



The
MAST
 Academy Trust

Policy	Colleagues Absence Policy (Including sickness absences and other absences)	
Owner	Executive Lead: Governance, People and Communications	
Date approved	12 th July 2023	
Approver	Staffing and Standards & Effectiveness	

Current version	V1.0
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Next review due	Summer 2026
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Objective of Policy

This policy aims to:

- Set out The Mast Academy Trust's approach to colleagues' sickness, including the procedures for reporting sickness and how we manage sickness absence fairly
- Support all parties in managing colleagues' sickness and absence effectively and consistently, to ensure a fair and transparent approach across the Mast Academy Trust that complies with our duties under the Equality Act 2010
- Set out our approach to requests for time off outside of annual leave or leave covered by other policies
- Help create and maintain a happy and healthy working culture in which colleagues are encouraged to look after their physical and mental wellbeing

This policy has been agreed following consultation with the unions listed on page 2 of this document.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it any time following consultation with the unions.

Version Control			
Version Number	Summary of amends from previous version		
1.0	Merge of staff attendance policy and leave of absence policy with adjustments throughout		
Sign off requirements			
Approvers		Position	
Education and People Committee		Trust Board	
Reviewers		Position	
Natasha Greenough		CEO The MAST	
Dorcas Atkinson		Trustee	
Unions consulted			
ASCL	GMB	NEU, (ATL)	NAHT
NASUWT	UNISON	UNITE	

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1.0 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of:

- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Employment Rights Act 1996](#)
- [Employment: Statutory Code of Practice](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Induction for Early Career Teachers \(England\)](#)
- [The Statutory Sick Pay \(General\) Regulations 1982](#)

It also reflects best-practice guidance set out in:

- [The Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(Acas\)'s guidance on holiday, sickness and leave](#)
- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) [incident reporting in schools](#)

Our colleagues have a contract that specifically incorporates conditions from:

- [School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document \(STPCD\)](#)
- [Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales](#) (the Burgundy Book)
- [The National Agreement on Pay and Conditions for Support Colleagues](#) (the Green Book)

These will continue to apply due to the [Transfer of Undertakings \(Protection of Employment\) \(TUPE\) Regulations 2006](#), which protect employees' terms and conditions when a maintained school becomes an academy, including any enhance terms.

As such, this policy complies with the STPCD, the Burgundy Book and the Green Book.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

2.0 Scope

2.1. Eligibility

This policy applies to all colleagues who are employed directly by The Mast Academy Trust
Self-employed workers, volunteers and agency workers are not covered by this policy.

2.2. Exceptions

This policy does not apply to colleagues who are:

Taking maternity, paternity, shared parental and/or adoption leave – please see our family leave policy, available here [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#)

Taking leave for dependents – please see our family leave policy, available here [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#)

3.0 Data protection

All discussions and sensitive medical and personal information about colleagues' sickness and other absence will be treated confidentially by all parties concerned. This data will be collected, used and stored in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. Please refer to our privacy notice for colleagues for more detail on how data will be processed – [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#)

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

4.1. Headteacher and CEO

The headteacher and CEO is responsible for making sure that:

- This sickness and absence policy is applied consistently across our schools and Trust and that it is in line with equality legislation
- All colleagues are aware of this policy and their responsibilities
- Considering all valid requests for time off equally, fairly, and according to the needs of the school and pupils
- Supporting colleagues and managing ill-health matters confidentially and sensitively, and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018
- Monitoring colleagues' absence and following the procedures on managing colleagues' absence if 'trigger points' are surpassed (see sections 16 and 17 for more)
- Ensuring the inputting of absence is delegated to suitability graded colleague and liaising with said colleague promptly if a colleague's pay needs to be adjusted as a result of their absence
- Promoting positive working arrangements, including monitoring workload and maintaining effective communication with colleagues
- Giving due regard to equality legislation and taking any disability requirements into consideration

4.2. Line managers

Line managers have day-to-day responsibility for this policy. If colleagues have questions about this policy, they should refer to their line manager in the first instance.

Line managers are responsible for:

- Supporting colleagues and managing ill-health matters confidentially and sensitively, and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018
- Promoting positive working arrangements, including monitoring workload and maintaining effective communication with colleagues
- Giving due regard to equality legislation and taking any disability requirements into consideration

4.3. HR function

The HR function is responsible for making sure that:

- This sickness and absence policy is applied consistently across our schools and Trust and that it is in line with equality legislation
- Supporting colleagues and managing ill-health matters confidentially and sensitively, and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Data Protection Policy. [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#)
- Provide accurate documentation and supporting leaders in monitoring colleagues' absence and following the procedures on managing colleagues' absence if 'trigger points' are surpassed (see sections 16 and 17 for more)
- Promoting positive working arrangements, including monitoring workload and maintaining effective communication with colleagues
- Giving due regard to equality legislation and taking any disability requirements into consideration

- In relation to any Occupation Health referral, a colleague's consent is obtained prior to commencement of any referral to a medical practitioner.

