

	Management of Staff Absence
Person (s) Responsible	
Approval:	Governing Body
Headteacher:	Gary Edmunds
Policy Originator:	Gary Edmunds
Date Approved:	September 2020
Date of Review:	September 2021

To be read in conjunction with: Staff Disciplinary Process and Procedure

1.0 Introduction

This policy is intended to be read by all members of staff employed at Spring Hill High School. The school values the importance of staff welfare and aims to achieve high levels of attendance through effectively managing sickness absence. This policy is designed to ensure that the Headteacher, Governing body and the Directors operate consistently in dealing with cases of general sickness absence and disability related absence, and that employees are treated equitably and with care.

2.0 Aim

The aim of the policy is to reduce staff absence and ensure that 'time off' is only granted for the reasons outlined in this policy.

2.1 It is recognised that inconsistency in staffing has a detrimental effect on children's learning. As such, this policy seeks to minimise disruption and maintain standards.

2.3 The Governing Body are committed to managing attendance so that any disruption to the pupils' education, or the effective running of the school, is minimised.

3.0

Definition of terms used in this policy:-

Illness - For the purpose of this policy the term 'illness' will be used as a generic term to cover all absences which are related to medical reasons.

Short Term Absence - Where a member of staff is absent due to sickness for a consecutive period no greater than seven (7) calendar days. Where an employee has been absent due to sickness for more than three(3) occasions (not including industrial injuries or illness) in the previous six (6) calendar months or has been absent for more than 10 working days (pro rata for part-time employees) in the previous 12 calendar months.

Long Term Absence - Where a member of staff has been continually absent, due to certified ill health, for a period of two (2) calendar weeks.

A Dependant A dependant is classed as a: husband, wife, child, parent, friend or family member who lives with you but does not pay rent; someone who relies on you to provide care for them.

Return to Work Contact

4.0 The principles on which this policy is based are as follows:-

- All staff members are entitled to a fair and equitable treatment.
- Sickness absence needs to be managed fairly and systematically to ensure the continued provision of high quality education.
- Serious ill health problems should be treated sensitively and sympathetically.
- All issues relating to any individual's sickness will be treated in the strictest confidence.

4.1 All staff members have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to take reasonable care of their own Health and Safety and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omission.

5.0 Section 1 When a Staff Member is Absent from work for Medical Reasons.

5.2 Staff members are required to notify the school if they are unable to attend for duty due to illness.

5.3 A staff member is entitled to statutory Sick Pay (SSP) during any unavoidable absence through sickness or accident provided that the staff member follows the notification and certification procedure for SSP.

6.0 Sick Pay:-

6.1 The Company's sick pay arrangements do not affect your entitlement to SSP or Statutory Sickness Pay Benefit as appropriate but any payments of either will be taken into account when assessing company sick pay.

6.2 Where a member of staff is absent from work, because of an injury caused by a third party, any sick pay paid to the member of staff by way of a loan must be repaid from the damages you recover from the third party, where such damages are paid by order of any Court or compromise settlement of the action.

7.0 Absenteeism

7.1 Absence for any reasons other than authorised leave or genuine sickness, absence will be treated as unauthorised absence by the school.

7.2 This will result in disciplinary action and non payment for the period of unauthorised absence, except in exceptional circumstances and with the written authorisation of the Headteacher on behalf of the Governing Body.

8.0 The procedure for Notification of Absence:-

8.1 An initial contact regarding such absence should be made in the form of a telephone contact to the Headteacher. This call must be made between 7:00 and 7:15 am.

8.2 If the Headteacher is not contactable on two attempts, the Deputy headteacher of the site that the staff member is assigned to should be notified of the absence.

8.3 After a period of sickness absence of more than seven (7) consecutive days, it is then necessary for a Fitness for Work certificate to be obtained and forwarded, for the attention of the Headteacher. Further medical certificates need to be sent in, as necessary, to cover the whole period of absence

8.4 Staff members are required to make regular weekly telephone contact with the Headteacher to give regular up-to-date information regarding his/her state of health, treatment plan and anticipated return. This is in addition to the timely submission of medical certificates for sick pay purposes as required above.

8.5 Upon return to work, the member of staff will be required to complete a Return to Work Form with your site Deputy. Failure to comply with this will automatically render you ineligible for any sick pay and may result in disciplinary action.

8.6 Spring Hill High School reserves the right to require a medical certificate to be submitted at more frequent intervals.

8.7 In the case of two periods of self certificated absence in any calendar year, Spring Hill High School reserves the right to request medical evidence before subsequent periods of absence less than seven(7) days are paid.

8.8 In addition, the company reserves the right to require you to attend a medical examination with the Company's doctor as, and when, it deems necessary. This may be a requirement where there is concern about the nature and duration or frequency of your illness and the implications for the school and your capability to perform your job.

9.0 Cover :-

Staff members should ensure that, where possible, work is prepared for completion by pupils during their absence. When this is not possible, the Deputy Headteacher or Head of Department will set appropriate work.

10.0 Absence from Work

Short term Absence :-

Doctor's certificates are no longer issued for short-term illness.

10.1 If a staff member is ill for seven (7) days or less the staff member should, on returning to work, report to the site Deputy to explain the full reasons for his/her absence and complete a Self Certified Form.

10.2 The staff member will be required to complete a Return to Work Interview on each occasion of absence. The Return to Work interview will normally take place on the day of return, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Long term Absence

10.3 Where a member of staff has been continually absent for longer than eight (8) or more days, the staff member should obtain a medical certificate from the doctor and forward it without delay to the school.

10.4 Further certificates should be submitted regularly (in ideal circumstances, weekly) for as long as the illness lasts.

