

# **Diss High School**

## **Management of stress at work policy and guidance**

**Updated Annually**

This policy is adopted by Diss High School from the Norfolk County Council recommended template. Any additions or amendments to this policy are done so in consultation with the School's Health & Safety Committee and Governors.

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## **1. Introduction**

This document contains policy and guidance on the management of stress at work. It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that stress related issues are managed in line with this document in any area under their control.

## **2. Manager's checklist**

The checklist below identifies key actions involved in managing stress at work. Further information on each of these points is contained in this document.

1. Do you understand Diss High School's overall policy and principles relating to stress management?
2. Do you understand the difference between 'stress' and 'pressure'?
3. Do you understand your responsibilities and the responsibilities of others?
4. Has a risk assessment of potential sources of stress been carried out using the Stress at Work risk assessment form and accompanying guidance?
5. Do you understand how to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in individuals?
6. Are you aware of the support mechanisms and interventions for individuals experiencing pressure or stress?
7. Are you aware of how individuals can report cases of work-related stress?
8. Do you know how to investigate the causes of stress with individual employees?
9. Are you aware of what to do in cases of stress-related sickness absence?

## **3. Defining stress**

### **3.1 Stress and Pressure**

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'.

Pressure will be present in all jobs in one form or another. Pressure and challenge, even when high, can be motivating and stimulating. Pressure that can be responded to effectively is likely to lead to job satisfaction. However, pressures at a level and at a time where an individual cannot cope, or even too little pressure or challenge, can lead to stress.

### **3.2 Stress and Medical Conditions**

'Stress' is not considered to be a disease or diagnosable illness. Nevertheless, exposure to excessive pressure can result in physiological, psychological, cognitive and emotional manifestations in individuals - see 'signs of stress' below.

It should also be noted that people do not have a predisposition to stress. Their response will depend on the amount of pressure and ability to cope at the time and will therefore differ from person to person. However, no one can be considered to be immune.

## **4. Policy on Managing Stress at Work**

Diss High School is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work and recognises that their well-being is important to the School's performance and service delivery, together with supporting people as valued employees.

Primarily the School is concerned with stress arising from the working environment, but it also recognises that events occurring in an employee's personal life may also lead to stress. Therefore an approach has to be taken of giving appropriate assistance to an employee, whatever the cause of their stress, particularly if this has an impact on the employee's ability to work effectively.

Diss High School aims to take positive measures to manage stress effectively, which include:

- Conducting risk assessments to identify all workplace stressors and to eliminate or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- Consulting with Trade Union Safety representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress
- Providing training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices
- Providing confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors
- Providing adequate resources to enable managers to implement Diss High School's agreed stress management strategy
- Monitoring and reviewing the stress management approach to ensure that it continues to meet the organisation's needs

### **4.1 Supporting Principles**

The following principles apply to the School's approach to dealing with stress:

- The management of stress will be dealt with in a way that is non-discriminatory and in accordance with Diss High School's equal opportunities policy
- Employees will be dealt with fairly and consistently across the organisation

- The School will aim to provide a positive and preventative approach to stress rather than a punitive one
- The School will be sensitive and supportive, as far as is reasonably practicable, to those experiencing stress
- The management of stress, including the monitoring of stress-related information, will be conducted with respect for individual confidentiality and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection and Access to Medical Reports Acts.
- Open communication will be encouraged and promoted

## **5. Policy implementation**

The School will complete a risk assessment using the 'Stress at Work - Assessment of Good Management Practice' form (Appendix 1). The questions on this form are modelled on the HSE's stress management standards.

The stress risk assessment may be completed via a number of routes, e.g. at team meetings, on inset days, using individuals' views collated from appraisals, one-to-ones, etc. By whatever route the risk assessment is carried out, managers should communicate the findings of the stress risk assessments to staff.

Individuals may have difficulty raising personal concerns in a group setting. If the risk assessment is to be completed in a team or group setting, managers should ensure that individual employees are aware of how they can raise personal issues on a one-to-one basis.

The 'Stress at Work - Assessment of Good Management Practice' form (Appendix 1) should not be used to carry out personal stress risk assessments. If a personal stress risk assessment is required, a 'Stress Action Plan' (Appendix 3) should be completed.

