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THE CARDINAL VAUGHAN MEMORIAL SCHOOL

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STRESS POLICY

All policies are updated regularly in accordance with statutory guidance.

Policy Statement for The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School

The Governors of The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School and Directors of the SJSCAT recognise their Health and Safety responsibilities and will take all reasonably practicable steps to address stress-related and well-being issues within the School.

In dealing with the issues of stress the Governors/Directors will, to the best of their ability, ensure that the following systems are in place, understood and acted upon.

In summary order to achieve the policy aims the School will:

(a) Ensure that the Stress Policy is brought to the attention of all staff who work in the School.

(b) Ensure that a School Risk Assessment is undertaken to identify the scope and causes of stress related to work and the findings shared with staff and the Governing Body.

(c) Implement control measures to minimise the risk of stress.

(d) Monitor and audit the arrangements in an effort to continuously improve the quality of the working environment and the implemented stress-minimisation arrangements.

(e) Encourage staff to report their views and to discuss stress-related issues with a member of the School's Senior Management Team.

(f) Ensure equality of treatment of staff.

(g) Ensure that individuals who have, or have had symptoms of stress-related illness are treated responsibly and fairly at an early stage, that confidentiality is ensured and that Individual Risk Assessments are undertaken as necessary

(h) Consider job security, sick leave provision, retention of status etc in accordance with the rights of the individual to employment protection and in accordance with the School's sickness absence policy.

(i) Establish a culture in School where stress is reviewed as a serious issue rather than viewed as a personal weakness.

(j) Nominate a member of the School's Senior Management Team to be responsible for the co-ordination of stress management in School.

(k) Communicate effectively and 'manage change' in a sensitive and responsible manner.

(l) Review arrangements for managing stress on a regular basis or following changes in the School's Senior Management Team, organisation or structure.

1.1. Policy

A copy of this Policy and accompanying guidance of The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School can be found within the School's Health and Safety Policy.

1.2. Responsibility for Co-ordination of Stress Management in the School

The member of staff responsible for co-ordinating stress management at The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School will be the Deputy Head (with responsibility for Health and Safety).

1.3. Stress Risk Assessment

School/Departmental Stress Risk Assessments will be undertaken following consultation with staff.

The findings of the School/Departmental Stress Risk Assessment will be communicated promptly to staff and the Governing Body.

Individual Risk Assessments will be undertaken for individuals who have, or have had symptoms of stress-related illness and these will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

1.4. Monitoring & Review

Procedures for monitoring stress in School will be an integral management function and be the subject of a regular review.

A copy of the school stress policy will be appended to the School's Health and Safety Policy.

1.5. Statement of Individual's Responsibilities

Individuals have a duty to co-operate with their employer in minimising, so far as is reasonably practicable, work-related stress. Individuals have a part to play in making reasonable adjustments to working practices which have to change due to circumstances beyond the School's control.

Anyone who feels he/she is suffering from stress should, wherever possible, inform their line manager so that he/she will have an opportunity to resolve the problem.

If anyone feels that they are unable to raise the matter with their line manager they can contact the Headmaster or one of his deputies.

Individuals should also seek advice promptly from their union/professional association.

1.6. Statement of the Headmaster's Responsibilities

The Headmaster has a key role to play in considering the work load and health implications of decisions involving staff. It is recognised that the style of management adopted has an impact on stress levels amongst staff. It is the responsibility of the Headmaster and Heads of Department to;

- Ensure that adequate risk assessments are carried out to evaluate stress.
- Ensure that sickness absence and staff turnover is regularly reviewed and monitored to identify any problem areas.
- Be able to identify and respond to issues of work-related stress.
- Be aware that stress is minimised in an organisation where there exists mutual trust, promotion of self-esteem, shared objectives and common goals.
- Act on information/reports received from members of staff.

1.7. Statement of the Governor's Responsibilities

Governors will:

- Give staff comprehensive and relevant information about work-related stress.
- Put measures in place to prevent, so far as is practicable, work-related stress.
- Ensure that adequate resources are in place to support the policy.
- Review and monitor sickness absence levels and staff turnover.

