Sophia HIGH SCHOOL

Health & Safety Policy

2025 - 2026

Ownership & Consultation	
Document sponsors (role)	CEO / Director of Education
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Health and Safety Policy

This policy is to be read in conjunction with our Online Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

The school believes that ensuring the health and safety of staff, students and visitors and positively promoting health and safety is essential to the success of the school.

We are committed to:

● Providing a safe and healthy working and learning environment online, at home and at the Office,

● Preventing accidents and work related ill health

● Providing safe premises at HQ (including access and egress), and equipment

● Maintaining safe systems of work among staff (including teaching and non-teaching staff, residents, and students undertaking work experience) and students

● Assessing and controlling risks from curriculum and non-curriculum work activities

● Providing a safe means of use, handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances

● Formulating effective procedures for use in case of fire and/or the need for emergency evacuation in Head Office

● Providing adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to staff and students

● Consulting with staff, students and their representatives on health and safety matters

● Setting targets and objectives regarding health and safety performance to develop a culture of continuous improvement as part of our BCorp Certification.

● The regular monitoring and review of health and safety procedures and systems (to include risk assessments, accident records and health and safety related issues and complaints etc)

● Ensuring adequate welfare facilities exist throughout our online practice and in Head Office.

● Ensuring adequate resources are made available for health and safety issues, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The school will establish a Health and Safety Management System to ensure the above commitments can be met. Sophia Technologies, the Co-Leadership team, staff and students will play their part in its implementation.

Health and Safety Law

The Health and Safety Policy is to be read alongside the Online Health and Safety Policy (as the latter concentrates more with online responsibilities). All staff have a right to work in places where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. Health and Safety policy is about stopping you from getting hurt at work or falling ill through work. Your employer is responsible for health and safety, but you must help.

What employers must do:

1. Decide what could harm you in your job and what precautions can be taken to stop it. This is part of risk assessment
2. In a way you can understand, explain how risks will be controlled and tell you who is responsible for this
3. Consult and work with your health and safety representatives (line managers) in protecting everyone from harm in the workplace
4. Give you the health and safety training you need to carry out your job
5. Provide you with any equipment and protective clothing you need, and ensure it is properly looked after
6. Provide toilets, washing facilities and drinking water for those in office-based roles
7. Provide adequate first-aid facilities for those in office-based roles
8. Report major injuries and fatalities at work to Royal Borough of Chelsea and Kensington Council, who will log the incident and send a written report to the CEO.
9. Work with any other employers or contractors sharing the workplace or providing employees (such as agency workers), so that everyone's health and safety is protected.
10. Ensure that proper Ergonomics and Mental wellbeing policies and procedures are in place for remote staff as part of our commitment to Sustainable Development Goals.

What you must do

1. Follow the training you have received when using any work items your employer has given you
2. Take reasonable care of your own and other people's health and safety
3. Cooperate with your employer on health and safety
4. Tell someone (your employer, supervisor, or health and safety representative) if you think the work or inadequate precautions are putting anyone's health and safety at serious risk
5. Employee well-being and absence prevention. All employees have a duty to ensure that they take reasonable care for their own health and safety and managers need to ensure that the workplace is safe and without risks to health. All potential employees complete pre-employment questionnaires which summarise occupational health information
6. Employees who use VDU equipment may undertake an eye test.

The Human Resources / Occupational Health Departments will analyse this information and advice whether the individual is fit for the specified employment or fit with specified restrictions. These restrictions must then be explored, and reasonable adjustments considered where necessary.

Health and Safety in an Online School

As a full time, online school, Sophia High School is in a unique position with regards to Health and Safety as aside from our Sophia Head Office Team, The Engine Room, Battersea Power Station, SW11 8DZ, all teachers and students work and learn remotely.

This means that whilst we have due regard for all Health and Safety matters according to the UK Laws, the majority of Health and Safety responsibilities lie with staff, families and students from within their home learning environments.

As an online school, of particular importance are the following areas with regards to Health and Safety:

- **Ergonomics:**
  To ensure that staff and students are following best practice in ergonomics when learning and teaching online every day, we provide guidelines for what the most ergonomic sitting posture for children is, and how to set that up in your child's desk and chair. (Click on Ergonomics title to see guidelines). We also spend time in lessons teaching children about how to learn effectively online which includes, how to set up learning spaces, the correct technology to use and the importance of screen breaks which are built into the timetable.

- **Safeguarding and Online Safety**
  Keeping children safe when learning online is a priority at Sophia High School given our full-time remote learning approach to education and is a key part of both our Child Protection and Online Safeguarding policy. In addition, all staff, students and families are provided with our Digital Safety Policy and Digital Safety Agreement which is shared and agreed to at the start of every year.

- **Risk Assessments for Remote Learning**
  We understand that learning online may present additional risks to the health, wellbeing and safety of our staff and students. We undertake an annual risk assessment for remote learning that is discussed amongst our staff and identifies both potential risks and ways to lower these risks.