## **6. Role and Responsibilities**

### **6.1 The Headteacher will**

- demonstrate their commitment and support to this policy by ensuring that the principles and approaches to managing stress are implemented
- reflect the policy's principles and approaches within their own management practice
- ensure resources are available to implement the stress management approach
- provide adequate support to line managers in the implementation of this policy

### **6.2 Line Managers (at all levels) will**

- reflect the policy's principles and approaches within their own management practice
- adopt an open attitude, ensuring that they are accessible to employees who wish to discuss problems and anxieties and that communication methods are effective
- adopt a flexible approach, wherever possible, to work schedules to help avoid conflicts between work and personal life

- ensure that employees have access to appropriate training in order to recognise stress and manage pressure
- ensure that employees are provided with clear and realistic objectives and that performance is managed effectively and fairly
- communicate openly and honestly with employees
- ensure that stress risk assessments are undertaken and reviewed, and that appropriate action is taken where necessary

### **6.3 Individual Employees (including all Managers) will**

- support Diss High School's stress management initiatives
- recognise that they themselves may be a cause of stress to others, accept responsibility and take action to deal with this where necessary
- attend appropriate training so that they are better able to recognise and manage pressure and stress in themselves and others
- communicate openly and honestly with their manager and colleagues
- identify causes of stress in the workplace and report them to their line manager
- take responsibility for their own well-being at work

### **6.4 Trades Union Representatives**

- help promote and support stress management initiatives in the workplace and to encourage full participation by everyone
- ensure that their members are aware of support mechanisms available to them
- support the monitoring and review of this policy, e.g. via the Health and Safety Committee

## **7. Signs of Stress**

Some common signs of stress are listed below. However, experiencing any of these in isolation, or as a one off in response to a specific situation, does not necessarily give an indication of stress and further advice should be sought when concerns are raised.

- Persistent or recurrent moods – anger, irritability, detachment, worry, depression, guilt and sadness
- Physical sensations/effects – aches and pains, raised heart rate, increased sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, skin or sleep disorders
- Changed behaviours – increased absence levels, difficulty concentrating or remembering things, inability to switch off, loss of creativity, making more errors, double checking everything, eating disorders, covering up mistakes by lying, increased use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

Prolonged or extreme exposure to the possible symptoms of stress is associated with serious chronic disease such as heart disease, back pain, gastrointestinal problems, anxiety or depression.

Managers should also be aware of the following possible signs:

- Increase in overall sickness absence – particularly frequent short-term absences
- Poor work performance – less output, lower quality, poor decision making

- Relationships at work – conflict between colleagues, poor relationships with clients
- Staff attitude and behaviour – loss of motivation or commitment, poor time-keeping, working longer hours but with diminishing effectiveness

Where managers have concerns, they must discuss these with the individual to identify any further actions required.

## **8. Supporting Managers and People Experiencing Pressure and Stress**

### **• Norfolk Support Line – 0800 169 7676**

A subscription service which provides confidential counselling and advice for all issues affecting an individual's psychological health. The service is provided by an external counselling organisation, providing telephone and face-to-face counselling for personal or work related issues.

A managerial support line (Option 5) is also available, giving managers advice regarding the psychological aspects of managing people.

The service also offers support specifically for head teachers through a group of counsellors with an understanding of the role and responsibilities of head teachers.

### **• HR Learning and Development**

HR Learning and Development provide a range of courses that can help managers and employees address potential causes of stress and help individuals deal effectively with work pressures.

Further details of courses can be obtained by contacting HR Direct (01603 222212).

### **• Health & Safety and Wellbeing Team**

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team are available to provide support and guidance on the risk assessment process, the steps that can be taken to minimise or eliminate risk, and to provide specific guidance on potential stressors.

Well-Being Officers also provide a pay-per-use service which uses established tools (e.g. Stress Action Plan) to help employees and managers address stress at work for an individual, whether work-related, personal or a combination of the two.

Further details can be found on Schools' PeopleNet or by contacting HR Direct (01603 222212).

