Outcomes Focused, Child Centred

Northern Education Trust
Health & Well Being Policy

Consultation Period:	16th – 24th October 2018
Date Approved by NET:	14th December 2018
Next Review Date:	August 2021

Health & Well Being Policy

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Northern Education Trust (NET) recognises the statutory responsibilities related to employment. Day to day management of employees is delegated to the Principal and Line Managers in each Academy/Service Division.

1.2 Throughout this policy it refers to 'a nominated officer'. This will usually be the Principal, Executive Principal, Service Director, Line Manager or any officer as nominated by the Chief Executive Officer. In some instances, it will be the Chief Executive Officer as outlined in the Scheme of Delegation.

1.3 The Trust is committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional well-being and will provide suitable support for all employees. Taking action to prevent ill health and promote good health makes good business sense as sickness absence carries high costs both in monetary terms and costs such as poor performance, impact on teaching and learning, poor morale, reduced productivity and disrupting student progress.

1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trusts Attendance Management Policy.

2. Who This Policy Applies To

2.1 This policy will apply to all employees of the Trust.

3. Aims

3.1 This policy aims to:

3.1.1 Support employees and ensure their health and wellbeing is promoted and enhanced at all times.

3.1.2 Provide a working environment which enables employees to carry out their duties.

3.1.3 Recognise the key role of the nominated officer for their responsibilities by enabling access to guidance, training and support.

3.1.4 Encourage employees as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional well-being.

3.1.5 Comply with statutory requirements.

3.1.6 Develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture through communication and consultation with employees and their representatives on health and safety matters.

3.1.7 Develop an open culture in which mental, physical and emotional well-being is taken seriously and in which employees are encouraged to seek any help and support they need.

4. Legislation

4.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

4.1.1 The Trust recognises that stress at work is a health and safety issue and that it has a duty under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to take all reasonably practicable measures to prevent stress at work. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 also require the Trust to assess health and safety risks including stress and to introduce prevention and control measures based on the risk assessment.

4.1.2 The Health and Safety Executive states that ill health resulting from stress caused at work should be treated in the same way as ill health due to other physical causes present in the workplace. This means that the Trust has a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that health is not placed at risk through excessive and sustained levels of stress arising from the way work is organised, the way people deal with each other in their work, or from the day-to-day demands placed on employees.

4.1.3 Under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, employees have a duty to not endanger themselves or others and to co-operate with the Trust in meeting statutory requirements.

4.1.4 The nominated officer will use the risk management approach to identify specific stress risk hazards in the Trust **(Appendix 3)**

This will include:

(a) Undertaking employee surveys
(b) Deciding who might be at risk
(c) Evaluating the actual level of risk
(d) Recording what action needs to be taken to avoid or reduce the risk, and
(e) Monitoring and reviewing to ensure the measures are effective
(f) Workload assessing all new working practices/initiatives
(g) Ensuring all activities contribute to raising achievement, and not ticking boxes, and removing those that do not
(h) Ensuring a suitable mechanism exists for employees to raise concerns about activities that are superfluous and/or do not directly raise achievement.

4.2 The Equality Act 2010

4.2.1 Disability is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The Act has made it easier for a person to show that they are disabled and protected from disability discrimination. A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The Equality Act makes it clear that the employer cannot discriminate against an employee on the grounds of a disabling health condition. By law, the Trust must make "reasonable" adjustments to accommodate the needs of an employee whose mental health condition lasts or is expected to last longer than 12 months. However, that does not mean that the Trust should wait 12 months before acting – action should be taken at an early stage wherever possible.

4.2.2 In appropriate circumstances and on advice from the Trusts Occupational Health provider the following will be considered as reasonable adjustments:

(a) Phased return to work.
(b) Provision of necessary and appropriate equipment.
(c) Adjusting the timetable allowing flexible working hours for a defined period.
(d) Adjusting room layout or location.
(e) Introducing additional class support for a defined period of time (e.g. teaching assistant).
(f) Providing a confidential mentor.
(g) Reassigning extra-curricular activities or additional responsibilities.

4.2.3 The above is not intended to be an exhaustive list but any adjustments will require discussion and flexibility from both parties. Even without the discretion afforded by the Act it would still be reasonable for adjustments to be made to reduce the impact on personal well-being and on student and Trust performance.