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing**
  The Mental Health and Wellbeing of students and staff is of paramount importance at Sophia High School. This is part of our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals We understand that teaching and learning in a fully online environment brings both challenges and opportunities to mental health and wellbeing practices. At Sophia High School both physical and mental wellness is an essential part of our curriculum; through a focus on Health and wellness related subjects during our IPC and IMYC units, as part of our PSHE program and in our daily staff and student team meetings.
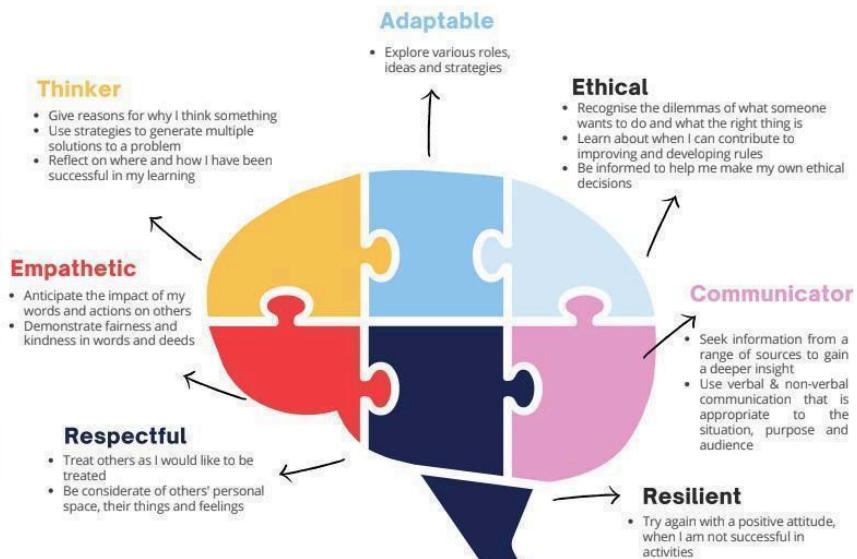 Teachers are also invited to participate in an 8 weeks program of Meditation and Wellbeing; aspects of which they bring into the classroom and share with their students. This is run by the Free Spirit Collective in Dubai.
  We also run meditation and wellbeing workshops throughout the year for our students.

The timetable also reflects the importance of children to concentrate on physical activities and time they can spend and share with their family members.

The breath of the curriculum and the students' own personal goals all contribute to making an all-rounded individual.

Personal Goals

Adaptable
- Explore various roles, ideas and strategies

Thinker
- Give reasons for why I think something
- Use strategies to generate multiple solutions to a problem
- Reflect on where and how I have been successful in my learning

Ethical
- Recognise the dilemmas of what someone wants to do and what the right thing is
- Learn about when I can contribute to improving and developing rules
- Be informed to help me make my own ethical decisions

Empathetic
- Anticipate the impact of my words and actions on others
- Demonstrate fairness and kindness in words and deeds

Communicator
- Seek information from a range of sources to gain a deeper insight
- Use verbal & non-verbal communication that is appropriate to the situation, purpose and audience

Respectful
- Treat others as I would like to be treated
- Be considerate of others' personal space, their things and feelings

Resilient
- Try again with a positive attitude, when I am not successful in activities

There are a number of areas within the Health and Safety remit which do not apply to our remote learning program at Sophia High School. These include:
- Fire
- Medical & First Aid
- Accident Reporting
- Evacuations
- Visitors
- Cleaning & Control of Substances (COSHH)

Policies in relation to physical school premises, with the exception of those mentioned in the policy below as they pertain to our Company Head Office and Head Office employees at The Engine Room, Battersea Power Station, 18 Power Station Road, London, SW11 8DZ.

- Our Head Office is managed by a third-party Property Management Company (IWG - The Engine Room) and their responsibilities are outlined in the policy below
- Hirers, Contractors & Others Using or Working in the School
- Off-site Visits
- * Educational Visits Policy - should our provision for Educational Visits change this policy will be amended accordingly.

The rest of this document covers all of our legal requirements for Health and Safety

Managers should use the following steps to prevent or reduce sickness absence:
Risk assessments need to be carried out routinely for new employees, as well as, for example, following office moves, for pregnant women and when an employee returns from maternity leave or from long-term absence. The Sophia High School Health & Safety Advisor will be able to advise in

situations where an employee claims that sickness absence is due to issues with their workstation or office environment.

1. Training: where relevant, this should be arranged for e.g. manual handling, working at heights, strain injuries (such as upper limb disorder) etc. The SHS Health & Safety Advisors can aid, or the Human Resources / Occupational Health Department can advise on this.
2. Understanding the effects of an employee's ill-health or disability: for example, sometimes this can be accommodated by making reasonable adjustments to working hours, equipment, or tasks etc. Advice and guidance are also available from SHS Health and Safety Advisors.
3. Eye Tests: Eye tests to be provided for staff as required through NHS
4. Display Screen Equipment: Assessments and records to be kept and maintained.

Stress management

The Management of Stress in Schools Guidance gives useful guidance on recognising the symptoms of stress and identifying possible causes and provides examples of how to reduce or avoid them. This guide can be found at the end of this policy.

Communication/Individual performance management

Understanding personal objectives and expectations and receiving regular feedback on progress and performance can assist in relieving stress at work. All teachers complete a TPGP at the start of the year, which they work towards with the support of regular mentoring sessions to ensure work is completed to standard with guidance and a range of additional resources available.

SHS follows the Government's guidelines of Health and Safety Procedures and Practices.

The Director of Education and Senior Leadership Team of SHS accept, and will meet, its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 (The Act) and other statutes and approved codes of practice.

It will do this by making every effort, insofar as it is reasonably practicable, to provide a safe and healthy environment for all its staff and students. It will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to protect the health and safety of those who meet its services and premises, by providing:

- A safe place to work, study and play, including access to and from the premises and a healthy environment and ergonomic advice to employees working remotely.
- Adequate provision, instruction, and information to enable all students and employees to avoid hazards
- Plant, equipment, and systems of work that are safe
- Safe arrangements for the use, handling storage and transport of articles and substances
- Adequate welfare and first aid facilities
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Should this healthy and safe environment not be maintained in any way, the CEO will restrict school activities, as necessary.

