



# ST. NICHOLAS SCHOOL CHILD OKEFORD

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY AIDED  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

## MISSION STATEMENT

‘At St. Nicholas, we nurture everyone *to be the best we can be*, in a caring and inclusive Christian environment.’

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# RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY

## POLICY SUMMARY

*Three parts:*

*Part One: Recruitment & Selection Procedure Summary*

*Part Two: Equal Opportunities in Employment*

*Part Three: Stress Management*

DATE ADOPTED  
June 2018

REVISION NUMBER  
1

LAST REVIEW

NEXT REVIEW  
June 2019

## **PART ONE: RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PROCEDURE SUMMARY**

### **1. Step 1: establish the vacancy need**

- (1) The Headteacher should establish whether the vacancy must be filled and if so the nature of the work that will be undertaken.
- (2) The cost implications on the school's budget will be a consideration as will any changes in workload that are foreseen or any plans for restructuring posts and or work allocation.

### **2. Step 2: prepare the job description and person specification**

- (1) A job description should be made available for each vacancy, outlining the job purpose and principal duties and responsibilities. The pay range for the post must be established at this stage ensuring that the pay range reflects the level and responsibility of the post.
- (2) Every job description should make reference to the employee's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- (3) Job descriptions for non teaching employees can be accessed via the schools' JE portfolio. If you cannot find a suitable job description within the portfolio and wish to create a new job description please discuss this with the ER team before advertising the position.
- (4) A person specification should be drawn up for each vacancy, outlining the essential qualities (i.e. skills, qualifications, experience and personal attributes) required in the post. The person specification should include specific reference to the suitability of the person to work with children and the degree of responsibility they will have for children in the particular role.

### **3. Step 3: plan the recruitment timetable**

- (1) Every appointment should be carefully planned and a clear, realistic timetable produced covering each stage of the recruitment process. Ensure enough time is allowed for each stage, incorporating adequate time for potential candidates to serve notice in existing employment.
- (2) Within each stage of the timetable, the following should be included:
  - (i) The methods to be used in the selection process (e.g. psychometric testing, group exercises, lesson observations etc).
  - (ii) Who will be involved at each stage of the process and what their responsibilities will be (book the necessary times, dates, room locations in their diary for shortlisting, interview planning, ensure at least one person on the interview panel has been on the safer recruitment training, testing and interviews etc).

### **4. Step 4: advertise the vacancy**

- (1) Vacancies should be advertised in appropriate media allowing adequate time for its publication.
- (2) Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher vacancies should be advertised in national press unless there is a good reason that has been agreed with the LA as to why not.
- (3) The content of the advertisement should include:-
  - (i) an appropriate headline (e.g. job title and location);
  - (ii) a brief summary of the role and person specification;
  - (iii) the rewards (e.g. pay and other benefits e.g. TLR or SEN);
  - (iv) terms and conditions (e.g. teachers or non teaching pay and conditions, part time, status etc);

- (v) if the post is fixed term, include reason and duration of the fixed term period;
  - (vi) the action necessary to respond;
  - (vii) the closing date for applications;
  - (viii) the County Council's equal opportunities statement;
  - (ix) Safeguarding of Children statement;
  - (x) the disability 'two tick' symbol;
  - (xi) the date the interviews will be held; and
  - (xii) the school and (if appropriate) the County Council logo.
- (4) See **appendix 5 & 6** in the toolkit (sample advertisement and advertising checklist).

**5. Step 5: provide a job information pack & confirm arrangements for selection process**

- (1) On receipt of application requests, the school should issue a job information pack (Appendix 7).
- (2) The nature of the post to be filled will determine the precise information to be sent. As a minimum the following is recommended:
  - (i) Application form (Appendix 8a or 8b);
  - (ii) appropriate information about the school;
  - (iii) Job description;
  - (iv) Person specification;
  - (v) Statement of the school's Child Protection Policy;
  - (vi) Statement of the terms & conditions relating to the post; and
  - (vii) Disclosure and Barring Service Form (Appendix B DBS Policy)

NB: if advertising on line please ensure you send attachments electronically so they can be linked to the advert.

