

**New and Expectant Mothers Policy**

**April 2020**

Approved by Chair\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Review Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to describe the policy and procedures for protecting the health of new or expectant mothers as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Legal requirements Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 (MHSW) provides the legal requirements for employers to protect their employees who are, or in the future could be, a new or expectant mother. Employers are required to assess risks to all their employees and to do what is reasonably practicable to control those risks. They must include any hazards/risks to new and expectant mothers, when conducting this risk assessment.

It is important that female employees inform their employers that they are pregnant, have given birth in the previous six months or are breastfeeding. The notification should be given in writing, as early as possible. When employers receive written notification from an employee that she is pregnant, has given birth within the previous six months or is breastfeeding, they must conduct a specific risk assessment. The assessment must consider any advice provided by the woman's GP or Midwife. If any risks are identified then employers must take action to remove, reduce or control the risk. If the risk cannot be removed employers must:

**Action 1**

Temporarily adjust her working conditions and/or hours of work; or if that is not possible:

**Action 2**

Offer her suitable alternative work (at the same rate of pay) if available; or if that is not feasible:

**Action 3**

Suspend her from work on paid leave for as long as necessary to protect her health and safety and that of her child.

**Responsibilities**

1. Employee’s Midwife/General Practitioner has the responsibility to enquire about the employee's occupation and inform the employer of any specific risks regarding that employee (for example if the employee has an underlying medical condition that needs to be taken into account when carrying out the risk assessment).

2. The employer has the responsibility to carry out a specific pregnancy risk assessment (considering the information supplied by the GP/Midwife) and put in place the necessary measure to protect the employee/pregnancy. There is no legal obligation for this to be done by an OH professional.

3. The Head Teacher and SLT are responsible for the school wide prevention and protection aspects of the policy.

4. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that the procedure is applied within their areas of responsibility and that recommendations regarding individuals and their work are complied with.

5. Individuals are responsible for notifying their line manager of their pregnancy and complying with appropriate advice and recommendations.

**Introduction**

Pregnancy is not an illness and although it is important to realise that there is a natural incidence of problems for new or expectant mothers and for the unborn child, it is known that their health may be affected by external physical or chemical factors. Such factors include virus infections. It is known that some external factors including exposure to biological agents, chemicals and physical stress may also cause problems. It is necessary to consider the action to be taken when information on adverse effects is available and the harm certain factors may cause. It is also known that excess physical work, fatigue and poor working conditions may cause adverse effects to the new or expectant mother or unborn child, particularly in the later stages of pregnancy. The policy is therefore also concerned with ensuring that expectant mothers are provided with satisfactory working conditions and do not put themselves or the unborn child at risk by carrying out excessive physical work.

**Procedure**

1. All practicable measures will be taken both by the school and by the employee to minimise exposure to chemicals and other potentially harmful agents to all employees.

2. Possible adverse effects on new or expectant mothers and the unborn child will be considered during any assessment of the risks posed by working conditions. These assessments will be made available to the relevant employees.

3. Employees will be asked to inform their Headteacher as soon as pregnancy is suspected so that any necessary advice can be given, and risk assessments can be carried out.

4. On notification of pregnancy the Headteacher will see the employee concerned and using the appropriate Generic Pregnancy Risk Assessment, determine if a specific pregnancy risk assessment is required. This specific risk assessment will be the responsibility of the Headteacher, Health and Safety Lead and SLT.

5. New or expectant mothers will be given advice on the possible hazards of exposure to harmful agents during pregnancy. They will receive appropriate levels of information, instruction and training on what is required of them, and the measures in place to effectively manage these risks.

6. As required by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, appropriate facilities will be made available for expectant and breastfeeding mothers to rest e.g. rest room equipped with a comfortable chair and provision for privacy and quiet.

7. If despite all practicable measures being taken, if the school considers that there is an unacceptable risk to a new or expectant mother; the school will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure working patterns are altered to ensure it is safe for new or expectant mothers to work. If satisfactory alternative arrangements of employment cannot be found the employee will be medically suspended from employment in accordance with the terms of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 as amended by the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act (1993).

8. The school will treat sympathetically requests for special working conditions which are medically required as a result of pregnancy or breastfeeding.

**Action in the event of pregnancy**

1. Members of staff must inform their Headteacher as soon as possible after receiving confirmation that they are pregnant. The school will require confirmation of the pregnancy from the expectant mother and review, and where necessary revise, risk assessments to take account of the individual's pregnancy and potential return to work.

2.. The Headteacher will apply the generic pregnancy risk assessment for the employee’s job. As a result of these risk assessments, the school will supply verbal and written advice.

**Ergonomic considerations**

Pregnant employees may have restricted ability to perform certain physical tasks. Physical capacity will vary according to stage of pregnancy and general physical capacity; however, a specific risk assessment should be carried out where there is:

* Work which because of problems with posture, reach or clearance could cause ergonomic problems to the pregnant employee
* Heavy or strenuous work
* Repeated heavy lifting. Strict limits on weights are not laid down, as much depends on the stage of the pregnancy, the physique of the person involved, on the nature and shape of the materials to be lifted and the nature of the lift, but as a general guide after 20-24 weeks lifts should not exceed one half of the guidance weights issue by the HSE under the Manual Handling of Loads Regulations for female operators.

**Visual Display Units**

The Health & Safety Executive do not feel that there is any risk to pregnant employees from such work except where ergonomic problems occur due to problems with posture, reaches and clearances. However, all cases where concern is expressed by an employee should be treated sympathetically.

**Implications**

There may be several circumstances where an employee may consider not advising her Headteacher about her pregnancy. However, by not advising, the employee may risk the following: - being asked to carry out work that puts herself and her baby at risk - being exposed to illnesses (through coming into contact with pupils who may have an illness or virus which is contagious or a danger to pregnant women.)

**Monitoring and review**

**This policy will be reviewed every two years unless there are any changes within the Trust.**

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff members and, where appropriate, parents.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE EXPECTANT MOTHER

Name:

Pregnancy Stage:

Weeks Description of principal work area:

Does the employee’s usual work involve:

Sitting

Sitting/Standing

Standing

No lifting

Minimal Lifting

Lifting to guidelines

Does the employee find their workstation comfortable/ uncomfortable

Details Does the Employee work regular overtime? Yes No

If Yes, average weekly hours .........................

Does the employee have an existing medical problem that may affect their health during pregnancy? (eg diabetes, varicose veins) ....................................................................................................................................................

Does the Employee have any minor discomforts of pregnancy e.g. morning sickness ....................................................................................................................................................

Family history: Twins Hypertension Diabetes Other None .................................................................................................................................................... Previous Obstetric History: .................................................................................................................................................... ....................................................................................................................................................

Does the Employee work with children with specific needs that may put them at risk? Yes / No

If yes give details

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Does the employee work with :

Chemicals

Biological agents

If YES give details:

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Name and Address of Family Doctor:

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Tel:........................................

Additional comments, adaptations or restrictions ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………… ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………