



Explorers Childcare Group recognises the value of maintaining the health and wellbeing of its employees.

1. Objectives

The aim of this policy is to describe Explorers' commitment

- to improve the health and wellbeing of their employees;
- to contribute to the National Strategy for Mental Health and Employment by providing support to employees suffering mental ill health;
- to prevent work-related illness and injury, going further to use the workplace as an opportunity for general health improvement;
- to respond early when health problems arise – and ensure that the necessary interventions are easily and speedily available;
- to help people to better manage their conditions so that they can lead as full a life as possible;
- to ensure that appropriate rehabilitation support and workplace adaptations are available for those who have been out of the workplace because of ill health, enabling them to make their return to work as soon as possible.
- to introduce a range of well-being initiatives which contribute towards excellent attendance and employee well-being.

2. Our commitment

Explorers Childcare Group has obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to reducing physical risks, this means operating in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are acceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals who experience mental ill-health at work. Explorers will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to promote a culture of good mental health by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to improve health issues at work.

3. Responsibilities

While this section seeks to allocate responsibilities to managers, employees and support services, it's important to emphasise that the wellbeing of employees is best promoted by all parties working together in an environment of openness, trust and cooperation.

Explorers as an employer, has a legal duty to ensure the health at work of all its employees. Explorers will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review them at regular intervals. Managers will demonstrate leadership by active and visible participation in and promotion of wellbeing programmes, they will put in place measures to minimise the risks to employee's health and wellbeing. They do this through active management of health risks – both physical and psychological.

Physical risks - Explorers' Health and Safety Policy requires managers to assess the risks of injury associated with the work they manage, and take steps to eliminate, reduce and control these risks. Risk assessments should be reviewed annually.

Psychological risks - managers must familiarise themselves with the risk assessment approach in *Stress at Work: a manager's guide*, and apply this to mitigate psychological risk in their teams. For example, managers should ensure that employees understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support from managers and team members to do their job. Managers must also be familiar with Explorers' Valuing Diversity and promoting Equality policy to support employees, who may be subject to bullying or harassment.

In particular, line managers must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to the employee's health and wellbeing by:

- ensuring that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications;
- keeping employees in the team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload;
- ensuring employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue these with senior management;
- making sure jobs are appropriately designed and that work is fairly allocated between teams;

If line managers are approached by employees with health concerns they should:

- ensure any information that an employee chooses to share with them is treated in confidence, and
- seek HR and/or OH advice on how to support the employee.

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns when their health is affecting their work with their manager or with HR. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee during discussions with managers, HR or the Occupational Health Service is treated in confidence.

Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting healthy behaviours (e.g. a balanced diet, moderating alcohol consumption and quitting smoking) and informing their manager if they believe their work or their work environment is affecting their health.

Employees should be fully aware of their responsibilities under Explorers' policy on Alcohol and Drugs.

Employees with a Disability

Explorers are committed to making all reasonable adjustments to accommodate employees with a disability. Where disabilities are identified pre-employment or if Explorers become aware of them in the course of employment, managers and colleagues must carefully consider any reasonable adjustments, document and, if appropriate, implement them to enable employees to function optimally as soon as reasonably practicable. Few people with disability experience unchanging conditions; the conditions resulting in their disability, their role and their workplace environment are all subject to change. Adjustments should be reviewed periodically and may need to change accordingly.

Explorers expects managers of employees with disabilities to meet each disabled employee on a one-to-one basis at least annually (and more frequently if the employee requests it) to review any changes that may have taken place, and plan reasonable adjustments as necessary. If solutions cannot be agreed in this meeting (and if in any doubt), managers should seek assistance and advice from HR, the Occupational Health Service and the Disability Employment Adviser.

4. Training and communications

Line managers and employees will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change. Managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication / feedback exercises, including employee

surveys and team meetings. All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, one-to-one meetings and electronic communications. Explorers will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

5. Other Support Measures

Other measures available to help employees to maintain their health and wellbeing include:

- special leave arrangements;
- flexible working policies;
- Alcohol & Drugs policy

6. Monitoring and Review

This health and wellbeing policy necessarily consists of a number of strands and areas of activity. It is important to ensure that each of these contributes positively to the overall wellbeing of the workforce. Each regular activity aimed at improving wellbeing, and any one-off planned health promotion initiative should be monitored for take-up, reach and effectiveness. Not all activities may result in immediate or objectively measurable health benefits and in these circumstances effectiveness may be measured in more subjective terms such as employee approval.