



Managing Absence & Ill Health Policy (Policy and Procedure)

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Part A – Policy

1. Policy Statement

The Trust is committed to supporting the health, wellbeing and attendance of all Employees. Each Academy expects a high level of attendance and requires each Employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.

The Trust recognises that on occasions Employees may be absent from work due to ill health and that health issues may also impact on performance in the workplace.

The Trust is committed to supporting an Employee during a period of absence with the aim of assisting their return to work and maintaining the required levels of performance. The Trust also recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Advice may be sought from an occupational health advisor or HR in the management of ill health issues.

An Employee will be advised of the possible consequences of their absence, including if their employment is at risk.

The Trust will seek to balance the needs of the Trust with the needs of the Employee. Where an Employee is unable to discharge the duties of their post due to ill health and all reasonable alternative options have been exhausted, consideration may be given to terminating employment.

This procedure explains:

- How the Trust will manage absence and ill health issues in a fair and consistent manner?
- What is expected from the Principals and employees with regards to the reporting and management of absence and ill health?

It does not address absences for reasons other than personal sickness. Non-sickness related absences are covered by other procedures.

2. Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all employees.

3. Adoption Arrangements and Date

This procedure was adopted by Trustees and supersedes any previous Absence and Ill Health Procedure.

This policy will be reviewed by One multi academies trust every 2 years or earlier if there is a need.

4. Responsibilities of the Trust and its Academies

- To ensure all Employees are aware of the absence management procedures
- To ensure sickness absence is accurately recorded, monitored and reviewed effectively
- To take appropriate management action where absence and ill health related under performance are causing concern

- To make suitable arrangements to discuss absence and the impact of this – including absence review meetings and return to work discussions
- To discuss / identify with Employees support and strategies for improving attendance and work performance or facilitating a return to work
- To keep in regular contact with an absent Employee and make them aware should their employment be at risk
- In most cases, the Academy HR Administrator will be responsible for maintaining regular contact by offering welfare calls/meetings to employees
- To consider termination of employment only after other options have been explored
- To provide a working environment conducive to enabling the Employee to perform their duties safely.
- To take reasonable action to maintain Employee's confidentiality in matters relating to health.

5. Responsibilities of the Employee

- To ensure attendance meets the required standards
- To make his / her Principal aware of any health issues that may be impacting on their ability to maintain good attendance and performance
- To comply with the Trust's absence notification and certification requirements
- To attend meetings in connection with the management of absence issues (i.e. return to work meetings, absence review meetings, Occupational Health appointments)
- To work with their Principal to identify support and strategies for improving attendance or facilitating a return to work.
- To notify his/her line manager as soon as possible in advance of their intended day of return

The management of ill health issues may be delegated to staff other than the Principal. References to the role of the Principal in this policy and procedure include his / her nominee.

Informal Action

Informal action may be delegated to line managers where appropriate.

Formal Action

Formal action undertaken by the Principal

Dismissal Decisions

In each Academy, responsibility for dismissal decisions lie with the CEO and therefore formal hearings to consider dismissal may be heard by the CEO and supported by HR.

Appeals will be heard by the LAB governors who have had no prior involvement in the matter under consideration.

The appeal panel to be comprised of not less than two members, although this may vary depending on the circumstances.

The following table sets out the provisions which would normally apply.

| formal action taken by | Formal Hearing heard by | Appeal heard by |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Principal | CEO and HR | LAB governors |

6. Matters relating to the Principal' s sickness absence

Where the Principal is absent the same principles in relation to reporting, certification and management will apply and will be addressed by the chair of the LAB.

Formal hearings will be heard by a panel of one or more LAB governors who have had no prior involvement in the matter under consideration and supported by the CEO.

Appeals will be heard by the Trust who have had no prior involvement in the matter under consideration.

| Informal/Formal action taken by | Formal hearing heard by | Appeal heard by |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| CEO | LAB Governors | Trustees |

In instances where there are insufficient Trust personnel available to sit on a hearing or appeal panel, the Trust may co-opt other individuals suitable to hear the case.

7. Timescales

Concerns regarding ill health and absence will be addressed without undue delay.

Timescales stated are for guidance and may vary depending on the circumstances of the case.

For the purpose of this procedure a 'working day' will be typically based on the Trust Master Funding Agreement in relation to the length of the school day and year.

For support staff employed on a term time only basis working days will normally refer to the days worked under their contract or for staff employed on contracts outside of the Academy term will mean all days excluding weekend and bank holidays.

8. Right to Representation

An Employee is entitled to be accompanied to a formal Hearing or appeal by either a workplace colleague or a Trade Union representative.

A workplace colleague or Trade Union representative is able to attend formal meetings held under this procedure, including formal absent review meetings.

NB Informal meetings will be held without the need for representation.

9. Absence Monitoring

In order to manage attendance effectively the Trust will record, monitor and review absences on an individual and whole Academy basis.

Part B - Procedure

1. Notification of Absence

Employees should report sickness absence to their Principal or other nominated person by telephone as soon as possible on their first day of absence before the start of the working day and no later than **1 hour before** their start time. Contact should be made by the Employee in person and not by a third party, unless absolutely unavoidable.

Employees should state:

The reason for their absence / nature of their illness

The estimated period of absence.

If the Employee does not contact their Principal by the required time, the Academy should attempt to contact the Employee by telephone/email and next of kin.

Repeated failure to follow these notification requirements will be addressed in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure and/or action taken where there appears to be a repudiatory breach i.e. employee is AWOL.

