Children First Learning Partnership

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

Stress and Wellbeing Policy 2025-2026

(Version 4)

The Stress and Well-being Guidance and Policy in respect of Kingsfield First School has been discussed and adopted by the Local Advisory Board in Dec 2025	
Chair of Board:	*Mr C Clulow*
Responsible Officer:	*Headteacher –Mrs C Hodson*
Agreed and ratified by the Local Advisory Board on: Dec 2025	
To be reviewed:	*Dec 2026*

Policy Statement

The Directors and Local Advisory Board members recognise their Health and Safety responsibilities and will take all reasonably practicable steps to address stress related issues in this school.

In dealing with the issues of stress in school the Local Advisory Board Members will, to the best of their ability, ensure that the following systems are in place, understood and acted upon in an attempt to deal with a problem which is giving increasing cause for concern.

The overall aim of this policy is to promote and maintain both individual and organisational wellbeing. This will help to create the strong, resilient, effective and energetic teams needed for our multi academy trust to achieve its objectives, and to ensure that the people who make up those teams are healthy, committed and feel that they can contribute their best to their work.

The objectives of the policy are: -

- to prevent stress by identifying the causes and eliminating or adequately controlling the risks at source
- to recognise and deal with stress related problems as they arise
- to encourage and promote a climate of openness
- ensure equality of treatment of staff
- to rehabilitate employees suffering from stress through the provision of independent confidential counselling and changing their workload or working environment

1. Success Indicators

The following indicators will demonstrate success in this area:

- Managers and leaders are committed to addressing work related factors which might contribute to excessive stress or undue pressure at work.
- Managers and leaders promote a culture where stressors are acknowledged, where stress is not stigmatised or regarded as a matter of individual weakness, and where staff can talk about feeling under excessive pressure without discrimination.
- Managers ensure that team stress risk assessments are completed, and the outcomes of assessments are implemented, monitored and reviewed regularly.
- Managers ensure that individual stress risk assessments are completed for employees where a need is identified. Appropriate control measures and reasonable adjustments are implemented and monitored.
- Employees are aware of the strategies available to manage their own stress and support wellbeing e.g. MindKind, Team Stress Risk Assessment, 5 Ways to Wellbeing and ThinkWell.

2. Overview

The HSE define stress as “an adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them”.
Stress is not an illness, it can be positive and motivating, but if it becomes excessive and /or prolonged, mental and physical illness may develop.
A person can experience excessive pressure and demand outside work just as they can inside work. Conflicting demands at home and work can cause excessive stress.

3. Management Arrangements

These arrangements will apply to employees and agency/supply employees.

4. Statement of Responsibilities

Individual’s Responsibilities-

- Seeking help early if pressure at work is getting out of hand or beyond control, using their Line Manager, the Staff Counselling Service, Occupational Health Unit, Trades Union, other management channels, Human Resources or the complaint/grievance procedures, as seems appropriate;
- Accepting their responsibility for, and role in, resolving any problem in which their feelings of stress are affecting their work;
- Taking care of themselves, and recognise and respect the need for breaks, lunch periods, holidays, control of work demands, control of working hours and need for a proper work-life balance;
- Not avoiding or ignoring situations of pressure at work that they are finding difficulty coping with, but instead identify and discuss them early and try to be constructive in looking for solutions;
- Respecting the rights and needs of others and their wellbeing;

- Co-operating in the risk assessment process, pressure management survey and other processes undertaken to identify sources of excessive pressure in the workplace;
- Adhering to any control measures identified in risk assessments;
- Understanding and act in accordance with other, associated Children First Learning Partnership policies covering areas that can impact on stress and wellbeing at work, such as those for bullying and harassment;
- Seeking help from their GP and from Occupational Health if they feel that they are becoming ill as a result of pressure either at work or at home.

