



HET Absence Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 “Hamwic Education Trust (HET) believe that all pupils should receive a high quality, enriching, learning experience in a safe and inclusive environment, which promotes excellence through a broad curriculum that prepares them for their future and opens doors to a diverse array of opportunities as well as that all pupils and adults within HET flourish as individuals and together.” This policy sets out our procedures for reporting sickness absence and for the management of sickness absence in a fair and consistent way for all employees at HET.
- 1.2 Sickness absence can vary from short intermittent periods of ill-health to a continuous period of long-term absence and have a number of different causes both physical and mental (for example, injuries, recurring conditions, or a serious illness requiring lengthy treatment).
- 1.3 HET wish to ensure that the reasons for sickness absence are understood in each case and investigated where necessary. In addition, where needed and reasonably practicable, measures will be taken to assist those who have been absent by reason of sickness to return to work.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time. HET may also vary the procedures set out in this policy, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.
- 1.5 As part of the application of this policy, HET will collect, process and store personal data and special categories of data in accordance with our data protection policy. HET will comply with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in relation to how we collect, hold and share special category personal data. Records will be kept in accordance with our Workforce Privacy Notice and Retention Schedule and in line with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy is for all employees working within a HET school or establishment (which for ease of reference are referred to throughout this document as ‘schools’) or the HET Managed Service (MS) Team.
- 2.2 It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or work experience students.
- 2.3 This policy has been consulted on with trade unions and covers all employees at all levels and grades.

- 2.4 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that employees remain or return to work in a timely manner and understand the expectations of HET in terms of attendance at work. In applying this policy, we aim to ensure that attendance is managed appropriately and consistently and that employees receive relevant support.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- 'HET' refers to Hamwic Education Trust.
- 'HR' in this policy, means Hamwic Education Trust HR.
- 'Local Governing Committee' in this policy, where reference is made to the Governing Committee, this means the Local Governing Committee of the school, or HET in the case of a school where no Local Governing Committee is present. Where a Governing Committee is not present in a school, or numbers are low, Governors from other schools/partnerships may be used. For HET MS Team, the Governing Committee is the HET Board.
- 'Manager' in this policy, is anyone as identified in the staffing structure with line management responsibilities. Training is provided for all managers.
- 'Representative' in this policy means a representative of a professional association or trade union who is accredited to accompany a member when the member is subject to formal policies where they are entitled to be represented. Employees may also be accompanied by an appropriate work colleague.

4. Absence definitions

- 4.1 Short-term sickness absence - any absence that lasts between half and 28 calendar days.
- 4.2 Long term sickness absence - any absence that lasts for a continuous period of longer than 28 calendar days.
- 4.3 The trigger points reviewed by HET are:
- After 5 absences (occurrences) or 10 days absence in any 12-month period;
 - Unacceptable patterns of absence, for example, regular Friday/Monday absence or any day immediately following a bank holiday.

A trigger point is a level of absence at which a review may be required, pro-rata for part time employees. It should be noted prior to any absence management process commencing, the employee's absence will be discussed with HR and possible referral to Occupational Health and consideration will be given to ascertain if the trigger points should be amended to allow for reasonable adjustment. This will usually be when an employee has a long-term condition or disability.

5. Disabilities

- 5.1 HET are aware that sickness absence may result from a disability, which is recognised under the Equality Act 2010. At each stage of the sickness absence meetings procedure (set out in section 19 of this policy), particular consideration will be given to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to



the requirements of a job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist a return to work. School Leaders/Line Managers are responsible for assessing whether adjustments recommended by Occupational Health, the employee's own doctor (e.g. via the Statement of Fitness to Work) or the employee themselves, are reasonable. Where they are reasonable, School Leaders/Line Managers will implement and monitor such adjustments.

- 5.2 If an employee considers that they are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects their ability to undertake their work, they should inform their line manager to review whether any reasonable adjustments may need to be made to support the employee.

6. Mental health related absence

- 6.1 If an employee is absent due to a stress-related illness, anxiety or depression (this is not an exhaustive list), as determined by the GP, the School Leader/Line Manager may make an early referral to Occupational Health. In addition, wellbeing/risk assessments, referral to the EAP may also be used. The employee should seek support from their Professional Association or Trade Union Representative. Employees are also encouraged to refer to the HET Wellbeing Policy and Health and Wellbeing intranet pages for further support and guidance.