2. Absences up to and including 7 calendar days

Employees will be required to complete and submit a self-certification form on return to work for all periods of sickness absence not exceeding five working days and seven calendar days.

Where an employee attends work but later goes home sick during the day – pay will not be deducted and this will not be regarded as a sick day for contractual sick pay purposes. However, such absences will be recorded and considered for absence monitoring purposes.

3. Absences of more than 7 calendar days

A Statement of Fitness for Work 'fit note' is required if a period of absence lasts for eight days or more inclusive of rest days, public holidays and Academy closure periods.

The following conditions apply to the provision of 'fit notes':

- 'Fit notes' must be signed, stamped and dated by a qualified medical practitioner
- 'Fit notes' must be received by the Principal or other designated person as soon as practically possible after the 8th calendar day of absence
- 'Fit notes' will only be accepted for sick pay purposes from the dates specified and certified by the doctor.
- Subsequent 'fit notes' must be submitted in a timely manner to cover absence if it extends beyond the period of the initial certificate, including Academy closure periods, weekends, bank holidays and non- working days

- Where an Employee is admitted to a medical centre for treatment, 'fit notes' need only be submitted on entry and on discharge
- Exceptionally, the Academy has the right to request an Employee to provide a 'fit note' for a period of sickness absence not exceeding seven days for example if an employee is sick leading into or following an academy closure period i.e. half term and full term. In such cases the Academy will meet the cost of any 'fit note' being issued.

4. 'Fit Note' Provisions

Should a 'fit note' indicate that an Employee is 'not fit for work' they should remain on sick leave until the expiry of the note. There is not a requirement for the Employee to be signed 'fit for work' by a medical practitioner before returning.

Should the Employee feel fit to return to work prior to the expiry date of the note, the Academy will give this request due consideration and may undertake a workplace risk assessment to establish whether the Employee is fit to return to work early. The Academy reserves the right to ask that the Employee remains on sick leave until the expiry of the note should they feel it is not appropriate for the individual to return.

Should a 'fit note' indicate that an Employee 'may be fit for work' the Academy will discuss with the Employee ways of helping them get back to work. This may include agreeing a phased return to work, amended duties or workplace adjustments for a temporary period.

- If it is not possible for the Academy to provide the support an Employee needs to return to work, or an Employee feels unable to return, then the statement will be used in the same way as if the GP advised that the Employee was 'not fit for work'.

5. Sick Pay Entitlement

The contractual sick pay entitlement for staff is as set out in the contract of employment which is 25 working days' full pay followed by 25 working days half pay over a rolling 12-month period.

- **In exceptional circumstances** i.e., a continuous episode of illness lasting over (30 calendar days) the Trust may use its discretion to extend contractual sick pay towards an individual providing that required documents and procedures have been followed.

Examples of long-term illnesses may include:

- Cancer treatment
- Multiple sclerosis
- Strokes
- Heart attacks
- Severe physical injuries
- Trauma
- Parkinson's disease
- Severe injuries sustained i.e. broken bones, swollen limbs, amputations etc

Although the above list is by no means exhaustive, consideration will also be given to those who need extended recuperation following on from Severe mental health issues, hospitalisation and/or serious medical operations.

Statutory sick pay will be paid to qualifying staff in accordance with statutory provisions.

6. Sick Pay Requirements

Payment of sick pay is conditional upon meeting both statutory and the Trust's requirement concerning absence notification and medical certification. Appropriate certification is required for the entire period of absence including Academy closure periods and nonworking days.

Failure to follow these requirements or provide certification in a timely manner may result in the absence being regarded as unauthorised and in exceptional circumstances the Trust reserves the right to withhold pay.

The making of false sickness declarations will be addressed in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure

7. Contact during a period of absence

The Trust requires Employees to maintain reasonable contact with the Academy during any period of absence, presenting medical certificates in a timely manner and attending review meetings as requested.

Where an absence is for three calendar days or less it is expected that the Employee will contact the Academy each day and set or organize for work to be set during this period, unless agreed otherwise.

Where an absence lasts more than three calendar days, the Employee must keep their named contact updated with the situation at agreed intervals until a return date is known. If possible, the Employee should assist the Academy as far as possible in determining work for their classes and co-operate with the Academy in covering for their absence, unless agreed otherwise.

If the absence is likely to be longer term it is expected that the Principal and Employee will discuss how best to maintain contact at agreed intervals. Consideration will also be given on how best to keep the Employee updated with Academy/Trust news and events during their absence.

In certain circumstances it may not be appropriate for the Employee and their Principal / line manager to speak (e.g. in instances where the absence is due to work related stress). However, even under these circumstances consideration should be given to identifying another appropriate manager to act as a contact point or to facilitate meetings.

Only in exceptional circumstances will the Principal consider a person other than the Employee such as their staff representative/ trade union representative being the point of contact with the Academy.

8. Location of meetings

Meetings in connection with the management of health issues will usually take place on the Academy site. However, a reasonable alternative venue away from the Academy site may be arranged if this will assist the Employee.

9. Referral to Occupational Health

Where health issues are impacting on an employee's attendance or performance, the Academy should seek advice from an Occupational Health Advisor or other appropriate health advisor in order to inform management action or support.

It is the Academy's policy to usually make a referral to an Occupational Health Advisor in the following circumstances:

- During a period of long-term continuous absence. The Principal will consult with HR about a referral for the employee following a minimum period of at least a month of continuing absence.

- Following frequent or recurring short term absence which is giving rise to concern. As a guide, a referral to OHU could be made in instances where there are ongoing concerns that are affecting regular attendance at work.

- Where an injury or illness may have an impact on the Employee's ability to undertake their job role.

