

# Employee Well-being policy

## 1. Introduction

The School as employer has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' physical and mental well-being, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the School's control.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

This policy recognises that there are many sources of work related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees or students.

The Health and Safety Executive have produced a number of **Management Standards** which cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands** – i.e. workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control** – i.e. how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- **Support** – i.e. the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships** – i.e. promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change** – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation.

The School's performance on well-being and stress management will be assessed in the context of the HSE Management Standards.

## 2. Statement of Intent

Council, the Director and the School's senior managers acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case as well as a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote employee well-being as far as reasonably practicable.

Council, the Director and the School's senior managers are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

Council, the Director and the School's senior managers recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on employees' well-being, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

The Employee Well-being policy expands upon the School's Health and Safety policy, setting out how the School will promote the well-being of employees by:

- Creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors as far as practicable are avoided, minimised or mitigated through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and staff development.
- Increasing managers' and employees' awareness of the causes and effects of stress.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Developing the competence of managers through the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours framework, so that they manage staff effectively and fairly.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships both within teams and across the School.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby employees feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and well-being through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

### **3. Responsibilities for implementing the Employee Well-being policy**

#### **3.1 The Director and the School's senior managers will:**

- 3.1.1 Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect within the School.
- 3.1.2 Champion good management practices as set out in the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours framework, and the establishment of a work ethos within the School which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables employees to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".
- 3.1.3 Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements at both a School-wide and departmental level.
- 3.1.4 Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being.

#### **3.2 Managers and supervisors will:**

- 3.2.1 Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and dignity, and will promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams they manage. They will not permit unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- 3.2.2 Ensure that there is good communication within their team and there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work, seeking advice from their HR partner and the Health and Safety Team at an early stage where concerns are raised.
- 3.2.3 Adhere to the sound management principles set out in the School's Human Resources policies and procedures, and the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours framework.
- 3.2.4 Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- 3.2.5 Co-operate with Human Resources and the Health and Safety team to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken for roles or working practices that may give rise to work-related stress.
- 3.2.6 Encourage their staff to participate in events and initiatives undertaken by the School to promote well-being and more effective working.
- 3.2.7 Take action in the interests of all their colleagues where performance by a member of staff may cause stress to their colleagues.

### 3.3 Employees will:

- 3.3.1 Treat colleagues and all other persons with whom they interact during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity.
- 3.3.2 Co-operate with the School's efforts to implement the Well-being policy, attending briefings and raise their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress on health.
- 3.3.3 Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being.
- 3.3.4 Take responsibility for their own health and well-being by adopting healthy lifestyles.
- 3.3.5 Take responsibility for their own development skills as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce of the risk of stress.
- 3.3.6 Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, thus helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

### 3.4 Human Resources will:

- 3.4.1 Provide advice to managers of staff and employees on best practice in relation to human resource management, developing policies and procedures as required.
- 3.4.2 Ensure that there are arrangements in place for communicating the content of the School's human resource management policies, procedures and toolkits to managers and staff.
- 3.4.3 Develop arrangements to enable managers and staff to achieve the necessary competencies in relation to the good management practices set out in the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours framework.
- 3.4.4 Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to the School's Occupational Health advisers where appropriate.
- 3.4.5 Ensure there are arrangements in place to support managers experiencing problems with employee performance.
- 3.4.6 Collate management information which will enable the School to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as:
  - Sickness absence data
  - Staff turnover, exit interviews
  - Number of self referrals to the counsellor service
  - Number of referrals to the Occupational Health contractor
  - Numbers of grievance and harassment cases.
- 3.4.7 Seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of the School's Employee Well-being policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.

### 3.5 The Head of Health and Safety will:

- 3.5.1 Ensure that the Well-being policy is kept under review and updated as appropriate, under the remit of the Health and Safety Committee.
- 3.5.2 Develop an institution level risk assessment based on the Health and Safety Executive's "Management Standards for Work-related Stress".
- 3.5.3 In conjunction with the Organisational & Lifelong Learning Unit and the Teaching and Learning Centre co-ordinate appropriate training and briefings to increase awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress among managers and other employees.