SHS has set up appropriate consultative systems to enable employees to contribute positively to the development of measures promoting health and safety at work

SHS expects its employees at all levels to set an example in safe behaviour, and to maintain a constant and continuing interest in safety, by:

- Acting in the course of their employment with due care for the health and safety of themselves, other staff, students and the general public, and by observing health and safety rules, wherever applicable to them or to matters within their control.

- Adhering to procedures, agreed on their behalf, for securing safe working; in particular, by using protective clothing and equipment provided, and making sure that students do the same.

- Reporting, as appropriate, accidents that have led or may lead to injury, and co-operating in the investigation of accidents with the object of introducing measures to prevent recurrence.

- On a day-to-day basis, observing that their working environment is safe, minimising risk and reporting hazards to their line manager.

The HR Department will review and amend, as necessary, the school's Health and Safety Policy annually, or in the light of further regulations and other guidance received from the Health and Safety Commission. All students, employees and other users of the school will be informed of the policy and amendments to it.

The Health and Safety policy will be supported by adequate resources, including for inset and training.

Responsibility holders and specific procedures are contained in the organisation and arrangements sections of this policy.

Management Obligations
The CEO is responsible to the CLA for health and safety matters. The Executive Principal, and others listed in this document or any amendment, are responsible to the CEO, so far as is reasonably practicable, for:
- Implementing, within their area of competence, the SHS General Health and Safety Policy
- The health and safety at work and employees under their supervision
- Areas of the Office specifically allocated to them
- Ensuring that all machinery, plant, and equipment procured, specified, installed, and maintained in their care, is safe for its intended use
- Upholding existing Codes of Practice in the various areas within the school, e.g., the use of safe equipment and appropriate advice to parents for home learning activities in the kitchen and when using learning resources.

The various Codes of Practice are located with The Senior Leadership Team
Teaching and non-teaching staff in all grades, and at all levels of responsibility, have individual obligations as employees of the School and CLA.
Visitors are expected to follow the instructions of their escort.

The CEO – Overall responsibility for Health and Safety Area of responsibility
Overall responsibility and authority for all matters related to the safety of school students and employees, and all other persons in respect of activities of the school or any member of it

- Implementation of the school's Health & Safety Policy
- Making recommendations on the policy and advising the relevant committee

- Delegation of responsibility and authority for safety matters via the management structure of the school in accordance with the arrangements detailed in this policy
- Liaison with Officials of recognised Trade Unions on appointment of Safety Representatives under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1978
- Keeping a register of Safety Representatives
- Maintain contact on matters of health and safety with the Safety Representatives and officers of the CLA
- Plan for training employees on safety at work, within the resources available

Premises Manager (3rd Party - IWG)
All team leaders are responsible for Health and Safety in their departments.

Area of responsibility:
1. All Head Office staff assigned to the Department, offices, and other areas specifically allocated to the Department.
2. All equipment and materials used or acquired for use in the Department on all sites.
3. Submission of risk assessment annually (or when areas are physically changed) with performance management review.

Premises Manager Present Post Holder: IWG
Area of responsibility:
1. Responsible for checking three times per year all fire extinguishers, fire blankets and other portable fire appliances
2. Responsible for informing the CEO when work is to be carried out in an area under their control or in an adjacent area, above, below or at the side of the workplace
3. Responsible for the safe maintenance and repair of defects upon receipt of written or verbal communications
4. Responsible for all equipment and materials used or acquired for use during, and in the exercise of, the Site Staffs' duties
5. Responsible for weekly fire alarm tests and fire evacuation controls, management on building first aid supplies and recording of incidents.

The Premises Manager authorised site users and visitors. The Premises Manager is responsible for ensuring that:
1. The annual check of electrical equipment is undertaken
2. All alarm systems are in good working order
3. The condition of the building is checked on a regular basis, and appropriate action is taken in the event of essential maintenance or repairs being required
4. Appropriate systems are in place to deal with emergencies and that all users of the site are aware of their own responsibilities in this area.

Other Responsibilities:
The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 emphasises the view that to achieve a successful implementation of Health and Safety Policy management, employee cooperation is essential. It is therefore necessary that all employees have clear lines of management to follow on health and safety matters.
1. The Local Health and Safety Contacts will have no executive authority beyond that attached to their normal duties.

2. The Local Health and Safety Contacts should be readily available to staff in their area of responsibility. They will be called upon to judge whether steps needed to remove potential hazards are within, or fall outside, the term 'reasonably practicable'. They will decide whether activities within their area of control should continue. The Local Health and Safety Contacts will be responsible for acquainting themselves with regulations pertaining to plant, equipment and activities in their area (obtaining external guidance where necessary), and for ensuring that all such equipment and activities comply with the appropriate regulations. The Local Health and Safety Contacts will take note of safety bulletins and safety instructions passed from time to time by the CEO and arrange for them to be distributed according to the requirements of the School. The Local Health and Safety Contacts will be responsible for producing a detailed statement indicating how the policy of the school will be implemented for their area. This will include safe working practices and procedures for areas of activities and give clear instructions for obtaining maintenance to the fabric and to plant and equipment.

3. Employees of SHS and other regular users. A Local Health and Safety Contact has responsibility for ensuring that all areas under their control are safe places of work, play and study for all employees and other regular users authorised to enter it. As part of that responsibility, the Local Health and Safety Contacts should ensure that employees and regular users of the school's head office facilities are properly instructed on safety matters. This includes safe working practices, procedures, restricted areas, and emergency evacuation procedures.