- Where an Employee has a degenerative condition or disability which is impacting on their ability to undertake their job role.

- When an application for ill health retirement is made.

The advice of an Occupational Health Advisor may be sought to:

- To identify how an employee's health or medical condition may impact on their attendance or ability to undertake their job

To ascertain when or if an Employee will be fit to return to work in the foreseeable future

To provide guidance on what support or adjustments could be made to facilitate a return to work

To provide guidance on any adjustments which may support a disabled Employee in the workplace

To provide guidance on the Employee's ability to attend formal meetings and investigations under any other procedure whilst absent

To advise how an Employee may be able to improve their health and wellbeing.

An Occupational Health Advisor may refer to the Employee's GP or other medical specialist for further information regarding the Employee's medical condition.

It is expected that all Employees will consent to a referral being made to an Occupational Health Advisor when reasonably asked to do so. Where consent is refused, the Trust may make decisions about the management of an ill health issue based on the available information and without the guidance of an Occupational Health Advisor

An assessment by Occupational Health may be conducted in person, online or by telephone consultation.

Any written report provided by an Occupational Health Advisor will be shared with the Employee. On receipt of the report from the Occupational Health Advisor a review meeting will usually be convened.

If an employee's absence becomes long term the Academy/Trust may request further advice from an Occupational Health Advisor, as necessary.

10. Return to Work (RTW) Meetings

Employees will be required to meet with their Principal or other delegated line manager on their first day of return. It is recommended to meet before they commence their duties regardless of the duration of their absence. RTW meeting record must be completed within 24 hours.

Form attached as Appendix B. The nature of the meeting will depend on the circumstances.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Discuss the reason and cause of the absence
- To consider any concerns regarding attendance or patterns of absence
- Confirm that the Employee is fit to return
- Discuss and agree any support that the Employee may need to return to work and sustain a successful return, including recommendations made by a GP or Occupational Health Advisor
- To update the Employee on anything they may have missed during their absence.

In complex cases, cases where disability is a factor and instances where an Employee has been absent from work for some time – it may also be useful for a staff representative or workplace colleague to attend this meeting.

A meeting record of the return-to-work meeting will be made and kept on the Employee's personnel file for absence monitoring purposes.

Depending on the reason and length of the absence the Principal may agree further follow up meetings to help ensure that the Employee makes a successful and sustained return to work.

11. Reasonable Adjustments and supporting a return to work

The Academy will seek to provide all reasonable support to enable an Employee to make a successful and sustained return to work following a period of absence or to maintain their performance in the workplace.

The Academy will give due consideration to any reasonable and practicable adjustments recommended in a 'fit note' or by an Occupational Health Adviser or requested by an Employee, as required by the Equality Act 2010.

When considering possible adjustments, the Academy will need to balance the needs of the Employee with what is realistic and practicable given the size and resources of the organisation.

The degree to which an Employee will need support, and the nature and duration of any adjustments will be determined by the circumstances and will arise from discussion between the Employee and the Principal.

Adjustments may include consideration of:

- A phased return to work of no more than 4 weeks (on full pay)
- A formal request under flexible working to vary hours/days of work
- Adjustments to the working environment
- The outcome of any risk assessment
- A temporary alteration of duties or pattern of work
- Provision of additional equipment to assist the Employee in their duties
- Providing time off for medical treatment or appointments
- Arranging temporary additional support in the workplace
- Any agreed supportive measures will be confirmed in writing.

12. Short Term and Long-Term absence management

The Academy will determine that a number of meetings are held before considering any severe action to address absence management.

As a last resort, should an employee be dismissed, the Academy will need to demonstrate that they have followed a fair procedure robust process and have acted reasonably in reaching this decision.

An employee will be given fair warning that their attendance is unsatisfactory, a fair opportunity to state their case and a reasonable opportunity / time to improve their attendance.

Short Term

12.1 Informal Action

In instances of repeated or persistent short-term absences causing concern the Principal or line manager will seek to address this informally at an early stage by meeting with the Employee.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- The Academy may determine that management action in relation to absence is required when there are 4 periods of absence of any duration or 10 days' absence within a 12-month period.
- Advise the Employee that their level of attendance is unacceptable and discuss how the level of absence is impacting on the individual's performance and the Academy.
- Explore reasons for absence and give the opportunity for the Employee to raise any health or other concerns arising from within or outside the workplace that may be impacting on their attendance.
- Identify any support that the Academy may be able to provide or any action the Employee can take to improve or sustain attendance.
- Agree any follow up action including whether or not to make a referral to an Occupational Health, counselling services or carry out a Risk Assessment.
- Explain the Academy's expectations regarding attendance, agree a formal course of action or attendance targets and timescale for improvement.
- Advise the Employee that should an acceptable level of attendance not be achieved and sustained – formal action up to and including the termination of employment may be considered.
- Agree when / how attendance will be monitored and reviewed.

The Academy reserves the right to move straight to a Formal Absence Review Meeting where the circumstances warrant, including instances where concerns about the Employee's short-term absence have previously been addressed informally.

12.2 Monitoring of Attendance following Informal Action

In most instances, it is anticipated that the level of attendance will improve, and informal monitoring will continue to ensure satisfactory attendance is sustained. However, in circumstances where an employee's attendance does not show acceptable improvement the Academy may move to a formal absence review meeting.

In instances where it is suspected that the reason for the absence is not genuine, the matter may be treated as a conduct issue and be addressed under the Academy's Disciplinary Procedure.

12.3 Formal Absence Review Meeting

Where attendance does not show acceptable improvement a formal absence review meeting will be convened.

