TrustEd SCHOOLS Alliance
Stress Policy
(Including Stress Risk Assessment & Tool Kit)

This Policy has been consulted on with the recognised Trade Unions set out below and through the Trust Forum Group, which includes Support Staff and Teacher's representation for all schools within our Trust.

- National Education Union
- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
- National Association of Headteachers
- Association of School and College Leaders
- Unison
- GMB

FREQUENCY OF REVIEW: **Every two years**

COMMITTEE: Personnel Committee

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AUTHOR: Shropshire HR

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Adopted by the Board of TrustEd Schools Alliance

Signed_____ Dated _____
Chair of Trust Board

Signed_____ Dated _____
Chief Education Officer (CEO)

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TrustEd Schools Alliance Stress Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the Trust's aims and objectives for the management of health and safety in relation to harmful stress at work. The intention of the policy is to aim that employees who experience stress are offered support.

The Trust believes that its employees are its most important asset and that their well-being is essential to effective work performance and the provision of a high-quality service.

Harmful stress reduces performance, creativity, and productivity. The Trust is therefore concerned to develop tools, to help employees understand and recognise the nature and causes of stress, and to take positive steps to manage stress effectively.

The policy is a guide and a toolkit to help school leaders with the assessment of stress risk. The key aims and objectives of this policy are:

- to increase awareness of stress and the methods available to combat it
- to initiate appropriate action to manage and reduce stress at work
- to assist employees in managing stress in themselves and others
- to manage problems which do occur and to provide confidential support
- to manage the return to work of those who have been absent as a result of stress

This policy contains tools that could be used:

- guidance on risk assessing stress
- a form to help identify if stress is home or work related
- a form for assessing the level of work-related stressors
- a scoring sheet
- an action planning form

It is appropriate for an employee to raise their concern with the Headteacher in the first instance. If they feel unable to do so, the matter may be taken to a Trust leader or to Shropshire HR. However, the Headteacher must be made aware that the concern has been raised elsewhere.

2. Definition

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as being 'the reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed upon them'

2.1 Some level of stress is a normal aspect of everyday life. However, the harmful effects of stress, particularly when chronic, are now regarded as having a significant negative impact on the overall physical and psychological well-being of individuals.

2.2 Harmful stress is seen as a contributory factor in a wide range of diseases and conditions and it is accepted that the recognition, management, and reduction of stress can have substantial benefits in improving an individual's general health.

2.3 Stress in the workplace can be a major factor in reduced employee performance, commitment and motivation, increased sickness absence, loss of productivity and general

absenteeism. The Health and Safety Executive views stress as the second most commonly reported work-related illness and states that it, along with associated problems. In addition, the HSE has also stated that current legislation encompasses the need to manage stress at work.

Relevant legislation identified by HSE is:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Public Order Act 1986
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023

2.4 The Trust also recognises that non-work-related stress such as that associated with bereavement, can have an impact on an individual's ability to deal with normal work-related stress. The Trust has a number of policies and guidance in place which can assist individuals e.g., use of the counselling service and special leave, with further information/guidance available from their HR provider.

3. Who can use It?

It is intended for school leaders as they feel appropriate, but it will be of use to staff interested in their own or colleagues' stress issues. You do not have to be a psychologist, safety expert, psychiatric worker, or occupational health expert to assess stress.

4. What is a Stress Risk Assessment?

Nothing more than a consideration of who might be harmed by work-related stress and how likely and serious the harm is and whether or not enough is being done to control the potential for ill health.

5. What is the legal position?

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (H&SWA 1974), employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of employees. There are also general duties for employees to take care of their own health and safety and that of others at work. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 employers have a duty to assess the health and safety risks to which their employees are exposed at work and to ensure that control measures put in place are monitored for their effectiveness. The Trust have devised and distributed a stress risk assessment tool to support this purpose. Employees have a responsibility to ensure that they comply with any guidance or advice relating to safe methods of working and to ensure that they do not jeopardise their safety or that of others. These regulations cover all health and safety risks including occupational stress.

There is a requirement to provide safe systems of work and proper information, training, and supervision, which clearly has an impact on the prevention and management of stress.