4. Visitors. The Local Health and Safety Contacts are responsible for the safety of visitors to the area of the school office within their control. They should ensure that visitors comply with safety procedures and are escorted where appropriate.

5. The Premises Manager is responsible for any area of the school office building in which a contractor is working.

6. Annual Internal Audit (Risk Assessment). It is the responsibility of the CEO to work with the Premises Manager to carry out, once a year, a full audit of areas of the School Office under her/his control in conjunction with any Local Health and Safety Contacts nominated.

General Duties
- Advising on the prevention of accidents to the staff, students, regular users, and visitors
- To receive comments from the staff and students on potential hazards and, if reasonably practicable, take steps to remove or reduce the hazard
- To report those instances where normal executive authority does not allow them to reduce the hazard, or where they have doubts as to the practicability of the solution
- Advising on the use of potential clothing and equipment and ensuring that such clothing and equipment are properly maintained and renewed where necessary, and are used by staff
- Ensuring that all accidents within their area of responsibility are reported and recorded in accordance with the procedures laid down in Paragraph 8. Establish, wherever possible, the facts of any accident by visiting the scene before site evidence is disturbed and, where practicable, ensuring that such evidence is not moved

Inspection

- Ensuring that a regular inspection is carried out and that appropriate records are maintained
- Inspecting, periodically, sites and places of work where staff are working to ensure safe practices and methods of work are being followed, and that appropriate plant and equipment are being used
- Assisting with Annual Audits.

Information and Training
- Ensuring that staff are fully informed of health and safety hazards, safe procedures, and relevant regulations, and provided with appropriate advisory literature.
- Ensuring that operators have been adequately trained in the safe use of items of equipment and maintaining a record of this training.

Maintenance of Building
- All employees should report any required maintenance to their Local Health and Safety Rep and/or the Premises Manager
- Local Health and Safety Contacts have a responsibility and authority to take out of use temporarily any area in which, in their judgement, it would be hazardous for employees to work, until such maintenance as is necessary has been carried out. Such action should be notified immediately to the CEO and the Building Management Staff
- Maintenance of Plant and Equipment Local Health and Safety Contacts must institute adequate procedures for the checking and maintenance of plant and equipment under their control, and associated records. Information about these procedures should be provided to all employees and students working under their control or supervision.

First Aid
- SHS are committed to the provision of first aid and will ensure that the levels of qualified staff are maintained if staff leave
- Arrangements have been made to provide First Aid boxes to all first aiders at the school building. It is the responsibility of the first aiders of the building management team to check the First Aid boxes regularly and report deficiencies
- Members of staff working in the school office will be encouraged to qualify as First Aiders in the workplace and training will be provided
- Requalification Lists of members of staff who are qualified First Aiders will be published and distributed within the school office. Any member of staff wishing to become qualified in First Aid should notify the CEO who will decide for them to attend an appropriate course. Should demand prove high, a place will be found as soon as reasonably possible, when funds are available
- Duties of First Aiders First Aiders may be expected:
- To provide on the spot treatment for minor injuries, advising possible appropriate further action to be taken
- To advise on the immediate supervision of serious accidents and to ensure that specialist help is obtained as necessary
- To report any incident where they have been needed. The formal report form will be used
- To inform all people they treat of the duty to complete an accident report form
- To maintain, and be responsible for, the contacts of specific First Aid boxes

Reporting of Accidents

- All major accidents/incidents which occur during the school day must be reported to the Lead First Aider, who will arrange for them to be reported to the Wandsworth accident line.
- Members of staff, and regular users of the school's facilities are required to report all accidents and incidents, however trivial
- In the event of a serious incident/injury*, the CEO should be informed.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 (RIDDOR) define a serious injury/incident as follows:

Serious Injury:
1. Death
2. Serious bodily injury, e.g. fracture of skull, spine, pelvis, arm, or leg
3. Amputation of hand, foot, or substantial part thereof
4. Loss of sight in an eye
5. Other injury which, at the time of the accident, appeared likely to endanger life, cause prolonged or permanent incapacity for the work at which the person was employed or studying, or substantially impaired their physical condition - for example, injury as a result of internal haemorrhage, burns (including chemical burns), scalds, asphyxia, electric shock, gassing or acute poisoning

RIDDOR and the Health and Safety Executive must also be informed if a member of staff is injured at work and off for 7 days or more because of this injury.

Serious Incident:
1. Explosion or fire, causing damage to the structure of any room or place in which persons are employed or studying, or to any machine or plant continued therein, and resulting in the complete suspension of ordinary work in such room or place, or stoppage of machinery or plant for not less than five hours, where such explosion or fire is due to: the ignition of dust, gas or vapour, the ignition of celluloid, or substances composed wholly or in part of celluloid
2. Electrical short circuit or failure of electrical machinery, plant, or apparatus, attended by explosion or fire causing structural damage thereto, and involving its stoppage or closure for not less than five hours
3. Explosion or fire affecting any room in which persons are employed, and causing complete suspension of ordinary work therein for not less than 24 hours
4. Explosion of a receiver or container used for the storage, at a pressure greater than atmospheric pressure, of any gas or gases (including air), or any liquids or solid resulting from the compression of gas
5. Dispersal of any radioactive substance by spill, fire, explosion or otherwise, involving in a single incident a quantity more than specified safety levels.

Visitors to the School Head Office
Members of the general public, students of the school and teaching staff should be made aware that if they have permission through the CEO to bring children on to the school office premises or school events if held on location, they are responsible for their supervision and safety whilst on the school premises, and that the children themselves must act in a safe and responsible manner, unless there is an organised function which has a crèche.