An Employee will be given written notification of the formal absence review meeting and will be advised that a management expectation letter may be issued.

The Employee may be accompanied to this meeting by a workplace colleague or union representative. This meeting will be conducted by the Principal or line manager.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Explore the reasons for continuing absence and the impact this is having on the individual's performance and the Academy.
- Give the Employee the opportunity to respond to the concerns about their attendance and make any relevant representations or present any mitigating factors.
- Consider any relevant advice received from Occupational Health or whether such advice should be sought.
- Review progress towards attendance targets and set further targets and timescales for improvement.
- Consider the impact of any support / workplace adjustments which have been put in place and any further support which may be of benefit.
- Consider whether the Employee will be able to achieve and maintain a satisfactory level of attendance.
- Advise the Employee that should an acceptable level of attendance not be achieved and maintained – the termination of employment may be considered
- Agree when / how a further meeting will be held to review attendance. The review period may vary depending on the circumstances of the case but will usually be within 8-12 weeks.

The outcome of this meeting may be:

- To continue a further period of formal monitoring in which the Employee will need to achieve and sustain a satisfactory level of attendance
- To adjourn the meeting to seek further information or advice e.g. from an Occupational Health Advisor or explore alternative options such as ill health retirement or redeployment, where appropriate to issue a management expectations letter on the grounds of unsatisfactory attendance.

The Principal should provide the Employee with written confirmation of what was discussed and the outcome of the meeting usually within 5 working days of the decision being made.

Where a management expectation letter is issued, the outcome letter should specify:

- The reason for the warning;
- The required improvement in attendance that is required and the timescale to achieve this
- Any agreed workplace adjustments / supportive measures
- When a further review of attendance will take place

Advise the Employee that should an acceptable level of attendance not be achieved or maintained that further formal action, including the termination of employment, may have to be considered.

12.4 Hearing to consider unsatisfactory attendance

The arrangements for hearings are set out in further detail in Appendix A

Should attendance not improve to an acceptable level, or should satisfactory attendance not be sustained within the review period, the Employee will be advised in writing of the requirement to attend a Hearing to consider unsatisfactory attendance.

The Employee will be given written notification of the date, time and venue of the Hearing. This will usually be not less than 5 working days' notice. The notification will advise the Employee of the case to be considered and possible outcomes of the hearing – including that dismissal may be an outcome.

The Employee will receive all relevant documents which will be referred to during the hearing with the notification letter.

The Employee has the right to be accompanied at this Hearing by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative.

The Employee is required to provide, no later than 2 working days before the Hearing:

- The name of their trade union representative, staff rep or workplace colleague
- Any relevant documents they wish to be considered.

During the Hearing the Employer will present the case and that the Employee will be given the opportunity to respond.

In reaching a decision, the panel may consider:

- The length of the Employee's employment and attendance record the impact of the Employee's attendance on their workplace performance and on the Academy and whether this can be sustained.
- Whether any progress has been made towards attendance targets.
- Whether there is any identifiable medical condition which is preventing the Employee from achieving good attendance.
- Any medical advice that has been received regarding the Employee's condition, and their current and future ability to undertake the job role.
- The impact of any measures / reasonable adjustments that have been put in place to support the Employee.

- Whether all alternative options have been discussed – including redeployment and ill health retirement, where appropriate.

The outcome of this Hearing may be:

- To continue a further period of formal monitoring in which the Employee will need to achieve and sustain a satisfactory level of attendance i.e. 3-6 months.
- To recommend further information or advice is sought (e.g. from an Occupational Health Advisor) or to explore alternative options such as ill health retirement or redeployment, where appropriate and reconvene the Hearing.
- To issue a written warning for 12 months with 95% attendance targets to be set
- To dismiss the Employee with notice on the grounds of unsatisfactory attendance or capability due to ill health.

The Panel should provide the Employee with written confirmation of what was discussed and the outcome of the meeting usually within 5 working days of the decision being made. The Employee may appeal against the decision within 5 working days of receipt of the outcome.

Where dismissal is an outcome, the notification letter should:

- Specify the reason for the dismissal, termination date and any notice period
- Advise the Employee of their right of appeal.

Where a sanction short of dismissal is given, the outcome notification letter should specify:

- The reason for the warning and how long this will remain 'live'.
- The required improvement in attendance that is required and the timescale to achieve this.
- Any agreed workplace adjustments / supportive measures.
- When a further review of attendance will take place.
- Advise the Employee that should an acceptable level of attendance not be achieved or maintained – further formal action, including the termination of employment, may be considered.
- Advise the Employee of their right of appeal against the sanction. It will be deemed sufficient for the Academy to issue written confirmation of the outcome of the hearing to the Employee's last known address.

12.5 Appeal Hearing

The arrangements for appeals are set out in further detail in Appendix A.

An Employee may register his / her appeal in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the written outcome to the Clerk to the LAB with clear details as to why the appeal should be considered.

An appeal may be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- Unfairness of the decision
- That the sanction imposed was unreasonable
- That new evidence has come to light
- Significant procedural irregularities.

In instances where the grounds for appeal are not stated the Academy will ask the Employee to confirm these to enable all parties to give due consideration of the issues prior to the appeal Hearing.

Any supporting information must be submitted by the Employee no later than the deadline for the receipt of an appeal.

The Academy will provide the Employee with copies of any documents which will be referred to during the appeal in advance and usually no later than 5 working days before the appeal hearing.

An appeal hearing will be convened at the earliest opportunity, usually within 10 working days of receipt. A workplace colleague, staff representative or trade union representative may accompany an Employee to an appeal.

