



Twyford
C of E
Academies Trust

Document Title	Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure
Committee Responsible for Policy	Resources Committee
Review Frequency	Every 3 years
Last Reviewed	March 2026
Next Review Due	March 2029
Policy Author	Director of Finance & Operations

Assessment of the Impact of a Policy on Equality & Diversity

Policy: Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure																																											
Impact assessed by: R Lane		Date: 3/3/2026																																									
<p>1. What is the potential for this policy impacting a person or group with a protected characteristic differently (favourably or unfavourably) from everyone else?</p> <p>Staff from protected groups (for example disabled staff) may receive less favourable treatment when they are absent due to sickness than staff in general.</p>																																											
<p>2. How would this be evidenced?</p> <p>Through grievances or reviews of cases of sickness absence.</p>																																											
<p>3. What is the impact of the policy and latest changes on people with protected characteristics?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Protected Characteristic</th> <th>Impact before change*</th> <th>Impact after change*</th> <th>Comments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender Reassignment</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marriage and civil partnership</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pregnancy and maternity</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Race</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religion or belief</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sex</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexual orientation</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td>Neutral</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Protected Characteristic	Impact before change*	Impact after change*	Comments	Age	Neutral	Neutral		Disability	Neutral	Neutral		Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Neutral		Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	Neutral		Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Neutral		Race	Neutral	Neutral		Religion or belief	Neutral	Neutral		Sex	Neutral	Neutral		Sexual orientation	Neutral	Neutral	
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<p>4. Policies are required to reduce or eliminate inequality and disadvantage and promote diversity. Does this assessment indicate that the Policy and latest changes pass or fail this test?</p> <p>Pass</p>																																											

Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This document is based, with permission, on a model document published by the London Diocesan Board for Schools who have asserted their rights under copyright law.
- 1.2. The Board of Directors recognises that its employees are its most valuable asset and resource. Employees, who are absent from work due to sickness, need to be treated with consideration and respect. Sickness absences may be related to a disability.
- 1.3. The Directors expect managers to manage sickness absence in a manner, that is fair and consistent and complies with employment legislation. Every effort needs to be made to assist staff in their recovery and return to work. However, the needs of an individual employee suffering from sickness must also be balanced against the needs of the Trust and our commitment to providing our pupils with a high standard of education.
- 1.4. This policy will be reviewed every three years.
- 1.5. References to Executive Headteacher in this document shall include the CEO. References to Associate Headteacher shall include school Headteacher. Specific duties of the Executive Headteacher or an Associate Headteacher may be delegated to another appropriate senior manager with the approval of the Board of Directors.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This procedure applies to all permanent and fixed term employees who have completed their probationary period.
- 2.2. The same policy, procedures and principles for resolving absence issues will be applied to both teaching and support staff.

3. LEGISLATION

- 3.1. This policy must always be applied fairly in accordance with employment law and the Equality Act 2010 and health and safety legislations.
- 3.2. Sickness absence may amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010. Where this is a possibility, specialist advice will be obtained from occupational health to establish any reasonable adjustments which will need to be considered and implemented to the employee's working systems or environment to enable them to return to work on a sustained basis.
- 3.3. It is acknowledged that disability is by no means generally synonymous with sickness or absence from work. However, guidance recognises that some employees with a disability will have conditions, that are from time to time relevant in terms of sickness absence management.
- 3.4. The definition of a person with a disability is a person with a physical or mental impairment, which has a long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 4.1. Information about sickness absences must be handled carefully in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 to ensure that sensitive details remain confidential. Notes and records of matters dealt with under this policy should be handled on a confidential basis and stored securely. The covert recording of informal or formal meetings, e.g., by use of a mobile phone or any other recording device, will not be allowed.

5. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- 5.1. It is important that all staff absent from work due to sickness follow the school's local procedure for reporting absence. Please refer to the staff guidance found on Copia. As a minimum requirement, if a member of staff is absent unexpectedly, the school should be informed of the absence by 7am on each day of absence, unless a 'fitness to work' certificate has already been provided by the GP, clearly indicating the absence period.
- 5.2. Staff can self-certify for up to seven calendar days, after seven days a medical certificate or 'fitness to work' note will be required from the GP. If, despite efforts to contact the employee and their emergency contact, the absence period is not accounted for, this may be treated as an unauthorised absence/unpaid leave and pay withheld for this period. Any persistent failure to follow the procedure could result in the disciplinary procedure being invoked.

