



Dixons City Academy

Policy Documentation

Policy: Staff Health & Well-being (Including procedures for dealing with stress)

Responsibility for Review: Operations Manager
Date of Last Review: July 2017

Staff Health and Well-being Policy

Policy statement

Dixons City Academy recognises that staff is its most important resource and are to be valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a learning and caring community. The purpose of this policy is to provide a document that embraces the many school practices that support staff health and well being, to minimise the harm from stress and ensure there is cohesion and progress in working towards the health and well being of all staff. This policy includes procedures for dealing with stress.

The school will:

- Provide personal and professional development that incorporates regular opportunities for learning and practicing skills such as – team building, management of change, stress management, assertiveness, communications etc. either as whole-school training, or when identified by individuals either during performance management or during particularly difficult periods
- Provide a range of strategies for involving staff in school decision-making processes, such as through the work of the Staff Central, surveys on particular developments (e.g. positive behaviour, curriculum reviews, reporting), and opportunities for involvement in Focus Groups designed around key issues of school improvement.
- Operate a sensitive and negotiated appraisal system linked to clear job specifications (see Appraisal Policy)
- Provide a non judgmental confidential support system such as a staff mentor at times of need, and specifically for new members of staff and those in new positions (including support for senior management).
- Provide extra support at certain times of difficulty either through counseling from the Academy Nurse, Operations Manager, support from Life-Coaching or counseling through Occupational Health.
- Work towards an ethos where all staff feel valued and where respect, empathy and genuineness are the cornerstones of school relationships.
- Continually reflect on and work towards achieving school improvement in terms of the 'H Factor'.
- Regularly review the demands on teacher time spent on paperwork and administration and seek practical alternative solutions wherever possible.
- Respond sensitively and flexibly to unavoidable external pressures that impact on staff lives.
- Maintain regular contact with staff when they are absent for long periods of time, both during the absence and also on returning to work.
- Maintain positive staff- student relationships to ensure an effective teaching and learning environment. (See Positive Behaviour Policy).
- Survey staff bi-annually on issues related to well-being and work-life balance and produce an action plan in relation to findings.

WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

Employees should explain the issue to their Line Manager (particularly if it is their belief that their work or the working environment is the problem). If the employee feels unable to approach their direct Line Manager for any reason, they may approach the SMT person with responsibility for their department. Alternatively, they may approach the Operations Manager or Principal directly. The employee will be heard sympathetically, the relevant work issue will be investigated and appropriate steps taken to assist.

The employee should also seek help themselves from a GP, a counsellor, a colleague or the Academy Nurse. The school will provide support and discuss options as appropriate to the circumstances.

- a) In some cases this may well include seeking external help such as using the teacher help line, accessing support from the life coach.
- b) Occupational Health and GP services may well be used. The school will continue to support staff even when external services are involved.
- c) During this time the school will seek at all times to maintain the confidentiality, rights and dignity of the staff involved.

Procedures for Dealing with Stress:

Establishing the Problem

All managers need to be aware that employees whose performance at work inexplicably deteriorates, or whose behaviour becomes erratic, or who are long-term absent, might be suffering from stress. They might display a variety of symptoms, which are an indication that, far from being a conduct or performance issue, they are suffering from stress, for whatever reason, which is adversely impacting on them at work. For example:

1. **Absence**

- a) this might be at a high, or intermittent but frequent, level
- b) absence might follow a pattern, for example, whenever a deadline has to be met
- c) absences might be mainly self-certified for non-specific complaints such as headaches, nausea, stomach complaints, irritable bowel syndrome, etc.

2. **Punctuality**

- a) employees frequently late for work or appointments
- b) inability to meet deadlines

3. **Prone to Accidents**

- a) at work, because of drowsiness through lack of sleep or the use of alcohol or drugs
- b) away from work, for example at home or travelling to and from it

4. **Poor Performance**

- a) an inability to concentrate or remember instructions
- b) lack of attention to detail
- c) inadequate completion of tasks

5. **Conduct**

- a) violent or aggressive behaviour
- b) drinking or taking drugs (prescribed or not) at work
- c) poor time keeping
- d) lateness

6. **Mood Swings**

- a) irrational behaviour
- b) irritable disposition
- c) easily confused
- d) depressed

Assessment of Situation

Intermittent absence: Level, frequency and reason for absence of the individual should be identified and any trend established (see Attendance – Staff Policy).

Long-term absences/disability: Review absence records, reason for absence of the individual and assess needs of the business for the work to be done.

Absence records: Should be reviewed generally to establish a trend amongst the workforce and/or to establish any margin by which the individual employee can be judged.

Performance record: Review and assess taking statements, if appropriate, from work colleagues, try to establish the point at which problems first arose.

Identifying the Cause

Managers should be aware that stress can be caused by a variety of factors including, but not limited to: the work itself (if over-burdensome), the working environment (for example due to harassment or bullying in the workplace), personal and family problems. The purpose of discussions with the employee is to try to establish the cause for that employee's absence record, behavioural conduct or performance problems (as the case may be) and put in place appropriate measures to remove the cause of the stress or assist the employee in dealing with it. The factors set out below should be taken into consideration:

1. **The work is causing the problem.** This might be because the Academy is asking too much or, for whatever reason, the employee can no longer cope with the demands of the job. Managers should carry out a risk assessment to ensure that the Academy is not making excessive demands of the employee. If it is, immediate action should be taken to adjust the work so that there is no breach on the part of the Academy of its health and safety obligations and the employee is no longer exposed to a risk to his or her mental health.