The purpose of the Appeal is to review the original decision based on the basis of the grounds for appeal presented by the Employee. The outcome may be

- To uphold the previous decision in full
- To uphold the previous decision in part – but reduce the level of the sanction imposed or amend other elements of the decision
- To uphold the Employee's appeal in full and withdraw any sanction.

The panel may not impose a higher level of sanction than reached previously.

The Employee will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal, usually within 5 working days of the decision being made.

It will be deemed sufficient for the Academy to issue written confirmation of the outcome of the Hearing to the Employee's last known address.

The decision of the appeal panel is final and there is no further right of appeal.

Long Term Absence

12.6 Informal Action

In instances of long-term absence, the Principal will seek to address this informally at an early stage by meeting with the Employee. A meeting will usually take place within the first 6 calendar weeks of any period of absence - but may be earlier if appropriate.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Explore reasons for absence and give an opportunity for the Employee to raise any health or other concerns arising from within or outside the workplace that may be impacting on their attendance.
- Consider the likely duration of the absence.
- Explain how the continuing absence is impacting on the individual's performance and the Academy.
- Identify any support or adjustments that the Academy may be able to provide or any action the Employee can take to facilitate or expedite a return to work.
- Make a referral to an Occupational Health Advisor or counselling service, undertake a risk assessment or consider any other follow up action that may be appropriate
- Consider whether the Employee will be able to achieve and maintain a satisfactory level of attendance.
- Agree when a further review meeting will take place.

Should an Employee return to work before the review date the Academy may continue to support and monitor the situation informally to ensure that a successful and sustained return is made.

12.7 Formal Absence Review

Should the Employee remain absent from work, after an agreed interval the Principal will convene a Formal Absence Review meeting with the Employee.

The review period may vary depending on the circumstances of the case, but the meeting will usually be held after 8-12 weeks of absence or once advice is received from an Occupational Health Advisor.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Discuss the impact of the absence on the individual and the Academy.
- Consider any advice received from Occupational Health.
- Consider whether the Employee will be able to return to work in the foreseeable future.
- Consider the Employee's views on continuing in employment.
- Consider other options which may be available such as Ill Health Retirement, flexible working and Redeployment
- Identify any support or adjustments that the Academy may be able to provide or any action the Employee can take to facilitate or expedite a return to work
Advise the Employee that if they are unable to return to work within a

reasonable period consideration may be given to the termination of employment on the grounds of ill health

The Employee may be accompanied to this meeting by a workplace colleague or a Union representative.

In instances where there is no prospect of a return to work or the Employee is permanently unfit to undertake the duties of the post, the Academy reserves the right to move immediately to a Hearing to consider the case for dismissal on the grounds of capability due to ill health.

The Principal will provide the Employee with written confirmation of what was discussed and the outcome of the meeting usually within 5 working days.

Following the review period, a Hearing will be convened to consider the termination of employment on the grounds of incapability due to ill-health.

12.8 Hearing to consider dismissal on the grounds of capability due to ill health

The arrangements for Hearings are set out in further detail in Appendix A.

The Employee will be given written notification of the date, time and venue of the Hearing. This will usually be not less than 5 working days' notice. The notification will advise the Employee of the case to be considered and possible outcomes of the Hearing – including that dismissal may be an outcome.

The Academy will provide the employee with all relevant documents which will be referred to during the Hearing with the notification letter and in any case no later than 2 working days before the Hearing.

The Employee has the right to be accompanied at this Hearing by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative (but not be a legal representative).

The Employee is required to provide no later than 2 working days before the Hearing:

- The name of their staff/union representative or workplace colleague. Any relevant documents they wish to be considered.

During the Hearing the Employer will present the management case and the Employee will be given the opportunity to respond.

In reaching a decision, the panel may consider:

- The length of the Employee's employment and attendance record.
- The impact of the Employee's ill health on attendance / workplace performance.
- The length of the absence and impact of the Employee's ill health on the Academy and whether this can be sustained.
- Whether or not it is envisaged the Employee may be able to return to work and if so when.

- Any specialist advice that has been received regarding the Employee's condition, current and future ability to undertake the job role and anticipated timescales for return.
-
- The impact of any measures / reasonable adjustments that have been put in place to support the Employee, including the findings of any risk assessment.
- Whether all alternative options have been discussed – including redeployment flexible working and ill health retirement.

The outcome of this meeting may be:

- To continue a further period of formal monitoring in which the Employee will need to achieve and sustain a satisfactory level of attendance i.e. 12 months.
- To recommend further information or advice is sought (e.g. from an Occupational Health Advisor) or to explore alternative options such as ill health retirement or redeployment, where appropriate and reconvene the Hearing.
- To issue a written warning for 12 months with 95% attendance targets to be set
- To dismiss the Employee with notice on the grounds of unsatisfactory attendance or capability due to ill health.

The panel should provide the Employee with written confirmation of what was discussed and the outcome of the Hearing within 5 working days of the decision. The Employee may appeal against any sanction within 5 working days of receipt of the notification of the outcome.

Where dismissal is an outcome the notification letter should:

- Specify the reason for the dismissal, termination date and any notice period and
- Advise the Employee of their right of appeal against any sanction issued.

It will be deemed sufficient for the Academy to issue written confirmation of the outcome of the Hearing to the Employee's last known address.

Where an Employee is not dismissed appropriate next steps and further review date may be confirmed in writing with the Employee.

12.9 Appeal

The arrangements for appeals are set out in further detail in Appendix A.