6. TIME OFF TO ATTEND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

- 6.1. Staff will be allowed paid time off to attend appointments with their doctor dentist or medical specialist where these are supported by an appointment card or letter confirming that the only time available was during employee's employment hours. This will not be recorded as sickness absence.
- 6.2. Appointments should be made at the beginning or at the end of the school day to minimise the impact on the school. If this is not possible then the school will ask for evidence that this is the case. Staff who work during term time will arrange non-urgent appointments during school closures.
- 6.3. Pregnant staff are entitled to time off for antenatal appointments and, although there is no statutory right to time off work, any time off work for IVF treatment will be treated in the same way as any other medical appointment as outlined in 6.1. If an employee receiving IVF is signed off sick as a result of the treatment then the school will treat this in the same way as any other sickness absence.

7. SICK PAY AND ENTITLEMENT

- 7.1. The sick pay and sick leave terms and conditions are as outlined in the employee's contract of employment. Sick pay is determined by continuous service length. Sick pay entitlement for teachers can be found in the Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales 'the Burgundy book'. Sick pay entitlement for support staff are detailed in the NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service 'the Green Book'.

8. SICKNESS DURING HOLIDAYS

- 8.1. If employees are sick on a public holiday they will not qualify for time off in lieu at a later date.
- 8.2. If all year round employees, such as premises staff, are sick whilst taking annual leave, the absence will be classified as sickness as long as the employee produces a certificate of sickness from a registered medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.

9. SUPPORT

- 9.1. Employees will be referred to occupational health to ensure that the school understands how it can support them in their role and will make every effort to implement any recommendations made by the medical professional.

10. BREACHES OF THE ABSENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

- 10.1. On the rare occasions where an employee breaches the absence management policy or procedure this will be handled under the Disciplinary Procedure. Examples of conduct that may be subject to a disciplinary action are:

- Taking part in activities that are inconsistent with the cause of absence or prejudicial to recovery;
- Failing to comply with the requirements of the Absence Management Policy;
- Making a false claim of incapacity for work due to sickness;
- Altering the content of medical certificates; and
- Carrying out other employment whilst on sick leave without permission

This list is not exhaustive.

11.SHORT TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

11.1. Occasional short-term sickness

11.1.1. A member of Senior Leadership Team ('SLT') or other relevant member of staff with line management responsibilities will hold a return to work discussion with an employee after every period of short-term absence, no matter how short. This is to ensure that the employee is fit to return to work, to ask if the school needs to take any action to aid the return to work and to ensure that the relevant certification has been received / completed.

11.1.2. The line manager will document all stages of the procedure and ensure that the return to work form is completed (see Appendix A).

11.2. Repetitive and persistent short-term sickness

11.2.1. Cases of repetitive and persistent short-term sickness need to be handled in a reasonable and consistent manner. Prompt action is important, to ensure that any underlying issues are identified, so that the appropriate support can be put in place.

11.2.2. If there is a concern about the level of sickness absence, it will be expressed informally to the employee at an early stage, during a return to work discussion. Appropriate support will be offered, as necessary, and the employee will be made aware in a non-threatening way that there is a pattern of short-term absence which is considered unsatisfactory and the impact it is having on the teaching and learning, or overall service provided by the school to pupils.

11.2.3. In most cases, an informal discussion at a return to work meeting may suffice and the level of attendance will improve. However, in those circumstances where an employee's attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, the formal procedure will be used.

11.2.4. The line manager needs to use their discretion and consider individual circumstances when making a decision as to the particular stage at which the issue will be addressed through an absence review meeting.

11.2.5. It is a reasonable expectation that employees will achieve at least the same level of attendance expected of pupils (97%). If it falls below this, or if one of the following conditions applies, then the formal sickness absence management procedures will be considered:

- Seven days absence within any rolling twelve month period (pro-rata for part-time staff);
- Three separate absences within any six month period; or
- Whenever a combination of odd days or longer periods and patterns of absence causes concern.

11.3. Absence Review Meeting

11.3.1. An absence review meeting will be arranged between the employee's line manager and the employee as soon as short term absence has been identified as a problem.

11.3.2. The aims of this meeting are to:

- Highlight to the employee that their time off is a cause for concern;

- Allow the employee to provide information about any medical problems or other personal issues affecting their attendance; and
 - Identify any appropriate support for the employee.
- 11.3.3. If an underlying medical problem is suspected, the individual will be referred to Occupational Health. If there are no underlying reasons identified for the absences, assurance about a sustained improvement in the employee's attendance pattern will be established. The outcome of the meeting will be recorded in writing, with a copy for the employee to sign.
- 11.3.4. Where appropriate, support will be provided, in the form of assistance with making arrangements for treatment, or temporary adjustments to working hours. In the case of a temporary reduction in hours the school will continue to pay the full salary for no longer than half a term.
- 11.3.5. After this meeting the employee will be allowed reasonable time to demonstrate an improvement in their attendance. This monitoring period will be up to one term, although in some cases a longer period may be agreed incorporating a further absence review meeting.

