



FOUNDATIONS

DAY NURSERY

Est. 2010

Stress Management

Policy Statement

Fun Foundations Day Nursery recognises that its staff are its most valuable asset, and that only through their personal and professional development - in a healthy and safe working environment - can they be encouraged to contribute fully.

We aim to promote the physical, psychological and social well-being of all its employees. It is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that no member of staff is subjected to an excessive and sustained level of work-related stress that is detrimental to their health.

Objectives Of The Policy

Fun Foundations aims to help understand the concept of work-related stress and put in place both preventative and reactive measures including:

- promoting a culture of encouragement, participation and open communication.
- increasing awareness of the concept of work-related stress and the methods available to combat this.
- Identify workplace stressors by conducting stress risk assessments.
- assisting staff in managing stress in themselves and others
- Consultation with the H&S Forum on all proposed action aimed at reducing workplace stress.
- providing appropriate and confidential support for those who are experiencing stress.

Definition Of Stress

Fun Foundations Day Nursery accepts the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) definition of stress.

Currently, the HSE states:

"We define work-related stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'.

This makes an important distinction between the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure and challenge and work-related stress, which is the natural but distressing reaction to demands or 'pressures' that the person perceives they cannot cope with at a given time.

Work-related stress exists where people perceive they cannot cope with what is being asked of them at work. It is important to remember that work-related stress is not an illness and based on individual perception, but if it is prolonged or particularly intense, it may lead to problems with ill health.

Effects of Stress

While each individual's response to stress is unique and based on personal perception and interpretation, some common symptoms are potentially discernible:

- a. Behavioural - withdrawal, hostility, excessive eating, drinking or smoking, poor concentration, being too busy to relax, absenteeism;
- b. Emotional - loss of confidence, lack of self esteem, anxiety, frustration, anger, apathy;

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- c. Physical - difficulties in sleeping, frequent and unspecified aches and pains, digestive problems.

Displaying some of these symptoms does not automatically indicate that a person is experiencing stress, but they point to such a possibility.

Signs of Stress in the Workplace

An individual's stress can be detrimental to him- or her-self and also adversely affect the efficiency, image and costs to our nursery; the knock-on effect on other staff can be considerable and can, in turn, increase their stress levels. Morale and Health tend to suffer, resulting in inefficiency, poor relationships, sickness absences, and high staff turnover.

In general, potentially harmful levels of stress are most likely to occur in the following circumstances:

- a. when pressures or stressors accumulate or are prolonged;
- b. when individuals perceive themselves as being unable to exert any control over the demands that are placed upon them, and/or are left feeling confused by conflicting demands that are made upon them.

Some of the common symptoms of stress problems in an organisation include:

- a. inferior work performance, loss of motivation and commitment, tense relationships at work and increased sickness absence.

Responsibilities Of Managers

All employees can contribute significantly to maintaining a positive workplace culture. This is especially true of those in a managerial role who can design the workplace to prevent work related stress and display a leadership style which encourages their colleagues discuss feelings of stress without the stigma of this being interpreted as a sign of weakness or failure.

In order to enable managers to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of instances of excessive and sustained work-related stress which are brought to their attention, they will receive information about, and training in, the basic physical and psychological symptoms of stress in order to take appropriate and reasonable action to avert this.

Line Managers will carry out stress risk assessments for their work area, to identify potential stressors and ensure that the appropriate preventative and control measures are in place.

The manager is neither expected nor presumed to have specialist knowledge in this area but is responsible for requesting the training appropriate to their level of experience and knowledge.

Line management tasks that are designed to prevent and reduce work related stress include:

- good communication through one-to-one supervisions and team meetings
- ensuring team members are trained to carry out their roles
- monitoring of workload to ensure it is appropriate.



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Responsibilities Of All Employees

Employees have a responsibility to take reasonably practicable steps to minimise their own stress levels and those of their fellow workers who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

Employees also have a legal responsibility to comply with the Health and Safety at Work legislation and other statutory regulations to take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of other people with whom they work. Employees should, therefore, draw to the attention of their manager any concerns about work-related stress which might present a health hazard to themselves or other people (see the section on what to do if you believe you may be experiencing work related stress).

What To Do If You Believe You May Be Experiencing Work Related Stress

There are many things which you can do to relieve the symptoms of stress. A leaflet produced by the Health & Safety Executive outlines some of them. A copy of this leaflet (produced by ACAS) is available by contacting a line manager or the Health and Safety representative. If none of these measures are effective or appropriate in your situation, the following steps should be taken:

- If you notice symptoms of stress in yourself or experience any health issues which affect your work, you should consider discussing this with your manager in the first instance.
- If you decide that this is not appropriate, or you feel that the matter requires additional professional guidance, you should contact the Human Resources Business Partner for Fun Foundations who may, depending upon circumstances, suggest that you be assessed by an Occupational Health Professional.

The involvement of the Occupational Health Service at an early stage can help facilitate the co-ordination of communication between the nursery and your own General Practitioner as well as providing advice as regards future management.

If you consult the Occupational Health Service a report will be sent to the Human Resources Business Partners. You have a right to view, comment on but not amend the report prior to it being sent to the nursery.

The release of medical information from your general practitioner requires your specific consent in accordance with the Access to Medical Records Act 1988. The HR Business partners will ensure that you give the necessary consent prior to contacting the Occupational Health Service.

Procedure For Managing Cases Of Work Related Stress

When it is brought to the attention of a manager that a member of staff has symptoms of stress, including frequent short-term absences, which is affecting their work, there should be a joint discussion with the person concerned in the first instance.

If both the manager and the member of staff consider that the matter requires additional professional guidance, reference should also be made to the Human Resources Business Partners who may, depending upon circumstances, suggest to the staff member that they be assessed by an Occupational Health Professional.



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Wherever reasonably practicable, an employee experiencing excessive and sustained work-related stress will have their work adapted, including the possibility of alternative employment within the nursery, so as to remove the risk or reduce it to an acceptable level.

A joint strategy will be agreed with the person concerned, their manager, the Human Resources Business Partners and Occupational Health as appropriate. If there is no suitable alternative employment within the nursery then an employee should recognise that, ultimately, it may be necessary to terminate their employment.

Managers must keep records of the advice and action they have taken in relation to an employee suffering from work-related stress.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, the employee has the right to access such information. Progress should be recorded, monitored and reviewed appropriately.

Counselling

Any employee suffering from work –related stress will also be offered the opportunity to attend workplace counselling through Occupational Health.

Risk Assessing stress

Culture

The way an organisation operates and the messages received from its leaders play a significant part in creating an environment that is supportive, open minded and emotionally healthy.

This can be provided by:-

- **Leadership Style:**
 - Dealing with staff in a sensitive and caring fashion. Monitoring of staff satisfaction and well-being on a regular basis.
 - Ensuring that all staff know whom to talk to about problems.
 - Fostering a team approach and good relationships between members of staff.
 - Having one-to-one supervision meetings every six to eight weeks as an open dialogue and way to foster support and open communication about any issues that the individual employee is struggling with.

- **Communication:**
 - Having regular two-way communication with staff, not only at formal meetings - making sure there is also an opportunity for informal discussion.
 - Communicating and discussing team objectives.
 - Recognising and praising individual or group achievements; hard work and efforts.
 - Giving support and providing constructive criticism when required; making opportunities for staff to discuss their concerns. Listening sympathetically and taking appropriate action.
 - Assessing the impact that your actions and decisions have on the staff for whom you have responsibility, e.g., prepare staff for proposed changes in staffing levels, work tasks and responsibilities.



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• **Work and work design:**

- Setting out clear roles and responsibilities for staff which they understand and which they can work to.
- Regular reviewing of known work pressures such as excessive workload, tight deadlines, staffing levels, and the need for staff skills development.
- Identifying jobs where stress has been or is a problem and seeing what can be done to reduce the risk of stress to jobholders.
- Allowing flexible work schedules when this is reasonably practicable and depending on business need.

Fun Foundations Day Nursery's Resources To Support Individuals Who May Be Experiencing Work-Related Stress Include:

The nursery has a dedicated Human Resources Business Partner who work closely with the the management team to ensure matters of Stress related complaints are taken very seriously. Also the nursery manager is available for confidential advice on how to manage work-related stress and what to do if an individual is feeling unmanageable pressure and stress.

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| Signatures | Date for review |
| A. Ferguson | June 2024 |