Headteacher's Responsibilities

- Conducting and implementing outcomes of risk assessments;
- Ensuring good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes;
- Ensuring that both they and their staff are fully trained to discharge their duties;
- Implement adjustments identified in "Statements of Fitness for Work" including considering phased returns to work, altered hours, amended duties, workplace adaptations or variations in job roles
- Monitoring workloads, working hours and overtime of their staff and themselves, to ensure that people are not overloaded, and can achieve a reasonable worklife balance;
- Monitoring holidays to ensure that they and their staff are taking their full entitlement;
- Setting the right example for others, to show how this Policy is to be applied in practice;
- Ensuring that bullying and harassment is not tolerated;
- Being vigilant and explore possibilities for offering additional support to any member of staff who is experiencing stress for causes taking place outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation;
- Actively managing work related-stress problems affecting team members so as to avoid harm increasing through neglect of the problem, and encourage and expect the person concerned to share the responsibility for doing so;
- Requesting advice from HR if they need assistance to manage the problem or require advice on gaining assistance for an individual;
- Monitoring and reporting on the successful implementation and operation of the Policy on an annual basis;
- Reporting any inability to implement this policy to their line manager to seek a resolution;
- Ensuring that employees who have, or have had, symptoms of mental health problems are treated responsibly and in an understanding manner; dealing with each person's problems on the basis of his or her individual circumstances, and ensuring that nobody's career is affected by the mere fact of their having suffered from mental illness;
- Respecting the confidentiality of their staff.

Statement of the Local Advisory Board Member's Responsibilities

- Give staff comprehensive and relevant information about work-related stress.
- Put measures in place to prevent, so far as is practicable, work-related stress.
- Ensure that adequate resources are in place to support the policy.
- Review and monitor sickness absence levels and staff turnover.

5 Risk assessment

As part of the general risk assessment process, managers must consider the potential that stress related hazards may exist for their team(s).

The Team Stress Risk Assessment (Appendix 2) is the most appropriate tool to help teams identify and consider the risk factors and decide if any control measures can be taken to manage the risks. This must be complete annually in all CFLP schools.

When identifying the hazards facing the team/unit in terms of pressure, the six categories of risk that may cause work related stress outlined by HSE research will assist in this process:-

1. **Demands** – such as workload and exposure to physical hazards.
2. **Control** – how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
3. **Relationships** – covering issues of bullying and harassment.
4. **Role** – understanding of role and eliminating role conflict.
5. **Support** – training and factors unique to the individual.
6. **Change** – how the organisational change is managed and communicated.

To ensure that each of these areas of risk is effectively controlled managers should consider them in terms of desired states which we can work towards. It is acknowledged that not all of the desired states below can be achieved at all times in all work places.

Demands
Employees should feel that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs and systems should be in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
What should be happening?

- Employees are provided with adequate and achievable demands in relation to their role.
- People's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands.
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees. Training to support this is provided.
- Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed promptly.
- Suitable resources provided.
- A work life balance is encouraged –SMART and flexible working could support this.

Control
Employees should feel that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work; and systems should be in place to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening?

- Where practicable, individuals have control over their pace of work.
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work.
- Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work.
- Managers encourage employees to develop their skills.
- As far as practicable individuals have a say over when breaks can be taken.
- Individuals are consulted over their work patterns as far as practicable.

Support
Employees feel that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and managers and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening to support this?

- Employees are adequately supported by policies and procedures including performance review.
- Managers support their teams.
- Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues.
- Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it.
- Employees know how to access the required tools resources to do their job.
- Regular and constructive feedback is given to employees.
- Appropriate training and development is offered.

Relationships

Employees feel that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying/harassment at work; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening to support this?

- Positive behaviours at work are promoted to avoid conflict and ensure fairness.
- Employees are encouraged to share information relevant to their work.
- Policies and procedures are in place to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour.
- Managers are equipped and confident to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Employees are encouraged and feel they will be supported if they report unacceptable behaviour.

Role

Employees feel that they understand their role and responsibilities and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening to support this?

- As far as possible, the different requirements of a role are compatible.
- Information is provided to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities.
- As far as possible, employees are clear about the requirements of their role.
- Employees can raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.
- As far as possible employees motivated by their job role.

Change

Employees should feel that during organisational change there are high levels of engagement; and systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

What should be happening to support this?

- Employees are provided with information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes.
- There is adequate consultation on changes and opportunities for employees to influence proposals.
- Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs and are given training to support any changes to their roles.
- The timetables for changes are clear and well communicated.
- Support is available during change such as training and development that meets the needs of the individual e.g. resilience training.

Team Stress Risk Assessments (Appendix 2)
Any stress risk assessment must be developed in conjunction with the team as a result of open discussions, and should also consider employee survey information, data analysis of absence, employee feedback and other related information.

The outcomes of any risk assessment including agreed control measures or actions required, must be shared with employees. Managers must monitor the effectiveness of control measures and ensure that they are implemented and effective.