4.3 Other Legislation to Consider

4.3.1 There are other pieces of legislation that will also be considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional well-being:

(a) Working Time Regulations 1998
(b) Employment Rights Act 1996
(c) Employment Relations Act 1999

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The Trust shall:

5.1.1 Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that recognise and deal with the issue of common mental health problems which will include; consideration of organisation of work; health risk assessment where appropriate; early recognition for employees with common mental health problems (which may require training) and interventions that include short-term rehabilitation and return to work plans and longer term reasonable adjustments.

5.1.2 Actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental health problems by creating an environment where employees feel comfortable in asking for help.

5.1.3 Where relevant; regularly survey employees in conjunction with the recognised trade unions to identify any areas of concern.

5.1.4 Act early and provide consistent support.

5.1.5 Enlist the support of the Trust's HR function and Occupational Health when appropriate and ensure employees have access to this support.

5.1.6 Ensure employees have their roles and responsibilities clearly defined.

5.1.7   Ensure the implementation of the Management Standards for work related stress from the Health and Safety Executive or an equivalent program **(Appendix 3)**

5.1.8   Ensure that all Trust policies are assessed for workload impact.

5.1.9   Actively encourage the appointment of union Health and Safety representatives

5.2   The Nominated Officer Shall:

5.2.1   Recognise the value of good management practice with systems in place to effectively manage employees.

5.2.2   Foster a supportive work environment.

5.2.3   Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in employees.

5.2.4   Encourage sympathetic alertness to employees who develop signs of not coping.

5.2.5   Liaise with the Trust's HR function and refer employees to Occupational Health or counselling when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental health problems.

5.2.6   Endeavour to keep in touch with absent employees at regular intervals and intervene early with mental health related absences.

5.2.7   Be supportive in any return to work process and ensure employees feel welcomed back after absence.

5.2.8   Carry out a risk assessment where necessary and especially when concerns have been raised.

5.2.9   Demonstrate commitment, via systems and practices in place in the Trust, to Trust employees maintaining a good work/life balance.

5.3   All Employees are Encouraged to:

5.3.1   Request advice or support as soon as they think they are experiencing a problem.

5.3.2   Co-operate with management in meeting statutory requirements.

5.3.3   Not endanger themselves or others.

5.3.4   Attend Occupational Health appointments or other arranged meetings unless there is a genuine reason not to.

5.3.5   Seriously consider any other support mechanisms offered by the Trust; e.g. counselling and the EAP (Employee Assistance Programme).

5.3.6   Be encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle and a good work/life balance.

5.4 **Trust HR Function shall:**

5.4.1 Provide the necessary professional advice and support to the nominated officer and all Trust employees when required.

5.4.2 Assist with the referral of employees to Occupational Health, Counselling or mediation when appropriate.

5.4.3 Assist in the formulation of return to work plan's and provide advice on the implementation of statutory requirements.

6. Support Mechanisms

6.1 **General**

6.1.1 The Trust hope that instances of workplace stress can be minimised by taking a proactive approach to managing stress involving risk assessment and training for employees. However, in cases where employees feel under stress due to perceived excessive pressure or demands placed upon them in the workplace, or due to other work-related issues, they should discuss this with their immediate Line Manager to explore ways of addressing the situation in the first instance **(Appendix 1)** Employees may also wish to speak to their Trade Union representative.

6.1.2 In cases where employees do not feel that their concern is being adequately addressed, they may take action under the Trusts Grievance Procedure. However, this should only be used as a last resort and not as a substitute for effective communication between the employee and their manager.

6.1.3 If the cause of the stress is perceived to be related to possible harassment or bullying, the procedures set out in the Trusts Dignity at Work Policy should be followed.

6.2 **Counselling**

6.2.1 Counselling can be provided where appropriate through the Trusts provider. This is a confidential, independent service using professionally qualified counsellors.

6.2.2 Employees can access the Counselling Service by contacting the nominated officer or the Trust HR function.

6.3 **Mediation**

6.3.1 In addition to the Counselling Service there is also a mediation service in order to assist employees to return to normal working relationships. Where this service is appropriate it will be discussed with the employees affected by the situation.

