



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 staff member's own GP/Medical Practitioner with the staff member'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 a staff member considers that they are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects their ability to undertake their work, they should inform the Headteacher

5. Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure

If a staff member is taken ill or injured while at work the staff member 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 for the staff member to leave work before their normal finishing time prior authorisation must be obtained from the Senior Leadership Team.

If a staff member 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 they are normally expected to start work.

The following details must be provided:

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

It is important that the staff member reports the absence information by telephone. It is not acceptable to text or email or through social media websites or instant messaging facilities. The staff member 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 staff member 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 staff member should expect to be contacted during their absence by the Senior Leadership Team who will enquire about their health and be advised, if possible, as to their expected return date.

The Company reserves the right to send a staff member 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 the staff member 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 staff member must obtain a fit note (a "Statement of Fitness for Work") from their doctor or other relevant clinician, such as a nurse, occupational therapist, pharmacist, or physiotherapist working a general practice or hospital setting 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 the fit note should the staff member still be unfit to return to work a new fit note must be submitted.

The staff member must always provide certificates (either the Company self-certification of sickness absence forms or fit note) to cover the entire period of their sickness absence.

In some circumstances the Company may ask the staff member to provide a fit note from their doctor during absences shorter than seven days.

6.3 Fit Notes (a Statement of Fitness for Work) stating "May be fit for Work"

If the staff member's doctor provides a certificate stating that they "may be fit for work" the staff member should inform the Headteacher immediately. The Headteacher will discuss with the staff member any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate their return to work, taking account of their doctor's advice. This may take place at a return to work interview. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, the staff member 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 staff member fails to provide certificates (either the Company self-certification of sickness absence forms or fit note 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 staff member does not report for work and has not telephoned the Senior Leadership Team to explain the reason for their absence, the Company will try to contact the staff member 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 staff member is absent on sick leave they 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 the staff member at home. The purpose of either form of contact will be to see if there is anything that the Company can do to assist the staff member with a return to work.

If the staff member 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 staff member to consent to our obtaining a medical report from their own Medical Practitioner at the Company expense.

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

Staff members will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to us and that Company may discuss the contents of the report with our advisers and the relevant Medical Practitioner.

10. Return To Work Interviews

If the Staff member 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 a staff member'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 their return to work, taking account of their doctor's advice.

11. Attendance Review Meetings

Should a staff member have 2 periods of absence in a rolling 3 months then they will be required to attend an "Attendance Review Meeting" to discuss their attendance.

At this meeting the Senior Leadership Team will review their attendance record and discuss the implications of their non-attendance, devise a development plan and agree actions that the staff member will take to improve their attendance. A review meeting will be agreed so that the Senior Leadership Team can monitor their progress. No improvement or insufficient improvement in the staff member's 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 the staff member's job or other aspects of their working arrangements to improve their attendance or to the targets and time limits which may

be set for improvement in their 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