### **• Managed Occupational Health**

The School has access to a local occupational health referral service.

## **9. Reporting incidents of work related stress**

If an employee feels the stress is work related, they must report this as on an incident form. The incident report book is held by the Headteacher's PA. Once completed, the line manager needs to carry out an investigation. As part of the investigation, the line manager should:

- Review any previous stress risk assessments carried out
- Ask the employee to provide the reasons and examples of why they feel they are experiencing work-related stress (this should lead on to the creation of a Stress Action Plan – Appendix 3)
- Identify any further actions to be taken (e.g. review the team stress risk assessment; create individual Stress Action Plan, etc.)
- Record all of the above in the investigation section of the incident report.

If an employee feels uncomfortable discussing these issues with their line manager they should contact the lead Governor for staff wellbeing.





## Stress at Work Assessment of Good Management Practice

Appendix 1

Issue	Suggestions for further actions	Further actions planned		
Are there possible issues with excessive job demands?		Action	By who	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People unable to take leave entitlement?</li> <li>• People regularly working longer than their contracted hours?</li> <li>• People regularly working longer than 48 hours per week?</li> <li>• Individuals working noticeably longer hours than others doing the same/similar jobs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold more regular team meetings or individual work reviews to discuss and anticipate workload.</li> <li>• Develop personal work plans to ensure staff know what their job involves.</li> <li>• Provide training to help staff prioritise, or information on how to seek help if they have conflicting priorities.</li> <li>• Develop a system to notify employees of unplanned tight deadlines and any exceptional need to work long hours.</li> <li>• Identify reasons for tight deadlines appearing and seek to resolve issues.</li> <li>• Ensure the job description matches the work being carried out.</li> <li>• Ensure the person specification matches the requirements of the job.</li> <li>• Introduce flexibility in work arrangements to enable individuals to cope with domestic commitments.</li> </ul>			
<b>Are there possible issues with lack of control over work?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do individuals have any control over the timing and/or pace of work?</li> <li>• Do others often change deadlines?</li> <li>• Is all work allocated by the line manager?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree systems that enable staff to have a say over the way their work is organised and undertaken.</li> <li>• Hold regular discussions at the planning stages of projects to talk about outputs and methods of working.</li> <li>• Talk about how decisions are made – is there scope for more involvement?</li> <li>• Hold work reviews to monitor ongoing workload.</li> </ul>			

Issue		Suggestions for further actions		
Are there possible issues with lack of support?		Action	By who	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals raising concerns about a lack of management support?</li> <li>Appraisals and work reviews are not taking place as planned?</li> <li>Absence due to stress taken seriously and handled in line with Diss High School's sickness absence procedures?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold regular team meetings and/or one-to-ones to talk about emerging issues.</li> <li>Seek examples of how staff would like to, or have received good support from managers or colleagues.</li> <li>Ask how individuals would like to access managerial support.</li> <li>Ensure appraisals to identify training needs are carried out regularly.</li> <li>Disseminate information on other areas of support (counselling, work-life balance, etc.)</li> <li>Talk about the ways the organisation could provide support for someone who is experiencing problems outside work.</li> </ul>		
Are there possible issues with relationships within the team?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have there been any complaints of bullying or harassment during the past year?</li> <li>Have there been any incidents of unacceptable behaviour?</li> <li>Does the team work cohesively and supportively in dealing with day-to-day work?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree standards with employees for acceptable behaviour at work.</li> <li>Ensure employees are aware of confidential routes by which they can report unacceptable behaviour.</li> <li>Provide training to help staff deal with difficult situations.</li> <li>Ensure employees are aware of where they can access Bullying and Harassment procedures and Grievance procedures.</li> <li>Identify ways to celebrate success.</li> <li>Explore team building exercises.</li> </ul>		