2. Background information

2.1 What is Work-related Stress?

The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School will use the HSE definition of stress which is

"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work."

It is important to note that every job brings its own pressures and demands; these are an unavoidable part of working life. It is also important to distinguish between reasonable pressure and challenge, which are stimulating and motivating, and work-related stress which is a distressing reaction to demands, situations or circumstances that the person perceive they cannot cope with.

2.2 Why is Work-related Stress a Headteacher / Manager's concern?

There are 3 reasons why the School's SLT and Directors/ Governors need to be concerned and to take action to deal with work-related stress - ethical, legal and economic.

- **Ethical** - the School wishes to do as much as it reasonably can to control the risk of work-related stress adversely affecting the health and/or quality of life of its employees.
- **Legal** - the law requires employers to consider work-related stress. Health and Safety Law and other legislation require employers to take action.
- **Economic** – taking action on work-related stress makes economic sense too. Costs are reduced due to reduced stress-related sickness levels, reduced labour turnover lower accident rates, less ill-health retirement, lower insurance premiums and occupational health costs less "stress" litigation and higher productivity.

2.3 Does the School have to do something about stress caused by problems outside work too?

The School's Governors/Directors are not under a legal duty to prevent ill health caused by stress due to problems outside work. However, health problems and home pressures such as money worries or marital difficulties can reduce a person's ability to cope with work leading to further stress problems and a poorer performance. Therefore it may be appropriate to offer assistance or provide information about where such assistance can be obtained.

2.4 What are the causes of Stress?

There are three principal areas of life that may cause people to experience stress:

(a) Their personal life (Personal Stressors)
(b) Their working environment, which includes culture and style of management used (Work Related Stressors)
(c) The level of threat inherent in their job, given the difficult situations they often face and the people with whom they have to deal (Operational Stressors)

Situations/worries at work and/or at home can make people more vulnerable to the effects of stress. Either can exacerbate the other and affect a person's ability to cope.

All work has its pressures but we all vary in our capacity to cope with different types of pressure. Some pressure, even when high, can be motivating and a challenge. Pressures that people can respond to effectively are more likely to lead to job satisfaction. However, pressures at a level we cannot cope with are likely to result in stress. In some cases, too little challenge or pressure will have the same effect.

There is no simple way of predicting what will cause a harmful level of stress to an individual. People respond to different types of pressure in different ways. An exciting challenge to one person may be a daunting task to another, a repetitive job may be viewed by some as boring and monotonous, but others like and feel comfortable with routine. Much depends on the individual's own personalities, experience, motivation and coping style paired with the support available from managers, colleagues, family and friends.

Much may also depend on the pressures which people are experiencing outside work in their home and personal lives. People may come to work against a background of bereavement, family illness or worry, marital or other interpersonal problems. Although these factors are beyond the employer's responsibilities, line managers should be aware of them since they could make employees more vulnerable to stress at work as well as affecting their performance and judgment.

In general harmful levels of stress are most likely to occur where:

- Pressures **pile on top** of each other
- People feel **trapped** or unable to exert any control over the demands placed upon them
- People are **confused** by conflicting demands made on them.
- People feel **vulnerable** and ill equipped to deal with change.

Problems can be triggered or made worse where:

- People feel a high degree of **uncertainty** about their work, their objectives, or their job and career prospects
- Work schedules are **inflexible** and over-demanding
- There is prolonged **conflict** between individuals, including possibly sexual or racial harassment, or bullying, or where staff are treated with contempt or indifference
- There is a **lack of understanding and leadership** from line managers or supervisors. This does not mean that they have to be easy-going and undemanding. People usually welcome clear direction and will often feel less stress if they can see that the line manager at least understands the problems they are under and will do what he or she can.

Physical conditions in the working environment can also be stressful. These include:

- Lighting, badly maintained buildings, inadequate or poorly sited equipment;
- Excessive noise, heat, humidity and vibration;
- The presence of toxic or dangerous materials or other workplace hazards which might not be adequately controlled.

