



Management of Stress in the Workplace Policy/Procedure

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Consulted with: Recognised Trade Unions
Approved by: Business Services Committee
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This policy / procedure is not contractually binding upon employees or the College, except to the extent required by law. Where the terms of this policy/procedure are in conflict with an employee's terms and conditions of employment, the terms and conditions of employment shall prevail.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All employers and employees have a shared responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of employees at work under The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 1.2 Exeter College recognises its commitment through the general duty of care to its employees, which includes their mental as well as their physical health and wellbeing. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require an employer to "make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to health and safety of its employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work". The risk to health and safety includes mental as well as physical health and well being.
- 1.3 Pressure is a normal part of everyday life and can be productive as it can motivate us, and help us perform better. However, too much pressure, or prolonged pressure, can lead to stress. The Health and Safety Executive define stress as "the reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demands placed upon them. It arises when they worry that they can't cope."
- 1.4 Although an employer has no legal duty to prevent ill health due to stress that is not work related, it is not always possible to distinguish work related and non work related stress; one can lead to, or exacerbate the other. Exeter College wishes to support staff experiencing non work related stress, not only because there are sound business reasons for doing so but also out of concern for the wellbeing of its employees.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy/procedure applies to all employees of Exeter College, including Senior Post holders.

3. Purpose of policy/procedure

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy/procedure is to:
 - Increase awareness of stress and its consequences.
 - Provide information on support available to staff to assist them to recognise and manage unhealthy stress levels.
 - Prevent staff from being placed in situations that will contribute to or exacerbate work related stress, as far as is reasonably practicable.
 - Ensure employees experiencing stress are managed fairly, effectively and sensitively.

4. College responsibilities

- 4.1 The College will take steps to reduce health and safety risks from stress in the workplace to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

4.2 This will be achieved by:

- Undertaking a suitable and sufficient assessment to identify the hazard and calculate the risk of work related stress.
- Identified risks will be reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable through safe systems of work, suitable equipment, and information and training.
- Investigating any reports of work related stress
- Increasing institutional awareness of the potential signs and symptoms of work related stress.
- Communication and where appropriate consultation with employees regarding significant changes to their working environment or working practices.
- The provision of a range of support mechanisms e.g. Human Resources, Occupational Health, and their communication.
- Provide training to assist staff in the performance of their role.
- Ensuring that an employee who reports a stress situation is supported as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Encourage an employee who reports feeling stressed to complete a stress risk assessment. This is available on the Occupational Health area of the portal. It can be completed confidentially by the employee to assist them in managing their own stress, but it is recommended that they complete with their line manager to ensure that management are made aware of their situation

5. Employee responsibilities

5.1 All employees are under a legal obligation to report any physical or mental illness or injury which they feel has been caused or exacerbated by work. They must then:

- Raise the issue with their line manager (see section 6 below).
- Accept opportunities to alleviate stress when offered.

5.2 In order to support staff who are experiencing non work related stress, the College encourages them to report stress related symptoms that are having, or may have, an adverse impact on their health and/or ability to carry out their role, so that appropriate support can be offered if required.

5.3 The College cannot be expected to respond to alleviate a stress situation unless it has been made aware that such a situation exists.

5.4 Employees have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

- 5.5 Employees will make proper use of any equipment and systems of work provided for their safety.

6. Raising issues of stress

- 6.1 If a member of staff feels they are experiencing work related stress, they should raise the issue with their Line Manager.
- 6.2 The manager should discuss the issue with the member of staff, consider the possible causes and talk about potential courses of action to remove the cause and/or alleviate the symptoms.

7. Absence management

- 7.1 Sickness absence which seems to be wholly or partly related to stress should be managed in accordance with the College Sickness Absence Management Policy/procedure.
- 7.2 The manager, and if necessary, in conjunction with the employee, the OH Adviser and/or a member of the HR team, will identify, wherever possible, the stressors contributing to or resulting in the absence.
- 7.3 Managers will continue to monitor the employee's recovery and the factors that contributed to the stress to ensure that these have been removed or minimised, wherever possible.

8. Policy / procedure review

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years, or in line with changes in legislation and/or best practice, whichever is sooner.

9. Related policies and procedures

- 9.1 Sickness Absence Management Policy/Procedure
Health and Safety Policy
Flexible Working Policy
Dignity at Work (Prevention of Bullying in the Workplace) Policy/Procedure

10. Legislation relating to this policy

- 10.1 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999