11.4. First Formal Review Meeting

- 11.4.1. If the employee's attendance does not improve sufficiently after the absence review meeting, the Executive Headteacher or Associate Headteacher with support from the will arrange a first formal review meeting.
- 11.4.2. The employee will be given a ten working days notice of the meeting and advised of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. The employee will be allowed one postponement, but the meeting may proceed without the presence of their trade union representative if there is more than one postponement.
- 11.4.3. The meeting may take place concurrently with other procedures such as grievance, disciplinary, or capability.
- 11.4.4. The aim of this meeting is to:
- Continue to discuss the employee's sickness absence;
 - Identify reasons for the lack of improvement;
 - Agree to refer, or to re-refer, the employee to Occupational Health;
 - Discuss any reasonable adjustments which the school may need to take to help the employee;
 - Advise the employee of the implications for their employment if their attendance does not improve;
 - Highlight to the employee that if there is not a significant improvement on a sustained basis, a second formal review meeting or a contractual review meeting will take place; and
 - Inform the employee that their attendance will be closely monitored for a specified period.
- 11.4.5. The outcome of the first formal review meeting will be confirmed in a letter to the employee within five working days. It may alert the employee to any implications for their employment in the event that there is no improvement in their attendance.
- 11.4.6. Referrals to Occupational Health may take place in parallel with any formal action. If an employee does not give consent to a referral to Occupational Health, or the medical advice available proves inconclusive, the employee will be asked to a further meeting with the Executive Headteacher or Associate Headteacher. During this discussion the employee will be told the level of improvement required in their attendance and warned of the consequences if this does not happen. As outlined in the Burgundy Book for teachers and the Green Book for support staff, the employee will be reminded that their cooperation with Occupational Health is set out as a condition of their employment.
- 11.4.7. If, following a referral to Occupational Health, no underlying reasons are identified and there

has been no improvement in attendance, the school will consider the following to decide on any further action based on:

- Length of service of the employee;
- The employee's performance;
- The likelihood of the employee improving their attendance;
- The availability of alternative suitable work for the employee
- The effect of the employee's absence on teaching and learning.

11.5. Second Formal Review Meeting

11.5.1. If the employee's attendance record does not improve sufficiently after the first formal review meeting a second formal review meeting will be arranged.

11.5.2. The second formal review meeting will follow the format of the first.

11.5.3. An outcome of the second formal review may be to give notice to the employee that, in the event of them not achieving an improvement in their attendance over a specified period, a contractual review meeting will be convened to determine if the employee has the capability to continue in employment.

11.6. Contractual Review Meeting

11.6.1. If the employee's attendance record does not improve sufficiently following the second review meeting, or the employee was warned after the first formal meeting that a contractual meeting would be the next step, a contractual review meeting will be arranged. By this stage, the employee will have been given every opportunity to improve their attendance to an acceptable level on a sustained basis. If all efforts have failed, the school has a duty to consider termination of the contract of employment on the grounds that the employee is unable to meet their contractual obligations to work.

11.6.2. School's management must provide evidence that the employee has been given a chance to improve their attendance by allowing a reasonable period of time between the first formal review and the contractual review.

11.6.3. A letter will be sent to the employee, giving them a ten working day notice of the contractual review meeting, and also advising them of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague. The letter will outline the employee's sickness record to date and inform them that, as a result of the review, a decision may be made to terminate their contract of employment.

11.6.4. The Senior Clerk to the Trust will convene a Staffing Procedures Committee to hear the case, or delegate responsibility to the Executive Headteacher. The Human Resources Manager, having taken appropriate legal advice, will be present to ensure that the process and the decision making is fair and legally compliant.

11.6.5. The purpose of the contractual review meeting is to:

- Consider medical evidence where it is available and appropriate. If the employee would like the Chair of the Committee to consider new or additional evidence this must be provided at least three working days before the contractual review meeting;
- Consider possible ways to improve the employee's attendance. The Chair of the Committee may, if appropriate, defer any decision to terminate the employment contract in order to seek further advice.
- Consider if the employee is unfit to carry out the duties of their post; is unable to sustain an acceptable level of attendance; and determine if the employee should be dismissed on the grounds of incapability with contractual notice.

11.6.6. The employee must be informed of the outcome of the decision of the contractual review

meeting within five working days, and advised of their right to appeal against dismissal if this is the outcome.

11.6.7. Appeals must be made in writing, stating the ground for the appeal, and lodged with the Executive Headteacher within ten working days of the date on the outcome letter.

11.6.8. The contractual review meeting will be clerked. Following the meeting, the minutes will be provided to the employee to review and confirm they are an accurate (not verbatim) record of the meeting. A deadline to review and return the notes will be given which will usually be within five working days of receipt. If the notes are not agreed as an accurate record, an annotated version should be provided. If the Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher or Chair of the Panel agrees the amended version is accurate, the changes will be agreed. If not agreed, both versions will be kept on record. If meetings are held online then they may be recorded with the consent of all those present. The recording will then be transcribed. The final notes of the meeting will be made available to the employee on receipt of a letter requesting an appeal. If a recording of the meeting was made then this will be available for 6 months on request.

