

STRESS IN WORKPLACE

September 2025

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Directors on an annual basis unless circumstances require policy update in the interim.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Directors on 01.09.2025.

It is due for review on 01.09.2026 (up to 12 months from the above date).

Signature (CEO):  Date: 01.09.2025

Signature (COO):  Date: 01.09.2025

Version Control

Version	Date	Changes
V1	04.09.2023	Original document
V2	01.09.2024	Terminology and layout update
V3	01.09.2025	Layout update

1 Introduction

Edit Education has a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the employees as far as reasonably practicable and to have reasonable care for the health and safety of our employees. This includes taking steps to minimise the risk of stress or stress related illnesses. We are committed to identifying, tackling and preventing the causes of work related stress and aim to promote a culture of care and mutual support to minimise stress and to ensure all employees are able to do their job to their best ability. This in turn will help us provide high quality teaching and learning for our students.

This policy sets out our approach to managing stress in the workplace.

Also contained within the policy is practical guidance for all staff on how to manage stressful situations set out in Appendix A.

This policy applies to all staff who work for the provision, referred to as employee within this document.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2 What is stress?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”. They state that stress is not an illness but a “state” and that illness, whether mental and/or physical, develops as a result of stress which is prolonged and excessive.

A certain amount of pressure is a normal part of most jobs and it can be beneficial in helping to keep an individual motivated. However, there is an important distinction between working under pressure and when pressure becomes excessive and produces stress, which can be detrimental to health. We recognise that what triggers stress and the capacity to deal with stress varies from person to person.

Stress may be experienced as a result of the workplace, external factors or a combination of both. Workplace factors could include the nature of the employee's work, the volume of the work, working hours, environmental factors, changes such as a restructure or redundancy programme or bullying or harassment by colleagues or third parties.

The Management Standards for work related stress define the way an organisation manages the risks from work related stress. There are six key areas that cover the primary sources of stress at work that if not managed effectively could lead to poor health, reduced productivity and increased absence. These are Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change. An examination of these areas forms part of the stress risk assessment process that demonstrates good practice in managing stress (see Appendix B).

3 Signs of stress

Some common signs of stress are listed below. However, experiencing one or more of these does not necessarily give an indication of stress.

- Persistent or recurrent moods, for example anger, irritability, detachment, worry, depression, guilt and sadness, mood swings (being tearful or over sensitive).

- Physical effects e.g. aches and pains (headaches, back ache, neck ache), raised heart rate, increased sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, skin or sleep disorders.
- Poor and/or changed behaviours for example, increased absence levels (including arriving late at work), difficulty concentrating or remembering things, inability to switch off, loss of creativity, loss of motivation, making more errors (poor performance), double checking everything, covering up mistakes by lying, working long hours/not taking a break, changes to sleeping or eating habits, increased use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs, poor attitude, behaviour and relationships with colleagues.
- Prolonged or extreme exposure to the possible symptoms of stress is associated with serious chronic diseases such as heart disease, back pain, gastrointestinal problems, anxiety or depression.

Signs that an individual is experiencing stress will vary according to how the individual reacts to stress. Key for the line manager to be aware of, are changes in an individual's behaviour that are more than just a "one-off" incident.

These should be acted upon promptly and discussed with the employee. This will include offering support, such as encouraging the employee to seek advice from his or her GP, who will be able to make a diagnosis.

4 Support

We will monitor sickness absence and workloads, and ensure that there is clear communication within the provision to promote a culture of open communication and encouragement. We will create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss areas of concern in an environment where stress is not considered as a weakness or a failure. We will also hold return to work meetings with any employee who has been absent in line with our Management of Absence Policy to establish whether there is any underlying problem and, if so, what the provision could do to address it.

We will be alert to the possibility of stress as set out above. However, employees who believe they are suffering from stress should also ask their line manager for help and support in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so, you should contact the Executive Headteacher or HR.