4.4. Education and People Committee (Trust Board)

The Board of Trustees has delegated the approval of this policy to Education and People Committee.

The committee will approve this policy and hold the CEO to account for its implementation.

Members of the Board of Trustees are responsible for hearing dismissal panels and any appeals (see section 18 and section 20).

4.5. Other colleagues

Colleagues are expected to:

- Follow the procedures set out in this policy
- Adhere to the stated time scales when responding to or appealing the school's and/or Trust's requests or decisions. In exceptional circumstances timescales may differ and will be agreed by all parties.

Sickness Absence

5.0 Procedure for reporting sickness absence

We encourage colleagues to keep an open dialogue with their line manager regarding their health to help us:

- Identify absence problems early on
- Support colleagues wherever possible, including with rehabilitation and return to work

If a colleague is taken ill or injured while at work, they should report or be taken to their line manager to be given permission to leave work, if appropriate. Line managers should make arrangements for anyone who is unwell to be accompanied home or to receive medical treatment where necessary.

If a colleague is unable to attend work because of illness or injury, they should:

- Follow the absence reporting process relevant to their location of work no later than 1 hour before the start of their working day. If they are not able to follow their absence reporting processes, they should:
 - Contact the location office, and
 - Send an email to their line manager, letting them know about their illness or injury and confirming how they can contact the colleague
- Explain the nature of their illness or injury and provide an estimate of when they are able to return to work
- Agree with their line manager how and when to keep in touch (see more in section 6.2 below) and confirm contact details
- Advise on any urgent or outstanding work-related matters that need attention

If the headteacher, or a member of the Senior Collaborative team, is unable to attend work because of illness or injury, they should:

- Contact the CEO and send an email to hr@themast.co.uk, letting them know about their illness or injury and confirming how they can contact the colleague

For absences of more than 7 calendar days, colleagues must obtain a "statement of fitness for work" stating that they are not fit for work and the reason(s) why. A copy should be forwarded to

their line manager as soon as possible. If absence continues, the colleague must obtain further medical certificates to cover the whole period of their absence.

If the statement or medical certificate says that the colleague “may be fit for work”, the individual should inform their line manager immediately. We will discuss any potential measures needed to facilitate the colleague’s return to work, taking into account the healthcare professional’s advice. If appropriate measures cannot be taken this will be explained to the colleague, they will remain on sick leave and we will agree a date to review the situation.

5.1. Unauthorised absence

If a colleague does not report for work and we receive no contact from them or someone on their behalf (in accordance with section 5), their line manager will contact them as soon as possible to:

- Make sure they are safe
- Give them an opportunity to explain their absence

Colleagues should not treat this as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

Where colleagues remain absent without leave and/or there are grounds to believe that they are acting dishonestly or failing to follow the procedures above, subject to investigation, we may treat this as an unauthorised absence without pay.

If there are concerns for the safety/well-being of the colleague, we may make contact with the colleague’s registered emergency contact to notify them that the person has not attended work.

We may deal with cases of unauthorised absence under our disciplinary procedures – see our colleagues’ disciplinary procedures for more detail – [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#)

5.2. Maintaining contact with line managers during sick leave

If colleagues are absent on sick leave, their line manager may contact them from time to time to discuss:

- Their wellbeing and expected length of continued absence from work
- Any of their work that requires attention

The purpose of such contact is to reassure the colleague, and line managers will keep it to a reasonable minimum.

If colleagues have 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 their line manager within the normal school day.

6.0 Sick leave and pay

For pay entitlements during phased return to work, see section 7.2 below.

6.1. Statutory sick pay and occupational sick pay

Colleagues are entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP) and occupational sick pay (OSP) where eligible.

OSP:

The Mast Academy Trust adhere to the [Burgundy Book](#) (which outlines conditions of service for teachers) and the [Green Book](#) (for support staff) for occupational sick pay.

SSP:

- Is calculated on a weekly rate and starts on the 4th day of absence, with the first 3 days being unpaid
- May be payable for up to 28 weeks

Qualifying days for SSP are Monday to Friday, or as set out in colleagues’ employment contracts. Read more about eligibility and payment rates at <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>.

