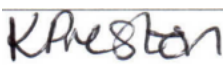


Policy/Procedure Name:	STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY		
Last Update:	August 2024	Next Update Due:	April 2027

Author	Alex Smythe
Signature of Authorised Individual	
Signature of the Director	

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1. Introduction

This policy sets the overarching framework which guides our approach to ensuring the well-being of staff and the management of stress within the workforce at Willow Park School.

- 1.2 Willow Park School is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of our employees and recognises that addressing the causes of stress at an early stage is generally the most successful way to manage problems associated with stress.

2. Definition of stress

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

- 2.2 There is an important distinction to be made between working under pressure and stress. Certain levels of pressure are normal in every job and are a positive state if managed correctly, unlike stress which can be detrimental to health. Manageable pressure can improve performance and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it can result in stress.
- 2.3 Pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events can also result in stress or may compound normal workplace pressures, resulting in stress.

3. Why is it important to tackle work related stress?

- 3.1 There are three main reasons why it is important to tackle work related stress:

3.1.1 A workforce with manageable stress levels can have a positive effect on:

- Job satisfaction, which can support retention and recruitment
- Employee commitment to work
- Staff performance and productivity
- Organisational image and reputation
- Educational outcomes for pupils

3.1.2 Reducing sickness absence can benefit the individual's mental health and reduces costs for the school.

To comply with Health and Safety law:

- i) Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers **must** assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities;
- ii) Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 employers must take measures to control that risk.



4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Senior Leaders

4.1.1 Senior Leaders are key in identifying and tackling stress at the school. By taking stress seriously and fulfilling the following responsibilities, stress can be reduced to manageable levels for staff:

- Promote a culture of open communication, participation and encouragement, where stress is taken seriously and staff are able and encouraged to seek assistance and support;
- Ensure good communication between management and employees, particularly where there are organisational or procedural changes taking place;
- Provide good supervision and meaningful development opportunities;
- Ensure staff receive training in order to discharge their duties;
- Monitor workloads and working hours and reallocate work where necessary;
- Monitor holidays to ensure that employees are taking their full entitlement;
- Ensure that work-related stress action plans and/or team stress risk assessments are conducted as appropriate to identify the causes of stress and actions are implemented where relevant;
- Adopt a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment;
- Reduce the identified risks to as low as possible through safe systems of work, suitable equipment, information and training;
- Be aware of presenteeism (where staff attend work for long hours each day, or attend work when they are not really well enough to do so) and speak to staff who appear to meet this definition;
- Ensure that support is provided to members of staff who are suffering from stress at work.

4.2 Employees

4.2.1 If employees believe they are suffering from stress which is affecting them at work, they should discuss this with the Head Teacher in the first instance. If they feel unable to speak to the Head Teacher, they may discuss the issue with the work colleague to gain support with the next steps.

4.2.3 In addition to raising the issues at work, employees should also take action at a personal level to review their lifestyle and work life balance to see if it is possible to identify any contributing factors. Examples may include:

- eating on the run, or in a disorganised manner;
- smoking, or drinking excessively;
- rushing, hurrying, being available to everyone;
- doing several jobs at once;
- not taking breaks, taking excessive work home with you;
- having no time for exercise and relaxation.



- 4.2.4 Employees should consider whether they would benefit from a discussion with their GP.

5. Managing Stress in the Workplace

- 5.1 Simply stated, the most effective way to tackle workplace stress is through good management practices. This includes having in place clearly stated business objectives, effective communication, well-defined roles and responsibilities and a focus on personal development through supervision and appraisal.
- 5.2 The Head teacher has a responsibility for health, safety and welfare within the school. They need to respond appropriately where it becomes evident that a member of their team may be suffering from stress. It is important to discuss this with the individual concerned as soon as possible. This discussion may take place as part of the normal line management process, or separately, and should be recorded.
- 5.3 Someone suffering from stress is likely to feel anxious and distressed. The Head teacher should be supportive and empathic so that problems can be solved in a positive way. The Head teacher should ask about possible causes and explore, together with the employee, some options for addressing the issues.
- 5.4 If part of the job or the working environment is identified as a source of the stress, the head teacher will need to clarify the specific area(s) of concern and discuss with the employee ways of tackling the problem.
- 5.5 If a head teacher has concerns regarding an employee's performance, capability or attendance, advice and support may be obtained from the school's HR consultants.
- 5.6 Where individuals feel unable to share how they are feeling, then the head teacher should suggest other people who may be able to help. These may include a sympathetic family member, friend or their doctor
- 5.7 When an employee is absent due to stress, the head teacher must ensure that supportive contact is maintained.

