



Harvard Park Policies and Procedures:
**Mental Health and Well-Being including work
related stress**

32. Mental Health and Well-Being including work related stress

The Mental Health and Well-Being Designated Lead at Harvard Park Day Nursery is **Tracey Milstead and Nicki Saunders**. The designated Safeguarding Lead is **Carol Mayell**.

The Mental Health and Well-Being Designated Lead at Harvard Park Pre School-**Tracey Milstead and Nicki Saunders**. The designated Safeguarding Lead is **Victoria Close supported by Jeanna Smith**.

What is this policy?

A staff wellbeing policy explains and sets out the setting's commitment to the wellbeing of all early year's educators. It should outline how the setting will support its staff, its ongoing commitment to staff training, and ensuring that all early year's educators are always treated fairly and professionally. It should be also reviewed and monitored against the National Health and Safety standards.

Who oversees Wellbeing?

Harvard Park recognises the statutory responsibilities related to employment and staff have the primary responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, this policy should also be viewed alongside other policies and procedures in relation to duty of care as an employer to all members of staff.

These may include (but are not limited to):

- Attendance/ Absence Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality.
- Complaints Procedure.
- Whistleblowing Procedure.

How will this policy be communicated?

This policy can only impact upon practice if it is a (regularly updated) living document. It must be accessible to and understood by all stakeholders. It will be communicated in the following ways:

- Sent via email to all staff and posted on the setting website
- Available in paper format in the staffroom
- Part of induction programme for all new staff (including volunteers and students)
- Integral to updates and training for all staff
- Reviews of this policy will include input from all staff, helping to ensure further engagement

Policy Statement

We want to ensure that staff are supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally. We recognise that staff are our most important resource and we seek to value our staff through personal and professional support, involvement in decision-making and access to professional development. We have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' physical and mental wellbeing, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the setting's control.

This policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as *"the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them"*. There is an important distinction between *'reasonable pressures'* which stimulate and motivate and *'stress'* where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

This policy recognises that there are many sources of work-related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees or children. This policy also recognises that employees at all levels can suffer from stress and their reactions can differ. It is important that suffering is not seen as a weakness. People have different abilities to cope with the pressures on them and may be able to cope with some pressures better than others. Stress, in itself, is not an illness but can and in some cases does lead to mental health and physical problems. There is no simple way to predict what harm levels of pressure can cause, however it is more likely to occur where: pressures pile on top of each other or are prolonged; people feel trapped or unable to exert any control over the demands placed on them; and people are confused by conflicting demands made on them.

We are committed to making sure that this Staff Wellbeing Policy is implemented so that everyone can cope successfully with the demands in their lives, whatever the cause of stress within an understanding and accepting environment. The purpose of this policy is to maintain an ethos which supports staff health and wellbeing by making sure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently.

Scope

This policy describes the setting's approach to promoting positive staff wellbeing. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including volunteers and students. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies.

Policy aims

- To develop a healthy, motivated workforce who can deliver a high-standard of care and education to children.
- To help ensure that our setting promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff members, recognising the impact work can have on employees' stress levels, mental and physical health.
- Develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture through regular communication and consultation with staff on health and safety matters.
- Develop and maintain a culture where everyone in this business works together to reduce the incidence of work-related stress.
- To recognise that excessive hours of work can be detrimental to staff health and effectiveness and to agree on flexible working practices where possible (managements discretion).
- To recognise that certain pressures and developments will result in pressures on the business and sector that may require frequent change to work processes and/or established structures. Such change may lead to pressures on employees, at all levels, to adapt to new ways of working in a dynamic environment. We aim to recognise that we have an important role in helping employees cope with change by ensuring that the planning for and implementation of change is effectively managed.
- To communicate the importance of a work-life balance to all staff, and to ensure that all policy updates are communicated regularly.
- To encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.
- To comply with all statutory requirements.
- To respond sensitively to external pressures which affect the lives of staff members.
- To provide staff with training to deal positively with stressful incidents and provide them with a sense of confidence to deal with emergencies via training.
- To improve staff development, co-operation and teamwork.
- To make staff members aware of the channels which can be used to manage and deal with stress or work-related health and wellbeing issues.

Legislation

Pieces of legislation that will be considered when promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, including, but not exclusively:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- The Equality Act (2010)

- Working Time regulations (1998)
- Employment Rights Act (1996)
- Employment Relations Act (1999)

There are no laws that specifically cover the risks from work related pressure, but there are elements of health and safety legislation which cover risks to mental health as well as physical health and safety. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 provides a general duty for employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, employee's mental health as well as their physical health, safety and welfare. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to undertake risk assessments which must cover risks to mental health as well as physical health and safety.

