

Health and Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

As a considerable amount of employees' time is spent at work, George Watson's College ("the School") considers that the School can and should play an important role in helping our staff achieve better quality working lives and enjoy improved wellbeing as a result. The School is therefore fully committed to providing a workplace that is healthy, safe, supportive, and accommodates different people's needs in relation to their health and wellbeing and to ensuring that our policies and management practices support this commitment.

Research has shown that there is considerable connection between health and work, generally finding that the benefits of work (e.g. increased self-esteem and companionship) greatly outweigh the potential disadvantages and negative health impacts (e.g. stress). With a keen awareness of both these possible perspectives, the School is committed to ensuring that our employees' experiences in the workplace are as positive and supportive as possible. On that basis, this policy is particularly aligned to the School's ethos of "*ex corde caritas*".

Purpose and Scope

This policy is intended to promote and support the health and wellbeing of all George Watson's staff. The policy covers the details of the School's commitment and associated actions for improving and maintaining employee physical and mental health and wellbeing, clarifies the various shared and individual responsibilities associated with achieving a good work-life balance, and provides additional details of various health and wellbeing topics and strategies.

In recognising that the School's policy cannot cover every topic, or specific and/or individual requirements in detail, Appendix 2 is designed to offer links to additional providers of advice and guidance on a range of health and wellbeing topics.

The Health and Wellbeing Policy applies equally to all employees of the School.

Commitment

The School is committed to:

- Building and maintaining a work environment and culture that provides a safe and comfortable workplace and proactively supports healthy lifestyle choices
- Outlining the roles and responsibilities associated with the health and well-being agenda and supporting the overall strategy being driven forward by the Staff Health and Wellbeing Group
- Increasing managers' and employees' knowledge and awareness of health and wellbeing issues and healthy lifestyle behaviours, with the aim of equipping them with the personal resilience to handle their work demands and maintain an effective work-life balance
- Facilitating active participation in a range of initiatives that support employee health and wellbeing
- Providing adequate internal and external resources, including the appropriate facilities and employee benefits to support the health and wellbeing agenda
- Ensuring that the School's health and wellbeing strategy and any associated support mechanisms take account of employers' legal duties and remain compliant with any appropriate legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

The Wellbeing Group

The Wellbeing Group is a subgroup of the [GWC Staff Association](#), and aims to drive forward the health and wellbeing agenda and help increase staff engagement by focussing on a variety of health, safety and wellbeing issues and coordinating school-wide social events. Along with the GWC Staff Association, The Wellbeing Group forms our “Staff Voice”; governance for the overall group sits with the Governing Council’s Staff Committee, via the ICE Committee.

Every member of staff is part of The Wellbeing Group, but there are a number of volunteer representatives from across the School who actively contribute to and coordinate key areas of interest, including work-life balance, events and social activities, staff benefits and communication, and the wellbeing budget. The Group is always keen to welcome new representatives who wish to get involved.

Communication

Regular and clear communication and providing easy access to sources of advice and information are both essential to ensuring success in raising awareness and increasing knowledge of health and wellbeing issues and encouraging healthy lifestyle behaviours.

The School will ensure that the Staff Health and Wellbeing Group have the opportunity to share key health and wellbeing messages via the School’s Staff Portal and weekly briefings, and by supporting their programme of events (e.g. with inclusion in Professional Learning Day agendas).

Human Resources will ensure that this policy is easily accessible to all members of staff and that any relevant information about new and existing staff benefits aligned to this policy are regularly communicated to employees, as required. Line Managers will advise new employees about the School’s health and wellbeing agenda as part of their induction programme.

The School’s health and wellbeing agenda is generally informed by staff feedback (e.g. from staff surveys and previous family group responses), and as such, two-way communication, active contribution, suggestions and feedback from all employees is strongly encouraged, via the Staff Health and Wellbeing Group or Human Resources, as appropriate.

Responsibilities and Governance

As in every organisation, the School (as the employer) and all its employees have shared responsibilities in relation to ensuring a safe, healthy, and supportive workplace that we can all enjoy. This section provides further details of the associated responsibilities, governance and obligations we all need to be aware of.

Health and Safety

All workers are entitled to work in environments where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled, and under the UK’s main health and safety legislation (the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974) the primary responsibility for this rests with employers. However, the law also makes it clear that employees have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. The law also makes it clear that everyone has to cooperate with their employers and colleagues to help everyone meet their legal requirements. In the school, this adherence to the law is a contractual requirement for all of us.

Similarly, everyone in the School has a shared responsibility to promote and maintain a safe, healthy and positive workplace.