Certain kinds of job can, by their nature, place heavy emotional demands on employees, which, if not properly addressed, can result in harmful levels of stress. These jobs include those which involve continuous contact with or responsibility for people.

2.5 Causes of Stress in the Education Sector

Causes of stress for any individual or groups of staff within the School may vary, but there are a number of common factors, any combination of which may result in feelings of stress. These include the effects of rapid and far-reaching changes, time pressures, low perceived status, poor working conditions and poor pupil motivation. Other examples are:

Relationships with pupils

- Inappropriate pupil / teacher ratios
- Actual or potential violence from pupils
- Uncertainty about limits of discipline
- Teaching low ability children in mixed ability classes
- Challenging pupil behaviour – dealing with pupils, exclusions etc
- SEN inclusion where this is proving to be problematic
- Malicious allegations

Relationships with parents

- Lack of parental support
- Unrealistic Parental expectations
- Violence & aggression from parents sometimes under the influence of substances
- Malicious complaints

Relationships with colleagues

- Lack of communication
- Conflicts between members of staff
- Inequitable distribution of work
- Lack of contact with Peers
- Pressure arising from supporting colleagues who aren't coping
- Work place/work related bullying and harassment

Management and Organisational issues

- Total volume of work
- Volume of paperwork / administration
- Ofsted inspection process
- New policies / initiatives from the DfE
- Continuous deadlines
- Lack of support from external agencies
- Low level of input in decision making process
- Change in management style
- Quality of supervisory support
- Work overload
- Vacancies
- Teaching unfamiliar subjects
- Pressure to deliver on examinations
- Lack of funding
- Being set unrealistic targets
- Breaks/lunch time too short/not taken
- Job security

Societal Issues

- Poor perceived status and school ethos
- Changing societal expectations and concern about roles of school
- Dealing with anxious, aggrieved, or aggressive parents
- Scrutiny of teachers and Heads, criticism of profession
- Allegations against staff
- Dealing with the media

Personal Perspective

- Conflict between work and family demands
- Unrealistic expectations

- Sense of injustice / bitterness
- Role ambiguity, no clear work objective, no clarity regarding scope of responsibilities
- Career development difficulties, over / under promotion
- Long hours of working at home are seldom acknowledged and rewarded.

2.6 How to recognise stress?

The most observable distress signal is CHANGE.

In individual employees

Changes which may indicate stress may be noticed in one or more of 4 major areas:

Physical	Cognitive
excessive tiredness	lowered attention
tense facial muscles	memory problems
increased sickness absence	poor concentration
shaking	confusion
excessive sweating	difficulty making decisions
more frequent trips to the toilet	losing interest in paperwork
ill health	
Emotional	**Behavioural**
becoming moody and sullen	change in work performance
becoming angry or aggressive	withdrawing from others
over-reacting	becoming less co-operative
becoming impatient	accident proneness
depression	increased alcohol intake
tearfulness	increased smoking
getting upset and flying off the handle	increased/reduced food intake

Within the School/Department

There may also be indicators which reveal stress within the Department. These include:-

Work Performance	Relationships at Work
reduction in output	conflict and tension between colleagues
increase in error rates	poorer relationships with clients/customers
poorer decision making	increase in industrial relations or disciplinary problems

Work Performance	Relationships at Work
poorer planning and control of work	increased use of grievance procedure
Sickness and Absence	**Staff Attitudes & Behaviour**
increase in overall sickness absence	loss of commitment/motivation
increase in other forms of absence	longer hours worked with less return
change in pattern of absence e.g. more short term absences	erratic or poor timekeeping
	staff refusing to work overtime/stay to complete task

2.7 What action will the School take to manage stress?

Action will be taken on 3 levels:-

- **Stress Risk Assessment**
  - identification of potential causes of stress within the workplace and the taking of action necessary to reduce stress "as far as is reasonably practicable". i.e. Risk assessments – for Departments & individuals.

- **Information & Training**
  - raising awareness of stress and helping individuals recognise it in themselves and others.
  - helping individuals deal with their own stress.

