



Staff sickness absence policy

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1. Aims

The Sickness Absence Policy aims to ensure that absence is managed in a consistent, supportive and effective way so that operational and service levels are maintained.

Sickness absence can vary from short intermittent periods of ill-health to a continuous period of long-term absence and have a number of different causes (for example, injuries, recurring conditions, or a serious illness requiring lengthy treatment). This policy relates to both short term and long term sickness absence from work. Short term is defined where employees are absent in short, sometimes intermittent, periods of time; long term is defined as an absence from work of one month or more.

The Company wishes to ensure that the reasons for sickness absence are understood in each case and investigated, where necessary. In addition, where needed and reasonably practicable, measures will be taken to assist those who have been absent by reason of sickness to return to work. The Company is committed to monitoring and promoting the health and well-being of their staff, however it aims to achieve a balance between the needs of staff members and those of the Company.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The Company may also vary the procedures set out in this policy, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

2. Responsibilities and Monitoring

The Senior Leadership Team have responsibility for monitoring absence:-

- › Ensure that all staff have access to this policy
- › Ensure the absence reporting procedure is followed
- › Ensure that the reason for absence is recorded
- › Conduct return to work interviews for all absences
- › Monitor absences, drawing attention to the Head Teacher when a trigger point has been reached and/or any problems that develop/absences that are of concern.

The Headteacher will be informed by the Senior Leadership Team if absence is a cause for concern. The Headteacher will:-

- › Review the absence in question
- › Carry out an Attendance Review
- › Explain any supportive measures to the staff member if relevant
- › Consider whether to obtain a medical report from the employee's own GP/Medical Practitioner with employee's consent.
- › Consider a referral to an Occupational Health Provider

3. Trigger Points

3.1 Short Term Trigger Points

For managing short term absence the Company considers the following absences as a cause for concern. These are referred to as "trigger points":-

- › 2 periods of absence in a rolling 3 months

3.2 Long Term Tigger Point

For long term absence the trigger point for action is an absence from work for one month (or more) and/or where there is no prospect of a return to work in the near future.

4. Disabilities

The Company are aware that sickness absence may result from a disability.

At sickness meetings particular consideration will be given to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of a job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist a return to work.

If you consider that you are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects your ability to undertake your work, you should inform the Headteacher

5. Sickness absence reporting procedure

If the employee is taken ill or injured while at work the employee should immediately report this to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The Senior Leadership Team should make arrangements for anyone who is unwell to receive medical treatment where necessary. If it becomes necessary the employee to leave work before their normal finishing time prior authorisation must be obtained from the Senior Leadership Team.

If the employee cannot attend work because they are ill or injured they should telephone the Headteacher as early as possible and no later than 1 hour before the time when you are normally expected to start work.

The following details must be provided:

- › The precise nature of your illness or injury ('sick', 'ill', 'unwell or 'personal problems' are not acceptable)
- › The expected length of your absence from work
- › Contact details
- › Any outstanding or urgent work that requires attention

It is important that the employee reports the absence information by telephone. It is not acceptable to text or email or through social media websites or instant messaging facilities. The employee is to make contact personally (not a spouse/family member/friend) unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. admittance to hospital).

On being fit to return to work, the employee must contact the Senior Leadership Team and let them know as far in advance as possible of the proposed date of return.

The Senior Leadership Team should ensure that:

- Any sickness absence that is notified to them is recorded on a 'Notification of Staff Sickness Form' and reported to the Headteacher
- Arrangements are made, where necessary, to cover work and to inform colleagues (while maintaining confidentiality)

The employee should expect to be contacted during the employee's absence by the Senior Leadership Team who will enquire about the employee's health and be advised, if possible, as to the employee's expected return date.

The Company reserves the right to send an employee home if, for any reason, they appear to be unfit for work or appear to present a risk to themselves, the workplace, other staff members or third parties. These are precautionary measures designed to prevent the spread of disease in the workplace and/or further harm to the employee or others.