Once an issue affecting an employee's health is brought to our attention, steps will be taken to support the employee to minimise the risk of harm and to identify additional arrangements to reduce the risk of work-related stress to as low a level as reasonably practicable. This may include:

- carry out further investigations
- review job descriptions to identify tasks that may involve stressors
- carry out a risk assessment to evaluate the risk of work-related stress, considering the existing arrangements that are in place and ensure that significant findings of the risk assessment are recorded
- carry out a stress risk assessment with the employee to identify whether stress is an issue with a view to addressing the situation. A stress risk assessment pro-forma is available at Appendix B.
- use the Stress Indicator Tool to support completion of the risk assessment see appendix C
- provide information and training, such as identifying opportunities for development relevant to the employee's position

- refer the employee to occupational health in line with our Management of Absence Policy.
- if an employee is absent from work due to sickness, apply the Management of Absence Policy, as applicable.

If stress is having a negative impact on an employee's performance, and his or her performance does not improve despite the manager having taken reasonable steps to alleviate pressure on the employee, it might be necessary for the provision to follow the Capability Policy.

5 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Information in relation to the management of stress at the provision will be kept to ensure an accurate record is available of what was discussed, actions taken and for monitoring purposes.

Records will be kept on the employee's personal file or with the provision's Health & Safety records. All records will be treated in line with our GDPR policy..

6 Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed every three years by the provision. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Appendix A

A Guidance on Dealing with Stressful Situations in Provisions

There are many different times in the provision year that can provide additional pressure to employees. These may include:

- dealing with bad behaviour
- Ofsted Inspections
- report writing
- parent consultation/open evenings
- meeting with/calling parents
- accountability (targets)
- finance (particular issue for the Executive Headteacher)
- premises matters (particular issue for the Executive Headteacher, designated person and facilities team)
- recruitment/ staffing issues
- conflict in the workplace
- restructure

It is strongly advised that in order to combat these areas of pressure, employees should:

- attend all relevant induction/training/ Inset sessions that are provided so that they are aware of all provision processes
- make themselves fully aware of the procedure to follow for each circumstance, for example the Grievance Policy
- know who to call on for support if they need it
- admit that they are struggling before it becomes too difficult to cope with, and seek help and advice

Other ways that can help you at work and therefore deal with stress include:

- good diet (e.g. eat breakfast and lunch)
- drink plenty of water throughout the day
- learn to manage your time effectively
- exercise (including yoga and relaxation)
- take time out (e.g. don't work all weekend and evenings)
- avoid procrastination All employees who are members of a Union or Professional Association are advised to contact them for support and guidance.

The CEO could take the following steps to help to prevent stress:

- encourage communication within the team: Where employees feel that they can discuss problems with their colleagues this can help to reduce the risk of stress. This could be achieved by holding regular team meetings and encouraging staff to approach their manager and colleagues informally with any issues that they have.
- foster good relations with employees: Line managers should take the time to get to know their team members, so that changes to their normal behaviour are easier to spot.
- ensure that employees have an appropriate amount of work to do:

Where employees feel that they are unable to cope with their workload, this can cause stress. Managers should review regularly the amount of work employees have, for example at regular appraisals. They should consider the impact of absences and departures on remaining staff and how the work can be shared fairly within the team.