6.4 **Education Support Partnership**

6.4.1 Education Support Partnership is a group of independent charities and a social enterprise that provide practical and emotional support to employees in the education sector and their families. Information, support and coaching is offered to all employees. The Education Support Partnership provide over

1000 factsheets covering a wide range of issues including money advice, how to cope with bereavement, mental health, diet and nutrition and how to manage stress. To access the free support line employees can call 08000 562 561 or Txt: 07909341229 for more information go to https://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/

6.4.2 The Trust has access to an Occupational Health provider. This will enable an employee to discuss any concerns about their health and well-being with a nurse or doctor trained in occupational medicine. This is an opportunity to discuss any health condition and get feedback about managing or improving that condition to help an employee to carry out their duties or return to work.

7. General Principles Underlying This Policy

7.1 Consistency of Treatment & Fairness

7.1.1 The Trust is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and will abide by all relevant equality legislation.

7.2 Confidentiality

7.2.1 The health and well-being process will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Trust to quality assure the operation and effectiveness of the policy.

7.3 Monitoring & Evaluation

7.3.1 Northern Education Trust is committed to monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Health and Well-Being Policy with recognised trade unions, both at national level through the JCC and at local level with Academy representatives.

Dealing with Stress Definition: What is Stress?

"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed on them"

Stress is not an illness but if it becomes excessive and or/prolonged, mental and physical illness may develop. Work is generally good for people if it is well designed, but it can also be a great source of pressure. Pressure can be positive and a motivating factor, it can help employees achieve goals and perform better. Stress is a natural reaction when this pressure becomes excessive.

Recognising Stress

Stress produces a range of signs and symptoms, the following is not an exhaustive list of the symptoms of stress but if employees feel that their attitude or behaviour is changing due to a situation at work or home, these may indicate stress and a need to seek further advice from their GP. Anyone can suffer from work-related stress, no matter what work they do.

Behaviour

When suffering from stress, employees may:

- Find it hard to sleep
- Change their eating habits
- Smoke or drink more
- Avoid friends and family
- Have sexual problems

Physical Symptoms

Might include:

- Tiredness
- Indigestion and nausea
- Headaches
- Aching muscles
- Palpitations

Mentally

Employees may:

- Be more indecisive
- Find it hard to concentrate
- Suffer loss of memory
- Have feelings of inadequacy
- Low self esteem

Emotionally

Employees are likely to feel:

- ☐ Irritable or angry
- ☐ Anxious
- ☐ Numb
- ☐ Hypersensitive
- ☐ Drained and listless

What can an employee do if they think they are stressed?

There are many organisation's that may be able to help employees with the issues that are causing their stress (See **Appendix 2** List of websites that may be useful).

If an employee thinks they are suffering from any mental health problem or any of the symptoms identified above, it may be advisable to speak to their GP. It is also a good idea to talk to their Line Manager, Human Resources or Occupational Health provider.

It is important for an employee to take action and to review their lifestyle to see if they can identify any contributing factors, i.e.,

- ☐ Eating on the run, or in a disorganised manner
- ☐ Smoking, or drinking excessively
- ☐ Rushing, hurrying, being available to everyone
- ☐ Doing several jobs at once
- ☐ Missing breaks, taking work home
- ☐ Having no time for exercise and relaxation.

Stress at work is a reaction to events or experiences at work. Common mental health problems can arise through causes outside work, e.g. bereavement, divorce, post-natal depression.

However, people can have common mental health problems with no obvious causes.

Useful Websites

Stress

ACAS www.acas.org.uk

Information on stress, and employer and employee rights, in the workplace

Alcoholics Anonymous www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
Fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other to recover from alcoholism.

Carers UK www.carersuk.org

CBI www.cbi.org.uk
Guidance to businesses on managing stress at work

Department of Health https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care Information on dealing with stress and mental health problems, including the use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Disability Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com
The new commission is working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

Gingerbread www.gingerbread.org.uk
Gingerbread and One Parent Families have now merged to provide better support and a bigger voice to 1.8 million lone parents and their children throughout England and Wales.

International Stress Management Organisation www.isma.org.uk
Useful help and guidance for managers and organisations on stress management

Local Government Employers www.local.gov.uk
Guidance for all councils on stress prevention and management

NHS Direct https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/
National Health Service advice and guidance on health matters

Princess Royal Trust for Carers http://www.carers.org
Here to improve carers' lives by fighting for equality and recognition for carers.

Relate http://www.relate.org.uk
UK's largest provider of relationship counselling and sex therapy.