**6. Step 6: shortlist candidates**

- (1) Each applicant should be individually assessed against the criteria specified in the person specification
- (2) Decisions should not be based on assumptions or generalisations about particular groups or categories of people. Care should be taken not to discriminate unfairly in any short listing decision.
- (3) Shortlisting should be carried out by a minimum of two people (as nominated by the Chair of the interview panel who may themselves be involved), maintaining a gender balance where practicable.
- (4) Generally, all candidates who meet the essential criteria should be shortlisted for interview. Where large numbers are involved, it may be necessary to shortlist against both essential and desirable criteria in order to produce a final shortlist (Appendix 10).
- (5) Once the shortlisting has been completed, those candidates selected for interview should be written to and invited to attend interview (Appendix 11).
- (6) Also included with the invite to interview letter should be the criminal records self declaration form (Appendix 9 or Appendix B DBS Policy), a request that the candidate brings appropriate identification with them to enable completion of the employee identity check (Appendix 16 or Appendix I DBS Policy) and any qualification certificates to be viewed and recorded, as these will be needed for the DBS and single central record.
- (7) Those applicants who have not been shortlisted should be written to and advised that they have been unsuccessful on this occasion. Alternatively, the original advert for the post can state the date by which candidates can assume they haven't been successful if they do not receive a response from the school.

- (8) Records of all applicants (successful and unsuccessful) and the justification for the shortlisting decision must be maintained for up to a year in order to respond to any claims of unfair discrimination.

7. **Step 7: obtain references**

- (1) Obtain references from two sources for all shortlisted candidates including internal and external applicants one of which must be a previous employer (Appendix 12 & 12a).
- (2) References must be in writing and should ask specifically about a candidate's suitability to work with children as well as their suitability for the post.
- (3) Offers of employment should be made subject to references.

8. **Step 8: on arrival for interview**

- (1) Record details on Employee ID check and view original documents for DBS check.
- (2) View and record Work Permit information (if applicable).
- (3) View and record qualification certificates for the single central record.
- (4) Give candidate medical questionnaire and ask them to complete and return to Occupational Health as soon as possible if they are successful at interview.

9. **Step 9: interview**

- (1) The interview panel should consist of at least two people, maintaining a gender balance where practicable. One member of the interview panel MUST have undertaken the safer recruitment training.
- (2) The interview should be held in a suitable room where the interviews can take place uninterrupted.
- (3) Interview questions should be planned and structured in advance.
- (4) Core questions should be applied consistently and asked of all candidates.
- (5) If a fixed term appointment, explain reasons and duration during interview.
- (6) Notes of each interview should be recorded with due regard to equal opportunities legislation (see appendix 13, 14 & 15).
- (7) Following interviews, all candidates should be assessed against all aspects of the objective selection criteria.

10. **Step 10: the selection decision**

- (1) The decision taken should be based on determining who is the most suitable candidate as assessed against the person specification and job description. (Appendix 17).
- (2) All candidates should be given equal consideration.
- (3) Reasons for selection/non selection of candidates should be objective, relevant and clearly recorded.

11. **Step 11: pre-employment checks**

- (1) Post offer, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT all pre employment checks should be obtained as quickly as possible to include:
  - (i) identity checks and confirmation of permission to work in the UK;
  - (ii) any outstanding references;
  - (iii) DBS checks;
  - (iv) medical clearance (ONLY send for clearance once offer has been made and accepted); and
  - (v) verification of qualifications and membership of professional associations.
- (2) SCHOOLS SHOULD NOT START APPOINTEES IN POST, until the appropriate checks have been carried out, in order to ensure that children are safeguarded and

that the individual is fit to undertake the role (see guidance on pre-employment checks at paragraph 15 below).

- (3) Successful candidates should be advised not to resign from any existing employment prior to clearance being obtained (see appendix 18).

12. **Step 12: offer of employment**

- (1) A provisional verbal offer will normally be made in the first instance to the successful candidate. It must be explained this offer is subject to pending DBS checks (where appropriate), medical clearance, and references where not already obtained (and anything else, such as sight of original qualifications or work permit).
- (2) When offering a fixed term appointment, re-iterate the reason and duration of the appointment and follow this up in writing.
- (3) Be careful not to quote full time salary rates for part time work.

13. **Step 13: recruitment file/ complaints procedure**

- (1) A structured recruitment file should be maintained for at least six months for each vacancy, including copies of all documents relating to the recruitment process.
- (2) This should be stored for one year following the appointment to ensure any claims or requests for information made after the appointment can be appropriately responded to (Appendix 22).