7. Sickness absence reporting procedure

- 7.1 All employees are required to follow the reporting procedure set out below.
- 7.2 If an employee is taken ill or injured while at work, they should report this to their line manager. Managers should contact the named First Aider/or appropriate person within their school or within HET if a Managed Services employee, to make arrangements for anyone who is unwell to be accompanied home if appropriate and/or to receive medical treatment where necessary.
- 7.3 If an employee cannot attend work because they are ill or injured, they should follow the school's absence or HET reporting procedure. Employees should telephone their line manager, or other designated individual as early as possible. The following details should be provided where possible:
- The nature of the illness or injury.
 - The expected length of absence from work.
 - Contact details
 - Any outstanding or urgent work that requires attention, including information in relation to pupil or any other work that needs covering.
- 7.4 Contacting by text message or email is not acceptable as these methods cannot be guaranteed to be received.
- 7.5 Managers should ensure that:
- 7.5.1 Any sickness absence that is notified to them is recorded on the MIS System and reported to the appropriate leader.
- 7.5.2 Arrangements are made, where necessary, to cover work and to inform colleagues (while maintaining confidentiality).
- 7.6 Employees should expect to be contacted during their absence by their manager or other appropriate leader as a supportive measure, who will want to enquire after the employee's health and be advised, if possible, as to the employee's expected return date.

- 7.7 To ensure HET are doing all they are able to in order to support pregnant employees, a pregnant employee will be asked to attend a return-to-work meeting when returning to work after any period of absence. For pregnant employees, non-pregnancy related sickness absence will be recorded in the normal way. However, any sickness absence by a pregnant employee for a pregnancy-related reason will not be included when considering the employee's attendance record, although it will require a Statement of Fitness to work where the absence has reached 7 calendar days or more and will be paid as sickness absence in accordance with the employee's sickness entitlement under their terms and conditions of employment.

Upon return to work, a return to work meeting may take place in the same way as any other absence in order to provide support or to consider any workplace adjustments that may be necessary and to review any risk assessments for the period that the employee remains at work prior to maternity leave.

If the employee is absent from work with a pregnancy-related illness during the last four weeks before the expected week of childbirth, maternity leave will automatically be triggered. Please see the HET Maternity Policy.

- 7.8 School Leader Absences – In the case of School Leader absences, the Standards Officer and Deputy CEO should be notified along with the Chair of Governors.

8. Evidence of incapacity

- 8.1 For sickness absence of up to seven calendar days, employees can self-certify their sickness absence.
- 8.2 For absence over seven days, employees must obtain a certificate from an eligible healthcare professional (a 'Statement of Fitness for Work') from the 8th calendar day of absence stating that they are not fit for work and the reason(s) why. This should be forwarded to their line manager as soon as possible. If the absence continues, further medical certificates must be provided to cover the whole period of absence.
- 8.3 If the healthcare professional provides a certificate stating that the employee 'may be fit for work' they should inform their line manager immediately. Any additional measures, that may be needed to facilitate a return to work, will be discussed with the employee, taking account of the healthcare professional's advice. This may take place at a return to work meeting (see section 13). The discussion may involve:
- Discussing the advice on the statement with the employee
 - Considering the advice and how it affects the job and the workplace
 - Considering the functional comments, any information on the return-to-work form and any other action(s) that could help the employee return to work
 - Discussing the possible options with the employee
 - If a return to work is possible, agreeing the date, any reasonable adjustments and review date
 - Carrying out a risk assessment, monitoring and review
 - Seeking further advice from Occupational Health if required

If appropriate measures cannot be taken, the employee will remain on sick leave and a date will be set to review the situation.

- 8.4 Where there is a concern about the reason for absence, or frequent short-term absence, employees may be required to produce a medical certificate for each absence regardless of duration. Advice should be sought from HET HR.

8.5 Where an employee is absent immediately prior to a closure period, they will continue to be deemed as being absent for the purposes of recording sickness and statutory and/or contractual sick pay during the closure period unless they otherwise confirm that they are fit to return to work during the school closure period and return to work on the first day after the period of closure.

8.5 If an employee is undergoing an elective or cosmetic surgery or procedure for which they will be absent from work, then any entitlement to sick pay (as set out in section 11) will be subject to receipt of satisfactory medical evidence. This medical evidence will need to be in the form of a report or a letter from the employees' doctor or a specialist confirming that the employee is undergoing the procedure on medical advice. The employee may be required to take annual leave or unpaid leave for any absence related to a purely elective procedure.