6.2. Pension contributions during sickness absence

Both the employer and the colleague will continue to contribute to the colleague's pension scheme during any SSP or occupational sick pay, if the scheme's rules allow this.

6.3. Sickness absence caused by a third party

If a colleague's absence is, or may be, caused by another party who is, or may be, legally liable to pay damages (for example, if the colleague is injured in an accident caused by another person or company), the colleague must immediately give their line manager details of this and of any legal claim they are pursuing.

If the Mast Academy Trust asks them to, the colleague must take part in any legal proceedings to recover damages. They must also, if asked, give the Mast Academy Trust, the part of any damages or compensation payment that relates to lost earnings. The amount will be all the following:

- Reasonably determined by the Mast Academy Trust
- Minus any costs the colleague has incurred to get the damages or compensation payment
- Capped at the amount the Mast Academy Trust paid the colleague over the period of absence

7.0 Returning to work

7.1. Return-to-work form

When a colleague returns to work after sickness absence, their line manager will provide a return to work form for completion. Within this form colleague's can indicate if they need any support on return to work.

7.2. Return-to-work meeting

When a colleague's sickness absence has been longer the 5 days, or it is deemed appropriate by the line manager, or the colleague, the line manager will arrange a return-to-work meeting to:

- Discuss the colleague's absence, making sure they've recovered and establishing whether there are any continuing underlying issues
- Talk about any support that the colleague's needs
- Allow the colleague to raise concerns
- Update the colleague on any work matters
- Complete a return-to-work electronic form relevant to location
- If relevant, review their sickness absence record for the past year and make them aware if they are approaching a trigger point

7.3. Phased return to work

Medical professionals or the occupational health service may recommend that a colleague returning to work from sickness absence should:

- Work reduced hours
- Have lighter duties or different duties

This will be followed by a gradual increase of working hours and/or duties over a period of 2 weeks, depending on individual circumstances, and may be additionally extended by 2 weeks.

We will consider recommendations by a medical practitioner on:

- Further extending the phased return to work
- The need to permanently change the colleague's duties

Colleagues will continue to be paid their normal salary and any contractual benefits during the period of phased return to work.

8.0 Disability-related absence

We have an obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for colleagues with a protected characteristic (such as disability, pregnancy and gender reassignment) where the reasonable adjustment would remove or reduce a disadvantage the member of colleagues faces. In discussion with the colleague, the Mast Academy Trust will consider all reasonable adjustments and provide these where possible.

Colleagues who believe they have a disability or medical condition that affects their ability to do their work should inform their line manager, so that the Mast Academy Trust is able to consider appropriate reasonable adjustments and support.

Where colleagues need time off work to attend medical appointments related to their disability or medical condition that affects their work (e.g. treatment, rehabilitation and/or check-ups), the Mast Academy Trust will normally allow paid time off for 10 appointments a year (pro rata for part-time colleagues) as a reasonable adjustment. This is not guaranteed and, as such, colleagues should speak to their line manager about their needs.

9.0 Pregnancy-related absence

A pregnant colleague may need to take time off to attend medical appointments and/or due to pregnancy-related illness, and the Mast Academy Trust will support this. We will not count pregnancy-related sickness absence when reviewing colleague's attendance record.

However, if the Mast Academy Trust has concerns about the reasons or lengths of absence, it reserves the right to formally investigate the nature and cause of the absence. The Trust will be mindful of the impact this may have on the colleague and ensure the investigation is not discriminatory.

For information on parental leave entitlements, please see our family leave policy [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#).

10.0 Absence related to gender reassignment

Colleagues who are due to undergo, or are in the process of undergoing, gender reassignment should discuss with their line manager their needs for time off. The Mast Academy Trust may accommodate those needs as far as these are reasonable. The colleague may wish to access the health and wellbeing service provided by the Trust.

11.0 Medical and dental appointments

Where possible, colleagues should book routine medical and dental appointments outside of working hours. If this is not possible (e.g. for hospital or specialist appointments) colleagues should:

- Where possible, book appointments for early in the morning, lunch time or end of the day so it causes minimal disruption to the working day.
- Request leave through EduPay where the allocated approver will review and advise if this will be paid or unpaid. Colleagues may need to provide proof of the appointment

Refer to appendix A for details of paid/unpaid time off for appointments.