14. **Step 14: post appointment induction**

- (1) All new appointees must receive an appropriate induction programme regardless of previous experience (Appendix 23).
- (2) The purpose of the induction is to:
  - (i) provide training and information about the school's policies and procedures;
  - (ii) confirm the conduct expected by the school;
  - (iii) provide opportunities for the new employee to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities; and to
  - (iv) enable the Headteacher or line manager to identify and concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

15. **Guidance on pre-employment checks**

- (1) Any offer of employment should be conditional upon:
  - (i) receipt of two satisfactory references if not already received;
  - (ii) satisfactory identity checks, and confirmation of eligibility to work in the UK;
  - (iii) satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure;
  - (iv) verification of candidate's occupational health clearance to teach/ operate in support staff capacity;
  - (v) verification of qualifications;
  - (vi) verification of professional status (e.g. GTC registration, QTS, NPQH, HLTA);
  - (vii) for teaching posts – verification of a statutory induction period for those who obtained QTS status after 7 May 1999; and
  - (viii) for non teaching posts – satisfactory completion of a six month probationary period (no probationary period is required for existing employees changing jobs within local government. However an appropriately structured induction is recommended).

- (2) In cases where it is essential, due to the needs of the pupils, to engage a new employee prior to the satisfactory completion of all pre employment checks a risk assessment MUST be undertaken and a check made of the ISA Children's barred list.

**16. Further reference documents**

These are:

- (i) Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, DfES;
- (ii) Safer Recruitment training (CWDC website e-learning course:  
<http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/safeguarding/safer-recruitment/e-learning>)
- (iii) Physical and Mental Fitness to Teach of Teachers and Entrants;
- (iv) Schools' DBS Policy
- (v) Equal Opportunities Policy (see Part two below)

**17. Other legal considerations**

These are:

- (i) School Standards and Framework Act 1998 & The Education Act 2002;
- (ii) School Staffing (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2006; and
- (iii) The Equality Act 2010.

## **PART TWO: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT**

### **18. Introduction and aim**

- (1) Child Okeford School recognises and values the importance of equality of opportunity in employment and seeks to eliminate unfair and unlawful discrimination in the workplace.
- (2) Part two of this Policy has been developed in accordance with advice and guidance from The Equality and Human Rights Commission, ACAS and takes account of all aspects of Anti-Discrimination Legislation, as detailed in the Glossary (Appendix 1).
- (3) The aim of part two of this policy is to communicate the school's commitment to equal opportunities in employment and to encourage and promote positive attitudes to equality of opportunity throughout the school.
- (4) If an employee is aggrieved about an issue of equality of opportunity and/ or unfair and unlawful discrimination, they should first discuss the matter informally with the Headteacher. In the event that informal discussions do not resolve the matter the employee can seek redress via the school's grievance procedure.
- (5) Part two of this policy is recommended to all schools for adoption. Please be aware that the Local Authority is not able to accept liability for any actions, claims, costs or expenses arising out of a decision not to follow this recommended policy or procedure, where it is found that the Governing Body has been negligent or acted in an unfair or discriminatory manner in exercising its employment powers.

### **19. Scope**

- (1) Part two of this policy applies to all employees of Child Okeford School. It also applies to job applicants and potential applicants; contract workers, agency or supply staff, trainees or student teachers and volunteers.
- (2) Where required, reasonable adjustments and appropriate support will be provided to those people in 19(1) above in order to ensure equal treatment in accordance with the Policy and Procedure.
- (3) All areas of the employment relationship are covered by part two of the policy, including recruitment and selection, promotion, training, discipline and grievance, redundancy selection and all matters of day to day employment.
- (4) Part two of this policy complements all other employment policies and practices in operation within Child Okeford School.
- (5) With regard to job applicants, employees and workers with a criminal background, decisions relating to their employment will be handled in accordance with the school's policy for the Employment of Ex-Offenders and the school's Criminal Records Checking Policy.

### **20. Responsibilities**

- (1) The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to practical implementation of the provisions of part two of this policy through timely communication, and the demonstration of good practice through embedding the principles of part two of the policy in all aspects of the employment relationship.
- (2) All employees will adhere to, and apply the principles of part two of the policy in all aspects of their day to day work. Failure to do so may lead to action being taken under the relevant disciplinary procedure.

### **21. What is equality of opportunity in employment?**

- (1) Equality of opportunity in employment is about aiming to ensure that individuals are recruited, promoted, listened to and treated on the basis of their merits and abilities regardless of their age, gender, race, religion or belief, disability and/ or sexual orientation.

- (2) When properly applied, the principles of equal opportunities results in the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination in employment.

22. **What constitutes unfair and unlawful discrimination?(Refer to the Glossary–Appendix 1 for more details)**

- (1) The school is committed to eliminating unfair and unlawful discrimination and all employees will be made aware that treating a person less favourably than others because of their age, gender, marital status, race/ ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, sexuality, membership or non membership or a trade union may constitute direct discrimination and is unlawful.
- (2) If a condition or requirement of a job, learning and development opportunity or promotion has the effect of excluding, penalising or treating any of the disadvantaged groups highlighted above differently without an objective justification, this may constitute indirect discrimination and is unlawful.
- (3) If an applicant or employee is victimised or harassed because of their age, gender, marital status, race/ ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, sexuality, criminal background (except in cases of child protection offences), membership or non membership or a trade union, this may also constitute discrimination and is as such unlawful.