Supporting an individual - Individual Risk Assessment
When an individual raises concerns about stress or their mental health, it's important that managers respond to this as soon as possible to ensure that appropriate support is given.

Managers should tailor the support provided to an individual based on their discussions and any advice from support services. It is important to ensure that two-way discussion around the support and management arrangements takes place and the individuals needs are listened to and explored.

The completion of an individual risk assessment (Appendix 3) must be considered although this does not have to be a formal record, this might be in the form of 1-2-1 notes or emails between themselves and the employee.

Individual support arrangements/reasonable adjustments, the contents of the assessment and the outcomes must remain confidential and regular review periods must be agreed. Managers must be aware of the individual's preferences on how these arrangements are communicated to the rest of their team (when and if necessary).

An early referral to ThinkWell should be considered as soon as managers become aware of any mental health concerns (for schools this is available via the Occupational Health SLA). Individuals may also confidentially refer themselves to the Service. Additionally, an Occupational Health referral may be appropriate. Generally, this should be completed as a management referral so that the right support can be provided to managers. Self-referral is available, however, no advice can be then be provided to the employer.

See further guidance on reasonable adjustments on the SLN
MindKind - Staffordshire County Council
https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/secure/Schools/Health-and-Safety/Mindkind/Tools-and-Resources/Resources-and-Links.aspx

Management practices to identify problems and develop solutions (Please refer to Appendix 1 for further guidance regarding the identification of stress)

Normal management processes, including work planning sessions, 1-2-1 meetings, supervision meetings and performance reviews, provide opportunities to identify the levels of pressure an individual perceives that they are experiencing and for managers to support individuals. Using an open question style during two-way discussions supports individuals to express concerns. Managers and individuals who perceive that that they are experiencing excessive stress or require support must work together to identify solutions that are appropriate.

If there are grounds for concern it is good practice to discuss with the individual opportunities to support them in identifying options to move forward. Managers must monitor the support/adjustments in a sensitive manner to ensure that they are supportive and effective.

The length for which any adjustments will be in place should be discussed by the manager and employee.

Ensuring good conversations

- Consider the setting for the conversation. A location which is private and where there is a low possibility of being interrupted or overheard is preferable. A neutral location may be beneficial.
- The timing of the conversation – ideally there should be no pressure to rush such as other appointments.
- Confidentiality and who will be told what. Confidentiality is not always possible (if risk to self or others is shared). Personal information is confidential, but issues affecting health and safety risks will need to be discussed further.
- The length of time that the problem has existed
- The issues that are causing concern or triggers and their impact.
- Possible support and adjustments.
- How long support and adjustments will continue and how these will be monitored.
- What colleagues will be told and by whom. How others will be made aware of adjustments.
- Recognise when professional/clinical support is needed and seek advice and support from Occupational Health.
- Any ongoing health issues either mental or physical which may affect the situation. (It is an individual choice whether to reveal this information, but it is harder to find appropriate solutions without being in possession all relevant information).
- Situations outside work that may be having an effect. (It is an individual choice whether to reveal this information, but it is harder to find appropriate solutions without all relevant information.)
- Arrangements for further discussions between manager and employee, including frequency and location. (An open-door approach is strongly recommended).
- For further information see the Take 10 Together guidance on either MindKind SLN

Where concerns are raised, or an individual has been absent due to stress, it may be appropriate to complete an Individual Risk Assessment considering the risk areas above.
Individuals may also find developing a Wellbeing Action Plan useful which they may wish to share with their manager but are not required to do so.

When individuals are absent from work

Keeping in touch during any absence is important, particularly if absence is due to stress, anxiety or other psychological conditions. Inadequate communication can exacerbate issues and create barriers to returning to work and it is essential that managers attempt to keep communication lines open.

Managers are actively encouraged to:

- Use open questions to encourage the individual to explain the issue and what is happening.
- If the member of staff has a Wellbeing Action Plan they wish to share, this may be part of this conversation.
- Provide information about practical issues e.g. attending Occupational Health meetings and financial impact of absence.
- Identify if there is any support that can be offered and review these needs regularly. This might include an Individual Risk Assessment.

