



Stress in the Workplace Policy

1. Policy Statement

This policy supplements the schools existing policy on health and safety.

Marden Bridge Middle School recognises that stress at work is a health and safety issue. The school accepts its legal responsibility to exercise its duty of care towards its employees and to manage the risk that they are exposed to from workplace hazards, including stress.

The introduction of a “Stress in the Workplace Policy” must be supported by a shared understanding between Headteachers and the people whom they manage that stress is a significant and a legitimate health issue in the workplace.

Uncomfortable levels of stress are not to be seen as an inevitable part of modern life or as a sign of individual weakness. School employees who are suffering from stress or stress-related illness will be encouraged to seek help and support and will not be subject to unfair discrimination of any sort.

All employees have a duty to themselves, under health and safety at work law, to minimise their experience of stress in the workplace and are expected to play an active part in stress management initiatives. Inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying and harassment, can affect colleagues’ stress levels and will not be tolerated.

2. Guidelines for the school

Marden Bridge Middle School will;

- uphold all legislative requirements relating to health and safety at work and the management of risk from work-related stress
- carry out assessments, where appropriate, to determine the nature and the scale of risk to health from stressors
- communicate the results of these assessments to the workers involved
- act on the information these assessments provide by taking all reasonable and practicable steps to reduce, eliminate or otherwise manage the source of stress
- review assessments regularly to take account of changes in work situations and in people’s ability to cope with them
- encourage a working environment in which stress can be openly discussed and the concerns of employees addressed sympathetically and positively
- ensure that all Senior Staff are aware of the need to recognise and identify employees suffering the ill effects of stress
- ensure that all Senior Staff have received training in understanding stress, recognising it in the people for whom they are responsible and intervening skilfully
- give any employee experiencing or exhibiting signs of stress the opportunity to discuss the issues they are dealing with

- take reasonable steps to minimise their problems, including appropriate training and reviewing the demands of their work
- offer avenues of support when an employee suffering from stress is absent from work due to ill health and provide support and rehabilitation in order to help achieve a successful return to work
- Governing Bodies will be required to put into place mechanisms to implement, maintain and review this policy.

3. Guidelines for employees

Employees will:

Play their part in the identification of possible stressful situations as part of the risk assessment process

Take responsibility for recognising harmful levels of stress in themselves and seek advice and help as appropriate

4. Where to go for help

You may approach any of the following:

- Your Headteacher
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team
- The HR/Admin Manager
- Your Line Manager
- A School Governor

If you are unable to secure a meeting with any of these people or wish instead to talk to someone independent, who you feel may be better to advocate on your behalf, then you can also approach:

- Your trade union representative
- Any personnel officer based in the Education Service
- Occupational Health
- Personal Support Network

Please see following sections for contact numbers

4.1 Personal Support Network

This service is available free of charge to all employees of the Council. It is provided by a group of volunteers, selected for their listening skills and competence and trained to help others to find ways of dealing more effectively with a variety of personal and practical issues that can cause stress or difficulty.

Support can be given face-to-face or over the telephone. Either way it is completely in confidence. The only exception to this rule of confidentiality is if you indicate that you might

cause harm to yourself or to another, when your Support Worker would explain to you that he or she would have to act to try to prevent that harm.

The Support Network provides an opportunity for you to talk to someone who is understanding, accepting and supportive to you during a difficult time. They will help you re-assess your coping skills in dealing with work relationships or personal difficulties and to try out ways that may be more effective for you to recognise common reactions to stress, loss, trauma or bereavement. They will also try out some ways of dealing with these reactions and gain information that may help you if you need to get in touch with other support services.

Calls are answered either personally or by an answering machine. The messages are picked up every day and someone from the Network will get back to you as quickly as possible, certainly within 3 working days. When you are called back you will be asked for information that will help us match our service to your needs as closely as possible.

If you are not available when your call is returned you will be asked to ring a named person. The person calling will not identify themselves as members of the Personnel Support Network.

Telephone Contact Number: (0191) 216 0889