23. **How the equal opportunities policy applies in employment at Child Okeford School**

- (1) Recruitment and selection:
  - (i) Whilst recognising the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in its recruitment practice, the school will ensure that good practice and equality of opportunity are integral to the recruitment and selection processes. Recruitment and selection at Child Okeford School shall be approached in a fair, consistent, equitable, transparent and effective manner, with due regard for Equal Opportunities legislation.
  - (ii) In conjunction with the school's recruitment and selection policy, the school will seek to ensure that all documentation, including job descriptions and person specifications relating to recruitment and selection will avoid unfair and unlawful discrimination. In liaison with the Local Authority, the school will provide application forms in alternative formats where required.
  - (iii) All vacancies will be open to all applicants unless there is a genuine occupational requirement for the post.
  - (iv) All short-listing and selection decisions will be determined solely on the basis of objective and job related criteria.
  - (v) Interviews will always be carried out by a panel, preferably with a gender balance, in order to avoid any risk of bias.
  - (vi) All employees of the school will be made fully aware of the school's commitment to equal opportunities in employment.
- (2) Access to professional development and promotion:
  - (i) The school is committed to the principle that opportunities for professional development and promotion should be available equally to all employees.
  - (ii) Any decisions regarding access to professional development and promotion are solely based on merit and ability and will be fair, open and consistent.
- (3) Rehabilitation, retraining and redeployment:
  - (i) The school will endeavour to accommodate changes in working patterns and practices, and will rehabilitate, retrain and redeploy employees who become disabled or whose condition requires a change in work practices, in so far as is reasonably practicable.

- (ii) The school's Management of Attendance Policy identifies the school's positive commitment to making reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
- (4) Selection for redundancy:
  - (i) In the event that the school has to consider redundancies to meet changing future staffing needs, decisions will be based solely on objective selection criteria.
  - (ii) No one will be selected for redundancy simply due to their age, gender, marital status, race/ ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, sexuality, membership or non membership or a trade union.
  - (iii) The school's Redundancy Procedure outlines the commitment to determine fair and objective selection criteria in determining potential redundancies.
- (5) Discipline and grievance: in handling matters of discipline and grievance, decisions will be based solely on the facts of each case and outcomes will be determined in a fair, open and consistent manner.

#### 24. **Monitoring and targets**

- (1) Although there is no statutory obligation for applicants and employees to give such information, the Headteacher should aim to ensure applicant's and employee's ethnicity is obtained and recorded.
- (2) This record will be reviewed by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors and will be made available in accordance with DCSF reporting, to assess the levels of diversity within the workplace.
- (3) Schools are also reminded of the need to regularly monitor and compare pay levels for all employees in order to ensure there has been no discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity or disability.

## **PART THREE: STRESS MANAGEMENT**

### **25. Introduction**

- (1) Part three of this policy has been developed in consultation with Headteachers and the recognised trades unions. The aim of part three of the policy is to deal with, and offer guidance in, a range of issues related to the management of stress at work with a view to reducing the incidence of work related stress within Child Okeford School.
- (2) Child Okeford School recognises its duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees. This policy, procedure and guidance takes into account the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and appropriate Regulations under the Act.

### **26. Scope**

Part three of this applies to all employees within the school. It has been recommended by Dorset County Council. Child Okeford School's Governing Body has formally adopted this policy. This recommendation recognises the joint responsibility of both Child Okeford School's Governing Body and Dorset County Council to provide appropriate support and protection to its employees.

### **27. Definition**

- (1) Stress is defined as '*the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them*' (Health & Safety Executive, 2001).
- (2) Pressure can improve performance, but when demands and pressures become excessive, this can lead to stress. As a result individuals, teams and schools will suffer.
- (3) Work related stress is defined as that which is caused by factors emanating from work practices/ environments. The Health and Safety Executive has identified the following factors that can have an impact on stress:
  - (i) Culture—of the organisation and how it approaches work related stress;
  - (ii) Job Demands—such as workload and exposure to physical hazards;
  - (iii) Control—how much say an individual has in the way they carry out their work;
  - (iv) Relationships—with other colleagues, covering issues such as bullying and harassment;
  - (v) Change—how organisational change is managed and communicated within an organisation;
  - (vi) Role—whether the individual understands their role and whether the organisation ensures individuals do not have conflicting roles; and
  - (vii) Support, Training and Factors Unique to the Individual—support from peers and line management, training to enable the employee to carry out their duties, and catering for individual differences, e.g. a disability.