Wellbeing

Although there is a clear crossover with health and safety, the majority of this policy and associated appendices focusses on health and wellbeing. Wellbeing is a broad term, but it can generally be considered to cover the following areas:

1. Physical wellbeing
2. Emotional and psychological health
3. Personal values, such as self-confidence and resilience
4. Attitudes to work, such as having a sense of purpose or job satisfaction
5. Personal development at work.

All of these can affect employee performance, and any might be the focus of measures or initiatives to promote health and wellbeing at work. Our policy and associated appendices aim to cover these areas of general wellbeing, or refer employees to other relevant school resources.

Responsibilities

For the School's senior leadership teams and committees (i.e. Principal's Leadership Team, JSLT, SSLT, Governing Council, Staff Committee, ICE Committee etc) this includes demonstrating commitment to the wellbeing agenda, preventing circumstances detrimental to good health and wellbeing, ensuring appropriate awareness of emerging national and local issues and taking relevant action (e.g. in response to pandemics, mental health issues associated with critical incidents or change management, etc) providing budget to support key activities/proposals made by the Health and Wellbeing Group, providing relevant training to Line Managers and staff, and monitoring the implementation of this policy.

For line managers, this includes planning work with "people" in mind (job design, workload, hours and demands), supporting team members to achieve work-life balance, understand potential constraints in their personal lives, health issues, potential workplace conflict, acting quickly where there's an issue, being alert to changes in circumstances, recognising changes in behaviour and knowing how/when to take action, encouraging employees to take their full annual leave allowance, etc.

For individual employees, this includes looking after our own health and well-being, using positive coping strategies, identifying personal stress triggers at work, engaging with line managers and the Staff Health and Wellbeing Group, and taking notice of, and supporting, work colleagues.

Monitoring and Review

The School's approach to health and wellbeing will be monitored by the Staff Committee of the Governing Council, based on reports provided by the GWC Staff Association. The Staff Health and Wellbeing Group will take regular feedback from staff, and share this feedback and their recommendations, including suggestions for improvement, targeted interventions, and other health and wellbeing promotions and benefits.

Other Relevant Policies and Documents

The School has a number of other policies which are intended to maintain a positive and supportive working environment or promote health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace, or which may provide opportunities for employees to personally develop a good work-life balance. All of these policies are available to review on the Staff Portal:

- Agile Working Policy
- Annual Leave Policy
- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Family Leave Policies – Adoption, Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental Leave, Parental Leave
- Flexible Working Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Professional Learning framework and policy
- Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Smoking Policy
- Special Leave Policy

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Health and Wellbeing at George Watson’s College
- Appendix 2: Useful websites for additional information
- Appendix 3: Stress in the Workplace Guide
- Appendix 4: Additional stress management guidance for line managers
- Appendix 5: Stress Risk Assessment Form

Policy Review and Approval

The owner of this policy is the Head of Human Resources.

The Health and Wellbeing Policy has been approved by the Staff Committee of the Governing Council, following endorsement by the Principal’s Leadership Team and ICE Committee.

In line with the agreed schedule, the School will review the Health and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years, or as soon as practicable after any change of relevant legislation, to ensure that the policy and associated procedures continue to comply with current employment legislation and to meet the School’s operational needs.

Date of next review: Summer 2025

Appendix 1: Health and Wellbeing at George Watson's College

George Watson's College is committed to supporting and enhancing the emotional, mental and physical health and wellbeing of all our staff, as well as promoting positive wellbeing through training and career development. This section provides fuller details of a number of HR policies, initiatives and staff benefits that the School has in place to help and support employees' health and wellbeing. Additional information about any of these can be provided by the HR Team, if required.

Employee Assistance Programme

The School understands that at various points in their lives, employees will be dealing with personal life, health, home, or work-related issues, and that they may need to access some professional advice, guidance, or support to help them deal with the situation. As part of the School's commitment to providing supportive staff benefits, all employees of George Watson's College can access professional counselling and specialist information advice providers, through the Employee Assistance Programme.

The Employee Assistance Programme is provided via Care First. The website offers support by a variety of methods, including a wellbeing assessment tool, health awareness dates and articles, and webinars, and topics covered include bereavement, finances, parenthood, and support for managers.

Their expert advisors, trained by Citizens Advice, can provide comprehensive answers on a range of issues, confidentially and free of charge. The confidential counselling service is available 24/7 and all counsellors are professionally qualified and accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Please refer to "lifestyle support" on the mybenefits@GWC website for further details and to access the website.