An employer is not under a legal duty to prevent ill health caused by pressure due to problems outside of work (e.g. financial). But non-working problems can make it difficult for employees to cope with the pressures of work and their performance at work may suffer as a result. Bullying in the workplace has been identified as a source of employee stress. However, any form of bullying at work would be in breach of Harvard Park's policies and would be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Managers and Directors:

- Will support in ensuring that strategies are implemented to effectively manage and, where necessary, reduce employee stress.
- Foster a supportive work environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.
- Will ensure that there is clear communication between staff and management with regards to all areas of setting life.
- Will create reasonable opportunities for employees to discuss concerns and will enable staff to do so in an environment where stress is not considered a weakness.
- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absence due to work related stress and other mental-health problems, ensuring that a return-to-work format is completed and support is offered whilst staff is absent and upon return to work.
- Will monitor and review any measures that are planned and assess their effectiveness.
- Ensure that all staff have access to regular training sessions on health and wellbeing in staff meetings.
- Ensure practical strategies to deal with mental, physical and emotional wellbeing issues are shared with staff team and that they are given the appropriate time and resources to undertake this.

- To conduct an annual survey of staff, focussed on health and wellbeing, and share and act upon results.

Staff:

- Will act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves and others whilst in the workplace and ensure that they do not, through their actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or colleagues.
- Will make themselves aware of all the relevant policies and thoroughly read the Employee Staff and Health and Safety Handbooks.
- Seek support or help if required. This includes understanding that a good relationship requires communication from both parties and therefore is important that issues are raised at the earliest possible moment so that effective strategies can be put in place to manage workloads.
- Consider attending training on health and wellbeing issues where they feel that this is appropriate.
- Will share their views, ideas and feelings about all issues concerning the setting at formal meetings and informal gatherings.

Support

The Management Team must encourage the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where all staff members feel comfortable asking for help or raising concerns. The Management Team should be sensitive to any problems which may cause the employee stress-related issues and should act in a professional, fair, consistent and timely manner when a concern arises. Where additional, professional advice is required, then Occupational Health Professionals and other avenues should be utilised. Where necessary, staff should be encouraged to use the free confidential counselling service from [Education Support Partnership](#) - **0800 0562 561**.

On joining the setting, the following support will also be offered:

- All new staff will have an induction programme and ensure that they receive the staff handbook and health and safety handbook.
- All new staff will be made to feel welcome and given as much support as possible.
- There will be reviews for new staff held throughout the first 6 months of employment (these should be in line with setting policy re induction highlighted in the staffing and employment policy).

Arrangements for implementing the Wellbeing Policy

Here are our outlined arrangements for wellbeing and stress prevention through good management practices. These include the following (but are not limited to):

- Recruitment and selection procedures.

- Clear job descriptions to ensure staff have clear roles and responsibilities.
- Training and Development procedures to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/duties required of them.
- Reward systems.
- Managing performance procedures.
- Capability and absence management & return to work procedures to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.
- Suitable adaptations for disability.
- Procedures for communicating with employees on the work of the setting and issues affecting their work.
- Flexible working arrangements and contact days with staff on maternity leave.
- The arrangements will be updated and augmented as required and when deemed necessary by the findings of stress risk assessments.

To protect our staff from ill health caused by work related stress we must endeavour to:

- Assess our work activities to identify where and when workers or others may experience unacceptable levels of work-related stress.
- Prepare a stress policy and plan of action when a member of staff is identified suffering ill health on account of work-related stress.
- Involve staff in developing the policy and plan of action.
- Identify any control measures already in place and the additional measures or actions that may be required.

Consider among other issues:

- The outward signs of stress: emotional – fatigue, anxiety, poor motivation in general; cognitive – making mistakes, having accidents; behavioural – deteriorating relationships with colleagues, irritability, indecisiveness, absenteeism, excessive smoking or drinking, overeating etc.;
- physiological – increased complaints about health, headaches, dizziness etc.
- Stress risk assessments.
- Support to an employee who is experiencing stress whether work related or not e.g. following a bereavement or separation.
- The effect of a new or changed roles without adequate training.

- The effect of poor communication during times of change.
- Excessive workloads, long working hours etc.
- Employees having to cover the poor performance or non-attendance of colleagues.
- Employees not having developmental opportunities.
- Prevent bullying and harassment by managers, directors and colleagues.
- Develop procedures, programmes and practices tailored to our workplace.
- Make sure all directors and setting managers understand the policy and procedures in place. Consider whether they need additional training.
- Explain these arrangements to the workforce. Ensure they are understood and provide further training where necessary.
- Implement the policy and procedure and ensure that it is followed in practice.
- Monitor and review the policy and procedures from time to time and following any case of ill health caused by work related stress, making changes as necessary.

This Policies and Procedures pack was adjusted by Harvard Park.

Date meeting was held on 30/04/2026

Signed on behalf of the Directors and Proprietors

Nicki Saunders and Tracey Milstead