### **28. Policy statement**

Dorset County Council is actively committed to addressing the causes of stress at work to reduce work place stress, and respond with an appropriate level of support. The County Council will ensure that:

- (i) appropriate training is made available for the Headteacher to assist him/ her in identifying the causes and signs of stress, how to carry out risk assessments and respond to individual employees suffering from stress.
- (ii) risk assessments are regularly undertaken;
- (iii) employees have access to confidential support and counselling;

- (iv) clear guidance is given to the Headteacher on his/ her responsibilities and the procedure to be followed if an employee is suffering from occupational stress;
- (v) all employees are informed of their responsibilities and the procedure for reporting work related stress;
- (vi) all issues of work related stress are dealt with as promptly as possible;
- (vii) responsibilities within the policy are clearly allocated; and
- (viii) will not consider the reporting of work related stress as a weakness, but a mechanism to ensure support through a systematic managed process.

## **29. Statement of Intent**

The County Council will aim to:

- (i) consult teachers, managers, trades unions and employees to assist in identifying particular causes of stress;
- (ii) encourage and develop a positive organisational culture where communication, support and mutual respect is normal practice;
- (iii) use surveys, audits and questionnaires, as appropriate, to identify areas of concern or risk;
- (iv) review sickness absence data, staff turnover and (where available) exit interview statistics to identify particular areas where stress may be particularly prevalent;
- (v) encourage all employees to participate in health promotion events;
- (vi) ensure teachers and managers are particularly alert to issues of stress in situations of change, for example, or where investigations are taking place, and to progress these in a way which minimises stress;
- (vii) improve workplace communication and employee participation;
- (viii) provide and support employees who are (or likely to become) stressed; and
- (ix) reduce work related stress in accordance with set targets.

## **30. Responsibilities**

- (1) Child Okeford School's Governing Body will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the effective implementation of part three of this policy. Child Okeford School's Governing Body will also be responsible for ensuring that the development of the culture of the school takes account of the principles set out in part three of this policy and ensuring that part three of the policy is implemented effectively within the school. This will include arranging for appropriate training to be provided to teachers and managers (including the recognition and management of stress in themselves and others), and the monitoring of sickness absence and employee turnover.
- (2) Headteachers will:
  - (i) undertake appropriate training;
  - (ii) ensure employees undertake appropriate training;
  - (iii) ensure all teachers, and managers are trained as necessary to undertake risk assessments and are aware of their responsibilities within this policy;
  - (iv) ensure that the policy and procedure is effectively implemented within their school;
  - (v) ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken as a result of a risk assessment or the stress reporting procedure being initiated;
  - (vi) ensure that employees have the skills and tools necessary to carry out their duties;
  - (vii) monitor sickness absence;
  - (viii) provide a supportive 'open-door' policy to employees who wish to discuss and/or report work related stress;

- (ix) monitor workloads and working hours;
  - (x) ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated;
  - (xi) ensure employees are aware of other supportive mechanisms in place, such as/ e.g. contact details for Dorset County Council's Staff Counsellor, Contact Officers, the national Teacher Support Network, and Headline (the support line for Dorset head teachers); and
  - (xii) identify posts where there are potentially high levels of stress, and ensure that additional support is put in place so that high pressure levels will be alleviated, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- (3) Individual employees will:
- (i) be responsible for ensuring their own health, safety and welfare as far as is reasonably practicable;
  - (ii) initiate the reporting procedure(s) as soon as they recognise that levels of stress are becoming unacceptable to them, and understand that the school would not consider this to be a sign of weakness;
  - (iii) participate in finding solutions to problems of perceived stress; and
  - (iv) assist Child Okeford School to report areas for improvement and ensuring their own individual behaviour is appropriate.
- (4) Recognised Trades Unions will:
- (i) co-operate with Child Okeford School and Dorset Local Authority in the promotion of health and safety;
  - (ii) assist in identifying high risk areas where priority action may be required;
  - (iii) assist in monitoring progress towards achieving a reduction in work related stress and in the review of the policy; and
  - (iv) participate, where appropriate, in finding solutions to problems of perceived stress.
- (5) The County Council will:
- (i) ensure the recommendation of the policy to schools;
  - (ii) arrange for appropriate training to be made available to teachers, managers and employees, which will include the recognition and management of stress in themselves and others;
  - (iii) monitor sickness absence trends and staff turnover on a county wide basis; and
  - (iv) ensure the Health & Safety and Occupational Health Services provide appropriate support and guidance to employees, to include a confidential service from the Staff Counsellor and support from Contact Officers.