- Agree any control measures of reasonable adjustments as part of the above, and review these as necessary.
- Consider what information will be given to colleagues if necessary and review these wishes as necessary.
- Depending on the severity of the illness/length of absence, explore if a phased return or altered duties is possible and would be helpful, redeployment may be a consideration.
- Discuss any recommendations made by Occupational Health or ThinkWell and agree how these recommendations/adjustments are implemented.
- Avoid undue pressure in the initial stages to identify a return to work date.
- Be aware that initially contact maybe limited depending on the severity of the illness.
- Agree keeping "in touch" arrangements which may vary according to individual circumstances.

6. Concerns for employee safety

If a member of staff is expressing thoughts of self harm or suicide, or it is believed they are an imminent threat to themselves or others **urgent action must be taken.**

Any member of staff can provide help by:

- Contacting 999 and asking for immediate help for the crisis situation
- Taking the person to any GP surgery
- Taking them to A&E or walk in centre.

Need urgent help – see further information on the MindKind SLN
https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/secure/Schools/Health-and-Safety/Mindkind/Need-urgent-help.aspx

7. Support

If an individual feels unable to discuss issues with their manager, they may contact HR for support. Occupational Health self or manager referral may also be considered. An alternative manager can be identified to support an OH Manager referral.

Mental health first aiders (MHFA) are available in the workplace. MHFAs are people who have volunteered and trained to recognise, understand and help colleagues experiencing mental health issues to get the support they need. Their role is to listen, reassure and respond in a crisis. MHFAs are identified by purple lanyard and you can search for information about MHFAs and how to access training on MindKind (SLN).

8. Training and Information

Information about stress risk assessment, managing stress and mental health is available on the SLN.

9. Monitoring and reviewing these arrangements

Stress risk assessments and control measures/arrangements should be reviewed following significant changes or if there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid. It is good practice to review risk assessments annually. Managers must monitor the effectiveness of control measures and ensure that they are implemented and effective.

Monitoring health and wellbeing forms part of the health, safety and wellbeing audit and evaluation process and managers must ensure that these are kept up to date.

10. Record Keeping

Once a risk assessment is no longer valid it must be kept in line with the retention schedule.

11. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Supporting Information

- Employee Wellbeing - SLN
- MindKind - SLN and ThinkWell - SLN

MindKind
MindKind - Stress
MindKind – Conversations
Need Urgent help
ThinkWell

12. Forms

Team Work Related Stress Risk Assessment Record Form (Appendix 2) and Individual Risk Assessment (Appendix 3)

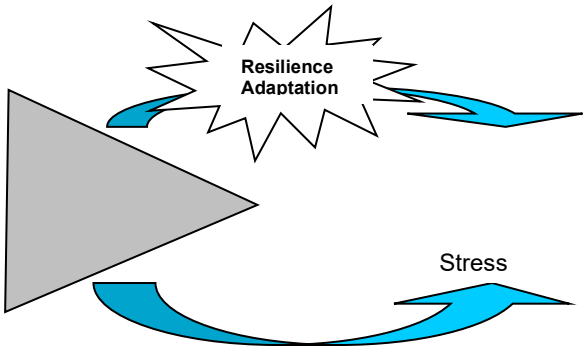
Appendix 1

Management of Stress in the Workplace Guidance

1**. Causative Factors of Stress**

Effects of Pressure

As the figure below shows, pressure can give rise to a positive or negative outcome, depending on how the individual perceives and responds to it. Our objective in managing individual and organisational stress is to improve the probability that pressure will produce a positive outcome - growth - rather than the negative outcome - stress.



Contributing Factors

Pressures can derive from personal life as well as from work, the negative effects being indistinguishable and cumulative. In consequence, people who are experiencing stress in response to pressures at home, such as marital difficulties or problems with children, will come to work with a significant proportion of their coping capabilities already committed, and therefore not available to accommodate workplace pressures. This provides organisations with the rationale to help employees cope with pressure generally, and not just with pressure at work, since the two are inextricably linked.

A list of all the possible workplace pressures would be virtually endless; the following table attempts to capture the most common and important workplace stressors.

Source of Pressure	Description
Workload	The amount and/or difficulty of the work
Relationships	How well you get on with the people you work with
Recognition	The extent to which you feel that your efforts and achievements are recognised
Organisational climate	The ‘feel’ or ‘atmosphere’ within your place of work
Personal responsibility	Being responsible for your actions and decisions
Managerial role	Being responsible for managing and supervising others
Home-work balance	‘Switching off’ from the pressure of work when at home, and vice versa
Daily hassles	The day-to-day irritants and aggravations in the workplace

2. Recognising stress

Changes in behaviour or work performance can often be signs that an individual may be suffering from stress.