- **Support and Rehabilitation**
  - providing support and rehabilitation for individuals and access to professional help for workplace, family or mental health problems.

2.8 The Legal Position

2.8.1 Health & Safety Law

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974, employers have a general duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health of their employees. This includes taking steps to make sure they do not suffer stress-related ill health as a result of their work. Ill health from stress caused at work has to be treated in the same way as health

due to physical causes in the workplace. This means that employers do have a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that employees' health is not put at risk through excessive or sustained levels of stress arising from the way work is organised, or from the day to day demands placed upon them in their work.

Also, employers must take account of the risk of stress-related ill health when undertaking their legal duties under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations, 1999. These include the duty to assess risk; duty to apply the principles of prevention; the duty to ensure employees' capability and to provide training and specific duties towards young people.

2.7.2 Employment Law

Health & Safety Law is not the only legal reason why action needs to be taken to tackle work-related stress. Examples include:

- Section 4A Public Order Act 1986 makes it a criminal offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour likely to cause harassment, harm or distress. This can be relevant to cases of bullying.

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence for a person to pursue a course of conduct which amounts to the harassment of another person. This harassment does not have to be motivated by a specific factor such as race or sex. This Act again may be relevant in some bullying cases.

- Employers have common law duties to take reasonable steps to ensure their employees physical and mental health at work. An employer will be liable in negligence for an employee's stress related illness provided:

  - It was reasonably foreseeable that the employee would suffer mental or physical illness
  - It failed to take reasonable steps to prevent the illness
  - The failure caused the ill-health

  - Within the Contract of Employment (written or otherwise) there is an understanding that employers and employees will behave reasonably towards each other in a spirit of mutual trust and confidence.
  - There are also considerations under the Working Time Regulations governing

- number of hours worked
- periods of rest
- paid holidays and time off for dependants

The Health & Safety Executive are also clear that employers must take steps to ensure the mental wellbeing of staff and consideration should be given to mental illness / disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) now covered by the Equality Act (2010).

Under current legislation employers have a duty not to discriminate against employees on account of any disability as defined under the Act. This involves making reasonable adjustment to the workplace or to the way the work is done, if the existing working arrangements or physical features place the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Ill health arising from, or exacerbated by, stress at work may constitute a disability under the Act.

3. Guidance on implementation

3.1 Stress Risk Assessment

There is a requirement for employers to consider stress when they carry out risk assessments. This will be the responsibility of the Headmaster/Directors of SJCAT as the employer. The Headmaster may delegate this matter to a member of the SLT as appropriate to help support a member of staff.

Stress can lead to ill health and employers must consider factors which are likely to cause intense or sustained levels of work-related stress.

There are likely to be external factors which cannot be controlled by the School. However, the School will do all that it reasonably can to ensure that basic systems are in place to control or reduce the level of risk in the workplace.

Some of the common causes of stress in the workplace have been identified. A key issue when looking at stress Risk Assessment is consultation with staff. This could be done formally on an individual basis or informally at a staff meeting or departmental meeting.

Whatever route is taken line managers need to ensure that their conceptions about stress and the causes are matched against the actual issues raised by staff. Immediate action may be appropriate where serious issues are identified or where several members of staff raise a key area of concern. Such matters should always be referred to the Headmaster.

3.1.1 Before undertaking the assessment

- Before undertaking an assessment the School will talk to all members of staff about work-related stress and explain that how to identify stress. All employees will receive a copy of the HSE's free leaflet –"Working together to reduce stress at work – a guide for employees".

3.1.2 The Risk Assessment Process

The School will undertake a risk assessment to identify the key areas of concerns and action that is required to support members of staff.

The need for an **Individual stress risk assessment** may arise from stress-related sickness absence, Harassment & Bullying/Grievance procedures or performance management/supervision meetings with individuals. Individual Stress Risk Assessments are considered to be most effective when carried out by the immediate Line Manager / Headmaster as they are best placed to address any operational issues which may be raised. However if the employee does not wish the Line Manager / Headmaster to be involved in the risk assessment interview, another option is to ask another manager of the SLT to undertake the assessment.