11.7. Appeal

11.7.1. Appeals will be heard by a Staffing Appeals Committee.

11.7.2. Appeals must be made in writing to the Executive Headteacher within ten working days of the date on the outcome letter from the contractual review meeting and state the grounds for the appeal.

Grounds for appeal should be based on the following:

- Procedural errors where there is evidence the process was incorrectly followed
- New information has come to light that may change the outcome of the original decision
- Fairness and Reasonableness of the outcome

11.7.3. The Executive Headteacher will then write to the employee, giving details of the appeal hearing which will be convened as soon as possible on receipt of the employee's written appeal. The employee will be advised in writing of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague.

11.7.4. The Chair of the Staffing Appeals Committee will confirm the outcome of the appeal, within ten working days of the Appeal Hearing.

12.MANAGING LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

12.1. Informal contact

12.1.1. If an employee has been absent from work due to sickness and this extends into a second continuous week, the employee is expected to make contact directly, or through a third party, with the school, in order to update them about the situation. The school may also make contact in a sensitive manner, giving due consideration to the employee's wellbeing. On occasion, the school may make contact with the employee's nominated next of kin.

12.1.2. The frequency of contact will be established and discussed with the employee or their representative. A record of the contact will be kept.

12.2. Formal contact

12.2.1. Long term sickness absence will normally be either a continual absence of twenty working days or more, or a shorter absence, but of a more serious nature and one of a series of absences, as the result of an underlying condition.

12.2.2. A referral will be made to Occupational Health to:

- Establish the state of the employee's health;

- Offer assistance and support to the employee;
 - Obtain an opinion on the likelihood of a sustained return to work; or
 - Consider any reasonable adjustments recommended by Occupational Health if the employee has a disability under the Equalities Act 2010
- 12.2.3. The employee will be informed of the referral to Occupational Health and consent will be sought from them. The school will handle any such communication with sensitivity, via a letter, email, telephone or through a nominated representative, to allay any concerns the employee may have and to maintain appropriate contact.
- 12.2.4. If it appears that the employee will be absent for a considerable period of time, or when a terminal illness has been diagnosed, the school's management may need to assess the situation with the Chair of Directors. In either circumstance, it may be that no further action will be necessary, except for maintaining an appropriate level of contact with the employee.
- 12.2.5. Employees who are absent due to long term sickness absence will be notified when their sick pay reverts to half pay or they exhaust their entitlement to contractual sick pay or Statutory Sick Pay.

12.3. Return to Work

- 12.3.1. In many cases a phased or gradual return to normal hours and responsibilities within a fixed timescale is a key way to facilitate a sustained return to work. Any arrangement will take into account both the needs of the individual and the needs of the school. A meeting to prepare the employee's return to work will be arranged, considering any advice from Occupational Health, and the employee may wish to be accompanied by their trade union representative. In some cases, it may be appropriate to consider redeploying the employee, where possible, for either a fixed term or on a permanent basis.
- 12.3.2. Where an employee is recovering from a mental health condition, careful consideration will be given to taking steps to minimise undue pressure and a stress risk assessment may be undertaken.
- 12.3.3. Provision will be made to enable those recovering from long term illness or injury to return in a supported manner and the school will work with other agencies such as 'access to work'.

12.4. First Formal Review Meeting

- 12.4.1. If it is unclear when, or if, the employee will return to work, the Executive Headteacher will write to the employee inviting them to a first formal review meeting, giving them a ten working day notice. The employee will be advised that they are entitled to be accompanied by their trade union representative or a work colleague and also to provide details of their sickness record and any Occupational Health reports.
- 12.4.2. The purpose of this meeting will be to determine:
- The medical treatment that the employee is receiving and the prognosis for recovery;
 - What the school can reasonably put in place to help the employee to return to work, including any reasonable workplace adjustments;
 - Whether it is reasonable for the school to wait for the employee to return to work;
 - The likelihood and length of any continuing or repeated absences; and
 - To advise the employee of the implications of their continued absence.
- 12.4.3. Such meetings are very difficult and will be conducted as sensitively as possible. The school management will conduct meetings with the employee's trade union representative, acting on their behalf, if necessary, in a neutral venue. Outcomes from this meeting will be confirmed to the employee in writing within five working days of the meeting.

12.4.4. The school may decide to move straight to a contractual review meeting depending on the information revealed in the meeting.

12.5. Second Formal Review Meeting

12.5.1. Where the employee's attendance does not improve, or if further medical evidence is produced suggesting that the situation has changed, then a second formal review meeting will be arranged. This meeting will follow the same format as the first formal review meeting.