Work Life Balance

The School has implemented a number of detailed HR policies and provided a number of staff benefits that can help employees achieve a successful balance between their work and home lives. Further summary details of these are provided below,

Agile Working and Flexible Working

The School believes that where either an agile or flexible working arrangement can be accommodated, they can, in turn, support a variety of positive impacts. Both of these working arrangements can potentially help to increase staff motivation, promote a good work-life balance, reduce stress, improve performance and productivity, and be environmentally friendly (by reducing the need for commuting). However, there are very important differences between Agile and Flexible working.

Agile working is an informal arrangement, agreed by line managers and employees, which offers flexibility in the design of the working day/week but without changing contracted hours or base or work. It is not compatible with every role or circumstance in the School, and the agile arrangement can be stopped, or flexed, at any time and without notice.

Flexible working gives certainty around formal flexible arrangements by protecting them through an employee's contract. The Flexible Working Policy is part of the School's overall commitment to "family friendly" working and sets out in detail the approach the School will take to flexible working arrangements, including the types of flexible working, eligibility, and the procedures for

making and approving a request. Our policy has been written in accordance with the ACAS code of practice on handling requests to work flexibly in a reasonable manner.

Full details can be found in the Agile Working Policy and Flexible Working Policy on the staff portal.

Family Friendly Policies

The School has a number of family friendly policies underpinned by employment legislation, namely the Adoption Leave, Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, Paternity Leave, and Shared Parental Leave policies. All of these policies are available on the Staff Portal, providing the necessary information needed to best support your own family situation. Further individual guidance can be provided by the HR Team.

Annual Leave

Annual leave is an important way of taking a break from work and staff across the School are strongly encouraged to use all of their annual leave entitlement. Full details of annual leave entitlement is available in individual employees' contracts of employment, which will be based on their hours of work and relevant terms and conditions (i.e. full or part time, teaching staff, sessional/term-time only or 52 week support staff etc). Line managers should also ensure that their teams are taking their annual leave, and actively encourage them to do so. The School has also developed an Annual Leave Policy, confirming the procedures associated with taking leave, and which is available on the staff portal.

For support staff on eligible 52 week employment terms (i.e. not teachers, sessional staff or staff already entitled to 8 weeks annual leave), another staff benefit that may further add to a positive work-life balance is the option to purchase additional annual leave.

Annual leave purchase is an employee benefit scheme that allows eligible employees to purchase up to five days (pro rata for part-time staff) through a salary sacrifice arrangement. There is a calculator on the benefits platform so employees can see what it would cost them in advance; repayments are then spread over the 12 months of the next leave year and the cost is deducted from gross salary, meaning eligible employees don't pay Income Tax or National Insurance on the cost of the purchase. Line manager approval is required, and there is a purchase "window" in May each year when eligible employees can apply. Further details of how this benefit works can be found on the staff benefits platform.

All staff can also benefit from the many holiday discounts available on the staff benefits website, including well known tour operators, holiday cottage companies and other accommodation providers.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Ensuring positive mental and emotional health in the workplace is a key component of the School's commitment to help our staff achieve better quality working lives and improved wellbeing.

According to the Mental Health Foundation, there are ten evidenced ways to improve mental health and our HR policies, health and wellbeing initiatives, and staff benefits are generally linked to these overarching principles:

- Talk about your feelings
- Eat well
- Keep active
- Drink sensibly

- Keep in touch
- Take a break
- Accept who you are
- Ask for help
- Do something you're good at
- Care for others

Further information about them can be found on their website:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-support-mental-health-work>

Stress

Stress is the reaction that people can have to excessive pressure or other types of demands that are placed upon them, either at work and/or at home and in their personal lives, which are not matched by their ability to cope or the capacity to meet the demands. Stress affects people differently – what stresses one person may not affect another. Factors like skills and experience, age or disability may all affect whether an employee can cope with the demands placed upon them, and individuals can experience both a physiological and psychological reaction to stress.

While a certain level of pressure can be positive and motivating in the short term and actually help people achieve success or targets, prolonged exposure to stress can lead to ill health. Employers have a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work and the School recognises its responsibilities to all its staff in this respect.

As a key topic in terms of employee health and wellbeing, further information and guidance on the effective management of stress can be found in three appendices, specifically designed to support this policy and assist line managers and employees in managing stress in the workplace. Please refer to the following:

Appendix 3: Stress in the Workplace Guide

Appendix 4: Additional stress management guidance for line managers

Appendix 5: Stress Risk Assessment Form

In addition to the information the School has made available, there is lots of accessible resources and information for managing stress (i.e. advice for yourself, and also as a colleague or manager of someone who is experiencing stress) via the Employee Assistance Programme on the benefits platform, including signposting to counselling, stress questionnaires, brain boosters and relaxation techniques, and lots of articles about building personal resilience and self-confidence. Online training and digital events are also available.

