



Sickness & Absence Policy

Absence Management Procedure

As the employer the Governing Body recognise that all cases are different and that a single, standardised procedure may not always address the unique issues of each individual case. Nevertheless, the following milestones must be adhered to unless there is clear justification to do otherwise. NB: following milestones are in elapsed days not work days.

Day 1: **Employee must** phone the office to report in sick, by 8.00am on each day of absence.

Day 4: **Employee must** phone in and update the office (Manager). If no contact is received, the **Line Manager must** contact the employee.

Day 8: A medical certificate (sick note) should, by now, have been received. **The Office (Line Manager) must** send this to the Staffing/Admin Section immediately.

Week 4: **Senior Manager** must now reassess the situation. If a return date – or date of any treatment event likely to facilitate a return to work – is known, then this will become the next deadline for review. If no such date is forthcoming, the case **must** be referred to the Occupational Health Unit.

Month 4: If, by now (or even before now), it is clear that the absence will exceed 6 months (without a known return date) the **(Line Manager) Head Teacher must** write to the employee to arrange a formal meeting with the employee (a standard letter exists for this purpose). Advice from Human Resources **must** now be sought.

Month 6: By now, a meeting **must** have taken place with the employee, to advise them that their employment with the School is at risk if the absence continues and outline the options now available to them (redeployment, phased return, etc).

If the employee has not already done so, they will be expected to make themselves available to the Council's Doctor (within the Occupational Health Team) for assessment. This assessment – made with full consideration of the individual's work environment and duties – will inform the next steps.

Please Note: The above 'Month 6' procedure must be applied immediately to any employee who has currently been off work for a period equal to, or in excess of, 6 months.

Return: **The Office** inform Staffing/Admin Section upon day of return, they will note end date on PSE and send a self-certification form to Manager;

Line Manager must hold return to work interview with employee as soon as possible. Start and end dates, and cause of sickness (NB. The use of "sick" or "ill" is not acceptable), must be checked and entered onto the front of the form, with interview notes entered on the back.

The completed form is returned to **Staffing/Admin** where the dates on the self-cert form **must** be checked against and entered onto the front of the form, with interview notes entered on the back.

The completed form is returned to **Staffing/Admin** where the dates on the self-cert form will be checked against those on PSE. The cause of sickness must also be checked and accurately recorded

Staffing/Admin sections must attach the self-cert form and any associated sick notes/documentation to the employee's personal file or equivalent system so that they can be produced upon request.

Frequent Sickness Absence – Triggers for Intervention

Apart from the medium to long term, continuous sickness absence situations covered by the procedure outlines above, **Line Managers must** also address situations where a pattern of frequent, short to medium term absences has become apparent.

Managers should be reviewing sickness history information before carrying out return to work interviews but, to assist in this process, Human Resources will send monthly reports to relevant Managers, listing the sickness history of any employee taking sick leave during that month. Managers should use these reports to assist (but not exclusively rely) in the identification individuals who have reached, or exceeded, the following trigger points:-

- **4 or more separate periods of sickness over the preceding 12 months**

or

- **2 or more periods of sickness, the aggregate total of which exceeds 15 working days, over the preceding 12 months.**

For each individual case identified, **Line Managers must** review the causes and lengths and frequencies of absence, along with other relevant circumstances, to inform the way in which they proceed. This will normally be in one of two ways:

1. **Where it is clear that there is a single, serious and indisputable cause, and the employee has taken every option available to them to prevent or minimise the absence:** Line Managers should review the circumstances of the absences with the employee involved during an extended return to work interview. The extent to which the absences are likely to continue should be discussed, along with the options available – including the scope and benefits of adapting working patterns, equipment or conditions – to reduce or prevent them altogether.
2. **In any other circumstances: The Head Teacher (Line Managers)** will hold a meeting – in addition to the return to work interview – with the employee concerned to make clear that their attendance levels are becoming a cause for concern. The employee should be informed that there will need to be a **significant and sustained improvement**, over a period specified by the Head Teacher, in order to avoid the possibility of disciplinary action. Support, and a referral to Occupational Health Unit, should be offered to facilitate this improvement where appropriate.

The extent of the improvement expected, along with the period over which it must be achieved, is at the Head Teacher's discretion and should reflect the individual circumstances of the case. The need to achieve **significant and sustained improvement**, however, should be the principal consideration at this point.

Where there is no subsequent, significant and sustained improvement, the Head Teacher will contact Human Resources to discuss whether disciplinary action is warranted.

Advice and support from HR is available to the school when determining an appropriate response in both of the above scenarios. It is also important for managers to note that circumstances should be reviewed continuously and it must not be taken for granted that an employee who has previously been established to have a '*clear ... single, serious and undisputable cause ...*' will satisfy this test for all subsequent absences.

NAME..... REPORTED BY

FIRST DAY OF SICKNESS (Date/Time) DATE RETURNED (Date/Time).....

REASON FOR SICKNESS EXPECTED DURATION (If known)

(Remind To Phone on 4th Day if still absent)

TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS SICKNESS/MEDICAL IN PRECEDING 12 MONTHS

OUTSTANDING WORK DETAILS

RETURN TO WORK DETAILS

ACTION

Record on sick return

Line Manager/HOD informed

4th Day Absence Only, Phone Call Received

Trigger Point hit passed to Line Manager

Date:
Brief details (include reference to any breaches of procedure)

Outstanding issues or Occupational Health Referral Details (include specialist equipment required)

Signed Line Manager Date

Countersigned Head of Deputy Date

Staff member Date

Trigger Points Explained:

4 or more separate periods of sickness over the preceding 12 months

Or

2 or more periods of sickness, the aggregate total of which exceeds 15 working days, over the preceding 12 months

DETAILS/SICK NOTE DATES/REFERRALS/EQUIPMENT PROVIDED:

Note: If sick note dates are not continuous, please contact employee to obtain correct certification