



Wisdom for life

Stress Policy

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1. Introduction

Bishop Otter Academy Trust (BOAT) is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees and volunteers. We recognise that workplace stress, particularly in schools, is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This policy will apply to everyone (including students and volunteers) in the trust (including schools).

2. Definition of stress

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

3. Policy

- The company will identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- The company will consult with Trade Union Safety Representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- The company will provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- The company will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- The company will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the company's agreed stress management strategy.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Trustees (Finance, Audit and Risk Committee – FARC) is responsible for:

- Setting and reviewing this policy.
- Taking advice and feedback from the CEO, Headteachers and Local Governing Body (LGB) as required.
- Oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.

4.2. The CEO is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy for the core central team.
- Supporting headteachers and LGBs with the implementation at school level.
- Consulting and negotiating with Unions and the Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee (JCNC).
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress – particularly for core trust staff, senior school leaders and senior admin staff.
- Providing or sign posting specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- Training and supporting headteachers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- Supporting or signposting headteachers with additional advice regarding individuals who have been off sick with stress and advising them on a planned return to work.
- Informing the headteachers and FARC of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.
- Give guidance to headteachers on the stress policy.
- Helping the CFO monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advising headteachers and individuals on training requirements.
- Providing continuing support to headteachers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counsellors where appropriate.

4.3. LGBs are responsible for

- Ensuring that the headteacher has sufficient resources to implement this policy.
- Supporting the CEO to support headteachers and other senior leaders to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress and maintain a reasonable work-life balance.
- Monitoring the impact of this policy.

4.4. Headteachers are responsible for

- Implementation of this policy.
- Conducting and implementing recommendations of risks assessments within their school(s).
- Ensuring good communication between the senior leadership team (SLT) and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensuring staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensuring staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitoring workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.

- Monitoring working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Monitoring holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attending training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Being vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Supporting individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Developing associated policies such as wellbeing and initiatives to reduce workload as and when required.

4.5. Employees (including students and volunteers) are responsible for

- Raise issues of concern with your headteacher, line manager or mentor.
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

4.6. Safety representatives / union reps / JCNC must be:

- Meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress.
- Able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting any workplace surveys.
- Meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.
- Allowed access to collective and anonymous data from HR.
- Be provided with paid time away from normal duties to attend any Trade Union training relating to workplace stress.
- Able to monitor the workplace to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.