### **31. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually as a standing item by Child Okeford School's Governing Body.

### **32. Aim of reporting work related stress**

- (1) Child Okeford School recognises that excessive levels of stress can have a negative effect on mental and physical health. It will therefore seek to take all reasonably practicable steps to protect employees from high levels of stress and support them as appropriate.
- (2) Child Okeford School will not consider the reporting of work related stress as a weakness, but a mechanism to ensure support through a systematic managed process.
- (3) Child Okeford School recognises that stress related illnesses are rarely the result of work issues alone. There are often other contributory factors over which the school has no control or influence but which nevertheless may affect performance/attendance at work. In these circumstances there may be temporary adjustments to

working patterns, for example, which would assist in reducing stress. Headteachers have the discretion to agree such adjustments at any time. Child Okeford School also has statutory obligations to comply with, such as Parental Leave and Time Off for Dependents.

- (4) Where pressures have been identified on particular posts which may lead to stress, Child Okeford School will ensure that additional support is put in place and that high pressure levels will be alleviated, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- (5) The aim of this procedure is to ensure that issues of work related stress are raised by employees as soon as possible, appropriate action is taken at an early stage, and that employees and managers together arrive at solutions.

### 33. **Procedure for reporting work related stress**

#### (1) Part A:

- (i) As soon as employees (or line managers or others) recognise that stress levels at work are becoming (or will become) unacceptable, they should inform the Headteacher of identified stress related symptoms and perceived cause.
- (ii) Where possible this should be done whilst the employee is still at work, i.e. well before the point at which any individual is contemplating the need to take sick leave due to the effects of stress.
- (iii) Every effort should be made to include the line manager as the first point of contact/ discussion when issues are raised. However, in the event that the line manager is identified as contributing to the symptoms, then the issue should be raised by the employee (or on behalf of the employee) with the next line of management above the line manager. The Headteacher, or the Chair of Governors must be informed each time stress is raised as an issue at work.
- (iv) Whenever stress is identified the Occupational Health Department of the Local Authority should be notified so that they can monitor the situation and advise as necessary.
- (v) Where a Headteacher identifies stress, he or she should raise the issue with the Chair of Governors who will be required to undertake appropriate consultation with the Occupational Health Department of the Local Authority to determine the necessary action to be taken. However, should the Chair of Governors be identified as contributing to the symptoms, then the issue should be raised directly with Occupational Health.
- (vi) If necessary, the issue can also be raised on behalf of the employee (e.g. by a manager or Trades Union Representative).

#### (2) Part B:

- (i) Following the reporting of stress employees are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative, to any meetings regarding work related stress.
- (ii) A record should be kept of the outcome of an informal discussion between the employee and their line manager to determine an agreed action plan to minimise the problem. If this agreement is reached, a review date should be set between the employee and the line manager to ensure both parties remain satisfied with the outcome and stress levels have continued to be reduced as a result of the action taken. A copy of the agreed action detailed within this section, should be forwarded to Occupational Health.
- (iii) Where an informal agreement cannot be reached, or a detailed assessment of the issues is required, advice should be sought from Occupational Health.
- (iv) In seeking to find solutions to any problems of perceived stress, the employee should be encouraged to participate in any discussion with the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, and will be invited to contribute solutions that are

suitable for them and the School. If solutions are to be effective then they must be mutually acceptable. Each employee has their own threshold for handling stress and this threshold may vary in different situations and at different times.

#### 34. **Responsibility**

- (1) The Headteacher or the Chair of Governors is responsible for ensuring that any issue of work related stress is dealt with speedily and effectively. They may arrange for an appropriate line manager to undertake actions within this procedure but cannot delegate the overall responsibility of ensuring that each issue is dealt with appropriately..
- (2) On receipt of a report of stress from an employee the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors will ensure that the matter has been dealt with appropriately and that Occupational Health have been consulted.
- (3) The Headteacher or the Chair of Governors must ensure that any additional notes or documentation) are kept for audit/ evidence purposes, and copied to the employee and to Occupational Health.