9. Unauthorised absence

9.1 Cases of unauthorised absence may be dealt with under the HET Disciplinary Procedure.

9.2 Absence that has not been notified according to the sickness absence reporting procedure may be treated as unauthorised absence.

9.3 If an employee does not report for work and has not telephoned their line manager to explain the reason for their absence, the manager will try to contact the employee, by telephone and in writing if necessary. This should not be treated as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

10. Absence related to accident or injury at work

10.1 Where an employee is injured as part of their duties they must report this to their School Leader/Line Manager immediately and complete an online accident form, unless the situation is an emergency and urgent medical treatment is required as the employee is incapacitated.

10.2 Certain absences resulting from an accident or incident at work must be reported under the 'Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations' 1995 (RIDDOR). Further guidance can be sought from HET's Head of Estates and Health and Safety.

10.3 Schools must not class an accident or injury at work as an "Industrial Injury" until confirmed by HET's Head of Estates and Health and Safety.

10.4 Where an accident is classed as an accident or injury at work in accordance with paragraph 10.3, a report should be made to HET's Head of Estates and Health and Safety.

10.5 Absences arising from accidents, injury or assault at work and contact with infectious diseases will continue to be paid in line the employee's contractual pay.

11. Sick Pay

11.1 Employees should refer to Annex 1 for details of their sick pay entitlement.

11.2 If a period of sickness absence is, or appears to be, occasioned by actionable negligence, nuisance or breach of any statutory duty on the part of a third party, in respect of which damages are or may be recoverable, the employee must immediately notify their School Leader, or HET Line Manager, of that fact and of any claim, compromise, settlement or judgement made or awarded in connection with it and all relevant particulars that we may reasonably require. If we require the employee to do so, the employee

must cooperate in any related legal proceedings and refund to us that part of any damages or compensation the employee recovers that relates to lost earnings for the period of sickness absence as we may reasonably determine, less any costs the employee incurred in connection with the recovery of such damages or compensation, provided that the amount to be refunded to us shall not exceed the total amount we paid to the employee in respect of the period of sickness absence.

- 11.3 Failure to properly report an absence or to provide medical or self-certification could lead to the employee's pay being suspended.

12. Keeping in contact during sickness absence

- 12.1 If an employee is absent on sick leave, they should expect to be contacted from time to time by their line manager, School Leader or other designated individual as early as possible in order to provide support where appropriate, discuss their wellbeing, expected length of continued absence from work and any of their work that requires attention. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a reasonable minimum. It is the joint responsibility of both the line manager and the employee to maintain contact.

- 12.2 If the employee has any 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, School Leader or other designated individual as early as possible at any time.

- 12.3 HET offer access to confidential counselling, through HET's EAP. The details to access this service are available on the HET Employee Intranet Well-Being pages.

12.4 Medical examinations

- 12.4.1 We may, at any time in operating this policy, ask employees to attend a medical examination by HET's Occupational Health Provider with permission from the employee.

- 12.4.2 Employees will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to HET and that the contents of the report may be discussed with Occupational Health and the relevant doctor.

- 12.4.3 Failure to agree to a reasonable request to a medical examination may result in decisions being made in the absence of any medical information.

- 12.4.4 This process is in line with HET's Workforce Privacy Notice, which sets out how HET will gather, process and hold special category personal data of individuals during employment.

13. Return-to-work meeting

- 13.1 If an employee has been absent on sick leave for 1 or more working days, employees will be required to attend a return-to-work meeting with their manager, School Leader or other designated individual on the first day of their return, or as early as possible following their return to work.

- 13.2 A return-to-work meeting enables details of the employee's absence to be confirmed. It also gives the employee the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions they may have, and to bring any relevant matters to their line manager's attention.



- 13.3 Where a doctor has provided a certificate stating that an employee 'may be fit for work', a return-to-work meeting will usually be held to discuss any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate a return to work, taking account the healthcare professional's advice.
- 13.4 The employee does not have the right to be accompanied at the return-to-work meeting, although this may be appropriate in certain circumstances, for example, as part of a reasonable adjustment and accommodated where requested.
- 13.5 The completed return-to-work form should be signed by both parties and a copy placed on the employee's personnel file.

14. Long-term sickness absence

14.1 Returning to work from long-term sickness absence

14.1.1 HET are committed to helping employees return to work from long-term sickness absence. As part of the sickness absence meetings procedure (see section 19), HET will, where appropriate and possible, support returns to work by:

- a) Obtaining medical advice;
- b) Making reasonable adjustments to the workplace, working practices and working hours, including a time-limited phased return to work.