Step 1 - Identify the Hazards

The HSE have published **Management Standards** to assist managers to determine the causes of stress in their workplace**.** These Standards look at the six key areas of work that, if properly managed, can help to reduce work-related stress:

- **Demands** – Includes issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control** – How much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- **Support** – Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships** – Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role** – Whether people 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.

See details of each standard at Appendix 8 HSE Management standards.

The Management Standards will assist the Headmaster to measure performance in managing work-related stress. Each standard provides simple statements about good management practice in each of the six areas.

Stressor Identification Methods

The School will use the following methods to identify areas of stress for members of staff.

- High levels of sickness absence.
- Low productivity can be an indicator of problems.
- High employee turnover
- Performance Management offering a regular opportunity to have a one-to-one discussion about work and to explore whether people within the school / department are experiencing excessive pressure.

Step 2 - Decide who might be harmed

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Stress can affect anyone at any time. Some of it may be attributable to work whilst other stress elements may be personal. Some employees are more susceptible than others and some are more vulnerable at particular times of the year or their life.

Step 3 - Evaluate the Risk and decide on control measures/actions

Identify what action is already being taken to control the risk, whether it is possible to do more and if so what action is required.

Developing solutions is often the most difficult part of tackling the possible causes of work-related stress. Each workplace and each worker is different, meaning that it is not possible to describe one set of solutions for all circumstances.

Possible strategies for dealing with stress at work:

The School will consider a range of strategies including:

(a) Review of roles and responsibilities
(b) Assisting with planning
(c) Communication
(d) Training
(e) Supervision
(f) Work-Life balance
(g) Counselling

Step 4 - Record the significant findings and take the necessary actions

The findings will be recorded and an action plan developed and agreed with the employee(s) concerned.

Step 5 - Review the assessment at appropriate intervals

It is important to check that the risk assessment is still valid so it is essential that any action taken to tackle stress is reviewed. There are two elements to this:

- Monitoring against the action plan to ensure the agreed actions are taking place.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the solutions implemented.

Evaluating the effectiveness of measures to control stress and address stress related problems. This can be done by:

- Comparing sickness and absence levels
- Comparing accidents and incidents
- Reviewing complaints and staff turnover
- Using questionnaires

Review the risk assessments following changes in staffing, management structure or organisation.

3.3 Support & Rehabilitation for Staff Suffering from Stress

It is always preferable to tackle issues before they develop but inevitably there will be individuals who at some stage will suffer as a consequence of stress. Strategies to assist in supporting the individual may include:

- A re-examination of the individual's workload with a view to making beneficial changes
- A re-examination of the individual's timetable and rooming with a view to making beneficial changes
- Offering access to training in Stress Management
- Provision of access to OHU services
- Support from a Union / Teacher Association
- Informal meetings with colleagues / networking groups
- Sharing concerns with other colleagues / friends
- Promoting health and exercise
- Providing assistance in managing challenging pupils and parents
- Developing strategies and policies for dealing with aggression
- Encouraging staff to be more flexible
- Developing models of good practice in terms of stress and other aspects of school life
- More and better consultation with staff, including target setting
- Access to guidance via electronic websites

In severe cases it may be necessary to:

- Recommend a period of paid absence from School
- Refer the individual to the *Occupational Health Service [OHU].

Appendix 1

Guidance for managers and employees on dealing with stressful situations in schools

There are many different times in the school year that can provide additional pressure to employees. These may include:

- dealing with bad behaviour
- Ofsted Inspections
- report writing
- parent consultation/open evenings
- meeting with/calling parents
- accountability (targets)
- finance (particular issue for the headteacher and SBM)
- premises matters (particular issue for the headteacher and SBM)
- recruitment/ staffing issues
- conflict in the workplace

It is strongly advised that in order to combat these areas of pressure, employees should:

- attend all relevant induction/training/ Inset sessions that are provided so that they are aware of all school processes
- make themselves fully aware of the procedure to follow for each circumstance, for example. the School's Behaviour Policy, Grievance Procedure
- know who to call on for support if they need it
- admit that they are struggling before it becomes too difficult to cope with, and seek help and advice

Other ways that can help you at work and therefore deal with stress include:

- good diet (e.g. eat breakfast and lunch)
- drink plenty of water throughout the day
- learn to manage your time effectively
- exercise (including yoga and relaxation)
- take time out (e.g. don't work all weekend and evenings)
- avoid procrastination

All employees who are members of a Union or Professional Association are advised to contact them for support and guidance.