6. Good Management Practice

- 6.1 Among the most common causes of workplace stress are excessive workloads, long working hours, lack of support or insufficient training, bullying, problem relationships at work, feelings of isolation and fear of change. Key factors that often contribute to stress are the feeling of not being in control and not having much say in how the work is done.
- 6.2 The HSE Management Standards lists the following seven areas where employees can experience work related stress:
- Work demands
 - Control
 - Managers support
 - Peer support
 - Relationships at work
 - The job role



- Change at work

6.3 Taking these factors into account, there are many courses of action that the Head teacher can take to prevent or reduce workplace stress:

6.3.1 Tackling excessive workloads

- Review each job and the way it is done with a view to introducing improvements wherever possible.
- Cut out all unnecessary or duplicated work.
- Ensure that workloads, targets and deadlines are realistic.
- Talk to employees to review whether or not the demands being made on them are within their individual coping mechanisms.
- Give individuals more control over their work wherever possible.

6.3.2 Managing working hours

- The Head teacher is responsible for making sure staff restrict their hours to a reasonable level and take regular breaks.
- Support requests for flexible working in relation to working hours and patterns whenever possible.
- Encourage employees to achieve a work-life balance and respect those who wish to limit their working hours to a reasonable level.
- Reiterate that there is no expectation for staff to respond to emails outside of working hours

6.3.3 Providing support and training

- Set time aside to support employees whenever they need it, e.g. after a period of absence or when newly promoted.
- Ensure that employees receive sufficient coaching and training to enable them to perform their job effectively and confidently.
- Ensure appraisals and regular work reviews take place.
- Offer employees training in personal stress management.

6.3.4 Preventing bullying

- Ensure all employees are aware of the school's whistle-blowing policy and understand that bullying or harassment will not be tolerated and that all instances of such behaviour will be considered as gross misconduct.
- Take prompt action whenever there is evidence of bullying or harassing behaviour, firstly to investigate and second to put a stop to it.
- Take all complaints seriously and act on them promptly.

6.3.5 Encouraging effective communication

- Make sure employees know how their job fits in with the school as a whole.
- Ensure staff are clear about what is expected of them in terms of objectives, job responsibilities and work standards.
- Provide regular feedback to employees on their performances.
- Take positive steps to ensure employees are informed, involved and, where appropriate, consulted, especially during periods of change.



- Provide a clear route for employees to raise genuine workplace problems and make sure that everyone knows there will be no recriminations for those who do so.

6.4 Simple ways of incorporating wellbeing into everyday school life may include:

- Ensuring staff receive positive feedback on a regular basis
- Including wellbeing as part of CPD for all staff
- Having a quiet space staff can go to during the day
- Encouraging staff to take breaks outside during the working day
- Ensure meetings finish on time
- Foster a culture where staff feel able to ask for help or support when needed

7. Resources to help resolve cases of stress at work

7.1 In the first instance, the head teacher should contact the school's HR consultants to gain advice on managing individuals who are reporting difficulties with stress.

7.2 The following useful documents can be found in the appendices:

- Individual Stress Management Flowchart (Appendix 1)
- Individual Stress Action Plan (Appendix 2)
- Stress Risk Assessment (Appendix 3)
- Teacher Workload Impact Assessment (Appendix 4)

These should be worked through in conjunction with advice from the school's HR consultants.

8. Equality Statement

At Willow Park School, we actively seek to encourage equity and equality through our teaching and our employment practices. As such, we seek to advance the equality of opportunity between people who share any of the following characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The use of stereotypes under any of the above headings will always be challenged.