14.1.2 A phased return to work will often be a recommendation of an Occupational Health advisor or the employees GP.

14.1.3 Employees will receive their full pay on the phased return. Phased returns to work should be for a maximum of 4 to 6 weeks. In the event an employee requests that the phased return is extended beyond 4-6 weeks, a dialogue should be held with the employee. Further advice may be sought from the GP or OH and if appropriate and in agreement with the employee, a temporary contractual change may be made to their working hours to accommodate the request and their pay adjusted accordingly.

14.1.4 Considering redeployment; and/or

14.1.5 Agreeing a return-to-work programme

14.2 Employees on long term sickness absence

14.2.1 Regular welfare checks will be made by the line manager or the agreed appropriate member of staff to the employee throughout the period of absence. These meetings will involve checking on the employee's wellbeing, discussing their health and plan their return to work. The welfare meetings should be arranged at 4 weeks, 12 weeks and 20 weeks.

14.2.2 In cases of long-term sickness absence, where an employee is unable to return to work over an extended period, other options will be discussed and considered on an individual basis e.g. ill health retirement, settlement agreement, dismissal on health grounds. In managing such cases, the School Leader/Line Manager will ensure Occupational Health advice is sought before proceeding further.



- 14.2.3 If the employee does not accept the Occupational Health recommendation, the employee must notify the School Leader/Line Manager within 7 working days from receipt of the recommendation. The employee will have a further 21 working days to obtain further medical information and submit to Occupational Health.
- 14.2.4 School Leaders/Line Managers will review the Occupational Health advice with sensitivity and discretion and make a decision as to whether the employee's absence can be sustained operationally before making a decision to proceed with the absence management process and/or where a dismissal is to be considered.
- 14.2.5 In such cases, employment may be resolved through one of two routes:
- a) Medical advice that supports a decision to grant ill health retirement. In such circumstances, the School Leader/Line Manager must agree an immediate date for retirement to take effect;
 - b) Medical advice does not support ill health retirement and/or operational requirements lead to the matter being referred to a Stage 3 School Leader/Governors' Committee in order for a decision to be made about the employee's continued employment.
- 14.2.6 Where ill health retirement has not been granted, an employee can appeal this decision in accordance with the detail provided in section 24.
- 14.2.7 Where a Stage 3: Final sickness absence meeting is being contemplated, the School Leader/Line Manager may meet with the employee to determine whether it may be possible to resolve the employment situation through a settlement agreement. Employees are encouraged to be accompanied by a Professional Association or Trade Union Representative or by a work colleague under any of the formal stages of the procedure and to seek advice at the earliest opportunity.
- 14.2.8 A school may consider moving to Stage 3 Final sickness absence hearing or a settlement agreement prior to the entitlement to Occupational Sick Pay being exhausted, where, following recommendations from Occupational Health, there is no reasonable prospect of the employee returning to work in the foreseeable future or within a reasonable timescale
- 14.2.9 In the absence of a Local Governing Committee, a relevant nominated body will be formed.

15. Terminal or long-term illness

- 15.1 Where an employee is suffering from a long-term or terminal illness, HET will endeavour as far as possible to accommodate their wishes and to provide additional support where feasible. This includes discussion of the possibility of ill-health retirement.
- 15.2 While we will support employees who wish to continue working, employees with a terminal illness should bear in mind that there may come a time when they will be unable to continue working. In this case, the employee's line manager will discuss the options with the employee, with the support of SLT and HET HR.
- 15.3 The employee's line manager will talk to the employee about whether to inform their colleagues, and if so, when and how to do so with the employee's permission.
- 15.4 The organisation provides an employee assistance programme, access to counselling services and access to a financial advice service to assist employees during this difficult time

16. Sick leave and Annual Leave

- 16.1 If an employee becomes sick or injured while on annual leave such that they would be unfit for work, they may ask HET to treat the period of incapacity as sick leave and reclaim the annual leave.
- 16.2 To be able to claim sick pay employees must notify their manager of their incapacity immediately, and the usual requirements for medical evidence in this policy will also apply, even if they are abroad.
- 16.3 If an employee is on sick leave, they may choose to cancel any pre-arranged annual leave that would otherwise coincide with their sick leave. They should notify manager soon as possible that they wish to do this.
- 16.4 If the period of sick leave extends into the next holiday year, or if there is not enough time left in the current holiday year to make it practicable to take their remaining holiday entitlement, they can carry any unused holiday entitlement over to the following leave year up to a maximum of 20 days.