12.5.2. The employee may be warned that they will be asked to attend a contractual review meeting if there is no improvement within a fixed timescale (normally at least half a term), to determine if the employee can continue in employment.

12.6. Contractual Review Meeting

12.6.1. Where there is no improvement in the employee's condition, or the prognosis for a return to full health is protracted, a contractual review meeting will be arranged.

12.6.2. The Head Clerk to the Trust will convene a Staffing Procedures Committee to hear the case. The Human Resources Manager will be present to ensure that the process and the decision making is fair and legally compliant.

12.6.3. The employee will be given a ten working day notice of the contractual review meeting (conducted by a Staffing Procedures Committee) and advised that they may be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague. The employee will receive a report containing their attendance record and they will be informed that as a result of the review a decision may be made to terminate their contract of employment with notice.

12.6.4. If the employee would like the Chair of the Committee to consider new or additional evidence this must be provided at least three working days before the contractual review meeting. The purpose of the contractual review meeting is to consider:

- The medical treatment that the employee is receiving and the prognosis for recovery;
- The likelihood and length of any continuing or repeated absences;
- Whether it is reasonable for the Trust to wait for the employee to return to work;
- What the Trust can reasonably put in place to help the employee to return to work, check the potential for redeployment or any other reasonable adjustments that may still need to be considered;
- Check the appropriateness of ill-health retirement;
- Consider if the employee is unfit to carry out the duties of their post; is unable to sustain an acceptable level of attendance; and determine if the employee should be dismissed on the grounds of incapability with contractual notice.

12.6.5. The employee must be informed of the outcome of the decision of the contractual review meeting within five working days, and advised of their right to appeal against dismissal if this is the outcome.

12.6.6. The contractual review meeting will be clerked. Following the meeting, the minutes will be provided to the employee to review and confirm they are an accurate (not verbatim) record of the meeting. A deadline to review and return the notes will be given which will usually be within five working days of receipt. If the notes are not agreed as an accurate record, an annotated version should be provided. If the Chair of the Panel agrees the amended version is accurate, the changes will be agreed. If not agreed, both versions will be kept on record. If meetings are held online then they may be recorded with the consent of all those present. The recording will then be transcribed. The final notes of the meeting will be made available to the employee on receipt of a letter requesting an appeal. If a recording of the meeting was made then this will be available for 6 months on request.

12.7. Appeal

12.7.1. Appeals will be heard by a Staffing Appeals Committee.

12.7.2. Appeals must be made in writing to the Executive Headteacher within ten working days of the date on the outcome letter from the contractual review meeting and state the grounds for the appeal.

Grounds for appeal should be based on the following:

- Procedural errors where there is evidence the process was incorrectly followed
- New information has come to light that may change the outcome of the original decision
- Fairness and Reasonableness of the outcome.

12.7.3. The Executive Headteacher will then write to the employee, giving details of the appeal hearing which will be convened as soon as possible on receipt of the employee's written appeal. The employee will be advised in writing of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague.

12.7.4. The Chair of the Staffing Appeals Committee will confirm the outcome of the appeal, within ten working days of the Appeal Hearing.

13.RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER POLICIES

13.1. This policy and procedure may run concurrently with any other procedure being implemented involving the employee.

13.2. Where an employee submits a grievance connected with the conduct of the managing sickness absence procedure, this should be considered as part of the appeals process and not separately.

14.LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND SPECIAL LEAVE

14.1. Employees who work on a term time only basis are not expected to take time off during term time except in exceptional circumstances and the school will follow the leave of absence and special leave procedure outlined in the Staff Leave Policy. Where requests for special leave are declined and the employee is absent on the date(s) requested they may be asked to produce a medical certificate. If the employee incurs any costs in requesting a certificate from their GP, it will be reimbursed by the Trust.

14.2. In the event that an employee does not contact the Trust or produce a medical certificate, this will be viewed as an unauthorised absence and may be addressed using the Disciplinary Procedure.

Appendix A: Return to Work Guidelines and Record Form

Return to Work Meetings - Guidelines for Managers

The informal meeting must be held in private and must be handled in a sensitive, professional and competent manner. The length of the discussion should be appropriate to the circumstances of the absence being considered.