Issue		Suggestions for further actions			Further actions planned		
		Action	By who	When			
<b>Are there possible issues with role ambiguity or confusion?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals mentioning conflicting goals?</li> <li>• Individuals not prioritising correctly?</li> <li>• Induction for new employees not being completed?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use appraisals and one-to-one meetings to help individuals clarify their roles and priorities, and to discuss any possible role conflicts.</li> <li>• Communicate key team objectives and targets.</li> <li>• Agree standards of performance for jobs and individual tasks.</li> <li>• Develop personal work plans that are aligned to the outputs of the unit.</li> <li>• Revise job descriptions to ensure core priorities of the post are clear.</li> <li>• Ensure existing team members understand the role and responsibilities of any new team members.</li> <li>• Ensure new employees receive an adequate induction into their role and objectives, and the team's role.</li> </ul>					
<b>Are there possible issues with managing change?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section/team/unit has been through a period of significant change?</li> <li>• Section/team/unit is about to go through a period of significant change?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure employees are aware of why change is happening and the key steps of the change</li> <li>• Ensure individuals directly affected are involved in the change process.</li> <li>• Ensure regular and clear communication with those indirectly affected.</li> <li>• Agree methods of communication/update.</li> <li>• Ensure employees are aware of the impact of change on their jobs, terms and conditions, etc.</li> <li>• Have an 'open door' policy to help individuals that have concerns.</li> <li>• Review work plans and objectives after change to ensure they are valid and clear</li> <li>• Ensure individuals receive relevant training for new/changed roles.</li> </ul>					
<b>Assessor's Name:</b>		<b>Assessor's Signature:</b>			<b>Date Assessment Completed:</b>		
<i>The Line Manager/Headteacher should sign below to show that the assessment is a correct and reasonable reflection of the hazards and of the control measures and actions required</i>							
<b>Line Manager's/Headteacher's Name:</b>		<b>Line Manager's/Headteacher's Signature:</b>			<b>Date Received:</b>		





## Diss High School – Incident Report Form

Appendix 2

The injured person, a responsible person completing the form on behalf of an injured person, or a responsible person reporting the incident must complete parts A, B, C and D. Please complete in Block Capitals.

A: About the Incident	
<b>1. Type of Incident (Tick applicable box)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Accident resulting in injury <input type="checkbox"/> Near miss/accident not resulting in injury <input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous occurrence <input type="checkbox"/> Violent incident (physical or verbal) <input type="checkbox"/> Antisocial behaviour (not violence but causing distress or disruption) <input type="checkbox"/> Work related ill health (including illness with gradual onset) <input type="checkbox"/> Damage to building or property <i>(Complete all of part A then go to Section D)</i>	
<b>2. Date of Incident/onset of illness<sup>i</sup></b>  <div style="text-align: center;">_ _ / _ _ / _ _ _ _</div>	<b>Time (24 hr clock incident only)</b>  <div style="text-align: center;">_ _ : _ _</div>
<b>3. Address/Site where incident happened:</b>  <div style="height: 40px;"></div>	
<b>4. Exact location on above address/site:</b>  <div style="height: 40px;"></div>	
<b>5. Describe task/activity taking place and what happened:<sup>ii</sup></b>  <div style="height: 80px;"></div>	
B. Outcome of the Incident:	
<b>1. How was the person involved affected?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Near miss/No physical injury <input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous occurrence <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal assault <input type="checkbox"/> Minor injury <input type="checkbox"/> Unconscious/needed resuscitation <input type="checkbox"/> Taken to hospital from the scene of the incident <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitalised for over 24 hours <input type="checkbox"/> Major injury or fatality (Defined under RIDDOR) <input type="checkbox"/> Ill health (Describe nature of illness below):	
<b>2. List injuries/illness</b>  <div style="height: 80px;"></div>	<b>3. Body part affected</b>  <div style="height: 80px;"></div>

C: About the Person injured/involved	
<b>1. Full Name:</b>  <div style="height: 30px;"></div>	
<b>2. Home Address &amp; Postcode:</b>  <div style="height: 80px;"></div>	
<b>3. Contact telephone Number:</b>  <div style="height: 30px;"></div>	
<b>4. Age:</b>  <div style="height: 30px;"></div>	<b>5. <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</b>
<b>6. Status of injured person (tick applicable box)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Client (go on to 10) <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil (go on to 10) <input type="checkbox"/> On a training scheme/work experience <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Someone else's employee (e.g. Contractor) <input type="checkbox"/> Member of public (go on to part D)	
<b>7. Job title/occupation:</b>  <div style="height: 30px;"></div>	
<b>8. Department:</b>  <div style="height: 30px;"></div>	
<b>9. If 'someone else's employee' ticked above give name and contact telephone number of employer:</b>  <div style="height: 80px;"></div>	
<b>10. Name and address of normal work base, e.g. unit or school (if different to address in A3):</b>  <div style="height: 80px;"></div>	