17. Managerial Support prior to action under the formal procedure

- 17.1 Prior to applying the formal procedure, School Leaders/Line Managers will normally seek to resolve the absence issues informally with the employee.
- 17.2 This procedure will be applied whenever it is considered necessary, including, for example, if an employee has been absent due to illness on a number of occasions in line with the following triggers or action of 10 days absence or 5 periods of absence in any 12-month period. These triggers should be pro rata for part time employees and consideration should be given to adjusting triggers for employees with a disability. Pregnancy related absences should be discounted when calculating triggers.
- 17.3 A one-to-one managerial meeting may take place at the point the School Leader/Manager identifies that an employee's absence is creating operational difficulties; this may not necessarily be in accordance with the triggers detailed in the policy. Note of the discussion with the employee during this meeting should be detailed on the Managerial Support Meeting form. An academic calendar highlighting periods of absence should be attached. Any patterns (Friday/Monday or other key dates should be discussed at this meeting). It may be appropriate to develop an informal action plan in agreement with the employee as a supportive.
- 17.4 If the trigger points are reached the School Leader/Line Manager will give the employee 5 working days' notice of the managerial meeting to be held to explore the reasons for the level of absence. A copy of the HET Absence Policy will be given to the employee. The employee has no statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting. If an employee requests to be accompanied, this will be allowed but should not cause undue delay in the meeting taking place

17.5 Purpose of the Managerial Support Meeting

- 17.5.1 The purpose of the meeting is to share with the employee their absence record and to set out clearly the nature of the attendance concerns. A discussion will take place around what support may be needed from the school and how it can be given. Employees are asked to share their reasons for absence(s) from work and whether they believe there is an underlying reason.
- 17.5.2 The School Leader/Line Manager will establish if the employee is receiving any medical treatment and whether there is any support, training or reasonable adjustments that might help them.



Consideration will be given as to whether an Occupational Health referral is appropriate. Schools will contact HR so they can be supported through the process.

17.5.3 The Line Manager and employee will agree upon the attendance standards expected, set appropriate timescales for improvement (see possible outcomes of managerial support meeting section) and the Line Manager must indicate to the employee that insufficient improvement within the agreed timescale may result in formal action being taken under the formal procedure detailed in section 18.

17.5.4 A copy of the form should be placed on the employee personnel file.

17.6 Possible Outcomes of Managerial Support Meeting

17.6.1 Possible outcomes may include:

- The employee is provided with a clear explanation of why their current absence level is a cause for concern;
- The employee is provided with clear guidance about how their attendance needs to improve;
- Where applicable, a timescale is given for any required improvement to take place;
- An action plan is written that reflects the key outcomes from the meeting;
- An outline is given of any support or training that will be provided;
- A clear statement is made that a failure to improve may lead to formal action in line with the formal procedure detailed in section 18. The employee will be provided with the above in writing following the meeting.

17.6.2 A referral may be made to Occupational Health to explore any underlying medical problems. Employees consent will be sought prior to a referral being made.

17.6.3 A record of this discussion including the possibility of moving to the stages of the formal procedure detailed in section 18 will be made by the School Leader/Line Manager, and any actions agreed. A copy of this record should be given to the employee and a copy kept by the School Leader/Line Manager.

17.6.4 If the employee's attendance does not meet the standard required following an informal meeting, or if an achieved improvement is not sustained for a 12-month period, the employee will normally be invited to a meeting under the formal procedure detailed in section 18.

18. Formal Procedure for Managing Sickness Absence

18.1 Action under the formal procedure will be triggered where unacceptable levels of sickness absence have continued following a managerial support meeting under section 17 of this policy, or where the School Leader/Line Manager considers the absence sufficiently serious to move into the formal procedure or in cases of long-term sickness where the employee has not been able to return to work over an extended period.

19. Sickness absence meetings procedure

19.1 Employees will be given 5 school days written notice of the date, time and place of a sickness absence meeting. Any concerns about an employee's sickness absence and the basis for those concerns will be put



in writing or otherwise advise why the meeting is being called. A reasonable opportunity for the employee to consider this information before a meeting will be provided.