The headteacher/line managers could take the following steps to help to prevent stress:

- **encourage communication within the team**: Where employees feel that they can discuss problems with their colleagues this can help to reduce the risk of stress. This

could be achieved by holding regular team meetings and encouraging staff to approach their manager and colleagues informally with any issues that they have.

- **foster good relations with employees**: Line managers should take the time to get to know their team members, so that changes to their normal behaviour are easier to spot.
- **ensure that employees have an appropriate amount of work to do**: Where employees feel that they are unable to cope with their workload, this can cause stress. Managers should review regularly the amount of work employees have, for example at regular appraisals. They should consider the impact of absences and departures on remaining staff and how the work can be shared fairly within the team.
- **ensure that individuals take proper breaks**: Managers should check that employees are not regularly working long hours and that they take regular breaks. If an employee is consistently working through lunch or beyond his or her contracted hours, the line manager should try to establish if this is because of a short-term increase in work or if it is a longer-term issue. The manager should set a good example by taking breaks and working appropriate hours.
- **have regular meetings with employees**: Having regular meetings with team members about their work will give line managers a good idea of what employees are doing and any problems that they have.
- **conduct performance reviews**: Line managers should carry out formal performance reviews with the individuals in their team in line with the school/academy policy and give employees the opportunity to raise concerns during these meetings. This process should include setting clear, achievable objectives for the individual.
- **provide appropriate training**: Line managers should conduct regular reviews to identify training needs for the members of their team. Employees could be involved in identifying their own training needs. Where training needs are identified, the line manager should provide training. Training is particularly important for employees who have additional responsibilities following a promotion.
- **be alert during periods of change**: Line managers should keep employees well informed and encourage them to raise concerns during periods of change, for example when the organisation is going through a restructure.
- **recruit employees who have the skills to perform the role**: When recruiting, line managers should consider what the duties of the job will be and what skills and experience the successful candidate will need. This will help to ensure that the right person is recruited to the job, so the job-holder does not feel out of his or her depth.
- **do not delay**: Line managers should take immediate action when they suspect that an individual is stressed or when an employee informs them that he or she is experiencing stress. This should help to avoid the problem escalating and helps avoid liability if the employee ends up making a claim, and should help the employee to make a swift recovery.

If the headteacher/line manager becomes aware that an employee is experiencing stress they

should arrange to meet with the employee. This meeting should be held in private and be kept informal in nature. The line manager should ask the employee whether or not he or she has been experiencing stress and what the employee considers to be the contributing factors. Questions that may be appropriate to ask including:

"I'm concerned that you appear to be under some pressure. Can we talk about it?"

"One of your colleagues has told me in confidence that she is worried about you."

"Are there any problems at home that you want to talk about?"

"I want to help resolve this issue. Do you think that some extra training or support might help?"

"I think we should meet again in a couple of weeks to see how things are going, but in the meantime please come and talk to me if you have any concerns."

After the meeting the headteacher/line manager may need to conduct a more detailed investigation to establish the causes of, and contributing factors, the stress, particularly where the employee alleges that it is a result of poor management or bullying, for example. Once the line manager has established the reason behind the stress, he or she should explore what steps the organisation could take to alleviate the situation.

Steps that could be appropriate for the line manager to take to help relieve the employee's stress include:

- a phased return to work (following sickness absence)
- temporary or permanent flexible working arrangements, for example reduced hours
- redistribution of some of the employee's work
- a temporary or permanent change in duties
- providing training for the employee
- referring the employee for counselling
- putting in place a mentoring arrangement.

What action is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, including the reasons for the stress, the nature of the job, and what is considered reasonable.