#### 35. **Support**

- (1) Contact officers:
  - (i) Contact Officers are work colleagues from a variety of Directorates within Dorset County Council who have been trained to provide confidential support and guidance for employees experiencing difficulties in the work place.
  - (ii) Contact Officers are not tied to any one Directorate or School. They are not counsellors but can offer confidential and independent support and guidance on an informal basis to help employees get through a difficult period at work.
  - (iii) A Contact Officer will not make any decisions on behalf of an employee nor are they acting as Dorset County Council representatives in any formal sense. At all times it is the employee themselves who will control what happens next, and seeing a Contact Officer does not necessarily set any wheels in motion. Headteachers are not told about the contact and the only time when confidentiality cannot be guaranteed is when the safety of others is involved, where there is serious breach of conduct, or where the law requires it.
- (2) Headline: Headline is a confidential support service for Dorset head teachers staffed by experienced clinical psychologists. They specialise in supporting Headteachers through stressful periods and aim to help them in the management of stress and the development of personal resilience. The aim is to maintain strong leadership in schools and reduce absences through stress related illness. This service is funded by Dorset County Council and is therefore free to Dorset head teachers.
- (3) Teacher Support Network: A national Teacher Support Line is available to all serving and trainee teachers, which offers information, support or concentrated short term counselling to help employees cope with the demands of teaching.

#### 36. **The County Council**

- (1) Occupational Health will ensure that the Staff Counsellor is aware of all issues of work related stress. Contact will be made with all employees who report work related stress to ensure that they are aware of the support that can be provided. Support may be provided internally, e.g. by the Staff Counsellor or a Contact Officer, or a referral may be made to an external source of support. Ultimately, it is an employee's decision whether or not to seek support from the Staff Counsellor.
- (2) Occupational Health will assist in monitoring progress of procedures and action plans.

- (3) The County Council will monitor county wide sickness absence and provide management information regarding stress related illnesses.
- (4) Schools will be invited to buy in to appropriate training provided by the HR Service. Training for managers will include how to recognise and deal with stress in themselves and their employees. Training will also be available to all employees on how to manage their own stress levels.
- (5) The Health & Safety and/or Occupational Health Services within HR will provide support and advice to Directorates and individual employees as appropriate.

### **37. Guidance for Managers**

- (1) What is Work Related Stress?
  - (i) Work related stress is defined as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them. It should also be recognised that on occasions insufficient demands can also be stressful e.g. those employees ‘on-standby’.
  - (ii) There is an important distinction between the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure (which can be stimulating and motivating), and work related stress which is a distressing reaction to demands or pressures that the individual perceives as unreasonable and/or that they cannot cope with at a given time. Work related stress is not an illness, but if prolonged or intense it can lead to increased problems with ill health for employees.
  - (iii) Everyone can experience work related stress in principle. No one is ‘immune’. Individuals react differently to different pressures at various times so what one employee may find unacceptable may not affect another employee in the same way.
- (2) What effect can stress have on individuals? Stress can manifest itself in a number of ways:
  - (i) behaviour: e.g. jumpy, moody, aggressive, drug or alcohol abuse;
  - (ii) thinking style: e.g. indecisive, negative, rigid, low concentration, paranoid;
  - (iii) emotional reactions: e.g. drained, phobias, depressed, irritable, withdrawn, defensive;
  - (iv) physical symptoms: e.g. headaches, infections, back and neck pain, blurred vision, palpitations, insomnia; and
  - (v) actions: e.g. missing deadlines, absenteeism, poor time-keeping, long hours, stockpiling work, low productivity.
- (3) What are the implications of work related stress for the School?
  - (i) It is essential that managers are trained to deal with stress related cases. As well as direct costs in terms of days lost through stress related illnesses, there are also many indirect costs.
  - (ii) Although clearly there will be costs involved in initially solving the issues of stress in the short term, there will be savings in the long term such as preventing:
    - (a) reduced morale and commitment to work;
    - (b) poor relationships with colleagues (the absence of one employee may in turn lead to increased workloads for others thus causing a ‘domino’ effect);
    - (c) reduced performance and productivity;
    - (d) increased accidents;
    - (e) higher staff turnover;
    - (f) the time and cost of intervention; and
    - (g) the time and costs associated with any claims and subsequent impact on insurance premiums.

