

**Normanby Primary School**

**Ironstone Academy Trust**

# **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

IAT is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for its employees and to promoting health within the workplace. IAT recognises the importance of fostering psychological as well as physical well-being and is committed to promoting positive mental health.

This commitment arises from IAT's duty of care to all employees and, more generally, the recognition that a safe and healthy working environment contributes to the motivation, job satisfaction, performance, and creativity of all employees.

## **2. SCOPE**

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy applies all employees of IAT.

The steps within this policy, whilst providing general guidance, are not intended to be prescriptive, and may be adapted/dispensed with as the IAT sees fit in order to deal with the specific requirements of individual cases.

## **3. AIM**

IAT aims to minimise the risk of stress through a risk management process involving the identification, assessment and implementation of control measures to workplace stressors.

IAT will take positive steps to prevent stress within the work place by:

- Fostering a co-operative and supportive environment
- Ensuring good communications within teams
- Ensuring adequate preparation for new roles and responsibilities through risk assessment and training
- Enabling employees to report excessive workloads, interpersonal pressures and symptoms of stress without fear of discrimination
- Recognising early signs of stress in employees and taking action to provide appropriate intervention
- Supporting employees in recovering from stress-related illnesses and managing the return to work after any period of sick leave so that stress does not recur.

Where workplace stress is detected IAT will address this, where appropriate, by:

- taking reasonable action to combat and prevent workplace stressors identified through risk assessment or those raised by employees
- increasing general awareness of stress and methods to prevent and combat harmful, excessive workplace stressors in various ways, including training and health promotion initiatives
- consulting with union safety representatives on proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress
- assisting employees in managing stress in others and themselves
- Managing problems that do occur and provide a confidential referral service
- Managing the return to work of those who have been absent from work with stress related problems

#### 4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

There is no specific law on controlling stress at work, but broad health and safety law applies:

- Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees;
- Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 employers have a duty to assess the health and safety risks to which their employees are exposed whilst at work. Such an assessment should include an analysis of the risks to employees' health caused by stress at work.
- Under the Equality Act 2010 employers have a duty not to discriminate against employees on account of their disability as defined under the Act. This involves making reasonable adjustments to the workplace or to the way the work is done, if the existing working arrangements or physical features place the disabled person concerned at a substantial disadvantage. Ill health arising from, or exacerbated by, stress at work may constitute a disability under the Act.

Ill health resulting from stress caused at work has to be treated in the same way as ill health due to physical causes in the workplace. This means that employers have a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that health is not put at risk through excessive and sustained levels of stress arising from the way work is organised, or from the day-to-day demands placed on their workforce.

All employees have an individual responsibility to minimise the risk of any kind of harm to themselves and their colleagues and to co-operate with IAT in its efforts to manage work-related stress.

Case law has established that, unless the employer knows otherwise, it can be assumed that employees are mentally capable of withstanding reasonable pressure from work. Employers are not under a legal duty to prevent ill-health caused by stress due to problems outside work, e.g. financial or domestic worries. However, non-work pressures can make it difficult for employees to cope with work and, consequently, their performance at work might suffer. Therefore, being understanding to employees in this position is in the employer's best interest.

#### 5. DEFINITIONS

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress at work as:

*'The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them'.*

This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and excessive pressure causing stress, which can be detrimental to health. The point at which workplace pressures become excessive will, of course, vary with individual levels of tolerance and with levels of pressure in other areas of life at particular times.

Stress may affect people in a variety of ways, and in serious cases may be a causative factor of a physical or mental illness.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Head Teacher

The Head Teacher should be alert to the risk of work-related stress in their employees and to signs of adverse reactions in individuals. This awareness will prompt them to take remedial action.