The School has a number of key staff who have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders.

Dignity and Respect

We appreciate that the behaviour of others has the potential to negatively impact an individual's mental health and wellbeing, and the School already has a Dignity and Respect Policy in place. The policy aims are to promote an enabling and inclusive work environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, free from bullying and harassment, and to ensure that any occurrences of bullying and harassment are taken seriously and dealt with promptly and with due sensitivity and discretion. Employees with any concerns, or needing further information, should refer to the Dignity and Respect Policy in the first instance.

Other Mental Health Information

Although we have provided a range of resources in relation to dealing with stress, we understand that there is a lot more to maintaining positive mental health and good emotional wellbeing, that the support needed will be different for every individual member of staff, and that employees may be affected by a wide range of other health concerns and conditions. There are links to some other sources of information in Appendix 2, support is available through the Employee Assistance Programme, and advice is always available from the HR Team.

Physical Health

The School is committed to supporting staff in developing and maintaining a good level of physical health by raising awareness of the benefits of physical activity (e.g. improved mental health and wellbeing), supporting employees in becoming more active, and by removing barriers to workplace activity. Several of the staff benefits we have in place can support staff to make physically active choices and employees are encouraged to make use of these benefits as much as possible.

Centre for Sport access and Gym Membership discounts

All staff are able to make use of the sports facilities within the School, with access subject to the appropriate term time or holiday opening hours (details available on the website).

The Galleon Club has a range of excellent facilities, and staff are welcome to make use of the gym equipment in the Pentland Fitness Suite, as well as enjoying the 23.5m swimming pool and a variety of bookable fitness classes.

In addition, staff are able to access a number of gym membership and other special offers via the staff benefits portal, including discounted memberships with Edinburgh Leisure venues, and other local fitness providers. The benefits portal also provides staff with access to discounted digital fitness provision.

Cycle to Work Scheme

The Government approved and HMRC compliant Cycle to Work scheme has been in place for a number of years, giving employees access to a salary sacrifice scheme which allows them to hire a bicycle and safety equipment (e.g. helmet, lock, lights) from their employer for commuting to and from work, as well as for general personal use, for example in the evenings, at weekends and on holidays.

The cost is spread over a set period of time, and as the salary sacrifice arrangements enable costs to be deducted from gross salary, This element of salary will not have tax or National Insurance applied to it, making this a tax free benefit. As deductions come out of your gross salary, the bike you hire will be provided at up to 32% less than the usual cost you would pay.

Employees interested in accessing the scheme can find more details under Staff Benefits on the portal (i.e. under Cycle2Work or Cycle to Work by Sodexo), or by contacting HR.

Bike storage and showering facilities are available on campus for staff cycling to work.

Eye Tests and Glasses

Under the terms of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, employees who are "users" of display screen equipment (DSE) (also known as visual display units or VDUs), have a legal right to an eye and eyesight test, on request. By providing suitable arrangements for these tests for eligible staff, the School aims to improve the comfort, job satisfaction and performance of employees, by allowing the identification and correction of any visual defects and by helping to prevent any possible eye strain, fatigue, stress and headaches.

In Scotland, residents between the ages of 16 and 60 can have an NHS-funded eye examination every two years (i.e. free of charge). Employees are able to claim for the costs of glasses and contact lenses as supplied by their own optician. The maximum claim that the School will reimburse is £150.00 once every three years, on production of a valid receipt. Staff should make their claim in line with the terms of the Staff Expenses Policy.

Flu Vaccinations

Employees of the School are also eligible to be reimbursed for the cost of getting a flu vaccination (i.e. a flu "jab") up to the value of £15.00. Again, this can be done on provision of a receipt and by using the appropriate Staff Expenses Policy process.

Smoking Cessation

Staff who would like support to help stop smoking can find information on the Employee Benefits platform. Links to local help services including pharmacies, group sessions and 1-1 are available through the NHS Scotland website:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/stopping-smoking>

Occupational Health

To help support its positive and proactive approach to sickness absence management, the School retains the services of an Occupational Health (OH) provider. In certain absence management cases, employees may be asked to consent to attend an appointment with Occupational Health for the purpose of helping the School to better understand their health condition and adopt the right strategies in assisting their recovery or return to work, or improving their attendance and performance. Further information about how the School may use Occupational Health services is available in the Sickness Absence Management Policy.

