



Attendance Management Policy & Procedure

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Note: Where reference is made to 'Manager' within this policy, this could mean CEO, Headteacher, line manager, Head of Department/Faculty, Business Manager, or Trustee/Governor, subject to delegation and authority for decision making within the Trust.

1.1 Scope

- 1.2 The current educational climate indicates ongoing change at a significant pace for delivery of high-quality teaching in a rich learning environment. The School values all members of staff and their health and well-being is important. There are occasions when health related circumstances cause sickness absence, and the Attendance Management policy and guidance enables staff to be appropriately supported within a procedural framework that provides for best management practice. The policy and related guidance have been developed for both managers and employees to increase transparency and encourage dialogue.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all employees of the Trust, with the exception of any staff currently within a contractual probationary period, in which case the probation policy will apply in respect of attendance management.

2.1 Purpose

- To be consistent and fair in the management of sickness absence, and the application of the attendance management policy;
- To provide appropriate support to employees during an absence and when returning to work;
- To prevent where possible sickness absence caused by or as a result of accidents/injuries at work;
- To set and review targets for Trust/School employees to improve attendance;
- To regularly monitor and review action taken by managers within this policy; and
- To provide adequate support to managers to manage attendance effectively.

3.1 Procedure

- 3.2 Employees must be aware that all sickness absence has an impact on educational provision. As an employer, the Trust will ensure that sickness absence records are kept and attendance levels monitored to ensure that employees are appropriately supported whenever they are absent, or upon return to work following absence.
- 3.3 In managing attendance before, during and after any period of absence due to sickness, managers should consider all options that could assist the employee in achieving a higher level of attendance or make a healthy and early return to work. Managers should record the outcome of any discussion with the employee detailing any reasonable adjustments.

- 3.4 Throughout both short term absence and long term absence, regular communication, review meetings, and consultation meetings will be held with the absent employee to ensure the employee is aware of the process, the support available to improve attendance and the potential impact on their employment. Employees will receive written confirmation of the arrangement, and outcome of all formal meetings held under the attendance management procedure.
- 3.5 Staff may be accompanied by a recognised trade union representative/professional association or work colleague at any formal meeting held in line with the Attendance Management policy (including attendance consultation meetings, long term sickness review meetings, panel hearings and formal meetings outside of the panel process). Where an employee intends to be accompanied the manager should establish the status of the person accompanying the employee before the start of the meeting. A work colleague is allowed to accompany the employee unless there is a risk that the colleague may be compromised. If this is the case the employee should be asked to find a suitable alternative colleague to accompany them.
- 3.6 Employees or anyone accompanying employees must not make any electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure, unless agreed by exception. A formal note will always be made of meetings and shared with all parties.
- 3.7 In some circumstances it is appropriate for a formal meeting to be offered to an employee, and where agreed, held instead of an Attendance Panel, for example an individual subject to an Attendance Management Panel requests that their dismissal takes place outside of that forum. In these cases, formal meetings will be held in line with the attendance management guidance

3.8 Short term absence

3.9 Triggers:

- Four or more occasions* of sickness absence in any rolling 12-month period.
- 8 days sickness absence in any rolling 12-month period
- Patterns of sickness absence** that cause concern

3.10 **An occasion is defined as a period of absence that may be consecutive days, single days or half days. This includes both long and short term absences. Consider two absences with the same illness in short succession, as one occasion.*

3.11 *** Example patterns of absence may be; regular Friday or Monday absences, absences regularly occurring at a particular time of month or year, or at the start or end of periods of annual leave. These examples are not prescriptive or exhaustive – and managers are advised to seek HR advice where they have identified a pattern of absence and intend to arrange an attendance management consultation.*

3.12 Rolling periods refer to 12 months previous to the most recent absence.

- 3.13 When triggers are met, the manager will arrange an attendance management consultation with the employee to discuss their attendance. It will be important at the outset to establish if there is an underlying medical cause for the absences or any disability considerations, for which reasonable adjustment need to be made or consideration of what appropriate next steps might be in terms of the attendance management policy (as detailed in the associated guidance).
- 3.14 After considering the circumstances on a case by case basis, where appropriate, the manager may put in place targets and support, over a three month review period (commencing from the date of the meeting), to help the employee improve their attendance.
- 3.15 If the employee has not sufficiently improved their attendance in the initial review period (measured against targets set where applicable), or there are further lapses in attendance within six months of the review period ending, a formal notification will be issued to allow the employee a further three-month review period and support to improve attendance.
- 3.16 If the employee has not met the targets set in the formal notification, or there are further lapses in attendance within six months of ending the formal notification monitoring end date, a final notification will be issued, with a further six-month review period, with targets and support to improve their attendance. The employee has the right of appeal in respect of being issued with a final notification.
- 3.17 If the employee's attendance has not sufficiently improved during the final notification period, or there are further lapses in attendance within six months of ending the final notification monitoring end date, and the manager has explored and exhausted all support mechanisms and reasonable adjustments to improve attendance, then the case may be progressed to attendance panel.

3.18 Long term absence

- 3.19 Long term absence is categorised as a prolonged period of absence in excess of four working weeks.
- 3.20 Long term absence will be managed through regular long term sickness review meetings. The frequency and content of review meetings for long term absence will be determined on a case by case basis subject to the nature of the absence. However, it is expected that the review meetings will include discussions regarding any updates in respect of the employees health (including any medical or Occupational Health advice available), support available and reasonable adjustments to assist the employee to make a healthy, early and sustained return to work (as detailed within the attendance management guidance), potential return to work dates, the impact of the absence on the school, and the possible next steps in line with the attendance management policy
- 3.21 If the employee's absence continues and there is no foreseeable return to work date, or there is a prolonged recovery timescale that is unsustainable for the school, then

the manager should consider whether medical redeployment, or ill health retirement are applicable to the case.

- 3.22 Once all options have been explored, if the employees absence continues then the case may progress to attendance panel. The employee has a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss then from their employment.

4.1 Exclusions to Attendance Management policy

- 4.2 The following appointments are not classed as sickness for the purposes of the attendance management policy:

- GP appointments, dental appointments, hospital appointments (please refer to the Leave Policy and Guidance);
- Appointments relating to medically prescribed treatment;
- Any form of absence that is not related to the sickness of the employee.
- Sickness absence which is as a direct consequence of pregnancy will be recorded as absence, but will not be included in calculating absence for the purpose of attendance management triggers.

- 4.3 Sickness absence which is a direct consequence of a disability is still recorded as absence, but managers need to consider reasonable adjustments in individual cases.

- 4.4 Absences arising out of an accident, assault, injury or disease whilst undertaking the duties of the post will be recorded as absent and will only be excluded in calculating absence for the purpose of attendance management procedures where the School acknowledges liability. However, all such absences will be subject to investigation in accordance with the health and safety policy, along with related terms and conditions and recommended HR advice.

5.1 Statutory Obligations

- 5.2 This policy recognises the requirements to comply with the following legislation where applicable:

- Equality Act 2010;
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999;
- RIDDOR - Reporting of Incidents, Diseases, Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (as revised 1999);
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Employment Rights Act 1996;
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

- 5.3 In application of this policy, it is expected that managers will follow the principles of the above legislation regardless of the reason for absence.

5.4 This policy and accompanying guidance are not intended to replace or undermine the provisions contained in any contractually agreed documents.