12.0 Elective surgery

If a colleague is undergoing elective surgery, they should discuss their need for time off and recovery with their line manager who may:

- Authorise it as sickness absence if the surgery is medically necessary. The colleague is expected to provide evidence to support this. In this case, the colleague may be entitled to SSP

- Grant or refuse the absence as special leave. If the absence is granted, it is normally unpaid unless:
 - Colleagues arrange the surgery and recovery time to occur outside term time
 - It is possible for colleagues to use annual leave for the period of absence
- View the time off as sickness absence where not doing so may be in breach of the Equality Act 2010, such as gender reassignment (see section 10 above). The line manager may seek further HR advice on how to proceed

13.0 Fertility treatment and IVF

Colleagues are encouraged to reach out to their line manager to enable the Mast Academy Trust to support the colleague where possible. These conversations will be strictly confidential.

Appointments for fertility treatment and IVF will be treated as any other medical appointment (see section 11). However, where possible, the Mast Academy Trust will endeavour to make reasonable time-off arrangements.

If a colleague becomes unfit for work because of fertility treatment, they should follow the normal procedures for reporting sickness in section 5.

14.0 Stress-related absence

The Mast Academy Trust will support and discuss options with any colleagues who need time off because they are experiencing significant stress at work or in their personal lives.

Colleagues should speak to line manager who may:

- Authorise the colleague's time off
- Arrange external support, such as counselling or occupational health services
- Suggest completing a risk assessment and following through with any actions identified
- Reassess the colleague's workload and decide what tasks to prioritise

At all times, the confidentiality and dignity of colleagues will be maintained.

Refer to our colleague wellbeing policy for more information [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#)

15.0 Work-related injuries or illness

Colleagues should report work-related injuries or illnesses to the senior administration colleague as soon as possible. The senior administration colleague will report all relevant injuries and illnesses (as defined in the RIDDOR 2013 legislation) to the Executive Lead for Operations, Business and Efficiency. Read more about this reporting duty in our Health and Safety Policy [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#) and the burgundy book or green book.

16.0 Procedure for managing short-term sickness absence

16.1 Triggers

A review point is triggered if, during a 12-month rolling period, a colleague is absent with a sickness Bradford Factor score of 50 (refer to appendix D for information on Bradford Factor scoring).

Patterns of absence will also be monitored and considered as part of the absence management period.

Each employee's circumstances will be considered, and appropriate adjustments made to the use of absence triggers where this is appropriate to avoid any less favourable or unfavourable treatment.

16.2. Formal review

There are 3 formal review meetings: the first formal review meeting, the second formal review meeting, and the final attendance review meeting:

- Stage 1 formal Sickness Absence Meeting with an agreed review point
- Stage 1 formal Sickness Absence Meeting review
- Stage 2 formal Sickness Absence Meeting with an agreed review point (This may follow on from the stage 1 review meeting)
- Stage 2 formal Sickness Absence Meeting Review
- Stage 3 formal final Sickness Absence Meeting

If the colleague's absence levels do not improve to an acceptable level after the final attendance review meeting, the headteacher or another senior colleague will convene an ill-health capability hearing, with a panel, to fully review the case (see section 18).

Each formal review meeting will usually take place 6 school weeks after the previous one, depending on circumstances. The line manager will inform the colleague of each meeting, in writing, 5 working days in advance. The colleague has a right to be accompanied to any formal meeting under this procedure by a trade union representative or colleague (see more in section 19), a delay to the meeting may be requested by up to a further 5 school days (to a maximum of 10 working days) if a union representative is not available.

Where the colleague's attendance improves to an acceptable level during the formal review process, the line manager/headteacher will hold a review meeting to confirm this. They will also agree on any further monitoring meetings, which the line manager/headteacher will confirm to the colleague in writing.

Where the colleague's attendance improves to an acceptable level and for a sustained period of time, formal monitoring will cease. However, if the colleague's absence levels increase again within a year, the formal reviews procedure will be triggered again from the point of last absence review.

16.2.1. During formal review meeting(s)

At the meeting, the colleague and a line manager will discuss:

- The colleague's absence levels, the reasons for it, and whether further absences are likely going forward.
- Any medical advice received including the outcome of any Occupational Health Referral.
- Any work-related issues that may be affecting the colleague's attendance and whether any temporary changes to the job could help improve their attendance.
- If the colleague has underlying health problems, any reasonable adjustments that could be made.
- How the colleague's absence is affecting pupils, colleagues, and the school.
- Any other ways the Mast Academy Trust can support the colleague. This may involve an action plan that includes obtaining further medical advice, or outlining what adjustments or adaptations will be made for the colleague either temporarily or longer term.

16.2.2. Possible outcomes

At the end of each formal review meeting, the line manager (or headteacher or another senior member of colleagues if this is a final attendance review meeting) may decide to:

- Agree the issue has been resolved and take no further action.
- Continue to monitor and review the colleague's attendance.

