



Policy for the Prevention of Work-Related Stress

Lincoln College is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all employees. The College seeks to maintain a positive and supportive working environment for all employees. It recognises that excessive or prolonged pressure in the workplace can have a negative impact on the College and individuals, and this can be prevented and alleviated through appropriate actions on the part of individuals and their managers.

This policy and procedure is designed to provide guidance to managers to facilitate the prevention and management of work-related stress. In addition this policy and procedure also provides information on sources of support available to employees who are experiencing feeling of work-related stress.

Definitions

The College adopts the definition of stress used by the Health & Safety Executive, namely 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'. Whilst pressure at work can sometimes be a motivating factor, stress occurs when the pressures on a person exceeds their ability to deal with them.

Stress can be caused by a variety of reasons which can be a result of excessive personal or work pressures, or a combination of the two. Where stress only lasts for a short time there is usually no lasting effect. However, if stress is sustained over a longer period it can have a significant impact on physical and mental health, work performance and morale. Reducing and preventing work-related stress therefore brings clear benefits to the employer as well as to employees.

Responsibilities

In applying this policy and procedure the College recognises its responsibilities by:

- Placing a high importance on health, safety and welfare of all employees;
- Accepting the legal and moral obligations to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace;
- Providing a commitment to support employees who require help for stress related problems;
- Ensuring managers and supervisors set an example themselves in sensible working practices and consider how to get the best out of their staff without affecting their

health;

- Promoting equality of opportunity, and provide a workplace free from harassment and bullying;
- Fostering effective workload allocation and feedback on performance, via regular one-ones and annual reviews;
- Promote good communication throughout the College and its departments;
- Provide information and training to enable staff to develop their skills and maximise their contribution to the success of the College.

In order to minimise the risk of work-related stress managers will be responsible for:

- Monitoring working hours and holidays to ensure that employees are not overworking and are taking appropriate breaks;
- Identifying or responding to issues of concern promptly and seeking constructive solutions;
- Ensuring staff are provided with meaningful training and development opportunities;
- Ensuring that bullying and harassment are not tolerated;
- Being alert to signs of problems and offer additional support to any employee who is known to be experiencing stress;
- Seeking advice and support at an early stage from the Human Resources Manager, the Domestic Operations Manager, the Bursar and/or the Chaplain.

It is essential that employees play an active role in contributing to their own well-being and development by using the resources available to carry out their role efficiently. In order to minimize the risk of work-related stress, employees will be responsible for:

- Ensuring good communication with their colleagues and their line manager;
- Supporting colleagues by providing appropriate information and sharing knowledge and resources where appropriate;
- Engaging in discussion about their performance and acting on feedback;
- Raising issues of concern at an early stage and seeking constructive solutions;
- Alerting their line manager, HR Manager, staff representative and/or Chaplain at an early stage if difficulties arise

Procedure

Any employee who believes they are suffering the negative effects of stress, are encouraged to speak with their line manager in the first instance. If the employee does not feel able to speak with their line manager then the Human Resources Manager, staff representative and/or Chaplain should be contacted.

If necessary, the College will carry out further investigations. This may include a review of the employee's actual duties against those described in their job description. The possibility of

changing work conditions or making changes to reduce stress on the employee may be discussed, in conjunction with the needs of the employee, their colleagues and the department. Employees may be asked to visit Occupational Health and/or permission may be sought to contact the employee's GP or specialist in order to get some professional medical advice. Employees should also speak with their own GP if there are any health concerns.

In all cases, if the College is aware that an employee is suffering from work-related stress, such steps as appropriate will be taken to try and manage the situation. This may include reviewing workloads, providing assistance, training or improved equipment.

Whilst the College is not responsible for causes of stress outside the workplace, the College recognises that this can impact on an employee's attendance and performance at work. The College would therefore encourage employees to make their line managers aware of any problems that are causing them concern.

It is sometimes necessary for managers to invoke disciplinary or capability procedures to address poor performance or conduct, and to protect other staff from the adverse effects of such under-performance. It is recognised that the prospect of disciplinary and/or capability proceedings or the proceedings themselves may be stressful for the employee involved. This should not in itself prevent managers from pursuing legitimate management action. Only as a final stage and where no alternative action is appropriate, would the College consider terminating employment on grounds of ill health, capability or unsatisfactory output of work, in line with the disciplinary and capability procedures.

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