The H&SWA 1974 requires that an employer does what is reasonably practicable i.e., that the greater the risk, the greater must be the controls over it. Fortunately, not all human beings are

alike and the ability to deal with pressure is greater in some than others, so it is necessary to respond to individual cases with sensitivity and flexibility.

6. When could I risk assess stress?

- When a member of your staff, or a group of your staff, inform you that stress is a serious issue for them.
- When a report is received that an employee is off work with stress, or a condition related to stress.
- Where there are increasing signs of conflict or dissatisfaction above what might normally be expected for an individual or group.
- When there are increasing levels of absence for an individual or group above the norm, some, or all of which might be attributable to stress.
- When an existing assessment requires review because of changing circumstances.
- After a particularly traumatic or draining work activity.
- When you feel it appropriate to undertake an assessment.

7. What can I do to control levels of stress?

Risk assessment allows flexibility in controlling risk. So long as reasonable standards are kept to, different options can be selected as appropriate to control the risk. In terms of stress, this means that options such as training, supervision and support can be considered together with workload control, flexible working, and personal development amongst others. A vulnerable member of staff may require more support than others (though you must do all that is reasonably practicable in respect of the others as well).

There are already a number of policies, procedures, systems and people in place to support staff and managers dealing with stress problems. These are intended to support managers in delivering proper standards of stress management for their staff. Those relating to stress are as follows:

8. Policies and Procedures

- Health and Safety Policy
    - Risk Assessment Arrangements
    - Working Time Arrangements
    - Stress Arrangements
    - Workplace and Environmental Arrangements
- Stress Policy
- Staff policies such as grievance, disciplinary and attendance.
- Equality Statement
- Flexible Working Policy

9. Systems

- Risk Assessment
- Performance Management
- Line Management
- Absence Monitoring
- Pre-employment Checks
- Training Needs Analysis

10. Components of the process

- Creating opportunity to properly consider the sources/causes of the stress (or potential Stress)
- Planning and preparing thoroughly to approach the assessment
- Analysing and clarifying home-work balance stress sources
- Discussing and reflecting on possibilities
- Reaching agreement about suitable actions for control of stress
- Producing a written, time limited action plan
- Agreeing formal monitoring of the situation

11. Leaders' Considerations

- Group or individual line management
- Significance of own style as a contributor to problem
- School calendar / meeting arrangements
- Workload management and monitoring arrangements.
- Revised admin/support and communication systems
- Additional equipment/human resources
- Group/individual Training plans
- Cultural and behavioural changes
- Changes to shifts/cover patterns
- Change planning
- Work changes
- Support and flexibility for home-based stress
- Skills training and/or personal development
- Temporary / permanent revision of duties
- Revised working hours
- Options for individual/or group 3rd party support

- Increased monitoring and analysis of absence
- More frequent leadership attention to the wellbeing of the group or individuals

12. Staff Considerations

- Training and development needs
- Relative contribution of home and work to overall stress
- Behavioural or attitude change
- Working on relationships
- Consider change
- Honest appraisal
- Need for honesty and openness
- Willingness to consider support

13. Monitoring and Review

Trustees will monitor the outcomes and impact of this policy on an a bi-annual basis in conjunction with school representatives and will discuss revisions with their HR provider.