- **For the first formal review meeting only:** issue a formal attendance notification, which will normally remain on record for 6 to 12 months depending on the circumstances (such as the nature and prognosis of the illness and impact of the treatment). The notification will:
 - Explain the Mast Academy Trust's expectations on attendance going forward and what the review period for this will be.
 - Warn the colleague of the potential consequences of not meeting the required standards, including another formal attendance notification and the risk of dismissal.
- **For the second formal review meeting only:** issue a final attendance notification, which will reiterate the Mast Academy Trust's expectations on attendance going forward, the review period for this, and warn the colleague of the potential consequences of not meeting the required standards, including the risk of dismissal.
- **For the third, final attendance review meeting only:** recommend dismissal and arrange a formal hearing for a panel to examine the case. See section 18 below.

After each review meeting, the line manager will summarise the outcome in writing, including the colleague's right to appeal within 10 school days if the line manager has issued a formal attendance notification or final attendance notification.

17.0 Procedure for managing long-term sickness absence

The Mast Academy Trust is committed to dealing fairly and sympathetically with colleagues who are absent from work for long periods because of ill health.

We define long-term sickness absence as absence lasting for 4 weeks or more. At this point, we will refer the colleague to the occupational health service so that we can obtain medical advice.

17.1. Formal review

There are 3 formal review meetings: the first formal review meeting, the second formal review meeting, and the final formal review meeting. If the colleague's absence levels do not improve to an acceptable level after the final formal review meeting, the headteacher or another senior colleague will convene an ill-health capability hearing, with a panel, to fully review the case (see section 18).

Each formal review meeting will usually take place 6 school weeks after the previous one, depending on circumstances. The line manager will inform the colleague of each meeting, in writing, 5 working days in advance. The colleague has a right to be accompanied to any formal meeting under this procedure by a trade union representative or colleague (see more in section 19), a delay to the meeting may be requested by up to a further 5 school days (to a maximum of 10 working days) if a union representative is not available.

Where the colleague recovers and returns to work during the formal reviews process, the line manager/headteacher will decide, in consultation with the colleague and their representative (as appropriate), whether to hold further review meetings.

17.1.1. Possible outcomes of formal review

At the end of each formal review meeting, the line manager, in consultation with the occupational health service (if relevant) may decide to:

- Agree the issue has been resolved and take no further action
- Agree a return-to-work plan with the colleague
- Extend the period of monitoring and review
- Begin a phased return to work
- Seek further medical advice

➤ **For the first and/or second formal review meetings only:** issue a formal attendance notification. This will warn the colleague that they may be dismissed on the grounds of ill health if it's unlikely they can return to work over a reasonable timescale (individual circumstances will be

taken into account but this is expected to be within 6 months of the previous formal review meeting).

➤ **For the final formal review meeting only:**

- Explore if the colleague is eligible for ill-health retirement
- Consider whether the colleague can do other suitable work in school
- Issue a final attendance notification on the grounds of ill health if the colleague cannot return to work at this point or within a reasonable timescale
- If medical professionals advise that the colleague is unlikely to return to work in a reasonable timeframe, usually 3 months, the line manager or headteacher will convene a formal review hearing, where the facts of the case will be examined (see section 18).

After each formal review meeting, the line manager will summarise the outcome in writing, including the colleague's right to appeal, within 10 school days if the line manager has issued a formal attendance notification or final attendance notification.

18.0 Ill-health capability review hearing (for short and long-term absences)

The headteacher or another senior member of colleagues will convene a panel to fully review the case if all other options have been explored and:

- A colleague's short-term absences have not improved sufficiently
- The long-term absence of a colleague continues due to the nature of the illness

The headteacher will inform the colleague of the meeting, in writing, 5 working days in advance, including that:

- The colleague has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative (a delay to the meeting may be requested by up to a further 5 school days (to a maximum of 10 working days) if a union representative is not available)
- If the colleague is not well enough to attend, they can send a representative instead and/or submit a written statement
- The headteacher or line manager will present a recommendation to the panel
- A possible outcome of the meeting could be dismissal

18.1. Convening the panel

The panel will usually consist of:

- Three trustees from the Board of Trustees

The headteacher/senior leader will also invite the following people to the meeting:

- An HR adviser

During the meeting, the headteacher/senior leader and panel will review:

- The record and pattern of absence, and how likely it is to improve
- What support the colleague has received and whether all appropriate options have been properly explored
- Whether the colleague has an underlying illness, disability, or any other issues raised by the occupational health service
- The impact of the absence on colleagues, pupils and the school
- The colleague's attitude towards recognising and addressing the impact of their absence
- The needs of the school and best interests of the colleague

The colleague will also have the opportunity to present evidence and explain their level of absence and what actions they are taking to reduce it to an acceptable level.