(4) Risk Assessments

- (i) The purpose of carrying out a risk assessment is to establish if existing control measures are sufficient or if more needs to be done to minimise the identified risks to the lowest reasonably practicable level. Completing a risk assessment will not in itself reduce work related stress, but the actions taken as a result should do so.
- (ii) The County Council has adopted the HSE's five step approach to risk assessment of work related stress:
  - (a) Step 1: Identify the hazards;
  - (b) Step 2: Establish who might be harmed and how;
  - (c) Step 3: Develop an action plan;
  - (d) Step 4: Take action; and
  - (e) Step 5: Evaluate and share your work.
- (iii) A programme of training will be provided for all relevant managers to ensure that they are competent to carry out risk assessments in relation to work related stress.
- (iv) All managers will have access to the HSE publication "Tackling Work Related Stress – A manager's guide to improving and maintaining employee health and well-being" which identifies seven categories of risk factors for work related stress.
- (v) Managers responsible for carrying out risk assessments should ensure that each of the seven factors are adequately assessed and seek advice and/or assistance from the County Health and Safety Manager, an HR Officer or Occupational Health as appropriate.

(5) Employee absence due to work related stress

- (i) Assessment and preventative action is aimed at reducing work related stress but however effective the risk assessment process might be, there may still be occasions when an individual employee suffers ill health as a direct result of work related stress.
- (ii) Where the Headteacher or Chair of Governors becomes aware that an employee is absent from work as a result of ill health caused by work related stress, the circumstances should be investigated as a matter of urgency. Although this task can be delegated, ultimately the responsibility falls on the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors.
- (iii) The aim of the investigation will be to determine which risk factors are involved, what changes have already been made (if any), and what changes need to be made in order for the employee to return to work. The results should be communicated to the employee and, as in other cases where issues of work related stress are raised, an action plan should be drawn up in agreement with the individual. It will be the responsibility of the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors to ensure that the action plan is monitored and the outcomes are effective.
- (iv) The results of the investigation and assessment should also be provided in confidence to Occupational Health where a medical referral is made the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors may find it helpful to involve an HR Officer in the investigation.

(6) Further guidance material from HSE:

- (i) "TACKLING WORK RELATED STRESS" (A Managers' Guide to Improving and Maintaining Employee Health and Well-being)
- (ii) CARING FOR THOSE WITH WORK RELATED STRESS(Reproduced from Part 3 of "Tackling Work related Stress" (HSE)

## Appendix      Part two - equal opportunities – glossary of terms

1. **Anti discrimination legislation** -Legislation designed to prevent unlawful discrimination in employment as follows:
  - (i) Equal Pay Act (1970)
  - (ii) Sex Discrimination Act (1975)
  - (iii) Race Relations Act (1976)
  - (iv) Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
  - (v) Human Rights Act (1998)
  - (vi) SEN and Disability Act (2001)
  - (vii) Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
  - (viii) Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
  - (ix) Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003
  - (x) Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
  - (xi) Civil Partnership Act (2004)
  - (xii) Gender Recognition Act (2004)
  - (xiii) Disability Discrimination Act (2005)
  - (xiv) Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (2006)
  - (xv) Equality Act (2006)
  - (xvi) Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006)
2. **DDA** – Disability discrimination act which provides certain rights for disabled people, in employment.
3. **Direct discrimination** – Occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of their sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
4. **Disability** – A person has a disability if he/ she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
5. **Diversity** – The differences in values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic background, sexual orientation, ability or disability, skills, knowledge, age and life experiences of each individual in any group of people.
6. **Ethnicity** – An individual's identification with a group sharing any, or all of the following – nationality, lifestyle, belief, religion, customs or language.
7. **Equal opportunities** – The development of practices that promote fair and equal chances for all to develop their potential and the removal of barriers to unlawful discrimination and disadvantage, experienced by certain groups.
8. **Equality** – Based on the legal obligation to comply with anti discrimination legislation, equality protects people from being discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
9. **Impairment** – The loss or limitation of physical, mental or sensory function on a long term or permanent basis.
10. **Indirect discrimination** – the use of an apparently non-discriminatory provision, criterion or practice which puts people from a particular group at a particular disadvantage compared with others, e.g. to decline a request for part time working without a good business reason would be discriminatory against women as more women than men work part time.
11. **Prejudice** – A preconceived judgement or opinion often based on limited information, about a person or group of people.
12. **Reasonable adjustments** – A legal term, introduced under the DDA 1995, giving employers a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments where arrangements or physical premises place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to persons who are not disabled. Reasonableness relates to the practicability and effectiveness of the adjustments being made and also financial considerations.

13. **Sexual orientation** – Noun referring to being lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight. It is often referred to as sexuality. (This term is not used for transgendered – see below).
14. **Stereotype** – A popularly held belief or generalisation held about a group of people, based on misleading assumptions or prejudices, creating an exaggerated view of that group.
15. **Transgendered** – Refers to people who identify with the opposite gender from the one they were assigned with at birth. It includes transsexuals and cross dressers.
16. **Visually impaired** – refers to people with little or no sight.