- ensure that individuals take proper breaks: Managers should check that employees are not regularly working long hours and that they take regular breaks. If an employee is consistently working through lunch or beyond his or her contracted hours, the line manager should try to establish if this is because of a short-term increase in work or if it is a longer term issue. The manager should set a good example by taking breaks and working appropriate hours.
- have regular meetings with employees: Having regular meetings with team members about their work will give line managers a good idea of what employees are doing and any problems that they have.
- conduct appraisal reviews: Line managers should carry out formal appraisal reviews with the individuals in their team in line with the provision's policy and give employees the opportunity to raise concerns during these meetings. This process should include setting clear, achievable objectives for the individual.
- provide appropriate training: Line managers should conduct regular reviews to identify training needs for the members of their team. Employees could be involved in identifying their own training needs. Where training needs are identified, the line manager should liaise with the member of PLT with responsibility for staff training to provide training. Training is particularly important for employees who have additional responsibilities following a promotion.
- be alert during periods of change: Line managers should keep employees well informed and encourage them to raise concerns during periods of change, for example when the organisation is going through a restructure.
- recruit employees who have the skills to perform the role: When recruiting, line managers should consider what the duties of the job will be and what skills and experience the successful candidate will need. This will help to ensure that the right person is recruited to the job, so the job-holder does not feel out of his or her depth.
- do not delay: Line managers should take immediate action when they suspect that an individual is stressed or when an employee informs them that he or she is experiencing stress. This should help to avoid the problem escalating and helps avoid liability if the employee ends up making a claim, and should help the employee to make a swift recovery.

If the CEO becomes aware that an employee is experiencing stress they should arrange to meet with the employee. This meeting should be held in private and be kept informal in nature. The line manager should ask the employee whether or not he or she has been experiencing stress and what the employee considers to be the contributing factors.

Questions that may be appropriate to ask including:

"I'm concerned that you appear to be under some pressure. Can we talk about it?"

"One of your colleagues has told me in confidence that s/he is worried about you."

"Are there any problems at home that you want to talk about?"

“I want to help resolve this issue. Do you think that some extra training or support might help?” “Have you mentioned this to your GP?”

“I will send you some information about our Employee Assistance Programme in case this is something that you might find helpful.”

“I think we should meet again in a couple of weeks to see how things are going, but in the meantime please come and talk to me if you have any concerns.”

After the meeting the CEO may need to conduct a more detailed investigation to establish the causes of, and contributing factors to, the stress, particularly where the employee alleges that it is a result of poor management or bullying, for example. Once the line manager has established the reason behind the stress, he or she should explore what steps the provision could take to alleviate the situation.

Steps that could be appropriate for the line manager to take to help relieve the employee's stress include:

- a phased return to work (following sickness absence)
- temporary or permanent flexible working arrangements, for example reduced hours
- redistribution of some of the employee's work
- a temporary or permanent change in duties
- providing training for the employee
- referring the employee for counselling

What action is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, including the reasons for the stress, the nature of the job, and what is considered reasonable.

Appendix B Stress Risk Assessment.

<u>Name</u>				<u>Date</u>		
Brief description of service area or individuals' role (attach job description if available)						
Risk Assessment						
Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)
Demands - are there any unusual/excessive demands e.g.: ▪ Work under load ▪ Work overload						

Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)
- Physical environment – noise, vibration, temperature, ventilation, humidity, lighting & hygiene. - Exposure to potential violence & aggression - Lone working - Night work - Shift work						
Control – can individuals exercise control over how the job objectives are achieved, in						

Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)
particular can employees: Participate in decision-making Influence how work is done						

Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)
Relationships – are there relationship issues e.g.: Bullying & harassment. Verbal abuse Victimisation, humiliation or ridicule						

Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)
Change – is there any significant change e.g.: Introduction of new technology Competition and changing market conditions Restructuring Downsizing Adopting new ways of working						

Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)
Stop-start one-off change events Subtle, frequent changes						
Role – are roles well defined and communicated to employees to prevent: Role conflict – i.e. individuals are torn by conflicting job demands or by						

Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)
doing things they do not really want to do, or things which they do not believe are part of their job. Role ambiguity - not having a clear picture of their work objectives, their co-workers' expectations of them, and the scope and responsibilities of their job						

Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)
Support/ training/ individual factors – have the following issues been addressed for current and new employees? ▪ Competent employees ▪ Training to obtain necessary skills ▪ Skills/training for new work ▪ Recruitment - skills matching for work demands ▪ Induction ▪ Constructive advice when						

Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)
things go wrong Team make-up, individual differences Personal Factors E.g. issues outside of the workplace, which are affecting the individual						