18.2. Deciding on appropriate action

The meeting will be adjourned and the panel will reflect on it before coming to a decision.

The panel may decide to:

- Keep the colleague's absence under review for a defined period of time
- Agree a return-to-work plan
- Dismiss the colleague
 - The Board of Trustees will dismiss the colleague with notice
- Decide whether the employee can retire on the grounds of ill health (where appropriate)

The chair of the panel will communicate the decision to the colleague in writing within 5 school days. The decision will also inform the colleague that they can appeal if they are not satisfied with the outcome and explain how to do this.

19.0 Right to be accompanied to formal meetings

The colleague has a right to be accompanied to any formal meeting under this procedure by a trade union representative or colleague. Their details must be provided to the senior manager conducting the meeting in good time before any meeting.

We may at our discretion permit other companions (for example, a family member) where this will help overcome particular difficulties caused by a disability, or difficulty understanding English.

A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up the colleague's position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on their behalf. The colleague may confer privately with their companion at any time during a meeting.

20.0 Appeals

If the colleague is not satisfied with the outcome of a review, they have the right to appeal the decision of the senior manager, headteacher or panel.

The colleague should set out their grounds of appeal in writing within 10 school days and submit this to the HR at hr@themast.co.uk.

An appeal is not designed to re-hear the matter but to examine the grounds of appeal. The colleague should therefore be specific about the grounds of the appeal.

However, a full re-hearing may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances.

The headteacher will appoint an appeal panel consisting of 3 people. This will be a group of trustees independent from any previous stage of the procedure, and the panel will be chaired by an independent individual.

Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay and in any event within 10 school days of the date of the appeal notice. The headteacher/senior leader will tell the colleague the time and place of the appeal meeting in advance.

Colleagues have the same statutory right to be accompanied to the appeal meeting by a colleague or trade union representative.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed in writing by the chair of the appeal panel to the colleague within 5 school days of the appeal. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

Leave of Absence

21.0 Other instances of absence (bereavement and compassionate leave, ECT induction, jury service and trade union duties)

The Mast Academy Trust recognises that it is not possible to cover all circumstances where it is reasonable to grant leave (refer to appendix A for further detail). If there is a specific or exceptional situation not covered by this policy, colleagues should discuss their need for time off with their line manager.

Paid and unpaid leave of absence must be requested at least 1 week in advance of the required date via EduPay. In urgent circumstances where leave is required in less than 1 week the colleague must speak to the headteacher/senior leader, prior to requesting the leave on EduPay, for approval.

21.1. Bereavement

We encourage colleagues experiencing bereavement to reach out to their manager so they can discuss:

- Whether and when the colleague will take compassionate leave. We will be guided by the wishes of the colleague on this
- How the Mast Academy Trust can support the colleague during this difficult time

21.2. Compassionate leave in the case of bereavement

Colleagues can take up to:

- Up to 5 days of compassionate leave for immediate family (parent, guardian, child, unborn child (this doesn't correlate to the maternity policy), sibling, partner), plus
- 1 day for attending a funeral

Depending on circumstances, colleagues may be able to extend this period of leave or take compassionate leave for situations outside of their immediate family. Refer to Appendix A for more information.

21.3. Statutory parental bereavement leave and pay

Beyond compassionate leave and when a colleague sadly suffers the loss of a child, a colleague may be eligible for statutory parental bereavement leave and pay in cases where:

- A child (under the age of 18) dies
- A child is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
- There's an abortion after 24 weeks of pregnancy

Read the government's [guidance on statutory parental bereavement and pay](#) to find out more.

21.4. Early career teachers (ECTs) serving induction

Where an ECT has been absent for 30 days or more (or equivalent for part-time ECTs), per year of their induction, their induction period will be extended by the aggregate total number of days absent. If the ECT is unable to serve the extension in our trust, they will need to complete 1 or more terms in a new school or institution.

This does not apply to ECTs taking statutory maternity, paternity, shared parental, adoption or parental bereavement leave. Refer to the Family Leave Policy for more information. [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#)

21.5. Jury service and magistrate duty

If a colleague is summoned for jury service, they should speak to their line manager as soon as possible to allow time to arrange cover. Refer to appendix A for more information.

If a colleague is a magistrate, the Mast Academy Trust will grant the employee reasonable time off for their duties.