An Employee may register his / her appeal in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the written outcome to the Clerk to the LAB or nominated person with clear details as to why the appeal should be considered.

An appeal may be made on the following grounds:

- Unfairness of the decision.
- That the sanction imposed was unreasonable.
- That new evidence has come to light.
- Significant procedural irregularities.

In instances where the grounds for appeal are not stated the Academy will ask the Employee to confirm these to enable all parties to give due consideration of the issues prior to the appeal Hearing.

Any supporting information must be submitted by the Employee no later than the deadline for the receipt of an appeal.

The Academy will provide the Employee with copies of any documents which will be referred to during the appeal in advance and usually no later than 5 working days before the appeal Hearing.

An appeal Hearing will be convened at the earliest opportunity, usually within 10 working days of receipt. A workplace colleague or a staff/union representative may accompany an Employee to an appeal.

The purpose of the appeal is to review the original decision on the basis of the grounds for appeal presented by the Employee. The outcome may be:

- To uphold the previous decision in full
- To uphold the previous decision in part – but reduce the level of the sanction imposed or amend other elements of the decision
- To uphold the Employee's appeal in full and withdraw any sanction

The panel may not impose a higher level of sanction than reached previously.

The Employee will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal, usually within 5 working days of the decision being made.

It will be deemed sufficient for the Academy to issue written confirmation of the outcome of the Hearing to the Employee's last known address.

The decision of the appeal panel is final and there is no further right of appeal.

12.9 Non-attendance at formal meetings and hearings

Where an Employee or their representative is unavailable to attend, they should inform the Academy at the earliest opportunity.

If an employee's representative is unavailable, a meeting/Hearing or appeal Hearing may be deferred by up to 5 working days from the initial date.

In some instances, it may not be possible for the Employee to attend meetings/Hearings due to the nature of their illness. The Academy will seek to postpone meetings where this is reasonable and practicable. Other than in exceptional circumstances only one postponement will be granted.

The Academy reserves the right to hold meetings/Hearings in the Employee's absence where all reasonable efforts to secure their attendance have been unsuccessful. In this event the Employee will be given the opportunity to make written representations or to be represented by a workplace colleague or staff/trade union representative.

Should the Employee not attend, and no representations be received the Principal / panel will make a decision as to the outcome based on the available information.

13. Absence during the probationary period

The Academy will monitor attendance during an Employee's probationary period. Any concerns will be managed in accordance with the probationary period guidance and without recourse to this full procedure.

14. Absence / poor performance related to an ongoing medical condition or disability

In instances where an employee's disability or ongoing medical condition has an impact on performance in the workplace advice may be sought from an Occupational Health Advisor in the first instance to identify measures that can be put in place to support the Employee. This may include consideration of reasonable workplace support and adjustments under the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010 and / or redeployment to an alternative role.

Regular informal review meetings will be arranged to monitor the situation.

Should there be an ongoing impact on performance these concerns may be addressed through the Academy's Capability Procedure.

15. Absence arising from management action to address performance / conduct concerns

In instances where absence arises directly from management action to address performance and or conduct concerns – the Academy will seek immediate advice from an Occupational Health Advisor on how to support the Employee in the management of the absence and / or progress the performance or conduct issues.

16. Health Retirement

If an Employee is unable to return to work due to continuing ill health an application for ill health retirement may be appropriate. Referrals for ill health retirement will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Teachers' Pension Scheme or the Local Government Pension Scheme or Trust's nominated Pension Scheme.

17. Medical Suspension

In some circumstances the Academy reserves the right to suspend Employees in accordance with their duty of care on medical grounds, pending medical advice, should their presence at work be deemed to be detrimental to the health, wellbeing and safety of the individual, colleagues or pupils. Any such suspension will be confirmed in writing, be for a limited period of time and reviewed regularly.

Such suspensions are made on contractual pay and do not count against an Employee's sick leave entitlement or pay.

18. Time off for Medical Appointments

Prior approval must be sought for time off for medical appointments during working hours. There is no statutory right for time off work to attend medical appointments or right to be paid for such attendance.

Therefore, wherever possible, routine medical appointments should be made outside of working hours. Should this not be possible the Academy will allow reasonable paid time off to attend such appointments, where the request is supported by an appointment card or letter.

Whenever possible, appointments should be made outside of hours or at least at the beginning or end of the working day to minimise absence during working hours.

The Academy reserves the right to require an Employee to reschedule non urgent appointments where their absence would have an adverse impact on the operation of the Academy.

Unless the medical appointment is for the whole day then this will not be recorded as sickness absence.

19. Time off for Elective Procedures

Sick leave cannot be taken for elective procedures such as IVF treatment or cosmetic surgery.

To enable an Employee to attend appointments, flexible working arrangements may be considered at the discretion of the Principal. Alternatively, unpaid leave or annual leave (in the case of employees contracted all year round) may be requested for such absence. An Employee should make the Principal aware of the need for any time off under this provision as soon as practicable.

Should the consequences of the treatment make the Employee unfit for work this would be regarded as sickness absence in which instances the usual absence reporting and certification procedures would apply.

In the case of treatment or procedure to correct or prevent sickness absence arising from a diagnosed medical condition – treatment will not usually be regarded as sickness absence and authorised absence will be granted. Following the treatment or procedure any time off which is necessary may be regarded as sickness absence and should be supported by a valid 'fit note'.

20. Absences Related to Drug & Alcohol Dependency

Absences related to a declared drug or alcohol dependency will be managed as an ill health issue in the first instance. Guidance may be sought from an Occupational Health Advisor and appropriate support and management action taken.