Healthy Eating

The School is keen to support staff in making healthy food choices and to continue developing and improving the provision of these healthier food choices in conjunction with Inspire, our in-house catering services supplier. Their approach of providing fresh, healthy and wholesome food applies to all school meals provision, hospitality and event catering, and takeaway offerings. Inspire will always cater for cultural and dietary requirements and aim to serve locally sourced, Scottish and seasonal produce, wherever possible. Their sites, including George Watson's College, hold the Healthy Living Award, and further information about Inspire Catering can be found on the Staff Portal and their own website: <https://inspirecatering.co.uk/>

Employees can also help support their own healthy eating choices outside of school by accessing a variety of providers and discounts via the staff benefits platform, including discounts and deals for delivered healthy eating recipe boxes, a range of restaurant chains, dine out cards, and eVouchers and reloadable cards for major supermarkets.

Employee Benefits Scheme

Many of the employee benefits accessible via the Staff Portal and benefits platform link clearly link into the overall health and wellbeing agenda. However, just doing something you love or getting a bargain can also increase a sense of wellbeing. As well as the benefits and sources of support highlighted elsewhere in this policy and appendices, there are a huge range of other benefits available to our staff, so please make sure that you make the most of all that the platform has on offer, including discounted access to lots of entertainment (e.g. cinema, theatre/gigs, books, theme parks and tourist attractions, spas, etc) and a wide range of shopping options (e.g. reloadable cards for retailers, discounted eVouchers, supermarkets, gifts and toys, fashion, health and beauty, etc).

Financial Wellbeing

We know that being able to effectively budget and plan for the future, including retirement, is important for many employees in terms of their personal financial wellbeing, and understand that financial worries may cause individuals considerable stress.

As an employer the School is able to offer some level of support, including the overall reward provision (i.e. remuneration, pension and staff benefits), but finances are generally a personal matter. However, the School does offer individual pensions meetings to staff on a regular basis with the relevant providers, and through the Employee Assistance Programme provided on the benefits portal, staff are able to easily access counsellors, a budget calculator, and financial support articles (e.g. online financial health checks, making a will, advice on staying social when in debt etc).

Emergency Salary Advances

As a responsible and caring employer, the School may consider supporting employees financially in times of unforeseen difficulties or personal financial hardship, by providing a small advance that can be recovered within a short timeframe and always at a level that could be recovered from final salary, if necessary. There are many reasons for such advances to be requested (e.g. change of employer, unexpected major household or legal bills, or a significant change in family circumstances), and we would try to support employees at these difficult times, if we are able. However, it should be noted that the School can only give assistance in the most **exceptional** of circumstances and whether this assistance is given is always wholly at the School's discretion. Further information on this emergency support and the applicable terms is available from the HR Team in the first instance.

Health and Safety and Physical Environment

Although much of the focus of this policy and associated appendices is on health and wellbeing, we fully acknowledge the importance to all our employees of both health and safety and the physical work environment. The School recognises its legal obligations to provide a safe and healthy work environment, and this commitment is supported by the Health and Safety Committee and our full-time Health and Safety Manager.

New staff will receive a Health and Safety induction, and there is a very comprehensive Health and Safety section on the Staff Portal providing details of health and safety topics from A-Z, risk assessment, fire procedures, and accident and near miss recording. All staff and managers should make sure that they are familiar with this information and follow any Health and Safety requirements.

Physical Environment

In terms of ergonomic checks for work spaces, full information about a workstation self-assessment can be found in the Display Screen Equipment of the Health and Safety A-Z. As the assessment advises, any concerns regarding the work environment (e.g. office furniture, lighting, heat, ventilation or noise issues, etc) can be shared with the Health and Safety Manager in the first instance.

COVID-19

In 2020, the School has quickly adapted to the changing working requirements associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic. As part of the response to this unprecedented situation, a number of key reference documents and resources have been produced to support line managers and employees. These cover practical information (e.g. return to school arrangements, IT during a school closure, SQA updates) and health and safety guidance on topics such as risk assessments and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). Staff can access all this regularly updated information on the Staff Portal: <https://www.gwc.org.uk/portal/school-information/coronavirus-guidance/>

Additionally, the School has issued regular reminders of the key sources of emotional and wellbeing support which may be of use to staff during these uncertain times, including the resources and counselling service available via the Employee Assistance Programme and the School's own HR Team.

Wellbeing through Personal and Career Development

As a caring employer, we understand the links between employee wellbeing and job performance, and know the benefits to both employer and employees of boosting those links by improving job satisfaction and general attitudes to work.