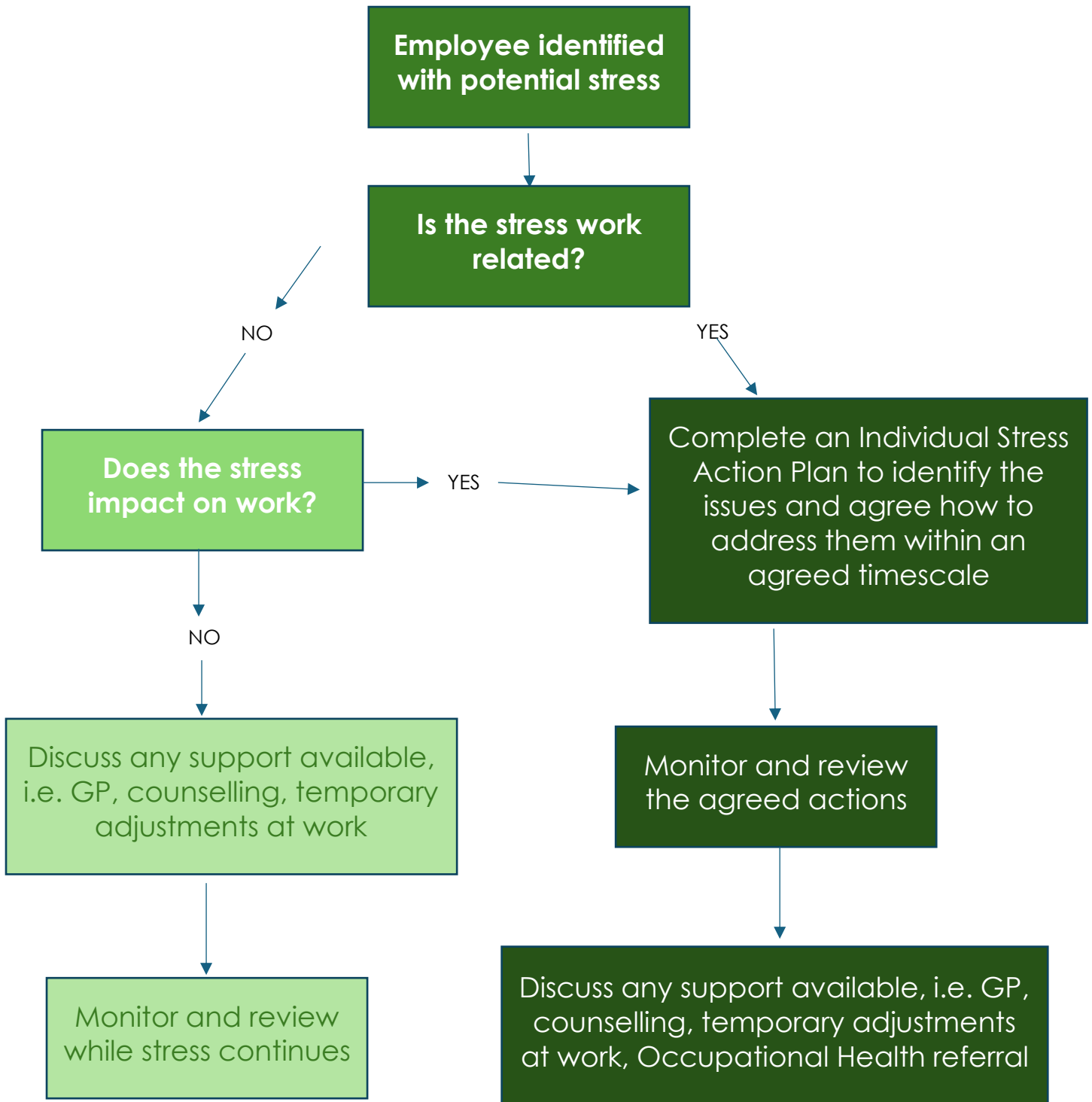
9. Inclusion



Our school is an inclusive school. We aim to make all pupils feel included in all our activities. We try to make all our teaching fully inclusive. We recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly-based curriculum. We have systems in place for early identification of barriers to their learning and participation so that they can engage in school activities with all other pupils. We acknowledge the need for high expectations for and of all children.



Appendix 1 - Individual Stress Management Flowchart





Appendix 2 - Individual Stress Action Plan

Criteria for Use

The individual Stress Action Plan is a tool which enables employees to identify the issues which have caused them to experience increased levels of stress, and to work with their manager toward solutions which help reduce this risk. The circumstances in which this tool must be used are;

- If an individual reports any difficulties in coping with their work and/or personal life
- If the individual is absent from work and reports experiencing increased stress, or stress related illness
- If the line manager identifies a pattern of sickness absence, and feels that this may be stress related
- If the line manager is concerned about the individual's performance at work and feels that this may be stress related

NB: If the manager does have concerns that the individual may be experiencing increased stress, this must be confirmed with the employee before initiating use of the Stress Action Plan.

Notes for Members of Staff

The overall aim of the Stress Action Plan process is for individual employees and their managers to investigate the causes of (and solutions to) stress together. It is not a blaming opportunity, but rather a chance to reflect upon the situation and the circumstances around it, and to identify how to reach a satisfactory outcome (e.g. if individuals are off work - that they are able to return to work). Approaching it in this way means that employees can play a major part in clearly identifying the issues involved, and how these issues could be addressed.