Samaritans https://www.samaritans.org
Work life and business training on managing stress in the workplace

The Stress Management Society http://www.stress.org.uk
Non-profit making organisation dedicated to helping people tackle stress. It gives a helping hand to those who could benefit from some good advice.

Trade Union Congress (TUC) http://www.tuc.org.uk Information and guidance on managing stress in the workplace

UK Stress Network: http://www.workstress.net/

Work Life Balance Centre http://www.worklifebalancecentre.org
Exists to help people restore control over their workload and working lives we enable them to cut down overworking and so make new decisions about how they spend their time.

Bullying

ACAS www.acas.org.uk
Information on bullying, including information on your rights

Dignity at Work Partnership www.dignityatwork.org Information and guidance on bullying in the workplace

Mental Health

Mindful Employer www.mindfulemployer.net
Information and guidance on managing stress and mental health in the workplace

Well Being at Work

HSE http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/ Information on the stress management standards

Investors in People www.investorsinpeople.co.uk
Information and guidance and tools on health and well-being in the workplace

Useful Reading

ACAS http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/q/b/B18_1.pdf Advisory booklet for employers and employees

Trade Union Congress https://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace-guidance/wellbeing-and-stress
Provides links to surveys you can carry out and identify WRS in the business

World Health Organisation
http://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/en/oehstress.pdf Publication on work organisation and stress

Making the Stress Management Standards Work

Step 1 Identify the Hazards:

The HSE categorise the major causes of work related stress into six key areas or 'risk factors' – the rationale being that if these are not managed effectively then employees are at risk of suffering work- related stress. In Step 1 it is therefore, important that all employees are familiar with and understand these risk factors. Jobs are not expected to be risk assessed, because no job should itself be inherently stressful. It is the interaction of the person with their job, and their individual perceptions of this, that can result in stress. A job may be stressful for one person but not another, so the key is matching the individual to the job.

Step 2: Decide Who may be Harmed & How:

Identify which factors are a problem in the workplace. To do this the Trust could:

- Use existing data such as sickness absence records and employee attitude surveys
- Complete the formal stress audit questionnaire
- Elicit views of employees. This may involve talking to employees at team meetings or running focus groups

The Trust may decide to use a combination of all three methods.

Step 3: Evaluate the Risk:

Use the information assimilated in step 2 to determine how the Trust is performing in relation to each of the six risk factors. Identify stress hot spots and priority areas. Communicate the results of step 2 to all employees, and involve employees at all levels in finding solutions through team meetings and/or focus groups.

Step 4: Record the Findings:

The Trust should work with employee and Trade Unions to decide on improvement targets and actions. Actions will depend on the information gained in Steps 2 and 3. Develop an action plan in consultation with employees and their representatives.

Examples of action taken could include:

- A change in some management procedures
- Increased communication channels
- Management development training e.g. listening skills, effective feedback, appraisals, delegation
- Personal stress management training for all employees
- Providing counselling

Step 5: Monitor & Review:

Look for improvements, communicate successes, listen to employees and tackle strategies that are not working, repeat the audit.

Stress at Work Risk Assessment Form

Date of Completion: ……………………………………………………………………..

Prepared by: ……………………………………………………………………..

Prepared for: ……………………………………………………………………..

	Demands: This includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.	Yes	No	NA
1.	Is the workload such that the demands can be achieved in a reasonable working day?			
2.	Are employees fully informed and able to cope with the initiatives they are asked to deliver?			
3.	Are employees equipped with the relevant skills, abilities and experience to carry out their work effectively?			
4.	Is there a recognised strategy in place to deal with the risk of violence/aggression from parents/students?			
5.	Is there a strategy in place for reporting and taking action regarding challenging behaviour and are employees trained to cope with such situations?			
6.	Are employees aware of the lone working policy and the supporting safe system of work for their specific area?			
7.	Has a suitable risk assessment been carried out to ensure that the working environment does not create any stress factors such as noise, over-crowding, poor lighting etc.?			
8.	Are employees fully aware of how to manage work life balance?			
	Control: How much say does a person have in the way they do their work?	Yes	No	NA
9.	Are employees informed about proposed changes to their jobs and given the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process?			
10.	Is the level of supervision appropriate to the level of post?			