- 19.2 The meeting will be conducted by the Line Manager, School Leader or another designated individual as early as possible and will normally be attended by a member of the HET HR team. Employees may bring a companion with them to the meeting (see section 20).
- 19.3 Employees must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. Failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If an employee or their companion are unable to attend at the time specified, they should immediately inform their manager who will seek to agree an alternative time.
- 19.4 A meeting may be postponed if the manager is awaiting receipt of information, needs to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at a previous meeting. The employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the meeting is reconvened.
- 19.5 Confirmation of any decision made at a meeting, the reasons for it, and of the right of appeal will be given to employees in writing within 5 school days of a sickness absence meeting (unless this time scale is not practicable, in which case it will be provided as soon as is practicable).
- 19.6 Formal warnings issued for sickness will remain live for a period of 12 months from the date of issue, during which time further absences beyond the review period would be dealt with either at the next stage of the procedure or by an extension of the current live warning. If further absences occur shortly after the end of the 12-month period (or any extended warning), HET reserve the right to deal with the matter at the same stage of the procedure and not return to earlier stage.
- 19.7 If, at any time, a manager considers that an employee has taken or are taking sickness absence when they are not unwell, they may refer matters to be dealt with under the HET Disciplinary Procedure.

20. Right to be accompanied at meetings

- 20.1 Employees may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure.
- 20.2 A companion may be either a trade union representative or a work colleague. Employees should provide their details to the manager conducting the meeting, in good time before it takes place.
- 20.3 Employees are allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.
- 20.4 HET may at their discretion permit other companions (for example family members) where this will help overcome particular difficulties caused by a disability or difficulty understanding English.
- 20.5 A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up the employee's position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on the employee's behalf. The employee may confer privately with their companion at any time during a meeting.

21. Stage 1: first sickness absence meeting

- 21.1 This will follow the procedure set out in sections 19 and 20 on the arrangements for and right to be accompanied at sickness absence meetings.



21.2 The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting may include:

- Discussing the reasons for absence.
- Where the employee has been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences.
- Considering whether medical advice is required or, if already obtained, what that advice is.
- Considering what, if any, measures might improve the employee's health and/or attendance.
- Determining a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review, and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure.
- Issuing a written warning that employment may be at risk if attendance does not improve or returns to work.

22. Stage 2: further sickness absence meeting(s)

22.1 Depending on the matters discussed at the first stage of the sickness absence procedure, a further meeting or meetings may be necessary if attendance concerns continue or improvements not met. Arrangements for meetings under the second stage of the sickness absence procedure will follow the procedure set out in sections 19 and 20 on the arrangements for and right to be accompanied at sickness absence meetings.

22.2 The purposes of further meeting(s) may include:

- Discussing the reasons for and impact of the ongoing absence(s).
- Where the employee has been absent on a number of occasions, discussing the likelihood of further absences.
- If it has not been obtained, considering whether medical advice is required. If it has been obtained, considering the advice that has been given and whether further advice is required.
- Considering the employee's ability to return to/remain in their job in view both of their capabilities and the needs of HET and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to their job to enable them to do so.
- Considering possible redeployment opportunities and whether any adjustments can reasonably be made to assist in redeployment within the employee's school, or for Managed Service employees, within the Managed Service team.
- Determining a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting(s). This may, depending on steps that have already taken, including any warnings where an employee is at risk of dismissal.
- Issuing a final written warning that employment may be at risk if attendance does not improve, or the employee does not return to work.

23. Stage 3: Final sickness absence meeting

23.1 Where an employee has been warned that they are at risk of dismissal and the improvement has not been made, they may be invited to a meeting under the third stage of the sickness absence procedure. Arrangements for this meeting will follow the procedure set out in sections 19 and 20 on the arrangements for and right to be accompanied at sickness absence meetings.

23.2 The purposes of the meeting will be:

- To review the meetings that have taken place, the matters discussed, and warnings issued.
- To review the Occupational Health Report which should be obtained prior to the final sickness absence meeting.



- To consider any further matters that the employee wishes to raise.
- To consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood of returning to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time.
- To consider the possible termination of their employment. This will only be considered where all other options have been exhausted.
- Termination will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice.

