



# Staff Health and Wellbeing Policy

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Together we **Exceed**



## Contents

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Definition .....	2
3. Legal Obligations.....	2
4. Responsibilities .....	2
5. Recognising the symptoms and effects of stress .....	4
6. Work Related Stress Solutions.....	5
7. Support.....	6
8. Health Assured - Employee Assistance Programme.....	6
9. Monitoring and Evaluation.....	8
10. Additional Information.....	8

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Exceed Academies Trust is committed to promoting a supportive and healthy working environment where employees can access appropriate support when experiencing the effects of physical or mental health conditions. The Trust is also committed to encouraging employees to achieve a healthy work life balance. This approach, strategy and policy applies to staff as well as those training to teach through the SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) and any other colleagues that work in any of our Trust settings.
- 1.2 Exceed Academies Trust is committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, and will provide suitable support for all staff.

## 2. Definition

- 2.1 Overall health is achieved through a combination of physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing. The definition of wellbeing, according to the British Health Organisation (BHO) is:
- ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’.*
- 2.2 According to The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) ‘wellbeing’ in the workplace is *“creating an environment to promote a state of contentment, which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation”.*

## 3. Legal Obligations

- 3.1 The Trust has a duty, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of its employees, in relation to work-related issues and ones within the employer’s control. This extends to taking reasonable care to ensure that health is not put at risk through excessive and sustained levels of stress arising from work activities i.e. to treat stress like any other health hazard.
- 3.2 Additional legislation will be considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, including, but not exclusively:
1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
  2. The Equality Act 2010;
  3. Working Time Regulations;
  4. Employment Rights Act 1996;
  5. Employment Relations Act 1999

## 4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Trust accepts the Health and Safety Executive’s definition of work-related stress as;
- ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work’*

4.1 There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures', which can stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced a number of Management Standards, which cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not effectively managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence rates.

4.3 The HSE Stress Management Standards cover six key areas, which are:

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

4.4 **Managers will:**

- Actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental and physical health issues by creating an environment where staff feel comfortable asking for help
- Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that recognise and deal with common mental and physical health issues, which will include: consideration of organisation of work; health/stress risk assessment where appropriate; early recognition for staff with common mental and physical health issues (which may require training); and interventions that include short-term rehabilitation and return-to-work plans and longer-term reasonable adjustments
- Ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and training is provided
- Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner
- Recognise the value of good management practice with systems in place to effectively manage staff and encourage a partnership approach with staff, workplace unions, mindfulness champions and health and safety leads
- Ensure good communication between management and employees, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes
- Monitor workloads and breaks to ensure that people are not overloaded and encourage good work/life balance
- Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff and promote sympathetic alertness to staff who show signs of being under stress
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is dealt with as defined under the Exceed Complaints and Grievance Procedures

#### 4.5 Staff will:

- Raise issues of concern with their line manager, senior leadership or HR
- Consider self-referral to the confidential counselling service and utilise other support mechanisms offered by the Trust
- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves and/or others whilst in the workplace
- Treat all colleagues with consideration, respect and dignity
- Where possible, be watchful of any indication of changes of behaviour in colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress

## 5. Recognising the symptoms and effects of stress

5.1 Employees should be aware of the symptoms of stress. Symptoms may include sleeping issues, dietary issues, mood swings, lethargy, fatigue, emotional issues, chest pains and elevated heart rate, lack of focus, inability to concentrate and increased sweating. ***Employees who suffer from any of these symptoms are advised to consult their GP as soon as possible***

5.2 Stress is what can be experienced when individuals feel unable to cope with the pressures and demands placed upon them. We can recognise that certain events will cause stress for many people. Some of these events are linked to daily lives, in or out of work, some to the workplace and some to the actual job role

5.3 Stress can come from any direction, and sometimes from several sources at once. It is important to recognise that it is how individuals react that causes stress, as well as the actual event itself. These reactions can be quite different between people experiencing the same event. For example, one person may thrive on deadlines as it gives them something to aim at and helps order their work – another may find them imposing or even threatening. There are three areas to monitor – **physical, behavioural and emotional issues**

5.4 These often overlap but we can put symptoms into these categories. The following list of typical symptoms is not exhaustive but does cover many of the common symptoms we can see in employees as reactions to stress:

