



Staff Wellbeing Policy

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Leadership Team Leader Reviewer: Trust Business Manager **Review Cycle:** 2 years **Last reviewed:** November 2022 **Date of Next review:** November 2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 As the employer of staff; Swift Academies recognises the statutory responsibilities related to employment. Day to day management of staff is delegated to the Executive Leadership Team, Head Teacher and line managers in each Academy. Throughout this document reference is made to the responsibilities held by the Local Governing Body/Head Teacher for operational purposes; the ultimate responsibility rests with the Trust.
- 1.2 Swift Academies and the Local Governing Bodies of Hurworth, Longfield and The Rydal Academies are committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and will provide suitable support for all members of staff. 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.
- 1.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Absence Management Policy.

2. Who This Policy Applies To

- 2.1 This policy will apply to all employees of the Trust working in the Academies.

3. Aims

- 3.1 This policy aims to:
 - 3.1.1 Provide a working environment which enables staff to carry out their duties effectively.
 - 3.1.2 Recognise the key role of the Head Teacher/Head of School & Line Managers for their responsibilities by enabling access to guidance, training and support.
 - 3.1.3 Encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional well-being.
 - 3.1.4 Comply with statutory requirements.
 - 3.1.5 Develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture through communication and consultation with staff and their representatives on health and safety matters.
 - 3.1.6 Develop an open culture in which mental, physical and emotional wellbeing is taken seriously and in which staff 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 Swift Academies and the Governing Body 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 upon a 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 Academy 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 staff.
- 4.1.3 Under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, employees have a duty not to endanger themselves or others and to co-operate with the Academy in meeting statutory requirements.
- 4.1.4 The Head Teacher/Head of School /Line Manager (or in the case of the Head Teacher/Head of School, the Governing Body) will use the risk management approach to identify specific stress risk hazards in the Academy.

This will include:

- Undertaking staff surveys
- Deciding who might be at risk
- Evaluating the actual level of risk
- Recording what action needs to be taken to avoid or reduce the risk, and
- Monitoring and reviewing to ensure the measures are effective

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 Academy must make “reasonable” adjustments to accommodate the needs of an employee whose mental health condition lasts longer than 12 months. However, that does not mean that the Academy 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 Trust’s Occupational Health provider the following will be considered as reasonable adjustments:
 - Phased return to work.
 - Provision of necessary and appropriate equipment.
 - Adjusting the timetable allowing flexible working hours for a defined period.
 - Adjusting rooming organisation.
 - Introducing additional class support for a defined period of time (e.g. teaching assistant).
 - Providing a confidential mentor.
 - 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 wellbeing and on student and Academy 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 wellbeing:
- Working Time Regulations
 - Employment Rights Act 1996
 - Employment Relations Act 1999

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The Local Governing Body 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 staff 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 staff feel comfortable in asking for help.
- 5.1.3 Where relevant; regularly survey staff to identify any areas of concern.
- 5.1.3 Act early and provide consistent support.
- 5.1.4 Enlist the support of Swift's HR function and Occupational Health when appropriate and ensure staff have access to this support.
- 5.1.5 Ensure staff have their roles and responsibilities clearly defined.
- 5.1.6 Ensure the implementation of the Management Standards for work related stress from the Health and Safety Executive or an equivalent programme (See Appendix 3 Making the Stress Management Standards Work).
- 5.1.7 Ensure that all Academy policies are assessed for workload impact.

5.2 The ELT/Head Teacher/Head of School/Line Managers shall:

- 5.2.1 Recognise the value of good management practice with systems in place to effectively manage staff.
- 5.2.2 Foster a supportive work environment.

- 5.2.3 Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour in staff.
- 5.2.4 Encourage sympathetic alertness to staff who develop signs of not coping.
- 5.2.5 Liaise with the Trust's HR function and refer staff 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 staff at regular intervals and intervene early with mental health related absences.
- 5.2.7 Be supportive in any return to work process and ensure staff feel welcome 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 Academy, to Trust employees maintaining a good work/life balance.

5.3 Staff shall:

- 5.3.1 Ask for support or help 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 Academy; e.g. counselling.
- 5.3.6 Be encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle and a good work/life balance.

5.4 Swift Academies' HR Function shall:

- 5.4.1 Provide the necessary professional advice and support to the Local Governing Body and all Academy staff when required.
- 5.4.2 Assist with the referral of staff to Occupational Health, Counselling or mediation when appropriate.
- 5.4.3 Assist in the formulation of return to work programmes and provide advice on the implementation of statutory requirements.

6. Support Mechanisms

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 The Local Governing Body hope that instances of workplace stress can be minimised by taking a proactive approach to managing stress involving risk assessment and training for staff. However, in cases where staff 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 (See Appendix 1, Dealing with Stress). Staff may also wish to speak to their Trade Union representative.
- 6.1.2 In cases where staff do not feel that their concern is being adequately addressed, they may take action under the Trust's Grievance Policy. 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 Trust's Staff Code of Conduct and Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policies should be followed.

6.2 Counselling

- 6.2.1 The initial series of counselling sessions can be provided where appropriate through the Trust's provider.
- 6.2.2 The second series of counselling sessions will be provided where this is deemed appropriate; please note that this will be subject to the Trust being in receipt of medical recommendation from Occupational Health.
- 6.2.3 Counselling services provided to employees of the Trust is a confidential, independent service using professionally qualified counsellors.
- 6.2.4 Staff can access the Counselling Service by contacting the ELT/Head Teacher/Head of School/Line Managers 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 Teacher Support Network

- 6.4.1 The education Support Partnership is a group of independent charities and a social enterprise that provide practical and emotional support to staff in the education sector and their families. To access the free support line staff can call 08000 562 661 or email support@edsupport.orf.uk

6.5 Occupational Health

- 6.5.1 Each Academy has free access to the Trust Occupational Health provider. This will enable an employee 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.

Appendix 1

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.

When suffering from stress, employees may:

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

Physical symptoms might include:

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

Employees may:

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

- Low self esteem

Employees may feel:

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

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

There are many organisations 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 in the table above, it may be advisable to speak to their GP. It is also a good idea to talk to their trade union representative, 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

The voice of carers

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

MIND <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/a-z-mental-health/> MIND Resources, information, advice and guidance

NHS <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/understanding-stress/>

National Health Service advice and guidance on mental 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/how-we-can-help/workplace/wellbeing-workplace/> 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.

Acas www.acas.org.uk

Information on bullying, including information on your rights

Mental Health

Mindful Employer www.mindfulemployer.net

Mind www.mind.org.uk/ 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 wellbeing in the workplace

Useful Reading

Acas http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/q/b/B18_1.pdf

Advisory booklet for employers and employees

National Social Inclusion Programme <https://www.ndti.org.uk/>

Publications on mental health available

Mental health organisation <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/s/stress>

CONTACTS

For advice on the content of this policy please contact:

Sarah Jones

Trust Business Manager

Swift Academies

sjs@swiftacademies.org.uk

Tel: 07825 401166