life balance and recognizes the mutual responsibilities and rights of employers and employees. The Federation is committed to:

- Identifying potential sources of stress in the workplace and taking such action as is reasonably practical to eliminate or reduce their effect on people
- Supporting individuals in managing effectively stress experienced by themselves and others, whatever the cause

Aims

In order to realise this commitment, the Federation has identified the following aims for the effective management of stress in the workplace:

- To increase general awareness of stress and methods available to combat its damaging effects

- To take action to identify and, so far as is reasonable, eliminate or reduce workplace stressors, whether associated with a person's work, or relationships with others, accepting that the effect will be different as to the people involved and over time
- To assist staff in managing the effects of stress in others, particularly people whose work they supervise, an in themselves, whether the cause is internal or external to their working environment
- To effectively manage problems that do occur, including the return to work of staff who have had problems with the effect of stress

Organisation

Any strategy to manage stress effectively needs to be a partnership between management at all levels, individual members of staff, the Local Authority, support services, and the recognized staff associations.

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for all staff. The Finance and Resources Committee is responsible for monitoring the management of health and safety across the Federation, for approving and monitoring the effectiveness of general staffing policies and procedure and provides a forum for the consideration and resolution of corporate health and safety matters.

Individual members of staff have a duty to take reasonable care both of their own health and general fitness and of the health and welfare of others who could be affected by their actions. Should individuals find that they are experiencing stress at work they are encouraged strongly to discuss this with their line manager to seek assistance in reducing the stress and/or assisting in its management. It is understandable that individuals may find this difficult for a variety of reasons including their perception that this may be seen as a weakness on their part. In this situation, they can approach another member of the management team or seek assistance from one of the support services referred to in below.

Individual staff are encouraged also to support colleagues showing any signs of stress and to seek assistance in doing this through the routes described above.

Monitoring

The following will be monitored to give an indication of on-going stress levels:

- Levels of sickness absence, frequency and duration
- Voluntary self-certification following all absence to establish any underlying causes in the school
- Turnover rates of staff
- Levels of early/ill-health retirement
- Reported incidents of actual or potential violence
- Class size

Sources of Support

The Local Authority provides an Occupational Health Service. This is a confidential service for staff. If a referral is made by an individual's manager, a report may be made to that manager with the express permission of the individual involved.

Staff Associations offer support to their members who are experiencing stress which is impacting on their working situation. As well as providing access to specialist services, they can assist an individual in raising with their manager the issues that need to be addressed to reduce the stress that they are experiencing.

Staff Development

- New staff will be given a comprehensive induction programme with support available to them when they take up their post.
- Staff will be allocated jobs for which they are suited, supported by clear roles and objectives and appropriate training
- Job descriptions will be clear and up to date
- Training needs will be identified through the performance management system
- All staff have a right to a programme of continuing professional development which will be monitored by the school
- The views of all workers will be consulted through regular meetings at which all groups are represented
- Decisions made by the management team will be clearly communicated to all relevant staff
- There is a grievances procedure to deal with any conflicts and grievances
- Staff are supported by the Federation's Behaviour Policy Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Regulations in dealing with any discipline problems
- When it is necessary for staff to work alone, appropriate mechanisms to support staff will be made

Appendix 1

Work Related Stress – Risk Assessment

Work related stress is defined as, the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them. This distinguishes the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure and challenge, and work-related stress, which is the natural but distressing reaction to demands or pressures that the person perceives they cannot cope with at a given time.

Apart from the ethical and economic arguments that are beyond dispute, the law requires the Federation to assess risk from stress, to apply the principles of prevention, to ensure employees capability and to provide training.

Step One: looking for the hazard – the main types of hazard

1. Culture – of the Federation and how it approaches work related stress
2. Demands – such as workload and exposure to physical hazards
3. Control - how much say the person may have in the way they do their work
4. Relationship – covering issues such as bullying and harassment
5. Change – how change is managed and communicated in the Federation
6. Role – whether the individual understands their role in the organization; and whether the organization ensure that the person does not have conflicting roles
7. Support training and issues unique to the individual

Step Two: decide who might be harmed and how

Work related stress could affect any member of staff for any of the seven risk factors identified in Step One. For example, at certain busy times of the year, those returning to work after a stress related illness, or those who have a domestic crisis such as bereavement.

Step Three: evaluate the risks and decide if enough is being done

Consider how likely it is that each hazard mentioned in Step One could cause harm in the Federation. In each case consider:

1. What action is already being taken
2. Is it sufficient?
3. If not, what more must be done?

Risks should be combated at organizational level at source before considering training needs, in terms of pressure management, or counselling. Action to protect everyone should be taken rather than for just a few.

Step Four: record your findings

The main findings of the risk assessment must be recorded in writing and its' contents shared with relevant employees. The document should be used to monitor progress.

Step Five: review your assessment and revise where necessary

Assessments must be reviewed regularly or whenever significant changes occur in the Federation, or in the way it handles its business. This should be in consultation with employees.