Purpose:

- To welcome the employee back to work
- To brief the employee on work-related issues in their absence
- To ensure the employee is fully fit to return to work
- To identify the reason for the absence and confirm the length of absence
- To identify and address any problem (work-related or otherwise) that may be causing or contributing to the absence
- To discuss and/or identify any adjustments to the workplace/hours/duties that may reduce/eliminate absences
- To agree the priorities for the post absence period and to up-date the employee

Preparation:

- Ensure you have the right information available
- Check records for both current and previous absences are up-to-date (contact HR if in doubt)
- Be prepared to discuss any trends or patterns of absence
- Remember this is not a disciplinary hearing - you are trying to establish facts relating to the sickness absence
- Approach the meeting with an open mind and have no prejudgments

Discussion:

- The core of this process is to discuss the absence
- Try to determine the cause of the absence
- Listen to what is being said
- Is the cause work-related?
- Could adjustments to the workplace/hours/duties reduce/eliminate absences?
- Are there any other problems contributing to the absence
- Place current absence in the context of previous absences
- Be sensitive to the employee's feelings where personal problems and illnesses are brought to your attention
- Where there is conflicting evidence/statements, ask for an explanation
- Discuss the effect of the absence on the employee's work colleagues
- Ensure the employee understands that frequent, short-term absences within a rolling 12 month period may trigger the School's policy regarding Frequent, short-term absences (section 3.6.2 of the Sickness Absence Policy)

Afterwards:

- Make a written note (electronically or by hand) of the meeting using the Return to Work Interview Form

Return the signed form to HR

Return to Work Meeting Record

Notes for managers

- Please complete this form (electronically or by hand) after discussion with the employee returning from sickness absence, and ensure it is signed by both the employee and you.
- Please return the signed form to HR

Name of employee	
Name of employee's line manager	
Date of return to work interview	
First date of the employee's absence	
Date of the employee's return to work	
Reason for the sickness absence	
Did the employee properly notify the employer as per the Personal Absence Arrangements document?	Yes/No
Did the employee consult his/her GP?	Yes/No
Does the employee need any reasonable adjustments on his/her return to work?	Yes/No
Did the employee indicate that factors at work may have caused or contributed to the absence?	Yes/No
If yes, please record the reasons given by the employee	
If so, what action is to be taken to support the employee?	
Was the absence related to a disability?	Yes/No
If yes, what action is to be taken to support the employee?	
Is a referral to Occupational Health recommended?	

Any further comments from the employee	
Any further comments from the line manager	
Signature of employee and date	
Signature of line manager and date	

Appendix B: Model Letters

1. Invitation to informal Absence Review Meeting.
2. Invitation to First Formal Review Meeting.
3. Invitation to Second Formal Review Meeting.
4. Notification of outcome of First/Second Formal Review Meeting.
5. Invitation to attend Contractual Review Meeting.
6. Notification of outcome of Contractual Review Meeting.
7. Invitation to attend an Appeal Hearing
8. Notification of outcome of Appeal Hearing

1. Invitation to informal Absence Review Meeting

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Date

Dear

Re: Absence Review Meeting to Discuss Attendance Record

I am writing to invite you to attend an informal absence review meeting with me on [ENTER TIME HERE] on [ENTER DATE HERE] in [ENTER VENUE] at [SCHOOL NAME] School.

At the meeting we will discuss your absence and ways in which we can assist in facilitating your return to work.

Yours sincerely

(typed name)
Executive/Headteacher/Head of School

2. Invitation to First Formal Review Meeting

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Date

Dear

Re: First Formal Review Meeting To Discuss Attendance Record

You will be aware from our informal discussions that there are a number of concerns about your attendance record. I write to invite you to attend a first formal review meeting to discuss your absence and ways in which we can assist in facilitating your return to work.

The meeting will take place [ENTER TIME HERE] on [ENTER DATE HERE] in [ENTER VENUE] at [SCHOOL NAME] School. *(At least 10 clear working days' notice.)*

You may be accompanied at the meeting by a companion, who may be a member of a union or professional association or a work colleague. I should be grateful if you would notify me the day before the meeting of the name of any companion you may be bringing. At the meeting I shall be accompanied by [NAME/DETAILS/ROLE HERE].

I enclose a copy of the LDBS Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure.

Yours sincerely

(typed name)
Headteacher

cc: HR Adviser, LA, LDBS, Union representative (if appropriate)

3. Invitation to Second Formal Review Meeting

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Date

Dear

Re: Second Formal Review Meeting To Discuss Attendance Record

Further to the first formal review meeting held on [DATE HERE], I write to invite you to attend a second formal review meeting to discuss your ongoing absence and concerns about your attendance record.

The meeting will take place [ENTER TIME HERE] on [ENTER DATE HERE] in [ENTER VENUE] at [SCHOOL NAME] School. *(At least 10 clear working days' notice.)*

You may be accompanied at the meeting by a companion, who may be a member of a union or professional association or a work colleague. I should be grateful if you would notify me the day before the meeting of the name of any companion you may be bringing. At the meeting I shall be accompanied by [NAME/DETAILS/ROLE HERE].

Yours sincerely

(typed name)
Headteacher

cc: HR Adviser, LA, LDBS, Union representative (if appropriate)

4. Notification of outcome of First/Second Formal Review Meeting

Sent by the headteacher. See paragraphs 11.4 and 11.5

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Date(to be sent within 5 working days of the meeting)

Dear

Re: Outcome Of First/Second (Delete As Appropriate) Formal Review Meeting

I write to inform you of the outcome of the meeting which took place on [ENTER DATE HERE] in [ENTER VENUE]. Present at the meeting were [ENTER NAMES AND DESIGNATIONS OF ALL PRESENT].

