

# Stress Management Policy, Procedure and Toolkit for Schools



## Wheatley Hill Community Primary School

**Author:** *Alan Scarr*

**Head Teacher:** *Alan Scarr*

**Chair Of Governors:** Michelle Forrest

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## **Stress Management Questionnaire**

Many people still get confused about pressure and stress, yet there's a great deal of difference between the two. We all experience pressure on a daily basis, and need it to motivate us and enable us to perform at our best – ask any athlete. However, if we experience too much pressure without the opportunity to recover, we feel unable to cope and stress is the result.

HSE defines stress as, 'An adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed upon them.'

Given an excess of pressure, stress can therefore happen to anyone, and should not be seen as a weakness. Instead, an individual needs to be helped to deal with these pressures.

As reactions to stress will vary from one individual to another – and may also vary at different times of our lives – it's important that we learn to recognise stress and understand what to do to reduce it.

This checklist recognises the fact that whilst tackling personal stress is an individual's responsibility; Durham County Council has a responsibility to help reduce any stress factors which may arise during the employment of a member of staff.

During either a 1-1 meeting, Appraisal, Return to Work Interview or Sickness Absence interview a Head Teacher should ask each employee if they consider any illness/problem has been caused or made worse by his/her work duties. In the event of an employee identifying that work may have been influential in causing an absence/problem the interviewing Head Teacher should pursue the employee's responses to following questions.

The analysis is linked to the 2004 Health and Safety Executive Management Standards on work related stress and provides the opportunity for Head Teachers and the employee to consider appropriate actions to be taken.

The Head Teacher is in most instances the first line manager supervising the employee. However this may vary and it may also be appropriate for this role to be taken by another manager in particular circumstances.

It would be helpful if you could complete and return this questionnaire to your Head Teacher before your next meeting with him/her so that you can discuss the issues raised and it can be used to develop an action plan to deal with them. Don't worry if you don't want to/don't manage to complete the questionnaire as your Head Teacher will talk you through it at the meeting if you would prefer. If you are in any doubt or want anything explained beforehand please talk to either your Head Teacher or Trade Union representative. As a result of this meeting your Head Teacher will work with you to produce an action plan that will help, where possible to address the issues that you raise.

Please answer the following questions by indicating the extent to which you feel that the following factors influenced your illness. Your Head Teacher will discuss with you your responses and jointly consider with you any resulting actions.

If you would prefer your responses to be considered by somebody other than your Head Teacher then please raise this with him/her. Alternatively you can raise your preference with a member of the HR Advice and Guidance Team who will discuss your responses.

**Note:** In the table below, for each of the statements in the left hand column please tick the response that most applies to you from the right hand columns.

<b>Name</b> .....	Is this a major cause of stress?	Is this a contributory cause of stress?	Is this an issue for you in the workplace but not a factor in your current stress?	This is not an issue for you.
<b>School</b> .....				
<b>Section 1: Demands</b>				
a) Demands are placed upon me from a variety of sources which are difficult to achieve				
b) I have unachievable deadlines.				
c) I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do.				
d) I am unable to take sufficient breaks.				
e) I am pressured to work long hours.				
f) I have to work very fast.				
g) I have unrealistic time pressures.				
<b>Section 2: Control</b>				
a) I cannot decide when to take a break.				
b) I do not have a say in my own work speed.				
c) I have no choice in deciding how I do my work.				

	Is this a major cause of stress?	Is this a contributory cause of stress?	Is this an issue for you in the workplace but not a factor in your current stress?	This is not an issue for you.
d) I do not have a choice in deciding what work I do.				
e) I do not have any say over the way I work.				
f) My working time is not flexible.				
<b>Section 3: Managers Support</b>				
a) I am not given supportive feedback on the work I do.				
b) I cannot rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem.				
c) I cannot talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work.				
d) I am not supported through emotionally demanding work.				
e) My Line Manager does not encourage me at work.				
<b>Section 4: Peer Support</b>				
a) If work gets difficult, my colleagues do not help me.				
b) I do not get help and the support I need from colleagues.				
c) I do not receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues.				
d) My colleagues are not willing to listen to my work-related problems.				
<b>Section 5: Relationships</b>				
a) I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour.				

	Is this a major cause of stress?	Is this a contributory cause of stress?	Is this an issue for you in the workplace but not a factor in your current stress?	This is not an issue for you.
b) There is friction or anger between colleagues.				
c) I am subject to bullying at work.				
d) Relationships at work are strained.				
<b>Section 6: Role</b>				
a) I am not clear what is expected of me at work.				
b) I do not know how to go about getting my job done.				
c) I am not clear what my duties and responsibilities are.				
d) I am not clear about the goals and objectives for my Service.				
e) I do not understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the Service.				
<b>Section 7: Change</b>				
a) I do not have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work.				
b) Staff are not always consulted about change at work.				
c) When changes are made at work, I am not clear how they will work out in practice.				
<b>Section 8: external pressure</b>				
a) Relationship problems				
b) Financial issues				
c) Bereavement				
d) Other external pressures				

## Stress Management Action Plan

Stress Management Standards	Employee response:	Head Teacher response:	Action:	Timescale for achievement:
<p><b>Demands:</b> could include workload, the patterns worked or environment. For example- Does employee consider that the demands placed upon them are achievable in relation to the agreed hours of work?</p> <p>Do their skills and abilities match the job demands (training requirements)?</p> <p>Is the job designed within the capability of the employee?</p> <p>Are concerns surrounding work environment justifiable/need to be addressed?</p>				
<p><b>Control:</b> could include whether the employee feels that s/he has control over the pace of work, whether encouraged to use skills and initiative and whether encouraged to develop new skills to assist in undertaking new pieces of work For example-</p> <p>Does the organisation/service area encourage employees to develop skills?</p> <p>Does the employee influence their own work patterns/when breaks can be taken?</p>				

Stress Management Standards	Employee response:	Head Teacher response:	Action:	Timescale for achievement:
<p><b>Support:</b> could include issues such as the employee feeling they don't receive the encouragement, sponsorship and resources required in which to fulfil their role For example- Not feeling supported by the organisational, line management and/or colleagues in carrying out role. Is the employee aware of the support available and how to access this?  Does the employee receive regular feedback?</p>				
<p><b>Relationships:</b> could include unacceptable behaviours such as bullying or harassment in the workplace, conflict or unfair treatment from a colleague, client or line manager. For example- Does the workplace promote positive behaviours in the workplace aimed at reducing conflict/unfairness?  Does the workplace follow procedures and policies preventing/resolving unacceptable behaviour?  Are the systems in place for the reporting of unacceptable behaviour known by the employee?</p>				

<p><b>Role:</b> Could include not fully understanding the role and where it 'fits' within the organisation/ feeling that s/he has conflicting roles in the organisation.</p> <p>Issues could include pressures caused by conflicting work expectations, a lack of understanding of the role and responsibilities and/or unclear expectations</p> <p>What information is provided to the employee to enable them to understand their role and responsibilities?</p> <p>Are the requirements of the employee clear in terms of what they need to achieve/do in their role?</p> <p>Are there systems in place to enable the employee to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts within their role?</p>				
<p><b>Change:</b> could include feeling disengaged from the change agenda, not understanding the reasons for proposed change or the probable impact upon role.</p> <p>Are employees provided with regular information promoting an understanding of the changes?</p> <p>Do employees receive adequate consultation on the changes enabling them to understand the reasons for the proposed changes?</p> <p>Are employees aware of the probable impact of any change upon their jobs?</p> <p>Do employees have access to support during changes?</p>				