Fire Precautions
- Arrangements for fire drills, alarms and emergency evacuation procedures are included in the Staff Handbook which is updated annually
- All Building Management to have had Fire Marshall training
- Regular training and practice in the use of evacuation chairs and manual handling
- Automatic fire detection sensors to be used in all key areas
- Ensure all glazing is fire resistant.

Everyone must comply with the arrangements to minimise the risk of injury/danger to individuals. All fire marshals are asked to be aware of the different types of fire extinguishers, their location, purpose and usage (using the wrong type can be hazardous and endanger the operator).

All staff are asked to:
- Become familiar with the position of fire alarms and exits in their work areas
- Notify the Premises Manager immediately if any of the fire extinguishers are used or discharged accidentally
- Keep all gangways, corridors and exits clear
- Note that emergency exit doors are clearly marked, and should be kept unlocked while the building is in use
- Not remove fire appliances or re-position them without the authority of the CEO
- Refrain from smoking in all areas of the school and grounds
- Not re-enter the building in the event of evacuation without the permission of the CEO / Building Manager (Note: when there is a member of the Police or Fire Brigade present, NO ONE shall enter without seeking permission from the Police or Fire Officer in charge

On receipt of a bomb threat by telephone, or on being informed of a suspicious object found in the building, the person taking the call should:
- Remain calm
- Note the location, the time and try to obtain as much other information as possible from the caller
- Contact and notify a senior member of staff (i.e. CEO, Board of Directors or members of SLT) as quickly as possible

Action of a Senior Staff
The senior member of staff will:
- Receive a report from the person who took the message
- Evaluate, in consultation with the CEO or Board, who will inform the Police, if necessary, and arrange for them to be met on arrival
- Evacuate the building by sounding the alarm
- Ensure the building is completely evacuated at least 20 minutes before the time given for the device to explode
- All other staff and students should follow evacuation procedures as for fire drill.

Re-entry to Premises
- No unauthorised person is allowed into the building while the emergency lasts
- All members of staff will remain at their assembly points until they have received instructions from the CEO
- Should the device not be found, and the CEO is satisfied that the building is clear, the staff should be permitted to return. Staff should carry out a further check on returning to their own area of work.

Disabled Staff

The needs of disabled staff require special attention, particularly in ensuring that they can leave the building easily and quickly during an emergency.

Members of staff in management and supervisory positions must take particular care to ensure the health and safety of disabled persons for whom they are responsible. If necessary, they must make additional local or specialised arrangements. Each person with a mobility problem will have an individual evacuation arrangement.

Accidents and First Aid

A simple first aid kit is kept locally in the office kitchen. Only equipment from this box should be used.

Management of Stress in Schools guidance

Guidance Statement: The governing body recognise that stress is potentially a major cause of ill health amongst its staff. Stress related illness can be caused by work or by issues outside work. The governing body is committed to eliminating the foreseeable causes of stress at work, or if that is not possible, minimising or reducing the risk of work-related stress to employees to the lowest level.

The Executive Committee and CEO recognise that the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty of care on employers to provide and maintain safe systems of work and a working environment which is, as far is reasonably practical, safe and without risks to health Further, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty of care to assess and manage all risks of injury to employees and, where these risks cannot be eliminated, implement control measures to minimise or reduce risk. The governing body has overall responsibility for agreeing and reviewing the Health and Safety Policy, including issues relating to staff stress. On a day-to-day basis, the CEO has responsibility for taking requisite measures to deal with and alleviate any work-related stress where possible.

Other relevant legislation that has implications for managing stress at work includes the Employment Rights Act 1996, Public Order Act 1986, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Working Time Regulations 1998, and Equality Act 2010. There is also a duty of care for staff under common law. This policy is underpinned by the principles outlined in current case law. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the governing body operates a fair, consistent and open approach to the issue of stress.

The executive committee, with the CEO will therefore:
- Agree and review the Health and Safety Policy
- Seek to eliminate or, if not possible, reduce the causes of work-related stress through risk assessment
- Investigate all reports of work-related stress and ensure remedial action is taken - developing safe systems of work and introducing practical preventative measures
- Provide information and training for managers to help them recognise the symptoms of stress and give practical guidance on the measures that may be taken to assist individuals suffering from potentially stress related symptoms
- Provide information and training to all employees to enable them to recognise the symptoms of stress and the appropriate measures that may be adopted
- Support employees (including the CEO) to achieve healthy work-life balance
- Take a supportive attitude towards individuals experiencing stress whatever the cause

- Respect confidentiality always - with individual cases only being discussed in the appropriate forum
- Monitor and evaluate absence levels due to stress related illnesses
- Monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of the Policy and procedures for the elimination and management of stress on a regular basis.

The Executive Committee believes that the elimination and management of stress is an important management task and that it requires a tactful and diplomatic approach and the co-operation and involvement of managers, staff, the LA, and trade unions. The costs of not managing stress effectively are significant on both an individual and school.

Stress is an important issue facing education and can adversely affect the ability of educational staff to meet the continually changing demands placed on them. DfE research found that stress was the fourth most common reason for staff absence. There is a need for schools to eliminate, or if not possible, reduce the causes of work-related stress and provide supportive strategies for staff.

This will:
- Ensure good employment practice
- Ensure all legal obligations are met
- Reduce the direct and indirect costs of stress
- Help staff maintain a healthier work-life balance

The CEO has overall responsibility for the health and safety of employees whilst at work. The responsibility for managing stress within school is delegated to the governing body and CEO. Support is provided to schools by the local authority Health and Safety Advisor and the school's HR Manager.