Some of the methods which the School may use to enhance job satisfaction include supporting career development (e.g. through training, mentoring, coaching, or promotion opportunities), facilitating personal development activities (e.g. to promote traits such as resilience, respect, team working, and assertiveness), encouraging inclusiveness of employees through equal opportunities, and by providing relevant policies and information.

Training

From a health, safety and wellbeing perspective, the School is particularly committed to ensuring that appropriate training is available to both educate and support staff and managers, particularly in terms of issues such as recognising stress in employees, mental health awareness, and health and safety issues.

ACAS offers a free online mental health awareness course which anybody is able to access. It may be particularly useful to line managers to help them better manage any mental health or stress at work issues affecting their teams.

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2113>

Mindfulness training is also available online, and may be a useful source of information and support to improve mental well-being.

Line managers will be trained, coached, and supported to ensure that they are equipped to confidently deal with managing and supporting mental health issues in their teams, and have the knowledge and confidence to successfully manage difficult conversations if required.

There is a section of the Employee Assistance Programme which is tailored specifically to line managers, offering support and guidance on a number of topics including managing a team, conflict resolution, social media, noticing problems and helping employees, and time management.

Appendix 2: Useful websites for additional information

As mentioned in the Policy statements, health and wellbeing are very broad terms and cover a wide variety of different wellbeing topics, medical conditions, and health concerns, all of which have a range of additional sources of external information and support.

Although not specifically endorsed by the School, the following website links are provided as suggested ways for employees to gain access to some of the most commonly needed information and as pointers to providers of resources for a number of health, wellbeing and personal concerns.

NHS Health and Well-being Information Websites

NHS Inform is the Healthier Scotland website supported by the Scottish Government with links to NHS 24. The NHS Inform webpages cover similar health and well-being topics as the NHS Live Well site (below), but also provide information about illnesses and health conditions, symptoms and self-help tools, information about tests, health screening and treatments, and confirmation of people's care and support options and rights in Scotland, as well as useful links to support and service providers accessible across Scotland.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living>

The **NHS Live Well** website covers all aspects of health and well-being, including sections such as Eat Well, Exercise, Healthy Weight, Moodzone, and Sleep and Tiredness.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/>

Mental Well-being

Scottish Association for Mental Health: <https://www.samh.org.uk/>

There is a Wellbeing Assessment Tool available on the SAMH website:

[https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/wellbeing-assessment-to
ol](https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/wellbeing-assessment-tool)

Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

edspace: <http://edspace.org.uk/>

Mental Health Foundation: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

Weight Management and Health Eating

NHS Eat Well: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

British Nutrition Foundation: <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/healthydiet.html>

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Smokefree: <https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>

Alcohol Focus Scotland: <https://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/>

Alcoholics Anonymous: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

Know the Score: <https://knowthescore.info/>

Heart and Lung Health

British Heart Foundation: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/>

Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland: <https://www.chss.org.uk/>

British Lung Foundation: <https://www.blf.org.uk/>

Cancer

Macmillan Cancer Support: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/>

Cancer Research UK: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/>

Other useful health and well-being information websites

Mental Health Foundation - Mindfulness: <https://bemindful.co.uk/>

Back Pain: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/back-pain/>

Diabetes UK: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/>

Age UK: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

Family Planning Association: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/>

Terrence Higgins Trust: <https://www.tht.org.uk/>

Men's Health Forum: <https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/>

Wellbeing of Women: <https://www.wellbeingofwomen.org.uk/>

Disability: <http://www.disabilityscot.org.uk/>

Menopause: <https://menopausesupport.co.uk/>

Henpicked (Menopause): <https://henpicked.net/>

Women's Health Concern: <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

Bereavement Support: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

Bereavement Support:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/death-and-bereavement>

Financial Wellbeing

Money Helper (formerly the Money Advice Service): <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en>

NB: Although these links will be regularly monitored to ensure that they are functioning correctly, if you find that any of these links are broken, please let Human Resources know.

In addition to the links above, many of these (and lots of other health and wellbeing topics) have specific sections on the EAP section of the benefits platform giving further information, sources of support and other links.

Appendix 3: Stress in the Workplace

What is stress?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as “*the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them*”.

This definition makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive and motivating state if managed correctly, and stress, which can occur when this pressure becomes excessive and exceeds the person’s capacity and capability to cope.

The stage at which excessive pressure leads to work-related stress will vary between individuals as each person has different tolerance levels. We acknowledge that employees may also be affected by non work-related issues which can lead them to react to work pressures adversely.