I explained to you the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss your attendance record. I explained that the level of absence was giving cause for concern and your absence was discussed. You stated that [ENTER DETAILS HERE].

I sought to identify any problems or difficulties that you might be experiencing which could be contributing to your absence. You indicated that [ENTER DETAILS HERE].

Select wording as appropriate:

I am satisfied that you intend to return to work on [ENTER DATE HERE] and that, should your future attendance record be satisfactory, no further action will be taken.

or

I advised you that you would be referred to Occupational Health. A date was set for a second formal review meeting to give further consideration to your attendance. The review meeting is to be held on at [ENTER TIME HERE] on [ENTER DATE HERE] in [ENTER VENUE] at [SCHOOL NAME] School, by which time the following targets for improved attendance should have been met [ENTER DETAILS HERE].

or

I advised you that your attendance record was not satisfactory. A date was set for a second formal review meeting to give further consideration to your attendance. The review meeting is to be held on at [ENTER TIME HERE] on [ENTER DATE HERE] in [ENTER VENUE] at [SCHOOL NAME] School, by which time the following targets for improved attendance should have been met [ENTER DETAILS HERE].

or

The results from your Occupational Health review indicated that you are unfit to continue in your present post/ permanently unfit to work. It is therefore necessary for me to ask you to attend a contractual review meeting to determine your continuation in employment at the school. You will be notified of the date of the contractual review meeting as soon as possible.

or

Having considered the details of your attendance record, together with your evidence and issues which were addressed at the meeting, I regret that it has become necessary for me to ask you to attend a contractual review meeting to determine your continuation in employment at the school. You will be notified of the date of the hearing as soon as possible.

If you need further advice or assistance or if you have any queries over the content of this letter, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

(typed name)

Headteacher

cc: HR Adviser, LA, LDBS, Union representative (if appropriate)

5. Invitation to attend Contractual Review Meeting

Sent in duplicate by the clerk to the governing body. See paragraph 11.6

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Date *(at least 10 clear working days' notice)*

Dear

Re: Formal Contractual Review Meeting To Consider Attendance Record

At the first/second formal review meeting which took place on [ENTER DATE HERE] you will recall that it was decided that it was necessary to hold a formal contractual review meeting to consider your attendance record. The meeting will take place at [ENTER TIME HERE] on [ENTER DATE HERE] *(at least 10 days' notice)* and be held in [ENTER VENUE] at [SCHOOL NAME] School. A copy of the agenda for the meeting is enclosed, together with written evidence and documents currently available and a copy of the formal sickness procedure adopted by the governing body.

The meeting will be before a committee of three governors / the Headteacher *(delete as appropriate)* and the purpose of the meeting will be to consider concerns relating to your attendance record. You should be aware that consideration will be given to your continued employment. You may be accompanied at the meeting by a companion, who may be a member of a union or professional association or a work colleague. If your chosen representative is unable to attend the meeting at the time given above, you may propose another date and time for the meeting to take place to me. Any such alternative date must be on or before [ENTER DATE OF THE FIFTH WORKING DATE AFTER THE PROPOSED MEETING DATE] I should be grateful if you would notify me as soon as possible and no later than 3 clear working days before the hearing of the name of any companion you may be bringing. At the hearing the headteacher will be accompanied by [NAME/DETAILS/ROLE HERE].

Should you wish to present any written reports or evidence at the meeting, please let me have copies of the documents as soon as possible and no later than 3 clear working days before the meeting. Similarly, at least 3 clear working days before the meeting I will send you copies of the written evidence and any relevant documents which will be presented by management.

In summary, the following information should be supplied to me as soon as possible and no later than 3 clear working days before the date of the meeting:

- 1 the name of any companion who will be with you at the meeting;
- 2 any written evidence or relevant documents you wish to be considered;
- 3 the names of any witnesses and copies of written statements detailing their evidence.

The names of the governors who will be serving on the committee are [NAMES OF GOVERNORS HERE]. The headteacher will be calling the following witnesses to the meeting [NAMES HERE].

Should you not attend this meeting without prior explanation or authorise a representative to act on your behalf, it will go ahead in your absence and any decision taken will be binding.