24. Appeals

- 24.1 Employees may appeal against the outcome of any formal stage of this procedure and may bring a companion to an appeal meeting (see section 20).
- 24.2 An appeal should be made in writing, stating the full grounds of their appeal, to the Chair of the Panel within 5 school days of the date on which the decision was sent to the employee.
- 24.3 Employees will be given 5 school days written notice of an appeal meeting. In cases of dismissal the appeal will be held as soon as possible. Any new matters raised in an appeal may delay an appeal meeting if further investigation is required.
- 24.4 Employees will be provided with written details of any new information which comes to light before an appeal meeting. Employees will also be given a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the meeting.
- 24.5 Employees should provide any information that they wish to be considered as part of the appeal process within 3 school days to the panel.
- 24.6 An appeal meeting will be conducted by an independent panel who have had no previous involvement in the employee's case.
- 24.7 Depending on the employee's grounds of appeal, the panel may decide that an appeal meeting may be a complete rehearing of the matter or a review of the original decision.
- 24.8 Following an appeal, the original decision may be confirmed, revoked or replaced with a different decision. The final decision will be confirmed in writing, if possible, within 5 school days of the appeal meeting. There will be no further right of appeal.
- 24.9 The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.

25. Review of policy

- 25.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by HET HR and any amendments will be shared with the recognised trade unions. HET HR will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

26. Associated Policies

- HET Disciplinary Policy
- HET Employee Handbook
- HET Leave of Absence Policy
- HET Maternity Policy



- HET Wellbeing Policy

Annex 1 - Sick Pay Entitlement

Teachers

Length of service	Entitlement
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During the first year of service	Full pay for 25 working days and after completing 4 calendar months' service, half pay for 50 working days
During the second year of service	Full pay for 50 working days and then half pay for 50 working days
During the third year of service	Full pay for 75 working days and half pay for 75 working days
During fourth and subsequent years	Full pay for 100 working days and half pay for 100 working days

Service is defined as 'all aggregated teaching service' with 1 or more LA.

Teachers employed under the Burgundy Book rules qualify for sick pay from their first day of employment.

Support Staff

Length of service	Entitlement
During 1st year of service	1 month's full pay and, after completing 4 months' service, 2 months' half pay
During 2nd year of service	2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
During 3rd year of service	4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
During 4th and 5th years of service	5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
After 5 years of service	6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

27. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Return to work form

Return to work after sickness absence form



Part 1 - Return to work discussion (to be completed by employee and forwarded to the line manager on return to work following 1 working day of sickness absence.)

- A return-to-work discussion will be arranged by the line manager.
- A doctor's certificate must be provided for all sickness absences of 7 calendar days.

Name:	Job Title:
1st day of absence:	Last day of absence:
No. of working days lost:	If longer than seven consecutive days, has a doctor's note been received? Yes/No
I reported my absence to:	On (date/time):
State briefly why you were unfit for work (specify nature of illness or injury). Words like 'illness' or 'unwell' are not enough:	
Was the absence a direct result of an incident at work? Yes/No	Has the online accident report form been completed? Yes/No
Have you taken any steps to assist your recovery?	Comments:
Do you require any support following your return to work?	Comments:
Are you anticipating any future health problems/sickness? (please note OH referral may be made to provide support to you)	Comments:
What preventative measures are you taking to reduce the potential of further sickness absence?	Comments?

I confirm that the information I have provided is true and that I am now fit to resume work. I understand that the disciplinary policy may be initiated if false information has been knowingly provided.

Date:



Signed:

Print name:

Part 2: Return to work discussion (to be completed by line manager)

Are any specific support measures required? Yes/No	Comments:
Number of days absent in the last 12 months.	Comments
Do any changes to work practices or work environment need to be considered? Yes/No	Comments:
Discussion: (delete as appropriate)	Face to face By telephone
Reason for Discussion (define/clarify where attendance is below attendance standards expected):	
Areas of Concern (e.g. length of absences, frequency of absences, impact on the education of pupils etc.):	
Employees explanation of events/comments (any mitigating factors):	

What action has been agreed: (e.g. what improvements the employee must make, and support or help offered and timescales, and what evidence will be considered):	
Update on work developments, not already covered by regular contact with employee and discussion on how the employee’s work has been dealt with in their absence	
Review date if appropriate:	
Date of return to work meeting:	
Signed (employee):
Signed (line manager or name of person conducting return to work meeting):

Cc: Personnel File
Employee

Appendix 2 – Managerial meeting

Record of Managerial Support Meeting



Section 1	
Name:	Job title:
Manager:	Job title:
Date of discussion:	
Section 2	
Reason for discussion:	
Section 3	
Account of events leading to discussion:	
Section 4	
Employee's explanation of events/comments:	
Section 5	
What action has been agreed:	