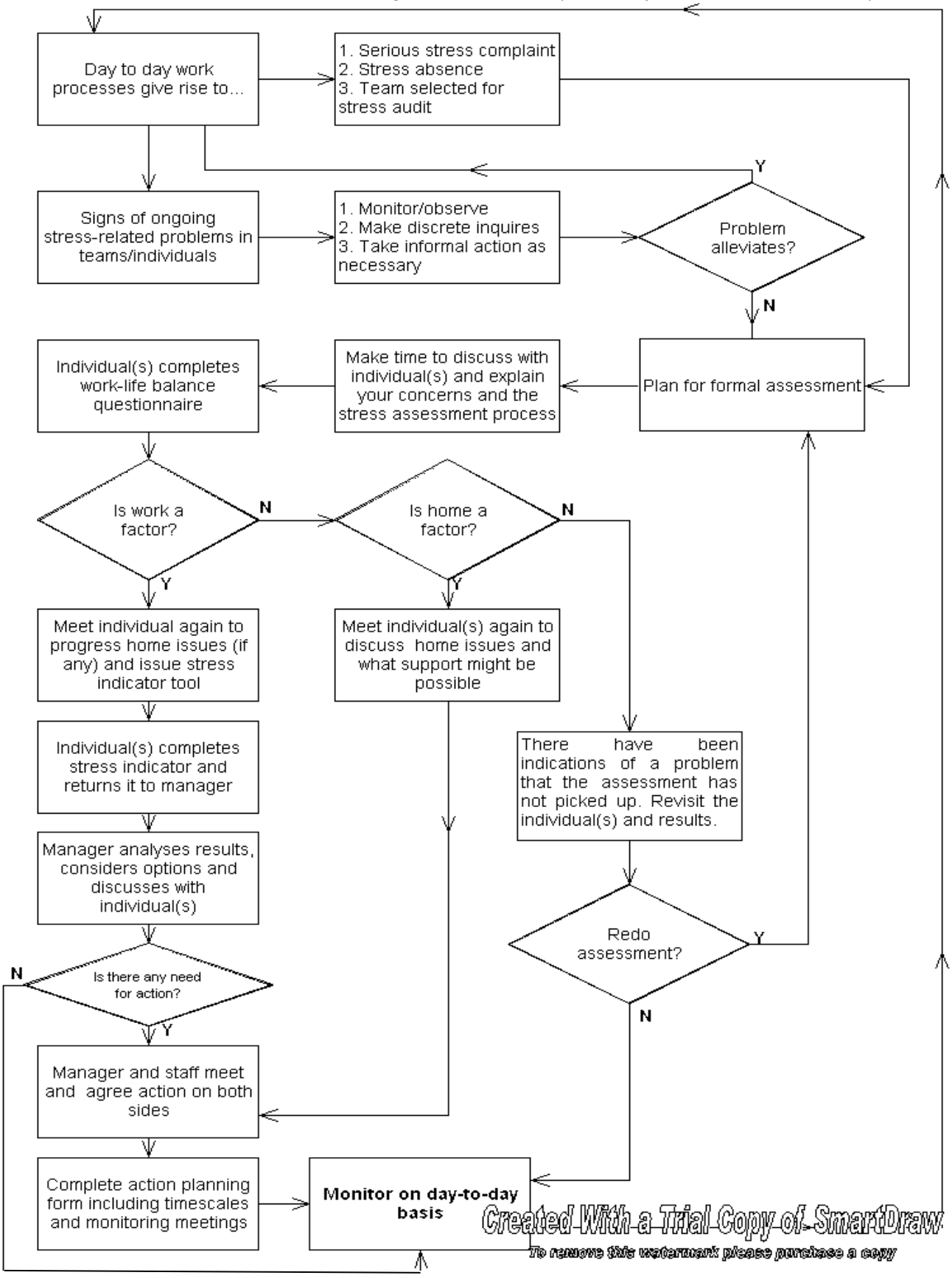
Appendices (Note: These tools are for Headteachers/leaders to use as tools as is appropriate to their needs)

Appendix A: Stress Risk Assessment Process
Appendix B: Work-Life Balance Questionnaire
Appendix C: The Trust Stress Indicator Tool with Tally Table for Manual Stress Indicator Tool Results
Appendix D: The Trust Stress Risk Assessment Action Plan

Appendix A

Stress Risk Assessment Process

The flowchart below outlines the general process: (Voluntary use for Headteachers)



Appendix B

Work-Life Balance Questionnaire

Your line manager / school leader will have asked you to complete this form.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help you identify if your home life is contributing to your stress. There is a further questionnaire about work-related stress. The intention is not to pry into your private life, but if there is something affecting you, some support or assistance from work might be possible and useful to you, but only if you wish it.

1. Are there major problems in your home life e.g. moving house, divorce, caring responsibilities, illness etc., which are causing significant amounts of stress for you?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. If yes, to what extent are they contributing?

A little ☐ About Half ☐ Very Much ☐

3. What do you think could be done at work that would help you in dealing with this?

4. Are there major issues at work that are causing you significant amounts of stress?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. What do you think could be done at work that would help you in dealing with this?