D. About the person who had completed Parts A – C (Delete as applicable)
<b>I am the</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Injured person named in part C; <input type="checkbox"/> a responsible person reporting the incident and confirm that this report records the incident as described.

Once Parts A – D are complete please pass this form onto the responsible line manager.

Signed: ..... Print Name: ..... Date: .....

i For gradual onset injuries or ill health conditions an estimated date will suffice

ii For gradual onset injuries or ill health insert details of how the injury is work related or exacerbated

#### E. Line Manager's Investigation of the Incident:

(Parts E and F to be completed by the relevant manager/supervisor)

##### 1. Tick one box that best identifies the kind of incident:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact with moving plant or machinery or material being machined | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric shock                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hit by a moving, flying or falling object                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Injured by an animal                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hit something fixed or stationary                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical assault                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Injured while handling, lifting or carrying                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened assault/verbal abuse           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slipped/tripped/fell on same level                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Antisocial behaviour                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fall from height How high was the fall? .....                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Near miss/no physical injury              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trapped by something collapsing                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous occurrence                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drowned or asphyxiated (lack of oxygen)                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Work related ill health                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exposed to heat/fire/explosion                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Road traffic accident                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exposed to or contact with a harmful substance                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Damage to building, property or equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other please specify:   |  |

##### 2. Why did the incident happen? (Describe below)

##### 3. Please tick any relevant factors that contributed to the incident:

- ☐ No risk assessment of task/activity  
☐ PPE not worn/provided  
☐ Insufficient training/instruction  
☐ Inadequate supervision  
☐ Work pressure/lack of concentration  
☐ Work procedures not followed  
☐ Condition of the workplace  
☐ Behaviour (third party/client)  
☐ Lone working  
☐ None of the above

##### 4. Has the incident (same task/activity etc. occurred before in your area of responsibility (not necessarily to the same person):

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

##### 5. Has the incident resulted in absence from work?

- ☐ 0 – 3 days absence from work or change in work activities  
☐ 3 – 7 days absence from work  
☐ over 7 days absence, expected absence, or incapacity for usual work

##### 6. Did the injured person receive First Aid: ☐ YES ☐ NO

Name of First Aider:

##### 7. Have you involved the person in the investigation and discussed the outcome with them?

- ☐ YES ☐ NO  
If not please do so

##### 8. Follow up Action (Describe what has or will be done to prevent a recurrence):

Name of person responsible for action:

##### 9. Were there any witnesses to the incident?

- ☐ YES ☐ NO

Provide Names and addresses of telephone numbers (attach any relevant statements):

##### 10. If a violent incident or antisocial behaviour, were the police informed?

- ☐ YES ☐ NO

Crime number .....

#### F. About the person who has completed Part E (to be signed by the person completing part E)

The information contained in this incident report is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: ..... Print Name: ..... Date: .....

G. A copy of this form must to be passed to the Head of Health and Safety for reporting purposes



## Stress at Work Action Plan

Appendix 3

This form should not be used without reference to the guidance contained in the School's "Management of Stress at Work Policy and Guidance"

Part One – to be completed by the Employee:

Perceptions	Evidence of Perceptions	The Future	
Perceptions and Feelings about the current situation	Examples and specific instances of why the feelings and perceptions exist	The most significant issues that the individual wishes to be addressed	Individual's proposals about how each of these issues should be addressed

Employee's Signature:	Date:	Manager's Signature:	Date:
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Part Two – to be completed by the employee's line manager:

Summary of actions proposed by employee:	Actions to be taken by management:	Explanations of reason for any inaction:	Review date for each action and details of progress at that date:

Employee's Signature:	Date:	Manager's Signature:	Date:
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