Employees Guide to Managing Stress
Definitions of Stress:
The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as: "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed upon them". Stress is part of everyday life and an individual's stress level can vary depending on their tolerance and threshold. However, there is an important distinction between the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure and challenge (which can be stimulating and motivating) and stress, which is the reaction to the demands that a person feels when they cannot cope at a given time.

Legal Responsibilities, Policies and Procedures
Health and Safety Legislation Employers have a legal duty under Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety, and welfare at work of their employees. There is a general duty therefore to seek to protect employees from undue stress at work, dealing with stress related issues and taking appropriate action. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty on employers to assess and manage significant risks to health and safety and, where these risks cannot be eliminated, implement control measures to minimise or reduce the risk. Also, employees have a duty under Section (7) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Regulation 14 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

This includes mental hazards such as work-place stress as well as physical hazards. Governing Bodies and CEOs have a responsibility under the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 to manage work life balance. Liabilities in law arise where an employer does not demonstrate

reasonable care towards an employee, and it is reasonably foreseeable to the employer that injury will (and does) result, therefore. Injury can be interpreted as either mental or physical and while stress is not an injury a mental illness such as a nervous breakdown is.

1. Working Time Directive: The Working Time Directive came into force on 1 October 1998 aiming to limit the number of hours in an employees' working week, ensure adequate rest times, etc. When looking at the hazards relating to stress and the prevention and reduction of stress managers should consider working patterns and hours.

2. Equality Act: The Equality Act defines a 'disabled person' as someone with "a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities". Employees who experience temporary and short-term cases of stress related illness would therefore not fall within the scope of the Act. However, longer-term cases and other forms of stress related conditions such as history of long-term depression may be covered by the Act. For those employees whose conditions do meet the provisions of the Act the school is required to make reasonable adjustments. Further advice on making reasonable adjustments can be sought from the school's Chair of the Board

3. Case Law: There are increasing numbers of employment tribunal cases dealing with work related stress where employees have been awarded high levels of compensation:
   - Walker v Northumberland County Council - awarded £175,000
   - Lancaster v Birmingham City Council - awarded £67,000
   - Benson v Metropolitan Borough of Wirral - awarded £47,000

4. Policies and Procedures: There are certain established policies and procedures within school that may need to be considered when dealing with stress. These include:
   - Attendance Management
   - Competence of employees

Teacher Work-Load Issues Further advice can be sought from the school's HR and CEO.

The Causes of Stress Causes of an individual's stress may be work-related or non-work related and it may not be possible to predict how or when a person will be adversely affected by the pressures they experience. Within school there are times that are particularly stressful for staff

e.g. Ofsted inspections or school re-organisations/closures, but there are many on-going, continual factors that may cause stress in particular the degree and speed of current educational change.

Causes of Non-Work-Related Stress

Causes of non-work-related stress may include:
1. Bereavement
2. Relationship breakdown
3. Problems relating to children/parents
4. Childhood issues affecting adult life
5. Illness in the family
6. Financial problems
7. Personal issues such as gender, sexuality
8. Experience of chronic illness
9. Addiction
10. Abuse
11. Violence
12. House move.

Causes of Work-Related Stress

Causes of work-related stress may include:

1. School Culture e.g. management style
2. Poor communication leadership
3. Organisational change
4. Poor relations with co-workers
5. Lack of participation in decision making
6. The Environmental Factors e.g. noise, lighting, ergonomic design
7. Factors Intrinsic to the Job e.g. long hours, high workload, dealing with challenging behaviours, confrontational situations
8. Employee Development e.g. unsupportive feedback on performance, training needs, job security, lack of promotion - under/over promotion

The Effects of Stress

The effects of stress can be short-lived provided timely and appropriate action is taken. Early recognition of the signs of stress is beneficial to the employee and the school.

Effects on the Individual Work-related stress is not an illness but if it is prolonged or particularly intense, it can lead to increased problems with ill health e.g. heart disease, anxiety, depression, high blood pressure etc. It can also lead to other behaviours that are not helpful to health such as weight loss/gain, drinking too much caffeine, alcohol, and smoking.

Effects on School Stress has implications for a school and reducing stress is cost-effective. For example, stress can cause: An increase in sickness absence, which leads to:

- Increased workload for other members of staff
- Reduced staff performance
- Reduced staff morale
- Increased staff turnover
- Increased parental complaints
- Possible expensive litigation

The Signs of Stress Early recognition of the signs of stress is beneficial to the employee and the school. It is important to recognise that people demonstrate some of the symptoms of stress at various times in their life. This does not necessarily mean they are suffering from stress. The levels of stress that individuals feel will correspond to the symptoms they experience.

Physical Signs → Nausea Headaches Fatigue Shoulders, neck, back pain Cramps Chest pain Palpitations Weight loss/gain

Behavioural Signs → Smoking Alcohol - increased drinking Nail biting Changes to eating habits Erratic mood changes

Emotional Signs → Intolerance and irritability Withdrawal of social contact Low self-esteem Guilt Panic Worrying inappropriately

Work Related Signs → Reduction in productivity Increase in error rates Indecisive/ poor decision-making Deterioration in planning/control of work Tension/conflict between colleagues Increase in disciplinary issues Loss of motivation/commitment Working longer hours with little achievement Erratic/poor timekeeping Increased absence Evading deadlines Lack of concentration

Sickness Absence Analysis

An analysis of sickness absence can identify stress. Consideration may be given to:

1. individual problems - where there may be increased rates of either short-term or long- term absences, or possible stress related diagnosis
2. whether there may be group problems - where there are numbers of employees with increased sickness absence rates or with possible stress related diagnosis
3. by looking at medical certificates for stress as a specific reason for absence.