It is important to note that stress is not an illness in its own right, and where it lasts for a short time, there are normally no lasting effects. However, where a team or an individual employee sustains stress over a prolonged period of time, it can have a significant impact on their health and well-being. The psychological impact of stress can lead to conditions such as anxiety and depression and it can also potentially increase the risk of developing or exacerbating physical conditions such as heart disease, back pain, gastrointestinal illnesses or skin conditions.

The early identification and reduction of work-related stress is therefore a priority for the School.

Indicators of Stress at Work

Although not an exhaustive list, we have noted some of the possible indicators that an individual or team may be experiencing stress:

Changes in work performance

- Reduction in output or productivity
- Uncharacteristic mistakes or errors of judgement
- Poor concentration or decision making
- Deterioration in planning and control of work
- Increased absence from work

Change in attitude and behaviour

- Loss of motivation or commitment
- Noticeable tiredness and irritability
- Loss of sense of humour
- Working longer hours with diminished returns
- Erratic or poor time keeping
- Rapid changes in emotional mood
- Increased use of alcohol and/or cigarettes

Alteration in relationships at work

- Tension and conflict between colleagues
- Socially distancing themselves from colleagues
- Poor relationships with pupils, parents or clients
- Increase in employee relations, grievances or disciplinary problems

What causes stress?

Stress can have a wide variety of individual, or combination of, causes. For example, stress can be caused by a variety of life circumstances, sometimes even positive ones. Planning a wedding, moving house, bereavement, financial problems, or difficulties in personal relationships can all cause people stress.

Work can also cause employees stress. The HSE has identified the six primary causes of work-related stress to be:

- **DEMANDS** The demands of the job can have a big impact; employees can become overloaded if they cannot cope with the amount of work or type of work they are being asked to do
- **CONTROL** Employees can feel frustrated and perform poorly if they have no control over how and when they do their work
- **SUPPORT** Support from managers and colleagues at work is vital - levels of sickness absence often rise if staff feel they cannot talk to managers about issues troubling them
- **RELATIONSHIPS** Relationships at work - a failure to build successful working relationships based on good behaviour and trust can easily lead to problems related to discipline, grievances and bullying
- **ROLE** Employees will feel anxious about their work and the organisation if they don't know what is expected of them, and/or understand how their role and their work fits into the overall objectives of the organisation
- **CHANGE** Change always needs to be planned and managed effectively or it can lead to huge uncertainty and insecurity for employees

Our commitment to reducing stress at work

There are huge benefits for employers associated with reducing work-related stress. Taking positive action to reduce stress at work can help employees to be healthier and happier at work, improve performance and increase productivity, lower sickness absence levels, make the organisation attractive to potential recruits, and reduce workplace grievances or disputes. As well as the clear benefits of reducing work-related stress, under the Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974, all employers have a legal obligation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees. The School is committed to:

- meeting our legal obligations as an employer
- identifying workplace sources of stress through organisational, team or individual risk assessments, as necessary
- reducing the risk of work-related stress as far as reasonably practicable (e.g. by referring to HSE guidelines and management standards)
- defining responsibilities in the management of work-related stress
- supporting line managers and employees to recognise the signs of work-related stress and to take appropriate action to reduce or eliminate the stress
- provide departmental, HR, or external support (as necessary) to any employee experiencing any form of stress to enable them to stay in work or return to work

Responsibilities

We all have responsibility for the effective management of stress at work. A general overview of these responsibilities is provided below:

The Principal's Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that arrangements for stress risk assessments are adequate across the School and communicated effectively. This organisational risk assessment will follow the HSE management standards as its framework and address the six primary causes of work-related stress.

Line managers are responsible, where possible, for identifying and responding to work-related stress issues within their own team. This might include proactively addressing potential work-related stressors (e.g. when planning for team changes), taking appropriate action when a team member indicates they are experiencing stress, managing absence, and seeking further advice from HR to support their team.

Employees are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health, safety and well-being, and that of colleagues who may be affected by their actions. They should let their line manager know if they are experiencing stress at work or have concerns about colleagues, and work with their manager to identify the stressors, and possible control measures that could reduce the impact of the stressors.

Human Resources are responsible for providing advice, support, and guidance to line managers and employees. Members of staff who do not feel able to speak to their line manager about work-related stressors or feel that their manager is not adequately addressing their concerns may speak directly to HR.

Stress Risk Assessments

The School is committed to conducting risk assessments for work-related stress and taking actions to prevent staff from experiencing a stress-related illness because of their work. Most risk assessments will be completed on an individual level, but in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to look across a team, department, or whole school.