Common indicators of stress (CIPD, May 2015)

Work performance • declining/inconsistent performance • uncharacteristic errors • loss of control over work • loss of motivation/commitment • indecision • lapses in memory • increased time at work • lack of holiday planning/usage	Regression • crying • arguments • undue sensitivity • irritability/moodiness • over-reaction to problems • personality clashes • sulking • immature behaviour
Withdrawal • arriving late to work • leaving early • extended lunches • absenteeism • resigned attitude • reduced social contact • elusiveness/evasiveness	Aggressive behaviour • malicious gossip • criticism of others • vandalism • shouting • bullying or harassment • poor employee relations • temper outbursts
Other behaviours • out-of-character behaviour • difficulty relaxing • increased consumption of alcohol • increased smoking • lack of interest in appearance/hygiene • accidents at home or work • reckless driving • unnecessary risk-taking	Physical signs • nervous stumbling speech • sweating • tiredness/lethargy • upset stomach/flatulence • tension headaches • hand tremor • rapid weight gain or loss • constantly feeling cold

Appendix 2 Team Stress Risk Assessment

Team Name	Date	Manager/Author
Points to consider when creating a team stress risk assessment. • Involvement and feedback from staff which could be through meetings, surveys, discussions, feedback, observations, research etc • Ensure there is discussion and openness regarding the hazards / stressors present and also the positive things already in place. • Using the guidance risk assess the stressors experienced. • Develop solutions, controls and strategies to reduce risk. • Work together as a team to implement the solutions and controls. • Agree points to check back to ensure controls are working effectively. • Review the risk assessment regularly or when something new or significant change occurs.		

a. Demands "Issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment"				
Issues Identified	**Proposed Control Measures**	**Responsibility/Ownership**	**Timescales**	Risk rating
b. Control "How much say the person has in the way they do their work"				
Issues Identified	**Proposed Control Measures**	**Responsibility/Ownership**	**Timescales**	Risk rating
c. Support "The encouragement, support and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues"				
Issues Identified	**Proposed Control Measures**	**Responsibility/Ownership**	**Timescales**	Risk rating

d. Relationships "Promoting positive working and communication to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour"				
Issues Identified	**Proposed Control Measures**	**Responsibility/Ownership**	**Timescales**	Risk rating
e. Role "Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles"				
Issues Identified	**Proposed Control Measures**	**Responsibility/Ownership**	**Timescales**	Risk rating
f. Change "How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation"				
Issues Identified	**Proposed Control Measures**	**Responsibility/Ownership**	**Timescales**	Risk rating

Signature	Date
	Review date
	Review date

Appendix 3

Individual Risk Assessment

Complete this form if there there is a requirement to create a risk assessment for an individual when they are at specific risk due to their health, age or other issue. This will include expectant mothers, young workers, service users, those returning to work after ill health, those with ongoing health issues or medical conditions etc.

Name of individual		Date of Birth		Date of assessment	
Service		**Role**			
Reason for risk assessment (including the benefit to service user)					

Hazard Identified	Who is at risk?		Hazard Rating	
	Employee		High	
	Service Users			
	Visitors		Medium	
	Members of the Public		Low	
	Others : Specify -			

How Could Exposure Take Place:	When and How Often Could Exposure Occur:	Possible Consequences of Exposure:

Methods used /Control Measures
Consider/discuss with the individual a) how long the control measure may be required, b) how frequently the assessment will be reviewed, c) at what point the risk assessment may no longer be required.

Controls in place –			
Risk Rating : *if with controls in place risk rating is still very high seek immediate advice from the Health and Safety Team.	High		
	Medium		
	Low		

Outcome /Action taken in relation to remaining issues
Identify any evaluation period for the assessment:

Signature of Assessor:		Print Name:	
Signature of Employee/service user or their representative:		Print Name:	
Signature of Line Manager:		Print Name:	
Review Date:		Review date	

Version Control and History

Version	Date	Amendment	By
V2	22.10.2023	Intranet references removed as intranet can only be used by Staffordshire County Council corporate staff.	COO
V3	15.10.2024	No Changes	CEO
V4	14.10.2025	No Changes	Ops Mgr