Where it is not appropriate to return the form back to their line manager, a nominated person (e.g. the Principal) must be formally identified to whom the form will be returned.

The first stage of the Stress Action Plan process is for the individual concerned to complete Part 1 of the Stress Action Plan Form. They should not complete it with their line manager, but either complete it alone or with the support of another person.

NB. It is important that individuals using this tool are as specific as possible with the information and examples they provide.

Employee's Perceptions of Stressors

Individuals should write down their perceptions/feelings about the situation (e.g. no one listens to me, can't cope with workload, no one interested, no support from manager, etc.). Simple statements such as 'I feel stressed' will not enable the 'Stress Action Plan' approach to be successful.

Employees are encouraged to seek advice and support from their supportive friend/colleague.



Perceptions

Individuals should provide examples of how they have arrived at their perceptions (e.g. instances that have led them to feel that they have no support from their manager). It is only when managers can understand the perception and what has led to that perception that the causes of the perception can be addressed.

The Future

Individuals should then write down the most significant issues in their work situation that they would want to see addressed (using examples from the evidence column), and how they would like these issues to be resolved.

Non-Work Factors

Individuals should also document any non-work issues that are causing / contributing to their stress and how the school may be able to help them with those issues.

Notes for Line Managers or Employee Representative

Summary of actions proposed by employee

Each of the actions requiring action and identified by the employee needs to be summarised and put in order of importance.

Actions to be taken by management

Using the actions proposed, each action needs to be individually considered and comment on what action will be introduced and has been introduced to address the concerns raised.

Explanations of reason for any inaction

Identify specific reasons for why actions are not going to be resolved or addressed.

Review date for each action and details of progress at that date

Identify a suitable review date for each of the actions identified and then at the review date, identify the actions that have been introduced.

If the actions are not completed, identify what further actions are proposed with review date.



Individual Stress Action Plan

What is your view of the current situation?	Please try to provide evidence of specific examples	Planning for the future	
		The most significant issues that the individual wishes to be addressed	Individual's proposals about how each of these issues should be addressed
Summary of actions proposed by employee	Actions to be taken by the school's leaders	Explanations of reason for any inaction	Review date for each action and details of progress at that date
Employee's signature:	Date:	School Leader's signature	Date:



Appendix 3 - Team Stress Risk Assessment

This risk assessment is intended to help those with responsibility for staff to assess whether or not current working conditions are likely to lead to significant stressors on employees within their area.

Note: This document is not intended to risk assess the stress of an individual. Where an individual is felt, or reports to be at risk from increased stress, the Head teacher must refer to the **Individual Stress Action Plan**.

Criteria for use

The Team Stress Risk assessment must be used when;

1. The Manager responsible has been made aware of, or feels that there may be issues with regard to stress impacting upon the performance of the team. Indications of this may be;
 - Increased levels of sickness absence
 - Concerns regarding diminishing performance
 - Increased interpersonal conflict
 - Unusually high number of grievances
 - High turnover of staff
2. The team is about to, or has experienced significant changes to the structure of their work. This may be in relation to;
 - A restructure of the team
 - Changes to roles within the team
 - Increased demands placed upon the team
 - A change of working environment

Completing the Team Stress Risk Assessment

1. The term 'manager' refers to people with responsibility for staff.
2. Please complete **Section 2: Arrangements**, answering both questions. If the answers are negative, then you **must** identify actions to establish such arrangements.
3. Then complete **Section 3: Performance** on each Stressor answering Yes or No to each of the questions in the table.
4. If you answer No to any of the primary questions in bold in each section, then you **must** identify actions that are necessary. The other questions in each section should help identify appropriate actions.
5. If you answer No to any of the other questions, then you **must** either indicate actions to be taken or at least comment on why the current situation is acceptable.
6. Then complete **Section 1: Summary** at the front of the assessment, including your estimate of the risk to your staff from stressors on the following basis:

Low Risk



- If your response to each primary question was **Yes**. Current methods for controlling risk to health are adequate. Unlikely to cause harm to members of staff.

Medium Risk

- If you responded **No** to a primary question, especially if your answers to other questions were also **No**, current methods for controlling risk to health are not fully adequate and must be improved within an agreed time period. Some risk to members of staff is possible.

High Risk

- If your responses to more than one primary question was No, current methods are inadequate for controlling the risk to health and improvements must be made as quickly as possible. Significant risk to members of staff is possible.