- 3.5.4 Assist and support managers to undertake local stress risk assessment where required.
- 3.5.5 Organise, in conjunction with the Human Resources, appropriate events and initiatives to promote health and well-being.
- 3.5.6 Liaise with the Staff Consultative Council on the development and implementation of the Employee Well-being policy.

### 3.6 The Staff Consultative Council will:

- 3.6.1 Act as the main focus group for consulting on the effectiveness of the well-being policy and the measures taken to implement it, developing staff questionnaires in relation to well-being and work-related stress and validating findings of institution level risk assessments.

### 3.7 The Health and Safety Committee will:

- 3.7.1 Determine the Employee Well-being policy, and recommend its adoption by Council.
- 3.7.2 Monitor the implementation of the Employee Well-being policy and the operation of associated arrangements such as the staff counselling service.
- 3.7.3 Review the policy every three years following feedback from staff surveys, management information provided by Human Resources and the findings of stress risk assessments, and in consultation with DMT, Staff Consultative Council and other appropriate bodies.

## **4. Arrangements for implementing the Well-being policy**

### **4.1 Risk Assessment**

#### 4.1.1 Institution-wide level.

At an institution-wide level, a risk assessment will be developed to establish whether the School's policies and procedures are sufficient to enable compliance with the HSE's "Management Standards" in relation to the management of work related stress.

Where gaps in arrangements are identified, the Head of Health and Safety will consult with the Staff Consultative Council, Human Resources and other relevant departments and advise DMT so that the necessary action can be taken to address any shortcoming in policies and procedures.

#### 4.1.2 At departmental level.

Where problems arise at a local level, a risk assessment will be undertaken by the relevant manager. The Head of Health and Safety will produce a checklist template for managers to use for this propose.

When risk assessments are undertaken at a departmental level, the employees working in the area which is subject to the risk assessment will be consulted. Any safety representative appointed by recognised Trade Unions under the provisions of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 representing employees working in the area covered by the risk assessment will also be consulted.

### **4.2 Arrangements for well-being and stress prevention through good management practices.**

These include the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures.
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that the 'right' person is recruited for the job.
- Formal accreditation such as Investors in People, Matrix etc.

- Agreed knowledge, skills and behaviours for managers, to be cascaded through to all levels of management and supervision.
- Training and Development procedures to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/duties required of them.
- Promotion and reward procedures.
- Managing performance procedures
- Capability and absence management & return to work procedures to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.
- Suitable adaptations for disability.
- Anti-harassment and anti-bullying procedures.
- Procedures for communicating with employees on the work of the School and issues affecting their work.
- Flexible working arrangements, and contact days with staff on maternity leave.

These arrangements will be updated and augmented as required and when deemed necessary by the findings of stress risk assessments.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The School will consult with its employees on the Employee Well-being policy and measures taken to implement the policy through the operation of the School Health and Safety Committee and via the Staff Consultative Council.
- 5.2 Staff surveys will be used to gather feedback on the Well-being policy.
- 5.3 The views of individuals will be sought in areas or teams subject to local stress risk assessments.
- 5.4 In those areas where Safety Representatives have been appointed by recognised Trade Unions under the provisions of Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977, these Safety Representative will also be consulted on the development of local stress risk assessments.

## **6. Communicating the Well-being policy and measures taken by the School to manage work related stress.**

- 6.1 The Well-being policy will be published on the Health and Safety and Human Resources webpages.
- 6.2 Leaflets will be produced for employees who do not have easy access to a computer.
- 6.3 The Well-being policy will be promoted in Staff News.
- 6.4 The contents of the policy will be covered during general induction training sessions for employees and specific training on stress awareness.

## **7. Monitoring and reviewing the Well-being policy.**

- 7.1 The Employee Well-being policy will be reviewed every three years by the Head of Health and Safety in conjunction with the Director of Human Resources.
- 7.2 This review will involve an examination of the management data referred to in Section 3.4 which will be collated by Human Resources, together with feedback from the Staff Survey,

consultation with the Director's Management Team, the Staff Consultative Council and the findings of risk assessments.

- 7.3 A report will be made to the Health and Safety Committee which will approve any revisions or amendments to the policy for recommendation to Council.