#### 5.4.1 **Physical**

- Cardiovascular problems (heart, blood pressure, shortness of breath, etc.)
- Headaches and migraine attacks
- Digestive problems (indigestion, ulcers, diarrhoea, constipation)
- Dizzy spells
- Muscle tension, leading to conditions such as back pain
- Nervous tension – including sweating, dilated pupils, high adrenalin levels, hot and cold spells, 'lump in the throat', 'butterflies', panic attacks
- Interrupted sleep patterns
- Skin problems

#### 5.4.2 **Behavioural**

- Mood swings
- Uncharacteristic behaviour (e.g. someone who is normally cheerful and loud is quiet and withdrawn)
- Edginess/short temper/hypersensitive
- Nervous laughter/faster speech/fidgeting
- Lack of eye contact
- Restlessness/trembling
- More prone to accidents
- Changes in eating habits (over or under-eating leading, in extreme cases, to eating disorders such as anorexia)
- Absenteeism
- Low morale – less commitment to the job/less job satisfaction/less concerned
- Difficulty in decision making
- Confusion
- Unreasonable behaviour
- Escapism – alcohol and drug abuse, excessive smoking

#### 5.4.3 **Emotional**

- Depression or boredom
- Anxiety
- Aggression
- Frustration
- Guilt
- Lack of confidence in self and maybe others
- Lack of self-esteem, even a loss of interest in outward appearance or personal hygiene
- Loneliness
- Tiredness (body and mind)
- Overwhelmed/unable to cope and eventually 'burn-out'

## 6. Work Related Stress Solutions

6.1 Exceed Academies Trust will take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of stress related symptoms on all employees and create a working environment where potential 'work-related stressors' are avoided, as much as reasonably possible. This will require good management practices, effective HR policies and employee training, increasing awareness of the causes and effects of stress and developing a culture, which is open and supportive of people experiencing the symptoms of stress or other forms of mental health

6.2 In trying to alleviate stress, managers should consider the following options;

- Flexible Working – temporary changes to working hours, advice should be sought from HR prior to agreement. Permanent changes should be made through the Exceed Academies Trust Flexible Working Guidance.

- Referral to Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Counselling, via the EAP
- Temporary redistribution of work in agreement with leadership (where there is capacity)
- Referral to Occupational Health
- Identify development needs and ensure that support is provided, where necessary
- Ongoing review of solutions; this will help ensure that the individual remains supported and that the success of any additional control measures is evaluated and reviewed

## 7. Support

- 7.1 Support will be available to all employees suffering from the symptoms of stress through access to additional management support, access to Occupational Health advice and access to counselling services, the Trust wide EAP or any other support deemed reasonable in the circumstances.
- 7.2 The Trust wide **Employee Assistance Programme** - a free, confidential helpline for staff to access 24 hours a day, 365 days a week. Staff can access various services including online/telephone counselling, financial advice, legal advice.
- 7.3 **Occupational Health** - will enable staff to discuss any concerns about their health and wellbeing 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. The information given is entirely confidential and will only be shared with relevant members of staff within the organisation.
- 7.4 **Communication** - essential in resolving stress, whether it is work related or not. Managers are encouraged to discuss their concerns with employees directly in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner, as soon as possible
- 7.5 **Mindfulness in Schools (Paws B)** - a number of staff within our schools will deliver initiatives to support the mindfulness of children and pupils by engaging in the MISP (Paws B) nationally recognised programme for Mindfulness in Schools.
- 7.6 **Staff Engagement** – regular staff surveys will be undertaken by the Trust to assess morale, health and wellbeing, and to provide a forum for staff to be heard.
- 7.7 **Mental Health First Aider (MHFA)** – qualified staff are located within some of our Trust schools (a list of MHFAs is retained within each school). The MHFAs can be approached at any time, should staff wish to discuss a mental health issue relating to themselves or share concerns about colleagues. MHFAs are trained to have an in-depth understanding of mental health and are well placed to support and coach staff to manage their symptoms and signpost them to further support.

