



Wolverham Primary and Nursery School

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Introduction

The Governing Body of Wolverham Primary and Nursery school is committed to a culture of high attendance, as without a skilled and motivated workforce the school would be unable to provide quality teaching, learning and support services, to our pupils. High levels of sickness absence result in direct and indirect costs and affect the morale and performance of colleagues. The School's absence levels are monitored, and used as a measure of our performance.

1.1 First Day of Absence:

- 1.1.1 Staff must make contact with school on or before the first day of absence as soon as possible and no later than 8.00am. In exceptional circumstances this time line may be extended. Staff must provide details of the anticipated length of absence and any work commitments that may need re-arranging. As soon as possible on the first day of absence, the member of staff should speak personally to the head teacher/manager to provide details of their illness/symptoms or injury and how and why this is preventing them from attending work. The head teachers/manager will be conscious that some matters may be of a personal or sensitive nature and conduct the conversation accordingly.
- 1.1.2 The member of staff is required to contact the Headteacher or in her absence the Deputy Headteacher ideally between 7.00 – 7.30am. A message may be left in the event of the call not being answered. E-mails are not an acceptable form of notification of absence.
- 1.1.3 If the member of staff is unable to telephone in person, they must arrange for someone else to telephone on their behalf, in accordance with the above.
- 1.1.4 If the member of staff does not speak to the head teacher or line manager directly they must leave a telephone number on which they can be called back.
- 1.1.5 If the member of staff believes that their absence may have been caused by something that happened at work, they should inform the head teacher/manager of this and arrange for the incident to be logged in the School Accident Report Book. A copy must be forwarded to the Health and Safety Team if the staff receives medical treatment; leaves work early or has time off as a result of an accident/incident.

Subsequent Days of Absence

- 1.2.1 If the member of staff is unfit to return to work when they anticipated returning, they must contact their head teacher/manager prior to this date to give an update on their condition. This ensures that head teachers can make arrangements for teaching or other service delivery to be maintained during the period of absence and enables the head teacher/manager to be aware of any concerns relating to the member of staff's welfare.

- 1.2.2 If this does not happen, the continued absence may be treated as absence without authorisation which may result in disciplinary action and/or suspension of sick pay.
- 1.2.3 The self certification period lasts for up to 7 calendar days (including the first day) and a fit note must be produced for longer periods.
- 1.2.4 Staff must agree with their head teacher/manager when they will next make contact and keep them updated regarding their progress towards returning to work.
- 1.2.5 If it is believed that a member of staff has a medical condition that is related to a disability, Human Resources may be contacted for advice.

1.3 Certification

- 1.3.1 Every absence has to be covered by the appropriate certificate to ensure prompt and correct payment of occupational and statutory sick pay as well as to ensure that accurate records are maintained. Failure to comply with the certification procedures may result in suspension of sick pay (see 5.0). Misleading or false statements may be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary procedure.
- 1.3.2 A Sickness Absence Notification and Certification form must be completed from day one of any absence.
- 1.3.3 If the member of staff continues to be absent for more than 7 consecutive days (regardless of whether or not these are working days for part-time staff), they must consult a doctor and obtain a fit note which must be forwarded at the earliest opportunity to the school. Alternatively, if a part-time member of staff becomes well again on a non-working day they should notify school that they are now fit so that the records are accurate.
- 1.3.4 The fit note enables GP's to advise the school that the member of staff is either:-
- Fit for work
 - Not fit for work - If the member of staff is too ill to work, the GP will advise this just like the previous sick note.
 - May be fit for some work now - the GP may state 'may be fit for some work now' if they think the member of staff's health condition may allow them to work with the school's support and agreement.
- 1.3.5 Where there is continuing sickness absence the member of staff must submit to the school concurrent fit notes to cover the whole period of absence, which should then be input onto the system, and sent to the Employee Service Centre.
- 1.3.6 Exceptionally, if a head teacher/manager is concerned about the frequency of a member of staff's absence or their reasons for absence, the member of staff may be required to submit fit notes rather than self certificates, from their first day of absence. In such cases the school will meet the cost of any fee charged. This should only be done after consultation with HR.
- 1.3.7 There may be circumstances where a member of staff does not comply with the School's procedure and does not provide a fit note to cover their absence. This may be regarded as

unauthorised absence which may result in suspension of sick pay and may warrant investigation under the School's Disciplinary procedure.