Personal Accident Report Forms

If an employee feels that they have an illness or condition caused by their work, it should be reported as a personal accident and investigated by the CEO. For details of accident reporting please contact the CEO.

Appraisal / Line Management Meeting Process

The appraisal / line management meeting process provides an opportunity for discussing and identifying if an employee has a problem. It is important for the CEO /Manager to listen to the employee and encourage them to discuss their feelings. Many teachers and support staff employees are reluctant to admit to feeling stressed at work as they may perceive it as a sign of weakness or failure or feel it goes against the management culture.

Informal Monitoring

The basis of this approach is that the CEO /Manager knows the members of the team, their individual skills, moods, personalities and how they respond to pressures and demands. They should then be aware of any difficulties and try to provide support and assistance.

Exit Interviews

Exit interviews occur when employees leave a job and can be a useful way of gaining insight and understanding into how employees view their job and the school.

Stress Audit

The CEO may wish to carry out an individual stress assessment. It is important that these are carried out on a confidential basis and that staff are aware of what the information will be used for. While these may give a good indication of stress levels, they can be time consuming in carrying them out and analysing the results.

Addressing and Reducing Work-Place Stress - The Role of the CEO and Manager

The executive committee and CEO are responsible for the health and safety of the employees in the school. When identifying the hazards employees face, consideration should be given to the causes of stress, making reductions as far as possible and taking appropriate action to monitor.

The School's Approach

The school's approach to stress should be supportive. If the cause of stress is not work related the employee should be supported via existing mechanisms such as their GP, Employee Wellbeing, etc. Where an employee has been absent from work for a long period, measures such as a phased return or a temporary reduction in hours or a temporary reduction in responsibility could be considered to aid in the return to school.

If the source of stress is work related, the CEO /Manager should undertake a risk assessment/risk reduction approach to the problem (this is a delegated responsibility from the LA). All reasonable,

practical steps should be taken to ensure the health and safety of employees. Evaluation should be undertaken annually to ensure that the responses that have been made are working and being observed. All staff have a responsibility to look after their own health and safety and ensure that they raise concerns at an early stage

Risk Assessment
Risk assessment is the process of identifying areas of work/work organisation that are likely to result in ill health (stress) and to attach an assessment of the likelihood and severity of that risk. Advice on carrying out a risk assessment can be obtained from the LA's Health and Safety Advisor.

Once the risk assessment has identified likely sources of stress, suitable measures should be developed and put in place to minimise the likelihood of 'ill health'. For example, in cases where staff take excessive amounts of work home and/or work longer hours, the school should ensure that a system is in place to monitor and address workloads. Also, where staff must deal with high levels of challenging behaviour the school should provide training and strategies for them to use.

The Manager's Responsibility
Managers have an important part to play as they are best placed to observe stress developing. They should ensure that they are aware of employee workloads and of employees' concerns both generally and specifically as they relate to work. This responsibility will apply to all appropriate line managers throughout the structure of the school.

Developing A Supportive Culture
Means of reducing stress is intrinsic to good management and it is important for the CEO and managers to show that stress is an issue that the school takes seriously and to be understanding to staff who admit that they are under too much pressure. Staff, in particular when remote working, can often feel isolated and unable to share their problems with others. An open-door policy can help eliminate feelings of having to cope alone and reduce stress.

     Managers should:
- Ensure they are accessible to staff to discuss problems
- Raise awareness of stress and demonstrate that it is not an indication of weakness
- Help new staff by having a good induction programme
- Encourage staff to talk about feelings of stress
- Encourage supportive behaviour in other team members
- Develop a team spirit to reduce feelings of isolation
- Provide support to staff returning to work after long term absence e.g. phased return, shorter hours
- Provide training on stress - on an individual or group basis
- Provide training on time management, management skills, assertiveness etc.

Management Style and Organisation
How a school or department is managed can contribute to workplace stress. The CEO and managers should consider:
- Ensuring effective communication takes place involving all staff
- Fostering cooperation, not competition - encouraging teamwork and participation
- Setting clear aims and having clear policies
- Ensuring sufficient and appropriate training
- Giving constructive feedback on performance
- Having effective mechanisms for identifying problems such as sickness absence and work performance at an early stage
- Helping staff recognise their own limitations and skills

- Regularly reviewing workloads and allocate work accordingly.

Other Considerations
The CEO and managers can also look at:
Factors in Reducing Work Stress Management e.g. effective, open management, good communication, employee involvement especially in periods of change, valuing staff

School Issues e.g. ensure training for dealing with challenging behaviour, provide support & use school procedures for cases of verbal/physical abuse, harassment and bullying.

Job Design e.g., well-defined tasks and responsibilities, address workload issues including working time, sufficient training, utilisation of skills etc.

Employee Development e.g. ensure clear objectives and understanding of responsibilities, ensure training needs are met and reviewed regularly, provide appropriate support etc.