Risk Factors	Issues Identified	Who is affected	Risk rating (to be identified by the individual / team) High/Med/Low	Current Controls (record statements/remarks on how the issues are addressed or otherwise)	Further actions: Manager (including timescales)	Further actions: Individual (including timescales)

Assessed by (print name)	Sign	Date

Individual (print name)	Sign	Date
Review		
Review details		

Likelihood (Probability)	Severity (consequences)
5. Almost Certain: More likely to occur than not	5. Fatality: 1 or more persons
4. Probable: Likely to occur	4. Major injury or illness: more than 3 days absence
3. Possible: Reasonable chance of occurring	3. Moderate injury or illness: up to 3 days' absence
2. Unlikely to occur	2. Minor injury or illness: requiring first aid
1. Very unlikely: Will only occur in exceptional circumstances	1. Insignificant: No injuries or illness

Likelihood	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20

	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
Risk Matrix		1	2	3	4	5
		Severity				

High risk: Score between 16 and 20. High Risks activities should cease immediately until further control measures to mitigate the risk are introduced.

Medium risk: Score between 9 and 15. Medium Risks should only be tolerated for the short-term and then only whilst further control measures to mitigate the risk are being planned and introduced, within a defined time period.

Low risk: Score between 1 and 8. Low Risks are acceptable to adequate: ensure controls are maintained and keep it subject to review periodically, or after significant changes etc. Make improvements where possible.

Guidance Notes on Completing the Stress Risk Assessment Form

Things to consider when assessing the role:

1. What job does the individual do and at what level?

Examples

- PLT
- Teacher
- LSA
- HLTA
- Mentor
- Well Being manager
- Admin staff
- Facilities team
- Cleaner
- Manager – teaching or non-teaching

2. What are the potential hazards and stressors?

Examples are provided below:

Demands

- Long hours
- Unreasonable deadlines
- Excessively busy periods
- Inadequate rest and holidays
- Inadequate staffing
- Inappropriately qualified for the job
- Over promotion
- Skills not recognised – promotion prospects not fulfilled
- Boring or repetitive work
- Too little to do
- Employees experiencing excessive workloads
- Employees working under excessive pressure
- Inability to cope with key aspects of the role

The physical working environment

- Poor temperature control
 - Noise
 - Lack of facilities for rest/breaks
 - Poor lighting / Poor ventilation
 - Badly placed or designed workstations
- The psychological working environment
- Threat of aggression or violence
 - Disruptive, angry or stressed children
 - Angry or stressed parents/members of the public
 - Difficult colleagues
 - Verbal abuse
 - Poor management practices
- Control

- Not being able to balance the demands of work and life outside work
- Rigid work patterns and breaks
- Fixed deadlines occurring in different parts of the year
- Lack of control over work
- Conflicting work demands Support
- Lack of effective return to work system
- Non-compliance with sickness and absence management policy
- Lack of managerial support through emotionally demanding work
- Inadequate inductions
- Reaction to post disciplinary, grievance, capability or suspension
- Lack of adequate training Relationships
- Poor relationships with others
- Staff complaints or rising absence trends
- Perception of bullying or confrontational communications styles from others
- Bullying, racial or sexual harassment
- Lack of support or fear culture from management and co-workers
- Lack clear lines of accountability and responsibility
- Lack of communication and consultation (both sides)
- Perception of a culture of blame when things go wrong, denial of potential problems
- Failure by the organisation to recognise success
- A culture that considers stress a sign of weakness
- Personal risk in relation to the role (e.g. money, lone working) Change
- Fears about job security / grading
- Poor communication – uncertainty about what is happening
- Not enough time allowed to implement change
- Inexperience / fear of new technology
- Lack of skills for new tasks
- Not enough resource allocated for change process
- Other personal fears, relocation 3. Is there a high, medium or low risk of stress, and why?
- Does the type of job in combination with the working environment and organisation result in a high, medium or low risk?
- What does history / experience tell us?
- What are the worst problems? 4. What control measures can be put in place?
- Training for job
- Job organisation
- Rest and meal break arrangements
- Job rotation
- Good working environment
- Security measures such as alarms, or buddying
- Local policy defined and upheld
- Counselling (last resort as this is not preventive action)

5. Priority and Timescale Some suggested goals:

High risk: Priority 1 (fix first) Initiate simple actions immediately, and devise a plan to review longer term other actions within 3 months.

