



Wessex Schools Training Partnership

Attendance Policy

October 2021

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Aim

This policy aims to enable Wessex Schools Training Partnership (WSTP) to exercise its duty of care and responsibilities in relation to ensuring that its Trainees pursue their training programme with diligence and take maximum advantage of the opportunities it provides. This policy encompasses, with minor adaptations, approaches to the management of absence commonly used in the teaching profession as a whole.

Context

WSTP recognises that in such an intensive one-year course, absence, for whatever reason, leads to missed learning opportunities which may impact on the Trainee's ability to provide evidence relating to their successful demonstration of the Teachers' Standards.

High levels of attendance and punctuality are central to the professional conduct of a teacher. Part Two of the Teachers' Standards states: "Teachers must....maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality".

It is therefore expected that a Trainee will be regular and punctual in attendance at all centre, teaching commitments and school-based training sessions prescribed by the course.

1. Notification of Absence

1.1 The contact for all matters to do with absence is WSTP Office Manager RKTT's who can be contacted on WSTP@poolehigh.poole.sch.uk

1.2 A Trainee will, before the course commences, provide the contact details for a named representative who will contact or can be contacted by WSTP in relation to the Trainee's absence from the course.

1.3 A Trainee will inform the following colleagues if, for any reason, they are unable to attend a placement school / training session by 7:30am on the day of the absence. Should an absence continue for more than one day, the Trainee needs to contact all colleagues on the second and every subsequent working day of that absence.

1.4 A trainee must discuss the placement school's staff attendance procedures with their Mentor and if required must follow additional procedures in line with school policy.

Training Location:	Placement School	WSTP including all day trips	Subject knowledge Coach
Inform			
WSTP@	X	X	
School Mentor	X	X	
Subject teachers	X	X	
School reps	X	X	
Subject Knowledge coach		X	X

1.5 If WSTP is informed by a placement school / other trainer that a Trainee is not present and the Trainee has not informed WSTP of their absence, WSTP will contact the

Trainee and/or their named representative to confirm the safety of the Trainee and ascertain why he/she is not in attendance.

1.6 If, after ten working days, WSTP is unable to contact the Trainee or the named representative, the provider will invoke a suspension of studies, informing Student Finance England (SFE), through a Change of Circumstances (COC) submission. This may have an impact on any maintenance loans and bursaries that have been arranged. If there is no contact in the following ten working days, the Trainee will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course and the relevant authorities will be informed.

Absence Procedures

2.1 For absence caused by sickness

2.1.1 Trainees can self-certificate for the first seven days (including Saturdays and Sundays) of an absence caused by sickness.

2.1.2 Where absence continues for more than seven days, on the eighth day a doctor's certificate (Fit for Work Certificate) must be obtained and forwarded immediately to WSTP@poolehigh.poole.sch.uk, giving an indication of the likely period of absence. Further 'Fit for Work' certificates must support continued absence.

2.1.3 If the absence continues for a prolonged period (more than 15 working days) or a date for the return to study exceeds 15 working days from the beginning of the absence, WSTP will notify the Trainee in writing that it is suspending the Trainee's study from that 15 day point. If the Trainee is in receipt of finance from Student Finance England (SFE) a Change of Circumstances form (COC) will be submitted to SFE by RKT suspending studies on medical grounds effective from that date.

2.1.4 If a Trainee is subject to an ongoing illness such as depression, arthritis, unstable diabetes, COVID or asthma, they should submit a case to WSTP for mitigation together with a medical certificate which explains the extent of the illness and the likely effect on their progress through the course before the 15 working day deadline. WSTP will determine whether the Trainee should be considered for deferral on medical grounds.

2.2 For absences caused by other reasons

Absences for any other reasons are termed 'known absences'. Known absences include events such as graduation ceremonies, interviews and unavoidable medical appointments. Approval to miss a training session or time in school must be given by WSTP or the Trainee's Mentor respectively. Absence for some specific, named events is covered in section 7 below.

2.3 Setting work during absence

2.3.1 When Trainees are absent from placement schools, they should make every effort to send detailed lesson plans / resources to their Mentor as soon as possible, so that their classes are not disadvantaged.

2.3.2 Trainees must prepare plans and resources for all lessons they will miss because of a known absence.

2.4 Convalescence

2.4.1 The nature of the course does not easily allow for light duties or other ways of reducing a Trainee's workload. However, WSTP will ensure that on return to the course following a lengthy absence, a Trainee has a few days' respite to become fully fit before carrying out important assessments.

2.4.2 A Trainee returning to work after an extended period of absence may be required to submit to a medical examination by Occupational Health professionals to determine whether and what staged return to the course should be implemented.

3. Attendance Monitoring

3.1 WSTP Office Manager who monitors attendance at all elements of the SCITT provision. Sessions are monitored through a combination of electronic session registers, Trainee self-monitoring and e-mail alerts.

3.2 Trainee self-monitoring: Trainees receive an attendance monitoring form at the start of their training year, which they complete on a weekly basis and have verified by their Mentor at the end of each placement.

3.3 Session leaders have cumulative electronic registers that are overseen by the Attendance Officer.

3.4 Subject Knowledge coaches will complete an electronic register at the end of each session that is sent to the WSTP.

3.5 Trigger Points: Partnership Director will request a meeting with a Trainee where:

- o A Trainee has three episodes of sickness-related absence
- o A Trainee reaches five days of cumulative sickness-related absence
- o A pattern of recurring short-term absence is identified
- o A Trainee has a single period of absence of five working days or more.