6. Would you like to discuss either of these any further with your manager?

Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Is there a specific support you can identify that would help?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Name: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

TrustEd SCHOOLS Alliance Stress Indicator Tool

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help identify any aspects of work life which are causing significant levels of stress and to assist in planning to reduce them. Please tick one box for each question, you do not need to spend ages deciding, your first reaction is usually the most accurate.

Name _____ Employee No _____ Date_____

On the scoring sheet, the categories are indicated both by the text colour of the question and in bold capitals in brackets after each question to assist with analysis.

	Never	**Seldom**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Always**
1. I am clear what is expected of me at work					
2. I can decide when to take a break					
3. Different Groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine					
4. I know how to go about getting my job done					
5. I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour					
6. I have unachievable deadlines					
7. If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me					
8. I am given supportive feedback on the work I do					
9. I have to work very intensively					
10. I have a say in my own work speed					
11. I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are					
12. I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do					
13. I am clear about the goals and objectives for my department					
14. There is friction or anger between colleagues					
15. I have a choice in deciding how I do my work					
16. I am unable to take sufficient breaks					
17. I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation					
18. I am pressured to work long hours					
19. I have a choice in deciding what I do at work					
20. I have to work very fast					
21. I am subject to bullying at work					
22. I have unrealistic time pressures					
23. I can rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem					
	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
24. I get help and support I need from colleagues					
25. I have some say over the way I work					
26. I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work					
27. I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues					
28. Staff are always consulted about change at work					
29. I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work					
30. My working time is flexible					
31. My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems					
32. When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice					
33. I am supported through emotionally demanding work					
34. Relationships at work are strained					
35. My line manager encourages me at work					

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

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
24. I get help and support I need from colleagues **(PEER SUPPORT)**	1	2	3	4	5
25. I have some say over the way I work **(CONTROL)**	1	2	3	4	5
26. I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work **(CHANGE)**	1	2	3	4	5
27. I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues **(PEER SUPPORT)**	1	2	3	4	5
28. Staff are always consulted about change at work **(CHANGE)**	1	2	3	4	5
29. I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work **(MGR SUPPORT)**	1	2	3	4	5
30. My working time is flexible **(CONTROL)**	1	2	3	4	5
31. My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems **(PEER SUPPORT)**	1	2	3	4	5
32. When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice **(CHANGE)**	1	2	3	4	5
33. I am supported through emotionally demanding work **(MGR SUPPORT)**	1	2	3	4	5
34. Relationships at work are strained **(RELATIONs.)**	5	4	3	2	1
35. My line manager encourages me at work **(MGR SUPPORT)**	1	2	3	4	5

Blank Sheet

Tally Table for Manual Stress Indicator Tool Results

The 35 questions fall into seven stressor categories. They are mixed up on the actual questionnaire to avoid respondents observing patterns in the questions. On the scoring sheet, the categories are indicated both by the text colour of the question and in bold capitals in brackets after each question. In the first column of this tally table, the stressors are listed together using the colour in which they appear in the managers' score sheet.

Stressor	***Q. Number***	***Score***	***Q. Number***	***Score***	***Q. Number***	***Score***	***Q. Number***	***Score***	***Q. Number***	***Score***	***Q. Number***	***Score***	***Q. Number***	***Score***	***Q. Number***	***Score***	***Total Score***	***No. of Questions***	***Average (Total / No. of Questions)***
Role (Orange)	1		4		11		13		17									5	
Control (Black)	2		10		15		19		25		30							6	
Demands (Blue)	3		6		9		12		16		18		20		22			8	
Relations (Pink)	5		14		21		34											4	
Peer Support (Green)	7		24		27		31											4	
Mgr. Support (Red)	8		23		29		33		35									5	
Change (Grey)	26		28		32													3	
																		35	

Appendix D

TrustEd SCHOOLS Alliance Stress Risk Assessment Action Plan			
Manager Name:	**Team / Team Member Name:**		**Assessment Date:**
Line Manager Tasks		**Team Member(s) Tasks**	
Action	**Date**	**Action**	**Date**
Signed		**Signed**	
SET REVIEW PROGRESS DATE:			

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