Sources of Help
- Employee Support Employee Assistance Programme Counselling, advice and information on a range of issues and services Teacher Support Line Free information, support and counselling for teachers. 24 hours 08000 562 561 http://www.teachersupport.info/ Trade Union Contact school's union rep
- General Support Careline Telephone counselling service for the general public: 020 85141177 Carers Line Help and advice line: 0808 8087777
- Cruse Bereavement Service Helpline for bereaved people and those caring for bereaved people: 0870 1671677
- Drink line Advice, information and support to anyone concerned with their own or someone else's drinking: 0800 9178282
- Gam Care Confidential counselling, advice and information for those with a gambling dependency: 0845 560001333
- National Debt line Help for anyone with debt/money issues: 0808 8084000
- National Drugs Helpline 24-hour helpline for drug/solvent users, their families, carers and friends: 27 0800 776600
- NHS Direct 24-hour confidential helpline for health concerns: 0845 46 47
- Parent line Helpline for support and information to those in a parenting role: 0808 8002222
- Refuge 24-hour helpline for those suffering from domestic violence: 0870 5995443
- The Samaritans 24-hour helpline for emotional support: 0845 7909090
- Victim Support Line Helpline for emotional support and advice for those affected by crime: 0845 3030900.

Publications Tackling Work-Related Stress:
A Manager's Guide to Improving and Maintaining Employee Health and Well-Being. HSG218HSE Books 2001. ISBN 0717620506
Managing Work-Related Stress: A Guide for Managers and Teachers in School. HSE Books 1998. ISBN 0717612929.
ACAS Health Work and Wellbeing www.acas.org.uk 28 Employees Guide to Managing Stress 1. WHAT IS STRESS? The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed upon them".
Stress is part of everyday life and an individual's stress level can vary depending on their tolerance and threshold. However, there is an important distinction between the beneficial effects of

reasonable pressure and challenge (which can be stimulating and motivating) and stress, which is the reaction to the demands that a person feels when they cannot cope at a given time.

The duties of your employer

The LA and your Executive Committee has a duty to ensure that the health of employees is not harmed by work related stress. They must:

- Assess the risk to your health from work related stress
- Put in place measures to eliminate, or where that is not possible, to reduce that risk
- Consult you, either directly or through your trade union about workplace and organisational changes that are likely to significantly affect your health and safety.

Your Role/Responsibilities

You and your colleagues may suffer sometimes in your working life from stress at work. It is important that you can recognise factors in the workplace which may cause stress. It is also helpful if you recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in yourselves or others in order to take positive action.

Legally you have a duty under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Regulation 14 of the Management if Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your acts or omission whilst at work.

The effects of stress

Different people perceive different events as stressful. Therefore, stress may be experienced because of exposure to a wide range of work demands and this therefore may contribute to an equally wide range of health issues. We respond to short-term stress in several ways. These responses allow the body to get rid of built-up energies on a regular basis and let the body recover and return to normal. These responses include the heart beating faster, tense muscles, extra cholesterol and sugar in the blood and slower immune and digestive responses.

Prolonged stress, or if it is particularly intense can lead to increased problems with ill health e.g. heart disease, anxiety, depression, high blood pressure etc. It can also lead to other behaviours that are not helpful to health such as weight loss/gain, drinking too much caffeine or alcohol and smoking.

The signs of stress

Early recognition of the signs of stress is beneficial to all. It is important to recognise that we demonstrate some of the symptoms of stress at various times in their life. This does not necessarily mean we are suffering from stress.
The levels of stress we feel will correspond to the symptoms we experience.

Physical Signs: Nausea Headaches Fatigue Shoulders, neck, back pain Cramps Chest pain Palpitations Weight loss/gain
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Work Related Signs Reduction in productivity Increase in error rates Indecisive/ poor decision-making Deterioration in planning/control of work Tension/conflict between colleagues

Increase in disciplinary issues Loss of motivation/commitment Working longer hours with little achievement Erratic/poor timekeeping Increased absence Evading deadlines Lack of concentration

Generally, the best way to identify your own or a colleague's stress is to be aware of normal performance levels, general demeanour and behaviour at work.
Where there are changes in any of these behaviour patterns it could be the effects of stress. These signs are often picked up by other people before we acknowledge them ourselves.

What do I do if I feel stressed?
There are support mechanisms and procedures in school to help you resolve workplace stress:
Communication: If you feel that there are aspects of your work which are causing you to feel excessively stressed you should discuss them with your CEO /Manager who will try and help you resolve the situation. They may also ask you if you have any problems related to stress, either as part of appraisal/line management meetings or absence control procedures. If your problems are related to home or are of a personal nature you may also wish to discuss them with your CEO /manager. They may be able to assist with emotional support or practical help such as compassionate leave. Your Head /manager will treat all your conversations in strictest confidence

Seeking Other Support
You may feel that talking to your Head /manager is difficult and, in these circumstances, you may wish to contact your trade union representative for support and advice. They have contacts with their own support systems, the LA and other outside agencies who they can approach with you or on your behalf. Support can also be gained from your GP, the LA, agencies who provide information and advice in respect of specific issues e.g. Relate.

Individual Strategies: On a personal level it is useful to be able to analyse and examine your reactions to stress and to be able to reduce the effects as much as possible. Your chosen methods of reducing stress are as individual as the causes of it.

Strategies for dealing with on-going stress
There are many things which can help you improve the situation to gain short-term relief and provide strategies for dealing with on-going stress:
- Be assertive – stand up for yourself
- Develop good points both in yourself and others
- Be positive, see the positive side of yourself and others
- Relaxation – this opposes the stress response and helps the re-balancing process
- Physical activity – use up the energy created by the stress response, this helps restore balance and build fitness
- Sleeping well – adopt regular sleep patterns
- Avoid trying things which cause more side effects than the stress such as alcohol, smoking, caffeine, overeating, aggression
- Eat well – the basis for good health which helps you to handle the pressure of stress
- Friendships – give the opportunity to talk and share
- Emotional release – laughing, crying, and talking helps release some of the tensions of stress rather than keeping them bottled up Appreciate the present rather than dwelling on the past