21.6. Trade union duties

Colleagues who represent a trade union that is recognised by the Mast Academy Trust are entitled to paid time off to complete training and union duties, such as:

- Negotiating pay, terms and conditions
- Helping union members with disciplinary or grievance procedures, including meetings to hear their cases

22.0 Annual Leave (contracted 52 weeks colleagues only)

For colleagues who are contracted 52 weeks a year they are entitled to request annual leave as outlined in their contract. Colleague must request annual leave through EduPay. It is strongly recommended that the colleague waits for approval prior to booking any holiday.

Annual leave should be taken throughout the academic year, and only in exceptional circumstances can annual leave be carried over to the next academic year.

22.1. Mandatory annual leave requirements

During the academic year our sites will be closed and colleagues will be required to take annual leave during:

- 2 weeks Christmas break (accounting for 10 days of annual leave including 3 bank holidays)
- The first week of the Easter break (accounting for 5 days of annual leave – this may include 1 bank holiday)

In exceptional circumstances the sites may be required to open during these periods to complete emergency repairs – this will be discussed and agreed with appropriate colleagues on a case-by-case basis.

In, colleagues are limited to a maximum of 2 weeks annual leave in the summer break.

23.0 Time off in Lieu

In cases of unpaid leave, colleagues may wish to discuss with their headteacher/senior manager that this be taken as time of in lieu.

If approved the hours must be worked back by the end of the same academic year that the leave was taken in.

24. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Appraisal policy
- Staff capability policy
- Data protection policy
- Family and parental leave policy
- Flexible working policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy notice for colleagues
- Staff code of conduct
- Disciplinary policy
- Staff wellbeing policy

Appendix A: Paid or unpaid absence types

The definitions of relations used in this Policy are:

- a. **Immediate family** – father, mother, guardian, brother, sister, grandparent, spouse, partner, child or grandchild (including half- and step-).
- b. **Other than immediate family** – aunt, uncle, cousin, mother/father-in-law, brother/sister-in-law, friend.
- c. **Close friend**
- d. **Connected close friend** – friend’s partner, father, mother, guardian, brother, sister, grandparent, spouse, child or grandchild (including half- and step-).

These definitions are not exhaustive and are for guidance only.

Where colleagues are contracted 52 weeks a year without salary absence can be requested as annual leave.

Reason for absence	Period of time in any one academic year (1/9 to 31/8)	Comments
Hospital/doctor’s appointment, or similar, where arrangement are beyond control of staff member for self or dependents	Minimum necessary up to a max of 1 day on each occasion. (Evidence to be supplied by staff member)	With salary
Doctor/Dentist appointments should be made outside normal school hours except in an emergency		With salary
Moving house	1 day (within a three year timeframe)	With salary
Emergency childcare arrangements	Min necessary up to a max of 1 day on each occasion and no more than 3 occasions in a year	With salary
	More than 3 occasions or for longer than 1 day at the discretion of the Headteacher	Without salary
	More than 5 days per year at the discretion of the headteacher	Without salary
Veterinary appointments should be made outside school hours except in an emergency		Without salary and only in an emergency situation

Interview for another post	Min necessary to be able to attend up to 2 days per interview	With salary
Visit to new school after appointment	1 day	With salary
Term-time events (e.g. other school sports day)	Min required where attendance does not impact on pupil learning	Without salary if flexible working arrangements are not possible.
Leave of absence for own wedding or civil partnership	Will only be granted in exceptional circumstances	
Wedding or Civil Partnership	If that of immediate family member, 1 day on the day of the wedding	With salary
	If attending as bridesmaid/best man/witness or close friend, 1 day on day of wedding	Without salary
Significant award to self or member of immediate family (Graduation etc.)	1 day	With salary
Visits to other school with immediate family (University open days etc.)	Min necessary up to a max of 3 days	Without salary
Sitting an examination	Min period required to attend exam	With salary
Studying for exam related to school role	½ day per paper on days immediately prior to exam	With salary
Chief Examiners/ Chief Moderators	Max 10 days (They will be paid for this work – should it be with salary in this case?)	With salary
Examiners/Assistant Moderators	Max 5 days for training only	With salary
	More than 5 days or for activity not related to training, at the discretion of the Headteacher	Without pay
Death and funeral of immediate family	Min necessary up to a max of 5 days for each bereavement	With salary
Death of a relative or close friend	1 day for each bereavement	With salary