## 8. Health Assured - Employee Assistance Programme

8.1 Exceed Academies Trust utilises Health Assured to provide all staff with access to a free, confidential support service;

Health Assured offers cover for all staff and their immediate family members\*, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year:

- Life support: Unlimited access to counselling for emotional problems and a pathway to structured telephone counselling at your convenience.
- Legal information: For any issues that cause anxiety or distress including debt management, accountancy, lawsuits, consumer disputes, property or neighbour legalities (employees only).
- Bereavement support: Health Assured offers qualified and experienced counsellors who can help with grief and related stress plus a team of legal advisors to help with legal issues.
- Medical information: Qualified nurses are on hand to offer advice on a range of medical or health related issues. They can't diagnose but can offer a sympathetic ear and practical information and advice.
- CBT online: We recognise the value of self-help tools in dealing with a range of issues, which is why we have a range of CBT self-help modules, informative factsheets and invaluable advice videos from leading qualified counsellors.

*\*Health Assured define dependants as immediate family members (spouse/partners) and children aged 16 to 24 in full time education, living in the same household.*

### Wellbeing Portal

In addition to the counselling support and advice, Health Assured also offer a virtual library of wellbeing information. These informative articles and self-help guides provide support on a range of health and advisory issues, as well as instant guidance to aid an employee's physical and mental health.

We understand that the information needs to be available in a way that is suitable for everyone, whenever they require it. From simple lifestyle changes to advice for many of life's most common concerns, the portal offers:

- Interactive health assessment providing personal tailor-made dietary tips and fitness plans
- Fitness and lifestyle advice, such as detoxing methods
- Four week self-help programmes
- Mini health checks
- Financial wellbeing articles

### Health e-Hub Mobile App

Sometimes it can be difficult to balance the pressures of work with the demands of home life. When daily life feels overwhelming individuals may need help and support to deal with the



practical and emotional challenges they may be facing. The free Health Assured app offers access to holistic health and wellbeing support at the tap of a finger anywhere and anytime;

- Support videos and webinars
- Four-week programmes
- Home life support and advice
- Work life assistance
- Physical and emotional health
- Mini health checks
- Life Support
- Emotional Health
- Physical Health
- Online CBT
- Wellbeing videos and webinars
- Medical information

To find out more information on what services Health Assured can provide, please visit [www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com) or contact 0800 030 5182 (quoting the Exceed username and password – if unknown, speak to the Office Manager in school).

## 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly, as necessary. The Trust will actively seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of this policy and any other stress management arrangements periodically, or as often as deemed appropriate, by methods such as staff surveys, questionnaires and through any other appropriate communication forum.

## 10. Additional Information

Please see links below for additional support;

### Mental Health

Mind – [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) – Mental Health Support and Advice

Mind in Bradford – [www.mindinbradford.org.uk](http://www.mindinbradford.org.uk) - Contact: 01274 730815

Young Minds – [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) – Mental Health Support and Advice for Children and Young People

First Response – <https://www.bdct.nhs.uk/services/first-response/> - Call: 0800 952 1181 – For urgent mental health support or when someone is in crisis

### Financial Support

Citizens Advice Bureau (Bradford & Keighley) – 0808 278 7828

Bradford Debt Advice Centre – 0800 169 1536

StepChange – [www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org) – Call: 0800 138 1111

### Bereavement

Health Assured – for referral to Bereavement counsellor  
Bradford Bereavement – [www.bradfordbereavement.org.uk](http://www.bradfordbereavement.org.uk)  
Mind – [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

#### Drug & Alcohol

NHS - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/addiction-support>  
FRANK – [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)  
Turning Point – [www.turning-point.co.uk](http://www.turning-point.co.uk)

#### LGBT+

LGBT Foundation – [www.lgbt.foundation](http://www.lgbt.foundation)  
Stonewall – [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)  
Mind – [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

#### Domestic Abuse

National Domestic Abuse Helpline - <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/> Call: 0808 2000 247  
Respect - <https://respectphoneline.org.uk/> Call: 0808 802 4040  
Staying Put - <https://stayingput.org.uk/>

#### Food Banks

Bradford - <https://bradfordfoodbanks.org.uk/>  
Leeds North & West - <https://leedsnorthandwest.foodbank.org.uk/>  
Leeds South & East - <https://leedssoutheast.foodbank.org.uk/>  
Bingley - <https://bingleyfoodbank.org.uk/>  
Wyke Foodbank - <https://wyke.foodbank.org.uk/>