- 1.3.8 Fit notes will be required from a doctor where the member of staff is suffering from a disease that is reportable under regulation 7 of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

2.0 DEALING WITH SHORT-TERM ABSENCE

Monitoring attendance and the control of absence levels is a leadership responsibility, along with creating a culture where employees know that attendance matters.

The advice of Occupational Health will be sought where appropriate.

The School will promote the health, safety and well being of all employees, including the use of risk assessments to identify and manage hazards impacting on health in the workplace.

2.0.1 Return to Work Meeting

- 2.0.2 When a member of staff returns to work following sickness absence the head teacher/manager should conduct a return to work meeting.

2.1 Stage 1 Absence Meeting

- 2.1.1 If either of the triggers outlined below are met the staff will be required to attend a formal Stage 1 Absence Review Meeting with their head teacher/ manager to discuss the matter.

- 10 working days absence in any rolling 6 month period OR
- 3 occasions of absence of at least one day in any rolling 6 month period

NB: Where a member of staff works less than 5 days per week, head teachers/managers may pro rata the working days absence trigger above as appropriate, but the number of occasions trigger will apply to all staff e.g. if an employee works 3 days per week the appropriate trigger would be 6 working days. or 3 occasions.

- 2.1.2 The member of staff will be given a minimum of 5 working days notice of the date and time of the meeting and informed that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss their attendance. The member of staff will have the right to be accompanied by an accredited Trade Union representative or a work colleague at the meeting.

- 2.1.3 The purpose of the review meeting is to discuss the absence record, explore the reasons for absence, identify areas for support, set targets for improvement and clarify what further action may be taken if improvement targets are not met.

- 2.1.4 Along with setting targets , the following outcomes may be considered:

- The employee may be required to submit a fit note from their doctor for every instance of absence (the School will bear any cost associated with this)
- Advice may be sought from OHU via a Management Referral.
- Other support mechanisms may be identified and implemented e.g. training.
- Reasonable adjustments may be identified such as changes to the workload, work practices or work pattern or the possibility of redeployment (subject to OHU advice).
- A stress risk assessment or a personal risk assessment may be conducted or updated if appropriate
- Suspension of sick pay may be considered if there is evidence of abuse of the procedure (see 5.0)

2.1.5 The manager will write to the employee confirming the points discussed, actions agreed and targets set informing them that if their attendance does not improve to the required standard within the agreed timescale, the matter may be escalated to a Stage 2 Absence Review Meeting. A copy of the letter will be retained by the head teacher/manager, placed on the employees personal file and a copy sent to the member of staff.

3. Aims/Principles

- 3.1 The Governing Body's objective is to foster a culture of high attendance by balancing the needs of the individual with the needs of the School. This will be achieved by implementing procedures to support employees experiencing ill health, whilst dealing with unjustified and/or high levels of sickness absence.
- 3.2 All reasonable support will be provided to employees who experience short or long term periods of ill health with the aim of assisting their recovery, return to work, and thereafter, to maintain a good level of attendance and performance at work.
- 3.3 All employees have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and fitness to attend work and to follow the correct reporting procedures if they are ill.
- 3.4 Where an employee's circumstances are covered by the Equality Act (2010) the School will make reasonable adjustments to help such employees carry out their job. The School will ensure they have the same opportunities to perform well and develop during their employment as any other employee.

4. Scope/Application

- 4.1 This policy applies to all School employees, whether on permanent or temporary contracts.
- 4.2 Any employee whose absence is being managed under the Absence Management Procedure, will be provided with a copy of the procedure at the point of entry to the process.

5. Definitions

- 5.1 Equality Act 2010 - defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry

out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months.

6. Equality Act 2010

6.1 In accordance with its Public Sector Equality Duty, the Governing Body of School has given due regard to equality considerations in adopting this policy/procedure and is satisfied that its application will not impact adversely on members of staff who have a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010.

7. See also:

- 7.1 Disciplinary - Where there is evidence to suggest deliberate abuse of the sickness scheme the matter may be dealt with through the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 7.2 Probationary Period - A new support staff employee's attendance will be subject to regular reviews as part of the 6 month probationary process. Attendance performance will be a contributory factor to successful completion of the probationary period.

See also CWAC ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE document

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