Their responsibilities are to:

- Consider conducting a Health and Wellbeing Assessment which is based on the HSE Management Standards, covering demands, control, support, relationships, role and change, and HSE guidance on risk assessment in general
- Implement actions arising out of Health and Wellbeing Assessment
- Attend appropriate training courses (Attendance Management is recommended/Mental Health First Aid may be considered)
- Ensure good communication especially where there are organisational or procedural changes
- Ensure employees understand and, if necessary, are trained to perform their roles and, as appropriate, encouraged to develop further
- Monitor workload, working hours, annual leave and sickness absence to ensure that employees are not overloaded
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated
- Offer support to employees who are experiencing stress outside the workplace
- As part of the monitoring process, conduct return to work interviews with employees when they resume work after any period of sick leave and exit interviews with employees leaving IAT.
- Refer the employee to the Occupational Health should they or their doctor attribute a period of sickness absence to work-related stress

### Employees

All employees have an individual responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work act 1974 to minimise the risk of any kind of harm to themselves and their colleagues and to co-operate with the Trust in its efforts to manage work-related stress.

- Employees must co-operate with their managers to reduce hazards that may affect their physical and/or mental well-being, including attending any training provided and following guidance regarding work-related hazards
- Where an individual believes they are at significant risk of work-related stress, then they should inform their manager in confidence so that appropriate steps can be taken to reduce the risk. Other sources of support to which they can turn if they feel they cannot speak to their manager for any reason include, Human Resources, Trade Union Representatives, Occupational Health or the Staff Support Network, as appropriate, who will facilitate early support or intervention.
- Employees must recognise their own training and development needs.
- Employees should be aware that a healthy lifestyle supported by an appropriate work-life balance is an important contribution to a person's well-being
- Employees should adhere to the Improvement Plan agreed following a Sickness Absence Review Interview.

### Senior Leadership Team

- The school's SLT, under the advice of our Human Resources Provider will give guidance on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.
- Monitor the success of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy by providing and analysing sickness absence and labour turnover statistics and conducting surveys of employee attitudes
- Provide support to managers and employees, through provision of written guidance
- Provide assistance in managing individual cases of stress and advice on stress prevention.
- Signpost to appropriate support services both internally and externally.
- Ensure that the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy is implemented
- Review risk assessments in accordance with best practice so as to monitor risk management to prevent stress.
- Provide training to both management and employees on stress awareness, the risk assessment process and the application of appropriate control measures
- Coordinate a programme of Mental Health First Aid Training.
- Provide support to managers and employees, through the provision of training in particular management training course such as Time Management.
- Consulting with management, reassessing the work environment as part of problem investigation or rehabilitation, and advising on the need for any individual work adjustments
- Coordinate the Health and Wellbeing Steering Group
- Monitor, investigate and evaluate stress indicators, such as excessive sickness absence or high labour turnover

### Departmental Health and Safety Champions may be considered, if used then they should:

- Monitor the implementation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy within their Directorate
- Advise the Head of Service on the effectiveness of the local arrangements and the adequacy of the control measures, for example as a result of carrying out risk assessments
- Attend the Health and Wellbeing Steering Group meeting

## **7. MINDFUL EMPLOYER CHARTER**

IAT has signed the Charter for Employers who are Positive about Mental Health. This means:

As an employer we recognise that:

- People who have mental health issues may have previously experienced discrimination in recruitment and selection procedures. This may discourage them from seeking employment.
- Whilst some people will acknowledge their experience of mental health issues in a frank and open way, others fear that stigma will jeopardise their chances of getting a job.
- Given appropriate support, the vast majority of people who have experienced mental health continue to work successfully as do many with ongoing issues.

As an employer we will aim to:

- Show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues. This will include positive

statements in local recruitment literature.

- Ensure that all staff involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues and the Equality Act 2010, and given the appropriate interview skills training.
- Make it clear in any recruitment or occupational health check that people who have experienced mental health issues will not be discriminated against and that disclosure of a mental health problem will enable both the employee and employer to assess and provide the right level of support and adjustment.
- Not make assumptions that a person with a mental health issue will be more vulnerable to workplace stress or take more time off than any other employee or job applicant.
- Provide non-judgemental and proactive support to individual staff who experience mental health issues.
- Ensure all line managers have information and training about mental health in the workplace.

## **8. SUPPORT SERVICES**

A number of support services are available to support employees within the workplace these include Occupational Health and the Staff Support Network. Employees who are members of a trade union can also contact the trade union for support.

## **9. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES/PROCEDURES**

Other policies and procedures include:

- Raising Staff Concerns Policy (Harassment and Bullying)
- Attendance Management Policy/Procedure