11.	Are employees given the opportunity to make suggestions around improving the way they work?			
12.	Do employees feel able to develop their roles in ways that suit them, and the students, including being innovative?			
13.	Are employees encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work?			
14.	Are employees given the necessary CPD opportunities to develop their skills?			
Support: Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the Trust, line management and colleagues.		**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
15.	Are employees familiar with the Health & Well Being Policy and the Trust's commitment to eliminate or minimise the effects of stress in the workplace?			
16.	Are employees aware that there is a confidential Counselling service available free of charge?			
17.	Are employees aware of the Occupational Health services?			
18.	Are employees aware they have the opportunity to attend training to enable them to manage their own stress factors?			
19.	Are employees aware of the Teacher Support Network?			
20.	Are employees aware of the Grievance Procedures to be used if they feel an issue or concern is not being adequately addressed?			
21.	Are employees aware of their own responsibilities to ensure their own health and safety and to comply with the guidance issued in the Health and Well Being Policy?			
22.	Does the Trust recognise and try to help, if possible, if an employee has identified a problem?			
23.	Do managers encourage employees to share concerns around work-related stress at an early stage?			
24.	Are there systems which allow for concerns to be raised relating to the workload etc.?			
25.	Are employees aware of the family friendly policies available that will be considered to accommodate working patterns for parents/carers?			
26.	Are employees given practical and emotional support when needed from management?			
Relationships: Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.		**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
27.	Do employees feel able to talk to their managers during times of stress?			
28.	Are employee – manager relationships such that, where appropriate, workload can be renegotiated?			

		Yes	No	NA
29.	Do employees have the opportunity to discuss issues around work priorities and uncertainties around tasks expected of them?			
30.	Do managers give positive feedback to employees?			
31.	Are managers accessible and approachable when there are concerns?			
32.	Do managers and employees share information regularly about their work?			
33.	Are employees aware of the Mediation Services that can be provided?			
34.	Are employees familiar with The Dignity at Work Policy and understand the Trust's commitment that bullying and harassment will not be tolerated?			
35.	Are employees aware of the Confidential Reporting Policy to report any serious concerns?			
Role: Whether employees understand their role within the Trust and whether the Trust ensures they do not have conflicting roles.		**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
36.	Are employees clear about what is expected of them in terms of their job and do they have well defined and clear objectives?			
37.	Do employees have an up to date job description?			
38.	Are employees given the opportunity to attend training to enable them to carry out their jobs?			
39.	Are employees aware of how they can positively contribute towards meeting the Trust's key objectives?			
40.	If roles change, are employees clear on their new responsibilities?			
41.	Do employees have the opportunity to raise concerns about any uncertainties with their role?			
Change: How changes in the Trust are managed and communicated.		**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
42.	During periods of change are employees kept well informed about how changes are likely to impact upon themselves as a team and also as individuals?			
43.	During periods of change, is there regular consultation that involves employees, management and trade unions?			
44.	During periods of change, is communication clear and effective using structured methods?			
45.	Are employees provided with relevant training to help them deal with any changes?			
46.	Do employees have access to relevant support during periods of change?			

Stress Risk Assessment

……………………….......................Academy

Assessment Date:	…………………………………..	**Next Due Date:**	……………………………………..
Prepared for:	…………………………………..	**Prepared by:**	……………………………………..

Hazards (Items marked 'no' on Stress Risk Pro Forma)	Existing Controls	Risk Level High, Medium or Low	Action Required / Person Responsible	Date Due	Signed Off Date

Stress Risk Assessment Continued . . .

Hazards (Items marked 'no' on Stress Risk Pro Forma)	Existing Controls	Risk Level High, Medium or Low	Action Required / Person Responsible	Date Due	Signed Off Date

CONTACTS

For advice on the content of this policy please contact:

Jude Telford
Director of HR and Communications
Northern Education Trust
j.telford@northerneducationtrust.org
Mobile: 07976 044539

Jess Worthington
HR Manager
Northern Education Trust
j.worthington@northerneducationtrust.org
Mobile: 07714 245673

Georgina Taylor
Senior HR Advisor
Northern Education Trust
g.taylor@northerneducationtrust.org
Mobile: 07714 245678

Jo Burnside
HR Advisor
Northern Education Trust
j.burnside@northerneducationtrust.org
Mobile: 07715 671660

Katie Rose
HR Advisor
Northern Education Trust
k.rose@northerneducationtrust.org
Mobile: 07715 655495

Employees are also encouraged to contact their trade union representative for advice and support where appropriate.