Medium risk: Priority 2 (fix after all priority 1 have been attended to) Systematically review and initiate actions within 12 months.

Low risk: Priority 3 (fix last) Document the risk assessment and revisit after 12 months.

Appendix C

This form comprises a standard letter to employees and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)'s Stress Indicator Tool (35 question questionnaire).

Instructions for Use

1. Complete the details required on the standard letter i.e.:
 - a. Name of Service Area,
 - b. Date by which the completed questionnaire should be returned to the pre-agreed named contact.
 - c. Name of a contact and telephone number for recipients who may have questions about the process etc,
 - d. Signed by manager commissioning the stress risk assessment.
2. Send out the letter and questionnaire to employees involved in the stress risk assessment.
3. Data from returned questionnaires will be analysed.
4. Analysed data will be used in focus group discussions with team members to clarify the stress issues and develop action plans.

The following three pages contain an example of a covering letter, to be sent to employees with the questionnaire, and the two-page questionnaire.

Note: It is recommended that you send the covering letter out to a named individual on appropriately headed/official paper. The quality and professionalism of the covering letter has been shown to have an effect on response rates.

Dear [employee's name],

Edit Education are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that work-related stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of tackling the causes of stress in our workplace.

The attached questionnaire consists of 35 simple one-line questions. It is designed to find out how you feel about various aspects of working conditions here. We do not ask for any information that would identify you. We are encouraging you and your colleagues to take the time to complete the questionnaire so that we can be that we are doing all we can to make this a good place to work.

When the questionnaires have been analysed the results will be discussed with employees and employee representatives. The next stage in the process will be to organise employee groups to discuss and confirm the results, decide what the key issues are, and reach agreement on appropriate action.

Please take the time during working hours to complete the questionnaire. It will provide an indication of how well we are performing and it will give an indication of where any problem areas might be.

*Your responses to this questionnaire will remain anonymous and only group data will be presented. It **will not** be used as an evaluation of your work or capabilities.*

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. For each question, tick the box that most accurately reflects how you feel about your job at the moment.

Please only tick ONE box for each question.

Once you have completed the questionnaire, please return it to [enter name] by [enter return date]. If you have any questions concerning completion of the questionnaire please contact [enter contact name and telephone number].

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.
Yours Sincerely,

[name of manager]

Job Title (optional) _____

Service Area _____ Date _____

Number		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I am clear what is expected of me at work					
2	I can decide when to take a break					
3	Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine					
4	I know how to go about getting my job done					
5	I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour					
6	I have unachievable deadlines					
7	If work gets difficult my colleagues will help me out					
8	I am given supportive feedback on the work I do					
9	I have to work very intensively					
10	I have a say in my own work speed					
11	I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are					
12	I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do					
13	I am clear about the goals and objectives for my section					
14	There is friction or anger between colleagues					
15	I have a choice in deciding how to do my work					
16	I am unable to take sufficient breaks					
17	I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation					
18	I am pressured to work long hours					
19	I have a choice in deciding what I do at work					
20	I have to work very fast					
21	I am subject to bullying at work					
22	I have unrealistic time pressures					
23	I can rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem					
24	I get help and support I need from colleagues					
25	I have some say over the way I work					
26	I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work					

Number		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
27	I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues					
28	Employees are always consulted about change at work					
29	I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work					
30	My work time is flexible					
31	My colleagues are willing to listen to my work related problems					
32	When changes are made at work I am clear how they will work out in practice					
33	I am supported through emotionally demanding work					
34	Relationships at work are strained					
35	My line manager encourages me at work					
Please add any other comments you wish to make:						