Ideally, risk assessments should be done proactively to focus on preventing and controlling the root causes of work-related stress, wherever possible, rather than dealing with issues once they have happened. However, this may not always be possible, and so they can similarly be used as a starting point for realistically and practically addressing issues once they have been identified (e.g. when an individual employee flags work-related stressors to their line manager).

A copy of the School's Stress Risk Assessment form is provided as Appendix 5 to this Policy, and can be used by individuals and line managers. Additional stress management information and guidance for managers is also available in Appendix 4.

Appendix 5: Stress Risk Assessment

Notes for individuals:

This risk assessment form is designed to help you identify any sources of stress that you are experiencing and to consider how to minimise the effects of these stressors in the workplace. The form asks a series of questions. You don't have to answer every question - only answer the ones that are helpful for you and your circumstances - but please answer the relevant questions as fully and specifically as you can.

You are not obliged to share this form with anyone, but ideally, your stress risk assessment should be discussed with your line manager to help you plan how to tackle any stressors identified. Remember, if they don't know there is a problem, they can't help deal with it. However, if you don't feel able to speak to your line manager about a work-related concern or other stressors, please consider sharing the form with Human Resources, or perhaps with a workplace representative or colleague who could raise issues with your line manager or HR on your behalf.

Notes for line managers:

You should offer your staff the opportunity to complete a Stress Risk Assessment:

- when they have been off sick with work related stress, either at their return to work interview or as part of the discussions planning a phased return to work
- when you think an individual, or a team, may likely be suffering from work related stress (e.g. due to an excessively demanding time at work or a traumatic or distressing situation or incident)
- to plan for major change

The form can be used as a guide during a meeting with an individual or a team, or as a survey to enable you to collate team responses. Please use your own judgement to decide the best approach for you and your staff/team. You can use the completed stress risk assessments to develop action plans to address any areas of concern and/or put support mechanisms in place; the action plans should be reviewed on a regular basis. And please remember that staff are not obliged to complete the form below - it has to be their choice.

Demands: this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment

Do you feel you have the right amount of work to do? Could you say what work you have too much/too little of?

Do you build sufficient rest periods into your working day and make best use of your annual leave? (i.e. taking rest/lunch breaks, using all annual leave entitlement, re-charging and switching off from work during holidays, etc)

What training, if any, would help you to do your job better?

Are there any problems with your work environment? (e.g. access, space, lighting etc) If yes, please describe them:

Control: how much say you have in the way you do your work

Do you determine how your work is done? If not, how could you have more say about how your role is carried out?

Do you feel included in decision making? If not, how could you be more included in decision making in the team?

Do you feel you are using your range of skills and initiative? If not, how could you be supported to use your skills to greater effect at work?

Support: this includes the encouragement, opportunities and resources provided by the School, your line manager and your colleagues

Do you feel you need more support to do your job? What support do you think you might need?

How could your line manager or colleagues better support you to do your job?

Are there any parts of your job that you find especially difficult? If yes, please describe:

Do you feel you have a healthy work-life balance? If not, how could it be better?

Relationships: this includes working with your line manager, colleagues, pupils/ parents, clients or others

Do you feel you have any difficulties with your relationships at work?

How could communication in the team be improved?

If you feel that you are experiencing any bullying or harassment at work, please explain what has happened and what could improve the situation.

Role: ensuring that your role is clear and that you do not have conflicting responsibilities

Are you clear about your role and responsibilities at work? If not, please explain:

Do you feel that there is any confusion or ambiguity in your role or responsibilities, and/or what is expected of you? Please explain:

Change: how organisational change is managed and communicated

Have you experienced or are you experiencing any significant changes at work? How have you found this experience

How could your line manager or others support you during change at work?

Do you feel changes at work have been explained to you adequately? If not, what could have helped?

Appendix 5: Stress Risk Assessment – Action Plan

For:				
Line Manager:			Date discussed:	
	Type of stressor(s) that have been identified	Existing workplace measures already in place	Any further action to be taken	Notes
Demands				
Control				
Support				
Relationships				

Role				
Change				
Personal Factors (Health, Relationships, Finances etc) **				

** These personal factors are not included in the HSE list of six primary causes of work-related problems that this form and risk assessment process focuses on. However, we know that sometimes personal stressors (i.e. non work-related issues) may also lead employees to experience an adverse reaction to work pressures. **IF** any of these personal factors have been discussed or are a concern, please document them and any action here (e.g. recommending and making use of the free, confidential employee counselling service may be a useful tool to help alleviate personal stressors impacting on work performance