

Schools for Every Child - Stress at Work: Organisational Risk Assessment

Activity / Scope

Trust-wide stress management arrangements apply to all employees across schools and central services.

Who is at risk

All Trust employees, including teaching staff, support staff, leaders, DSLs, HQ staff and senior leaders.

Assessment completed by

LF & KC

Trust-Wide Control Measures

The Trust recognises work-related stress as a health and safety risk and has the following controls in place to prevent, identify and manage stress:

- **24/7 confidential advice line** / Employee Assistance Programme, providing immediate support, counselling and guidance.
- **Dedicated Trust Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) , offering:**
 - Bookable one-to-one sessions
 - Drop-in support
 - Informal advice and signposting
- **External supervision** every six weeks for staff who:
 - Line manage others
 - Hold safeguarding responsibilities (DSLs / DDSLs)- Supervision is provided by an external coach or mentor.
- Access to **counselling via the Trust cash plan** for all staff.
- **Free Trust-funded CPD, including training on:**
 - Stress management
 - Wellbeing
 - Resilience
- Early referral to **Occupational Health**, including:
 - When staff are signed off work with stress
 - Earlier referral where stress is disclosed or identified
- Structured **return-to-work meetings** following stress-related absence, with agreed support plans.
- **HQ notification and support system that enables** central support to be deployed to schools during periods of increased pressure.
- **CEO open-access model**, with bookable meetings available to all staff.
- **Regular 1:1 meetings** between line managers and staff to provide protected time for discussion and support.
- **Performance Management Review (PMR)** process, providing formal, structured opportunities to discuss workload, wellbeing and development.
- **Regular wellbeing content**, including:
 - Mental health and stress management tips in Trust newsletters
 - Guidance shared with staff and parents
- **Staff Portal** wellbeing section, containing:
 - Practical stress-management guidance
 - Key contact numbers
 - 24/7 support information
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Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) One-to-One Support During Sick Leave

Purpose: To reduce stigma around mental health, encourage early signposting to support services, and provide staff with a safe space to begin conversations about their wellbeing—particularly when they may not feel comfortable speaking with their line manager.

Scope: This support is available to staff signed off sick with stress, anxiety, grief, bereavement, or other mental health-related concerns.

What we offer:

- A one-to-one meeting with the Trust Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) during the period of sick leave
- Access to this support is voluntary and designed to reduce feelings of isolation
- The MHFA will provide a confidential, non-judgemental space to talk
- Signposting to further internal and external support services, including the 24/7 advice line, counselling via the Trust cash plan, and Occupational Health
- An opportunity to discuss concerns that staff may find difficult to raise with their line manager

How to access: Staff can contact [insert MHFA name/contact details] directly, or their line manager can facilitate the introduction with the staff member's consent.

Confidentiality: All conversations with the MHFA are confidential unless there is a safeguarding concern or risk of harm.

Bereavement and Grief Support

Recognition: The Trust recognises that grief and bereavement are significant life events that can affect mental health and wellbeing. Support is not limited to stress and anxiety—we are committed to supporting staff through all forms of emotional difficulty.

What we offer:

- Access to the Trust MHFA for one-to-one support
- Compassionate leave in line with Trust policy [insert reference to your compassionate leave policy or entitlement]
- Ongoing internal support, including regular check-ins with line managers
- Signposting to specialist bereavement services and counselling via the Trust cash plan
- Flexibility around return-to-work arrangements, agreed on a case-by-case basis

How we support you:

- Your line manager will work with you to agree a support plan that meets your needs
- You can access support during compassionate leave and after your return to work
- We will maintain regular, sensitive contact to ensure you feel supported throughout
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Understanding Our Support Services

We want to make sure all staff understand the different types of support available and when to use them.

Mental Health First Aider (MHFA):

- Provides immediate, informal support and a listening ear
- Available for one-to-one sessions, drop-ins, and signposting
- Suitable for staff who want to talk through concerns or need guidance on next steps
- Contact: [insert name and contact details]

24/7 Confidential Advice Line / Employee Assistance Programme:

- Provides immediate telephone support, counselling, and guidance at any time
- Available for urgent concerns or when you need to speak to someone outside of working hours
- Contact: [insert phone number]

Occupational Health:

- Provides professional health assessments and advice to support staff wellbeing and fitness for work
- Used for formal assessments, particularly when staff are signed off sick or require workplace adjustments
- Referrals are made by line managers in consultation with HR
- Contact: [insert referral process]

Trust Cash Plan Counselling:

- Provides access to professional counselling services
- Suitable for staff who need ongoing therapeutic support
- Contact: [insert details or signpost to HR]

When to use each service:

- **For an informal chat or signposting:** Contact the Trust MHFA
- **For immediate support or advice outside working hours:** Call the 24/7 advice line

- **For professional counselling:** Access counselling via the Trust cash plan
- **For a formal health assessment or workplace adjustments:** Your line manager will refer you to Occupational Health

1. Demands

Hazards

- High workload and competing priorities
- Long working hours during peak periods
- Emotional demands of working in education
- Staffing pressures

Controls

- Workload reviewed through line management and PMR processes
- Access to supervision for high-responsibility roles
- Stress management CPD available
- Occupational Health referrals used where appropriate
- HQ capacity deployed to support schools under pressure

Residual risk: Medium

Further action: Ongoing monitoring through absence data and staff feedback

2. Control

Hazards

- Limited flexibility during busy periods
- Fixed deadlines linked to the school calendar

Controls

- Regular 1:1s to discuss priorities and capacity
- CEO and senior leaders available for escalation and support
- Flexibility considered where operationally possible
- Staff encouraged to raise concerns early

Residual risk: Medium

3. Support

Hazards

- Staff feel unsupported or unsure where to turn

Controls

- Dedicated Trust MHFA with visible, accessible support
- 24/7 advice line and counselling provision
- External supervision for DSLs and line managers
- Clear signposting via newsletters and staff portal
- CEO open-door approach

Residual risk: Low

4. Relationships

Hazards

- Interpersonal conflict
- Stress arising from difficult conversations or safeguarding work

Controls

- Supervision for safeguarding and leadership roles
- HR support available to managers
- Clear policies on dignity at work, bullying and harassment

- Culture of early conversation and support

Residual risk: Low to Medium

5. Role

Hazards

- Unclear expectations or role conflict

Controls

- Clear job descriptions
- PMR process used to review responsibilities
- Line manager support and regular check-ins
- Access to coaching and CPD

Residual risk: Low

6. Change

Hazards

- Anxiety linked to organisational or operational change
- Increased workload during periods of development or growth

Controls

- Changes communicated clearly and sensitively
- Opportunities for staff to ask questions and raise concerns
- Support from HQ during implementation
- Occupational Health support where needed

Residual risk: Medium