3.6 Each trainee will receive a 'return to training interview when any of the above trigger points are reached.

4. Maternity Leave

4.1 General: The nature of this one year course means maternity leave as such is not available but WSTP will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible within the course structure to enable the Trainee to achieve QTS. The length of absence anticipated means that the course will have to be extended into a second year providing there is no substantial change in the requirements for QTS anticipated. A Trainee who becomes pregnant after being offered a place or during the first half term of the course can apply to have the course deferred for one year only, subject to there being no substantial change to the requirements for QTS during the deferment. Any Trainee requesting maternity leave must complete the course within six school terms. One of those terms must be the final term of an academic year. There may be some implications for a Trainee receiving finance from SFE.

4.2 WSTP's preferred plan is for a Trainee to return in the second year two weeks before the anniversary of the date of commencement of maternity leave.

4.3 The Trainee should notify WSTP as soon as is practicable but not later than 14 weeks (unless there is good cause) before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) that they wish to be absent for maternity.

4.4 Absence on account of illness which is attributable to the pregnancy, including absence on account of miscarriage, and which occurs outside the period of absence for maternity, shall be treated as ordinary sickness absence and shall be subject to the conditions normally governing such leave, provided it is covered by a doctor's statement.

4.5 Maternity leave should not normally be taken earlier than 11 weeks before the EWC.

4.6 When maternity leave begins, WSTP will write to the Trainee to formally suspend the Trainee's studies, informing the SFE through a COC where required and record the Trainee as 'dormant' on the DMS.

4.7 The Trainee will inform WSTP of the date of birth of the child.

4.8 The Trainee may not return to the course less than two weeks after the birth of the child.

4.9 Thereafter, the Trainee should discuss with WSTP when they intend to return to study and a timeframe for the completion of the course should be agreed.

4.10 Where a Trainee does not make contact with WSTP, WSTP may write to the Trainee no earlier than 21 days before the anniversary of the commencement of maternity leave, asking her to confirm the date of birth and her intention to return to the course. The Trainee or her representative must respond within 14 days of receiving the request. If there is no response, WSTP will withdraw the Trainee from the course.

4.11 If requiring student finance, the Trainee will need to apply for finance (as a returning student repeating Year 1) for the second academic year. At the beginning of the first term, the Trainee will continue to have her studies suspended and SFE informed through a COC. A further COC will be completed when the Trainee returns to the course.

4.12 For a Trainee paying fees through an SFE loan, the fee structure means that the Trainee must be present in Term 3 of one of the years in question. If that is not the case, WSTP has the right to request 25% of the total tuition fees direct from the Trainee.

5. Paternity Leave

5.1 The nature of this one year course means paternity leave as such is not available, but WSTP will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible to allow a short period of absence within the course structure to enable the Trainee to achieve QTS. If the length of absence anticipated is significant, the course is likely to have to be extended into a second year for which there may be financial implications. See compassionate leave below.

6 Medical appointments

6.1 A Trainee should inform WSTP of any appointments for which he/she needs to take leave, being prepared to offer further evidence if requested. The difficulty of obtaining

GP and hospital appointments is acknowledged and these will be honoured wherever possible, though a Trainee should attempt to ensure follow up appointments do not impact unnecessarily on attendance on the course.

6.2 Other routine medical appointments should not be made during the working day.

7. Leave of absence

7.1 Leave of absence for other reasons may be granted by the Office Manager acting on behalf of the provider.

7.2 For absences longer than two consecutive days, or for a cumulative total of more than five days, the request will require the additional approval of the Director. It is expected that an application will be made for leave of absence, in writing, at least two working days before the absence occurs.

7.3 In the case of absence included in private and personal or compassionate categories, written confirmation of a return to study should be submitted to WSTP immediately after the absence.

7.4 The following outlines the rationale for decisions relating to common requests for leave of absence. They should not be seen as an exhaustive list, but serve as an indication as to how leave of absence decisions will be expedited.

7.4.1 Graduation ceremonies: Absence of one day to attend a graduation ceremony for a first degree will be granted. Any requests for travelling time associated with this would not be expected to exceed half a day in total.

7.4.2 Interviews: All reasonable requests will be honoured. Decisions relating to absence for interviews abroad or in places involving extra days for travel will be limited to a cumulative maximum of three working days in the year.

7.4.3 Visits to schools before application/interview: Given the open-ended nature of these absences and the significant demands of the course, leave of absence will not be granted for these visits. In refusing the application, WSTP will, if requested by the Trainee, contact the school in question, informing them both of the Trainee's expression of interest in attending and the rationale for the refusal of the application.

8. Compassionate leave

8.1 In the event of such emergencies as bereavement, serious accident or illness of an immediate family member/dependant, up to three working days will be allowed for the death of a father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister and up to five working days leave on the death of a husband, wife or partner.

8.2 Requests for additional compassionate leave, or in the case of a cumulative total of more than ten working days, must be referred to the Director.

9. Private and personal

9.1 A maximum of two days at any one time will be granted for the purposes of urgent and unforeseen personal business which does not come under the scope of compassionate leave or to fulfil an important and significant personal commitment which cannot be undertaken at any other time. Requests for such absence should be made to the Director.

9.2 Statutory Leave of Absence up to a cumulative total of five working days during the course will be allowed. However, given the intense nature of the course, Trainees will be advised that membership of bodies requiring such absence should be reviewed.

9.3 Holidays: The intensive nature of the course means that holidays, including those booked before commencement of the course, should not be undertaken.

9.4 If WSTP agrees to holiday leave, for example to attend a family wedding, it should be noted that Student Finance England will be informed and an adjustment to any maintenance loans may follow.