Date set for review:	
Line Manager's signature:	
Date:	

Appendix 3 – Managerial Support plan

Managerial Support Plan to support attendance / review meetings



This form should be adapted as appropriate and used if decided that a plan would be beneficial

Part 1

Name:	Job title:
Absence concerns	
<p>1. Is there an underlying/ongoing health problem? Is the employee being seen by their GP or a specialist?</p>	
<p>2. Is there a need to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 (or what adjustments have been made)? Should a referral to OH be made for more advice? Has the employee been sign-posted to Access to Work?</p>	
<p>3. Are there other reasons for the absence (work or home related)?</p>	
<p>4. Action/ support already put in place</p>	
<p>5. Actions to be taken by manager (e.g. informal / formal support, training, guidance, supervision)</p>	

6. Actions to be taken by employee to improve attendance

7. Timescale for attendance to be achieved.

Review dates:

The details on this action plan have been agreed by the following:

Employee's signature:	
Date:	
Line Manager's signature:	
Date:	

Part 2

Name of employee:	Date of action plan review:
Name of manager conducting meeting?	

Action points agreed:	Progress	Comments:

Outcome of review meeting				
Outcome	(?) month review	(?) month review	(?) month review	(?) month review
Showing signs of improvement therefore continue to monitor through further review Meetings				
Insufficient improvement/ no improvement therefore move to next formal stage				

Improvement achieved therefore no further review meeting required – employee is aware that the improvement must be sustained				
---	--	--	--	--

These notes represent an accurate record of the discussion:

Employee's signature:	
Date:	
Line Manager's signature:	
Date:	

Appendix 4 – Long Term Absence Review Meetings and Return to Work Plan

LONG TERM ABSENCE REVIEW MEETINGS AND RETURN TO WORK PLAN

Name of employee	
Job title	
Date of meeting	
Number of weeks absent at which meeting is being held (6, 12, 20 weeks)	
Present at meeting	

Welcome and Introductions completed (*tick box*)

Reason for the meeting explained

If meeting held remotely, expectations outlined and agreed

REVIEW OF ABSENCE

Overview of employee's health position and reason for absence

Does the employee have a disability or underlying health issue? If yes, what is it and how does it affect them?

Are there any contributory work factors that should be addressed?

Does the employee have a Fit Note? What advice has their GP given them?

Would advice from Occupational Health be beneficial? If Occupational Health report has been received by the school, go through the report and recommendations.

Are there any reasonable adjustments recommended/suggested that need to be explored to support a return to work?

Can a return-to-work date be agreed?

If a return-to-work date has not been agreed, is the employee likely to be able to return to work in a reasonable timeframe?

Where it is uncertain whether the employee can return to work in a reasonable time frame, record here that the employee has been informed that their employment cannot be held open indefinitely.

Date of next formal review meeting

RETURN TO WORK PLAN

What is the date of the planned return?

Is the employee on medication? How does this affect them?

Will the employee need to attend any further medical appointments? If so, when or how often?

Record details of any reasonable adjustments that are available and any timescales for them to be reviewed

If applicable, record details of phased return to work plan (this can be amended at the end of each week for the following week)

Week 1 w/c DATE – Detail days/times to work eg, 2 mornings Wednesday and Friday	When?
Agreed Priorities	
• Eg Training – safeguarding....	<i>e.g. Wednesday</i>
•	
•	
• End of week meet with XX to review week and plan for next week	<i>e.g. Friday</i>
Week 2 w/c DATE – 3 mornings Monday, Wednesday and Friday	
•	
•	
•	
• End of week meet with XX to review week and plan for next week	<i>e.g. Friday</i>
Week 3 w/c DATE – 5 mornings	
•	
•	
•	
• End of week meet with XX to review week and plan for next week	<i>e.g. Friday</i>
Week 4 w/c DATE – 1 day and 4 mornings	
•	
•	
•	
•	
• End of week meet with XX to review week and plan for next week	<i>e.g. Friday</i>

Are other supportive measures required to be completed, for example Wellness Action Plan, Risk Assessment, Wellbeing Assessment

NO LIKELIHOOD OF A RETURN TO WORK IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE

Is the employee able to return to work in the foreseeable future? Recommendation from Occupational Health.

Decision to refer to ill health retirement or dismissal meeting

Any other comments

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I confirm this is an accurate record of the meeting:

Employee's signature:	
Date:	
Line Manager's signature:	
Date:	