6. Evidence of Incapacity

6.1 Sickness Absence of up to Seven Calendar Days

For sickness absence of up to seven calendar days you must complete a 'Self-Certification of Sickness Absence Form' which is available from the Senior Leadership Team

6.2 Sickness Absence in Excess of Seven Calendar Days

For absence of more than seven calendar days the employee must obtain a certificate from their doctor (a "Statement of Fitness for Work") stating that they are not fit for work and the reason(s) why. This should be forwarded to the Senior Leadership Team as quickly as possible and in any event no later than the end of the calendar week in which the certificate was issued. On expiry of your doctor's certificate should you still be unfit to return to work a new doctor's certificate must be submitted.

You must always provide certificates (either the Company self-certification of sickness absence forms or doctor's certificates) to cover the entire period of your sickness absence.

In some circumstances the Company may ask the employee to provide a certificate from their doctor during absences shorter than seven days.

6.3 Doctor's Certificates stating "May be fit for Work"

If the employee's doctor provides a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" you should inform you're the Headteacher immediately. The Headteacher will discuss with you any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate your return to work, taking account of your doctor's advice. This may take place at a return to work interview. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick leave and the Company will set a date to review the situation.

7. Unauthorised Absence

Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Absence that has not been notified according to the sickness absence reporting procedure will be treated as unauthorised absence.

If the employee fails to provide certificates (either the Company self-certification of sickness absence forms or doctor's certificates as appropriate) to cover the entire period of sickness absence then the period of absence not covered by a certificate will be classed as unauthorised absence.

If the employee does not report for work and have not telephoned the Senior Leadership Team to explain the reason for their absence, the Company will try to contact the employee by telephone, and in writing if necessary. This should not be treated as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

8. Keeping in Contact During Sickness Absence

If the employee is absent on sick leave the employee should expect to be contacted from time to time by their Senior Leadership Team in order to discuss their wellbeing, expected length of continued absence from work and any work that requires attention. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a reasonable minimum.

For long-term sickness absence, the Senior Leadership Team may also request to visit you at home. The purpose of either form of contact will be to see if there is anything that the Company can do to assist you with a return to work.

If the employee has any concerns while absent on sick leave, whether about the reason for their absence or their ability to return to work, they should feel free to contact the Senior Leadership Team at any time.

9. Medical Examinations

The Company may, at any time in operating this policy, ask the employee to consent to our obtaining a medical report from the employees own Medical Practitioner at the Company expense.

Alternatively, the Company may ask the employee to consent to a medical examination by an Occupational Health Advisor and/or a Doctor nominated by us (at our expense).

Employees will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to us and that The Trust may discuss the contents of the report with our advisers and the relevant

10. Return To Work Interviews

If the employee has been absent on sick leave for all sickness absence of a day or longer the Company will arrange for them to have a return-to-work interview with the Senior Leadership Team. These interviews will be held on every occasion of absence (except for prior approved absence such as annual leave)

A return-to-work interview enables the Company to confirm the details of the employees absence. It also gives the employee the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions they may have, and to bring any relevant matters to our attention.

Where an employee's doctor has provided a certificate stating that they "may be fit for work" the Company will usually hold a return-to-work interview to discuss any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate the employees return to work, taking account of their doctor's advice.

11. Attendance Review Meetings

Should an employee have 2 periods of absence in a rolling 3 months then you will be required to attend an "Attendance Review Meeting" to discuss your attendance.

At this meeting the Senior Leadership Team will review your attendance record and discuss the implications of your non-attendance, devise a development plan and agree actions that you will take to improve your attendance. A review meeting will be agreed so that the Senior Leadership Team can monitor your progress. No improvement or insufficient improvement in your attendance may result in disciplinary action.

If the sickness absences are related to a disability, the Company will first consider whether there are any reasonable adjustments that could be made to either the requirements of your job or other aspects of your working arrangements to improve your attendance or to the targets and time limits which may be set for improvement in your attendance, i.e. by extending the trigger points for taking disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary procedure. It will also consider if medical advice or evidence is required.

12. Returning to work from long-term sickness absence

The Company are committed to helping members of staff return to work from long-term sickness absence. As part of the sickness absence meetings procedure the Company will, where appropriate and possible, support returns to work by:

- Obtaining medical advice;
- Making reasonable adjustments to the workplace and working practices;
- Agreeing a return to work programme with everyone affected.

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every annually, but can be revised as needed.

These procedures have been agreed by the Propriety Board, who will approve them whenever reviewed.

14. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff code of conduct
- Capability of staff policy
- Staff disciplinary procedures