The Academy reserves the right to address instances of misconduct resulting from the use of alcohol or drugs under its disciplinary procedures.

21. Communicable Diseases

Should an Employee believe that they have come into contact with a disease that could present a risk to public health they should inform the Academy and not attend work if any symptoms are experienced.

The Employee should seek immediate advice from their GP and, if advised that their presence in the workplace presents a risk to themselves or others, remain off work until the GP advises it is appropriate for them to return.

Should their GP advise that the Employee remain off work, such an absence will be regarded as sickness absence.

Should there be an infectious disease in the workplace which may place certain Employees at particular risk

The Academy will discuss with those individuals how such risks can best be minimised. In certain circumstances this may include a temporary period of authorised paid absence.

22. Accidents at work or due to a Third Party

Employees should notify the Principal or other appropriate person of any accident or injury that occurs due to no fault of their own during the course of their work and follow the Academy's procedures for reporting and recording such incidents. All Employees will receive normal pay (maximum of 6 months) and will not be recorded as sickness absence.

Employees should notify the Academy of accidents / injuries where damages may be recoverable from a Third Party. An Employee who is absent from work as a result of an accident and receives damages in respect of loss of pay from a third-party claim will be required to refund to the Academy any normal pay, they have received in relation to absence from work as a result of an accident.

23. Absences arising from recreational activities outside the workplace

Employees should consult with the Principal about high-risk recreational activities that may result in absence from the workplace to determine whether their entitlement to sick pay may be affected.

24. Disclosure of formal sanctions in employment references

Should an Employee have an unexpired formal sanction on file relating to attendance – this will be disclosed, upon request, in any reference provided by the Employer to a prospective Employer.

25. Minuting Meetings and Record Keeping

All absences will be recorded. Notes may be taken of all discussions and formal / informal meetings held with an Employee to discuss attendance and ill health issues. Where notes are taken a copy will be made available to the Employee.

Minutes will be taken at Hearings and appeal meetings and shared with the Employee at the earliest opportunity. The Employee will have the opportunity to

check the minutes and comment on the accuracy of the minutes. Where there are discrepancies between the Employer and Employee that cannot be resolved both version of the minutes will be held on record.

Covert recordings of meetings or Hearings are expressly prohibited. Any recording of a meeting or a Hearing must be with the prior consent of all parties.

All records will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, which provides individuals with the right to request and have access to certain data.

26. Confidentiality and Data Protection

The Academy will respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's health and handle sensitive personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

27. Suspected non genuine absence

Where it is suspected that an absence is not genuine or that false sickness declarations have been made the Academy may, after appropriate investigation, address the matter through the Academy's disciplinary procedure.

28. Advice and Support to Employees

Employees are advised to seek support from their Trade Union Representative or Professional Association with regards to absence issues. Employees may address questions about this procedure to the Principal or other delegated staff member.

29. Policy Review Statement:

This policy will be reviewed to ensure it remains up-to-date, relevant, and aligned with the Trust's strategic objectives, regulatory requirements, and best practices. The review process will be conducted as follows:

- **Policy Owner Review**
The Policy Owner will conduct an initial review to assess any necessary updates or amendments.
- **Executive Team Policy Committee**
The revised policy will be presented to the Executive Team Policy Committee for further evaluation and recommendations.
- **Trust Board Approval**
Following review and necessary revisions, the policy will be submitted for formal approval by the Trust Board in accordance with the scheduled review cycle.

For details on the specific review schedule, please refer to the review table on the front page.

Appendix A: - Guidance for Hearings and Appeals

General

- Hearings and Appeals should take place at a reasonable time and place usually during the Employee's normal working hours and, in the case of Employees who work term time only, during the Academy term. These arrangements may be varied by mutual agreement
- Consideration should be given to the venue for the Hearing. There should be adequate rooms for the parties and arrangements to ensure that the Hearing is conducted with discretion and confidentiality maintained. A venue away from the Academy site may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

The precise procedure to be followed will vary depending on the particular circumstances of each case, but in general the following will apply:

Role of the Panel / Manager Hearing the Case

It is the role of the panel / manager hearing a case to consider the evidence presented and decide whether on the balance of probabilities:

- The case against the Employee has been established.
- Whether it is appropriate and reasonable to issue a formal warning or dismiss the employee.
- Seek further medical advice and reconvene
- Allow a further period of monitoring

Should an Employee appeal the outcome of the Hearing it is the role of the panel / manager considering the appeal to review the original decision on the basis of the grounds for appeal presented by the Employee and consider whether the original outcome was within a range of reasonable responses given the circumstances.

If the case is to be heard by a panel, a chair will be identified who will have responsibility for facilitating the Hearing.

The Role of the Representative

The Employee has the right to be accompanied to a Hearing or appeal meeting by either a workplace colleague or recognised trade union representative.

The representative may address the Hearing to put and sum up the Employee's case, respond on behalf of the Employee at the Hearing and confer with the Employee during the Hearing. The representative does not have the right to answer questions on the Employee's behalf, address the Hearing if the Employee does not wish it or prevent the Employer from explaining their case.

The Role of HR

HR will attend any Hearing or appeal meeting which may result in issuing of sanctions/ dismissal.

Witnesses

Witnesses may be called by either party. Details of the proposed witnesses should be communicated in advance no later than 5 working days before the date of the Hearing / appeal. The role of the witness is limited to giving evidence and responding to questions in relation to the employee's sickness. The Employee is responsible for ensuring that any witnesses they call can attend on the relevant date. In the event that a witness cannot attend they may make a written statement which should be provided to the Academy no later than 5 working days in advance of the Hearing / appeal.