7. Share the results of the assessment with staff, highlighting the arrangements that are in place and offering them the opportunity to provide feedback either direct to their manager or through a confidential channel such as a Trade Union representative or work colleague.
8. **Make sure there is follow up on any identified actions.**



Section 1 : Summary	
Willow Park School	Head teacher: Kimberley Preston
Trigger for completion of assessment :	
Using Information on this form is the Risk: Low / Medium / High (circle relevant category)	
Summary / additional comments :	
Date of Assessment :	Target date for implementation Of remedial measures :
Date for review of Assessment :	Signature of Manager :

Section 2 : Arrangements	
With regard to the following stressors, ➤ How do you get feedback from your staff? ➤ What arrangements are in place for your staff to inform you of their concerns?	Comments / Actions
Stressors : 1. Demands – Workload, work pattern and work environment, including exposure to physical hazards; 2. Control – how much say the person has in the way they do their work; 3. Relationships – includes promoting positive behaviours to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour; 4. Change – how school change is managed and communicated; 5. Role – how well people understand their role in the school and whether they have conflicting roles; Support : Whether people feel equipped with the necessary skills, information and support to carry out their jobs effectively;	



Section 3 : Performance On Each Stressor

Demands

Includes issues like workload, work pattern and work environment, including exposure to physical hazards:

This is about developing a style of management and communication, which takes individuals and their needs into consideration

Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do staff indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their job;		
Do you provide employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work;		
Are the skills and abilities of your staff matched to the demands of the job;		
Are jobs designed to be within the capabilities of employees;		
Do you address employees concerns about their work environment;		

Control

How much say the person has in the way they do their work:

This requires effective two-way communication and consultation with all staff. This should be readily achievable through existing channels such as informed discussions with line managers, individual performance development reviews, open-door policies, team meetings

Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work;		
Do your staff have control over their pace of work, where possible,		
Do you encourage your staff to use their skills and initiative to do their work;		
Do you encourage your staff to develop their skills;		



Do you encourage your staff, where possible, to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work;		
Do your staff have a say over when breaks can be taken;		
Do you consult your staff over their work patterns?		

Relationships		
Includes promoting positive behaviours to avoid conflict, and dealing with unacceptable behaviour: You should bring policies and procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour at work to the attention of all your staff as part of raising awareness.		
Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work;		
Do you promote positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness;		
Do your staff share information relevant to their work;		
Do you understand the systems that the School has in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour;		
Do you draw to the attention of your staff the procedures they should follow to report unacceptable behaviour.		

Change



How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation:

You may need to review your procedures for consulting with staff prior to implementing any significant changes that impact upon individuals.

Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change;		
Are your staff provided with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes;		
Are your staff consulted on changes and provided with opportunities to influence proposals;		
Are your staff aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, are they given training to support any changes in their jobs;		
Are your staff aware of timetables for changes;		
Do your staff have access to relevant support during changes.		

Role

Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether they have conflicting roles

You may need to encourage your staff to make you aware of any issues in this area.

Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities;		
Do you ensure that, as far as possible, the different requirements placed upon your staff are compatible;		
Have your staff been provided with information to them to understand their role and responsibilities;		



Do you ensure that, as far as possible, the requirements placed upon your staff are clear;		
Are your staff aware of the procedure to follow to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.		

Support		
Whether people are equipped with the necessary skills, information, and support to carry out their jobs effectively: This requires managers to ensure that staff are equipped with the necessary skills and information to carry out their jobs effectively. Personal development plans could be one method of approach.		
Stressor	Yes/No	Comment/Action (describe actions to be taken)
Do your staff indicate that they receive adequate information and support		
Do you encourage your staff to support their colleagues;		
Do your staff know what support is available and how and when to access it;		
Do your staff know how to access the required resources to do their job;		
Do your staff receive regular and constructive feedback from you and other people for whom they carry out work		

Appendix 4 - Teacher Workload Impact Assessment

This impact assessment should be applied when making planned large-scale changes or restructures that affect a whole school, to assess any potential changes in workload



What is the purpose of the change or restructure?
What is the process to achieve this?
Will the level of marking for teachers increase?
What will be the impact on pupil assessment and provision of feedback?
How will planning meetings be affected (individual and collaborative)?
Will there be any change in the provision of resources and schemes of work?
How will this impact the use of data collection and reporting by teachers?
How will the workload of staff other than teachers be impacted by this change/restructure?



From the above questions, are there any associated aims (knock on effects)?	
Are there any significant differences to workload (adverse impact)?	
How will any adverse impact be mitigated?	
Completed by:	Date: