

Staff Well-being Policy 2024

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (EFSA). All Members of the Board of Trustees of the exempt charity are also Directors of the company; the term 'Trustee' used in this policy also means Director. This policy applies to all staff employed by the Link Academy Trust.

1. Introduction

The Trust as an employer has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' physical and mental well-being, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the Trust's control.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

This policy recognises that there are many sources of work related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees or pupils.

The Health and Safety Executive has produced a number of **Management Standards** which cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands** – i.e. workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control** – i.e. how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- **Support** – i.e. the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships** – i.e. promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change** – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation.

The Trust's performance on well-being and stress management will be assessed in the context of the HSE Management Standards.

2. Statement of Intent

The Trustees, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Trust's senior managers acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case as well as a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote employee well-being as far as reasonably practicable.

The Trustees, CEO and the Trust's senior managers are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

The Trustees, CEO and the Trust's senior managers recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on employees' well-being, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

The Staff Well-being policy expands upon the Trust's Health and Safety Policy, setting out how the Trust will promote the well-being of employees by:

- Creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors as far as practicable are avoided, minimised or mitigated through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and staff development.
- Increasing managers' and employees' awareness of the causes and effects of stress.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Developing the competence of managers, so that they manage staff effectively and fairly.
- Engaging with staff to create constructive and effective working partnerships both within teams and across the Trust.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby employees feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own health and well-being through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging staff to take responsibility for their own work and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

3. Responsibilities for implementing the Staff Well-being Policy

3.1 The Trustees, Governors, CEO and the Trust's senior managers will:

- Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect within the Trust.
- Champion good management practices and the establishment of a work ethos within the Trust which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables employees to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".
- Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation to management structures and working arrangements.
- Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being.
- Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and dignity, and will promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams they manage. They will not permit unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.
- Ensure that there is good communication within their team and there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work, seeking advice from Human Resources and the Health and Safety Coordinator at an early stage where concerns are raised.
- Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- Co-operate with Human Resources and the Health and Safety Co-ordinator to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken for roles or working practices that may give rise to work-related stress.
- Encourage their staff to participate in events and initiatives undertaken by the Trust to promote well-being and more effective working.
- Take action in the interests of all their colleagues where performance by a member of staff may cause stress to their colleagues.

3.2 Employees will:

- Treat colleagues and all other persons with whom they interact during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity.
- Co-operate with the Trust's efforts to implement the Well-being policy, attending briefings and raise their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress on health.
- Raise concerns with their line manager/Trust HR Operations Manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being.
- Take responsibility for their own health and well-being by adopting healthy lifestyles.
- Take responsibility for their own development skills as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce the risk of stress.
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, thus helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

3.3 Human Resources will:

- Provide advice to managers of staff and employees on best practice in relation to human resource management, developing policies and procedures as required.
- Ensure that there are arrangements in place for communicating the content of the Trust's Personnel Policies and procedures to managers and staff.
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to the Trust's Occupational Health advisers where appropriate.
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to support managers experiencing problems with employee performance.
- Collate management information which will enable the Trust to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as:
 - Sickness absence data
 - Staff turnover, exit interviews
 - Number of contacts made to the Employee Assistance Programme
 - Number of referrals to the Occupational Health contractor
 - Numbers of grievance and harassment cases.
- Seek the views of employees on the effectiveness of the Trust's Well-being Policy and stress management arrangements using staff surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.
- Ensure that the Well-being Policy is kept under review and updated as appropriate, under the remit of the Remuneration Committee.
- Review the Policy every two years following feedback from staff surveys, management information provided and the findings of stress risk assessments, and in consultation with other appropriate bodies.

3.4 The Health and Safety Co-ordinator will:

- Assist and support managers to undertake local stress risk assessments where required.
- Liaise with Human Resources on the development and implementation of the Well-being Policy.

3.5 The HR Workforce Group will:

- Determine the Well-being policy following review and recommendation from the HR Operations Manager
- Monitor the implementation of the Well-being Policy and the operation of associated arrangements such as the Trust Occupational Health Advisers.

4. **Arrangements for implementing the Well-being policy**

4.1 Arrangements for well-being and stress prevention through good management practices

These include the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures.
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that the 'right' person is recruited for the job.
- Agreed knowledge, skills and behaviours for managers, to be cascaded through to all levels of management and supervision.
- Training and Development procedures to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/duties required of them.
- Promotion and reward procedures.
- Managing performance procedures
- Capability and absence management & return to work procedures to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.
- Suitable adaptations for disability.
- Harassment and anti-bullying procedures.
- Procedures for communicating with employees on the work of the Trust and issues affecting their work.
- Flexible working arrangements, and contact days with staff on maternity leave.
- The arrangements will be updated and augmented as required and when deemed necessary by the findings of stress risk assessments.

5. **Consultation and Communication**

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- Staff surveys will be used to gather feedback on Well-being.
- The Well-being policy will be published to all staff.
- The Well-being policy will be promoted in every academy.
- The contents of the policy will be covered and included during general induction of staff.

This Policy is reviewed by the HR Workforce Group on a 2-yearly cycle.

Approved by the CEO: July 2024