If it is the case that the employee simply cannot cope for other reasons the Managers will need to consider whether or not the employee can be assisted, for example by a lessening of the load, a transfer to other duties (on a temporary or more permanent basis) or counselling.

2. **Harassment and bullying in the workplace.** Must be dealt with in accordance with the Academy's code of practice on harassment and disciplinary procedures. As part of the Manager's investigation, the employee will be dealt with sympathetically and should be encouraged to make a statement confirming details of the harassment or bullying and dates on which it occurred and any witnesses to it. Each of the witnesses identified by the employee will

then be interviewed, as will the alleged harasser/bully. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken against the harasser/bully. In the meantime, the employee might wish to be suspended on pay whilst the investigation and disciplinary process is followed through. The employee must be kept informed of all developments at all stages. When the disciplinary procedure has concluded (and whether or not the alleged harasser/bully has been disciplined or dismissed) the Academy will, if reasonably practicable, endeavour to accommodate the employee's wishes if he or she wishes to be transferred to a different place of work within the organisation.

- 3. *Where stress has led to conduct and performance problems.*** These should be reviewed and a plan for improvement should be put in place, having established the cause of the problem and dealt with it accordingly. It might, in the meantime, be appropriate to make certain adjustments to the employee's work to make it more manageable.
- 4. *Medical opinion.*** This should be sought, where appropriate, particularly if the symptoms manifested by the employee indicate a dependency on drink or drugs (prescribed or not) and/or where the employment is damaging his or her health.
- 5. *Employees disabled by stress.*** The Academy will consider and put in place reasonable adjustments, where appropriate, after having taken medical advice, if necessary.
- 6. *Counselling and support mechanisms.*** These may be available and the employee will be afforded reasonable time off work, with pay, to attend counselling and support sessions. Where appropriate and useful, a referral to Occupational Health will be made and support from Human Resources will be requested.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Academy constantly monitors all aspects of its operation to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, it does not expose any employees to health-endangering working practices or an otherwise stressful environment. The school will use the following indicators to assess the impact of the policy:

Indicators

- The school has an action plan for staff health and well being linked to the school development plan.
- A staff audit will be carried out bi-annually to focus the action plan
- Staff skills and understandings related to stress and stress management will be assessed
- Confidential help line numbers are displayed and promoted
- Middle and Senior Managers set positive role models in terms of work-life balance and the promotion of the 'H factor'
- Decision-making processes are clearly understood and supported by the staff
- Opportunities are provided for all staff to socialise and relax with each other
- A non-competitive staff praise/ acknowledgment/ reward system is in place that is supported by all staff (the Community Award Scheme).

- New staff are supported with an appropriate level of induction
- An open listening management system that responds quickly to problems raised either by individuals or the Staff Central
- A welcoming staff room sensitive to issues of race, gender, homophobia, culture, and disability.
- Quality of staff facilities and accommodation (such as access to refreshment, adequate seating and toilet facilities)
- Life balance approaches are seen as positive strategies for maintaining staff health and school effectiveness.
- Awareness raising, training and procedures are in place to prevent staff harassment and bullying.
- The regular and systematic monitoring of
 - Staff understandings and feelings - such as sense of security and safety
 - Staff absences
 - Staff/student/parent relationships
 - The recruitment and retention of staff

Staff Central

Staff Central was established to positively address and promote all aspects of staff health and well-being. Well-being is defined as the extent that staff; feel that they have work-life balance, are valued in their work, have a voice in school development and are supported by peers, line managers and senior management in their role. Members work together to; find solutions to practical problems that affect efficiency and morale, raise well-being issues related to the culture of the organisation, are advocates of well-being and help to keep its profile high. They meet a minimum of 5 times a year to address all aspects of staff health and well-being and work with the Senior Team in surveying staff bi-annually on well-being issues and then creating an action plan in response.

Staff Central will represent individuals and groups to Senior Management and raise any issues that may be of concern. Concerns may be raised directly with members of the Staff Central or through the Suggestion Box in the staff room. All members of staff are automatically members of the association and their fee is paid out of the school budget so that it is inclusive and representative of all. The Central Group meet a minimum of 5 times a year to discuss issues raised by staff and to consider practical solutions to problems that may emerge. Minutes are circulated to all staff. Staff Central and the Operations Manager also manage the money that is allocated for staff coffee mornings and social events such as end of term celebrations.

ACTION PLAN

The school will develop an action plan to be included as part of the School Improvement Plan.

This plan will be based on need assessments, set targets, be time scheduled and have clear achievable outcomes

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Action Plan will be monitored and reported on to the governors and the staff on an annual basis. The Operations Manager assisted by the Staff Central will ensure the Action Plan is implemented.

CO-ORDINATION

This policy relates to and supports other policies such as;

- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety
- Safer Recruitment
- Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy

Useful Telephone Numbers/websites

Teacher Support Network - www.teachersupportinfo.com – 08000 562 561

www.teachernet.gov.uk

www.samaritans.org.uk – 08457 909090