Funeral of relative or close friend	1 day for each bereavement	With salary
Funeral of a connected close friend	Up to 1 day for each bereavement	Without salary
Attendance at religious ceremony/observance	As appropriate, in discussion with the line manager	
Jury service/Witness in court	As required	With salary, less any compensation paid
Representation at national level in significant sporting/ cultural events	As appropriate, in discussion with the line manager	
Attendance at annual camp as member of Territorial Army etc.	10 days	With salary
Disability related absence Need some clarification on this	10 days	With salary
Maternity/Paternity absence	As outlined in the family policy	
Other reasons not specified above	As appropriate, in discussion with the line manager	With or without salary

Appendix B: Return-to-work action plan

RETURN-TO-WORK ACTION PLAN			
Agreed action(s) from interview form:	What does good look like?	Date of checkpoints:	Name of line manager who will check in on colleague :

Appendix C: timetable for phased return to work

PHASED RETURN TO WORK TIMETABLE							
Date week commencing (w/c):	Total days worked in a week:	Number of hours worked in a week:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
e.g. 22/3	1	3-5	1-3		10-12		
e.g. 29/3	2	5-8	12-3	9-12			12-2

Appendix D – The Bradford Factor formula used in managing short-term sickness absence.

What is the Bradford Factor?

The Bradford Factor is a formula commonly to measure employee absence. It's a number that represents how many sickness absences an employee has taken during the last working year.

Generally, the rule is that the number increases with each bout of absence. The Bradford Factor helps to measure the potential impact sickness absence could have on the overall running of our organisation. The bigger the score, the bigger the impact.

How is The Bradford Factor calculated?

Increased emphasis is applied to the instances as it is the instances more than the number of days which cause disruption and impact in an organisation.

S = the number of instances of sickness absence

D = the total number of sickness days absent in a 52-week period

$S^2 \times D = \text{Bradford Factor}$

Examples of Bradford Factor calculations

As you may have noticed from the formula, a colleague who takes frequent, short spells of sickness will equal a higher Bradford Factor than a colleague who has less bouts of sickness but tends to take more days off each time.

A higher Bradford Factor scores suggest a colleague's absence rate is having a more negative impact on the organisation.

For example:

If a colleague is absent **once** in 52 weeks for **ten** days, their Bradford factor score is:

$$(1 \times 1) \times 10 = 10$$

If a colleague is absent **twice** in 52 weeks for **five** days at a time, their Bradford factor score is:

$$(2 \times 2) \times 10 = 40$$

And if a colleague is absent **10 times** in 52 weeks for **one** day at a time, their Bradford factor score is:

$$(10 \times 10) \times 10 = 1,000$$

In these three scenarios, the employee has been absent from work for the same length of time, but the shorter, more frequent absences generate a higher Bradford factor score.

Further considerations

The Mast Academy Trust ensures safeguards in place to protect employees with medical conditions – such as cancer – that may cause irregular absence patterns because of hospital appointments. The Trust also make sure that their absence policies (including their use of Bradford factor scores) do not discriminate against employees with disabilities. Colleagues are legally entitled to time off to care for dependents, so these unplanned absences should not be included in Bradford factor calculations – for further detail refer to the family and parental leave policy. [Policies | The Mast Multi Academy Trust](#).

Each employee's circumstances will be considered, and appropriate adjustments made to the use of absence triggers where this is appropriate to avoid any less favourable or unfavourable treatment.

Appendix E: Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy being assessed	Sickness and Absence Policy
Summary of aims and objectives of the policy	See page 1
What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	This will be discussed at the TU meeting and Education and People committee.
Who is affected by the policy?	All colleagues.
What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy?	On an annual basis.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Neutral impact	The policy is inclusive for all colleagues.	
Gender reassignment	Neutral impact	The policy is inclusive for all colleagues.	
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral impact	The policy is inclusive for all colleagues.	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral impact	The policy is inclusive for all colleagues.	
Race	Neutral impact	The policy is inclusive for all colleagues.	
Religion or belief	Neutral impact	The policy is inclusive for all colleagues.	

Sexual orientation	Neutral impact	The policy is inclusive for all colleagues.	
Sex (gender)	Neutral impact	The policy is inclusive for all colleagues.	
Age	Neutral impact	The policy is inclusive for all colleagues.	

Evaluation

Question	Explanation / justification
Is it possible the proposed policy or change in policy could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	No; the changes made during this policy update encourage an inclusive culture across all colleagues working at The Mast Trust.

Final decision

Please indicate the final decision using the options below	1
What is the explanation for this?	

There are four options open to you:

1. No barriers or impact identified, therefore policy will **proceed**.
2. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the evidence shows bias towards one or more groups
3. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias, or
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in **extreme cases** or where **positive action** is taken). Therefore you are going to **proceed with caution** with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.

Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required	Yes
Date completed:	2 nd May 2023
Review date (if applicable):	In line with policy review