Yours sincerely

(typed name)

Clerk to the governing body

Headteacher

Members of the committee

HR Adviser, LA, LDBS, Union representative (if appropriate)

6. Notification of outcome of Contractual Review Meeting

Sent in duplicate by the clerk to the governing body. See paragraph 11.6

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Date *(to be sent within 5 working days of the meeting)*

Dear

Re: Outcome Of Contractual Review Meeting

Following the formal contractual review meeting held on [DATE HERE], I write to inform you of the outcome of the meeting. On the evidence presented to the committee/Headteacher (*delete as appropriate*), it was decided that:

Select wording as appropriate:

(a) you are able to return to work, either immediately or in the very near future and that no further action is required; [MAKE FURTHER AMENDMENTS TO LETTER AS APPROPRIATE]

or

(b) a further review period would be appropriate, after which there will be a further contractual review meeting before the Headteacher/same committee of Governors (if possible);

or

(c) you are unfit to carry out the duties of the post of [ENTER POST HERE]/you are unable to sustain an acceptance level of attendance and that you should be dismissed. Your last day of employment will be [DATE HERE].

The committee considered the evidence presented to the meeting and had the following reasons for reaching its decision [ENTER COMMITTEE FINDINGS HERE].

Should you wish to appeal against this decision, you may do so by writing to me, stating the grounds of your appeal, within 10 working days of the date of this letter.

As acknowledgement of receipt of this letter, please sign and return to me the enclosed copy. Failure to return the copy does not invalidate any possible subsequent procedures.

Yours sincerely

(typed name)

Clerk to the governing body

CC: Headteacher

Members of the committee

HR Adviser, LA, LDBS, Union representative (if appropriate)

7. Invitation to attend Appeal Hearing

Sent in duplicate by the clerk to the governing body. See paragraph 11.7

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

POST CODE

Date *(at least 10 clear working days' notice)*

Dear

Re: Appeal Committee Hearing

In response to your letter of [ENTER DATE HERE] stating that you wish to appeal against the decision of the committee of the governing body notified to you on [ENTER DATE HERE], I write to inform you that an appeal hearing will be held at [DATE – AT LEAST 15 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THE LETTER] at [PLACE] at [TIME]. *(the appeal committee shall meet within 15 school days of receipt of written notice of appeal)* The procedures to be followed during the appeal hearing are the same as those used during the original hearing.

You may be accompanied at the hearing by a companion, who may be a member of a union or professional association or work colleague. If your chosen representative is unable to attend the hearing at the time given above, you may propose another date and time for the meeting to take place to me. Any such alternative date must be on or before *[date of the fifth working date after the proposed meeting date]* I should be grateful if you would notify me as soon as possible and no later than 3 clear working days before the hearing of the name of any companion you may be bringing. At the hearing the headteacher will be accompanied by [NAME/DETAILS/ROLE HERE]

I enclose details of the documents to be presented to the appeal committee. This includes copies of all of the documents which were considered by the contractual review panel and which the headteacher will present to the appeal committee. [I also enclose copies of new documents which the headteacher will introduce at the appeal.]

If you wish to submit new papers please send them to me as soon as possible and by no later than 3 clear working days before the hearing.

The following information should be supplied to me as soon as possible and no later than 3 clear working days before the date of the hearing:

- 1 the name of any companion who will be with you at the hearing;
- 2 any written evidence or relevant documents you wish to be considered;
- 3 the names of any witnesses and copies of written statements detailing their evidence.

The names of the governors who will be serving on the committee are [NAMES OF GOVERNORS HERE]. The headteacher will be calling the following witnesses to the hearing: [NAMES HERE].

Should you not attend this meeting without prior explanation or authorise a representative to act on your behalf, it will go ahead in your absence and any decision taken will be binding.

As acknowledgement of receipt of this letter, please sign and return to me the enclosed copy. Failure to return the copy does not invalidate any possible subsequent procedures.

Yours sincerely

(typed name)

Clerk to the governing body

CC: Headteacher

Members of the committee

HR Adviser, LA, LDBS, Union representative (if appropriate)

8. Notification of outcome of Appeal Hearing

Sent in duplicate by the clerk to the governing body. See paragraph 11.7

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
POST CODE

Date *(to be sent within 5 working days of the meeting)*

Dear

OUTCOME OF APPEAL HEARING

Following the Appeal Hearing held on [DATE HERE], I write to inform you of the outcome of the meeting. On the evidence presented to the Appeals Panel, it was decided that:

Select wording as appropriate:

(a) the decision made by the committee/Headteacher (delete as appropriate) at the Contractual Review Meeting is upheld and your dismissal is confirmed

or

(b) the Appeal Panel decided not to uphold the decision of the committee/Headteacher at the Contractual Review Meeting. You are able to return to work, either immediately or in the very near future and no further action is required; *[make further amendments to letter as appropriate]*

The committee considered the evidence presented to the hearing and had the following reasons for reaching its decision [ENTER COMMITTEE FINDINGS HERE].

The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

Yours sincerely

(typed name)

Clerk to the governing body

CC: Headteacher

Members of the committee

HR Adviser, LA, LDBS, Union representative (if appropriate)