All witnesses should be aware of the confidential nature of Hearings and should not discuss any aspect of the meeting or matters under consideration with anyone outside of the Hearing.

Procedure for Hearings

- The manager hearing the case / chair of the panel will introduce those present and their roles, explain the case to be considered, the procedure to be followed and the format of the hearing
- The Academy's representative presents their case including calling any witnesses and referring to written submissions / evidence. The Employee and their representative and panel may ask questions of the Academy's representative or any witnesses
- The Employee or their representative presents their case including calling any witnesses, referring to written submissions and presenting any mitigating circumstances. The Academy's representative and panel may ask questions of the Employee and their representative or any witnesses
- Adjournments may be requested by both parties or by the manager / panel during the Hearing
- Both parties have the opportunity to sum up their cases, with the Employee or their representative having the final word
- The Hearing will then be adjourned whilst the manager / panel deliberates over the evidence. If further clarity is required both parties or witnesses may be recalled and the Hearing reconvened so that all parties may hear any additional evidence
- The Hearing is reconvened immediately after deliberations have concluded and the outcome is communicated verbally to the Employee. This should also be confirmed in writing. On occasions, it may not be possible for the panel to reach a decision on the day of the Hearing in which case the outcome will be communicated in writing within 5 working days of the decision being made.

Procedure for Appeals

- The manager hearing the case / chair of the panel will introduce those present and their roles, explain the case to be considered, the procedure to be followed and the format of the Hearing
- The Employee or their representative shall put the case in support of the grounds for appeal, including any mitigating circumstances. This may include referring to written submissions and evidence. Witnesses may be recalled only where this is strictly relevant to the grounds of the appeal. The Academy's representative and panel may ask questions of the Employee and their representative
- The Academy's representative presents the case for upholding the previous committee's decision and refers to written documentation. Witnesses may be called only where this is strictly relevant to the grounds of appeal. The Employee and their representative and panel may ask questions of the Academy's representative. The panel will invite both parties to sum up their cases, with the Employee or his/her representative having the final word. The hearing will then be adjourned whilst the panel deliberates over the evidence
- Adjournments may be requested by both parties or by the panel
- During the appeal Hearing. If new evidence is presented the appeal may need to be adjourned while this is investigated
- The appeal Hearing will then be adjourned whilst the panel deliberates over the evidence. If further clarity is required both parties or witnesses may be recalled and the hearing reconvened so that all parties may hear any additional evidence
- The appeal Hearing is reconvened immediately after deliberations have concluded and the outcome is communicated verbally to the Employee. This should also be confirmed in writing. On occasion, it may not be possible for the panel to reach a decision on the day of the hearing in which case the appeal outcome will be communicated in writing within 5 working days of the decision being made.

Any other comments or issues raised, and any further action agreed:

Any changes/adjustments that need to be made in the workplace to accommodate the employee's illness or injury?

Signed (employee): Date:

Signed (Manager): Date:

Appendix C: Informal invite letter

INFORMAL SICKNESS MANAGEMENT INVITE LETTER

[date]

[name]

Dear employee,

Re: Absence management meeting - informal stage (para 12.1)

I am writing to you in connection with the level of sickness you have taken in the last 12 months. According to our records, you have taken:

Tuesday 1st July 2024 – 1 day

Monday 16th September 2024 – 1 day

Wednesday 18th September 2024 – 1 day

Thursday 19th – Monday 23rd September 2024 – 3 Days

Tuesday 1st October 2024 – 1 Day

Total of 7 days over 5 occasions.

Under the sickness procedures we are required to meet with you to discuss your sickness and what we can do help you improve your attendance. As you know, frequent sickness can adversely affect the service delivery to students, increases the management costs for cover, increases the workload on colleagues and can result in low staff morale within departments.

Therefore, it is very important that supportive discussions can be provided to all our employees who may be experiencing regular periods of sickness throughout the year.

I have arranged for a meeting to take place on **[date and time and location]**. I will be accompanied by **[name]** to take notes. At this meeting stage in the procedures, you may wish to be accompanied by a work companion only.

Should you need any clarification please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Principal/HR]

Appendix D: Formal invite letter

FORMAL SICKNESS MANAGEMENT INVITE LETTER

[date]

[name]

Dear employee,

Re: Absence management meeting - formal stage (para 12.6)

I am writing to you in connection with the level of sickness you have taken since we last met on [date]. This meeting is being conducted following a period of informal sickness management. Unfortunately, your sickness has not improved to the required standard.

Therefore, according to our records, you have taken a further 7 days. These are:

Tuesday 1st July 2024 – 1 day

Monday 16th September 2024 – 1 day

Wednesday 18th September 2024 – 1 day

Thursday 19th – Monday 23rd September 2024 – 3 Days

Tuesday 1st October 2024 – 1 Day

Total of 7 days over 5 occasions.

Under the sickness procedures we are required to meet with you to discuss your sickness and what we can do help you improve your attendance. As you know, frequent sickness can adversely affect the service delivery to students, increases the management costs for cover, increases the workload on colleagues and can result in low staff morale within departments.

Therefore, it is very important that supportive discussions can be provided to all our employees who may be experiencing regular periods of sickness throughout the year.

I have arranged for a meeting to take place on [date and time and location]. I will be accompanied by [name] to take notes. At this meeting stage in the procedures, you may wish to be accompanied by a work companion only or trade union representative.

Please note that frequent or long-term absences could result in matters being progressed to a panel of LAB Governors as per our managing absence and ill-health procedures.

Should you need any clarification please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Principal/HR]