10.6 A Return to Work Form must be completed by the member of staff and the Headteacher or the deputy. The return to work interview will normally take place on the day of return, or as soon as is reasonably practicable.

10.7 Absence during the working day :-

If a member of staff feels unwell during the working day, they should notify the Headteacher by telephone and where possible give deputies time to arrange cover before leaving the site.

When an Employee Returns to Duty:-

The Headteacher is responsible for the management of absence of all employees. However, where there are large numbers of members of staff the Headteacher may nominate Deputies to undertake the Return to Work interviews for specific groups of staff.

This contact will assist in :-

- Promoting communication between the staff member and the Headteacher
- Indicating the school's interest in the welfare of the staff member.

The following checklist indicates possible areas for discussion during the return to work contact.

- Establishing the cause of the absence.
- Establishing whether the staff member is truly capable or fit to resume their duties, by identifying any obvious symptoms which may endanger the employee in their role at work.
- Establishing if the staff member has any issues relating to their return to work.
- Identifying any underlying cause, eg. domestic circumstances, work related problems, stress, etc.
- Giving the employee an opportunity, whereby other facilities (eg. counselling) can be instigated.
- Re-enforcing the policy and confirming the Headteacher's role in the management of absence.
- Allowing discussion on the sickness record of the employee.

Where the absence relates to a disability or the ability to take part in physical interventions, the member of staff and the Headteacher or the designated Deputy must explore any possible support or adjustments which could assist the employee in the post.

The nature of the Return to Work interview will vary according to the reasons for the absence and any previous absences. Eg after a short period of absence, any enquiry about an individual's health may be sufficient. This will be carried out by the Headteacher or the designated Deputy.

This discussion may last only a few minutes, the basic purpose is to recognise that the member of staff has been off work and to offer them support and encouragement on their return to work.

However, for longer periods of absence a return to work pastoral discussion may be appropriate. This is particularly important and can prove most valuable to someone who has been absent for some time. They are likely to return to work unsure of themselves and may be concerned at the impact their absence has had on the school.

The staff member will be treated as sympathetically as possible and if they prefer to discuss some issues with a member of the same sex, appropriate arrangements will be made.

The discussion will be recorded formally on the employee's personal file but if it is felt appropriate the outcome may be recorded as an aide memoire and a copy will be given to the employee.

All contacts of this nature will be conducted confidentially, and with sensitivity.

Concerns for Employees who are still at work:-

Where the headteacher or appropriate Deputy is concerned about an individual's health either mental or physical, perhaps due to deteriorating performance or uncharacteristic behaviour, and the member of staff is still at work, the headteacher or designated Deputy may ask to speak to the member of staff on an informal basis. Furthermore, the Headteacher must take emergency action when they consider a member of staff may become medically incapable of performing duties if this puts at risk the health, education, safety and welfare of the pupils.

Disability Related Sickness Absence:-

Although not required to do so, under DDA (Disability Discrimination Act), employees are encouraged to inform the School if they have a disability in order to provide appropriate support and adjustments to be put in place.

The Headteacher and the Governing Body are aware of their obligations under DDA in the management of absence: not to unlawfully discriminate against a disabled person in the field of employment and to make 'reasonable adjustments' to working

arrangements so that the member of staff does not feel substantially disadvantaged to a non-disabled member of staff.

Where a member of staff becomes disabled during the course of his or her employment, the School will endeavour, where this is possible, to make reasonable adjustments in order to accommodate the individual in employment. This may include redeployment to another alternative post.

Chronic or terminal illness:-

If a member of staff has a chronic or terminal illness, appropriate support and contact will be given. The individual's wishes will be of paramount importance and such cases will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially.

Section 2: Monitoring and Procedures

An effective monitoring procedure is essential to ensure fairness and consistency across the school, to detect patterns or trends within groups of staff members or individuals and to assist in identifying possible causes for these.

Records:- Complete and accurate records will be maintained for all staff members to enable sickness absence to be monitored.

Recording and monitoring sickness is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

The following records are kept for Short Term Absence:-

- Length of absence
- Reason for absence

Where procedures relating to short or long term absence are followed a written record of all meetings, copies of correspondence etc will be maintained, on a confidential basis.

Records will be kept of any adjustments to a disabled staff member working arrangements to support the employee in performing their duties.

Short Term Sickness Absence Procedure:-

Where the Headteacher or line Manager (HT/LM), following due consideration, has cause for concern about the level of absence of a member of staff, the following course of action will be taken , as appropriate:-

- **Informal interview by the HT/LM:** The purpose of the interview is to express concern at the level of absence and to determine any underlying cause. Where having discussed the situation with an employee, the HT/LM determines that further action is required a further meeting shall be arranged and if the member of staff so wished they can be represented at that meeting.
- **Requesting medical certificates :** The HT or LM may request medical certificates to be produced in respect of future absences. This request to be confirmed in writing to the member of staff.
- **Requesting for medical opinion and report :** The HT may decide that a medical opinion is required. This may be obtained through an independent Medical Adviser. Where a cost is incurred, the school will stand the incurred cost.
- **Second interview based on medical report:** When a medical report has been requested and received, the member of staff can be interviewed again to review the individual circumstance in the light of additional information.
- **Target setting :** The HT/LM may set realistic targets for future attendance over a period not exceeding twelve (12) calendar months. In determining targets the HT will take into account any medical advice which states that the employee is likely to be absent from work during the specified period because of the effects of a disability. The staff member will be informed that if these targets are not reached, it may result in formal proceedings being instigated. This will be confirmed in writing.
- **Review period :** The HT will set a review period for assessing the effectiveness of any adjustments made to the member of staff duties for working arrangements.
- **Disciplinary procedure :** If absence problems continue and targets are not being met during the period agreed, the school will take further action under the school's disciplinary procedures. Please refer to the Staff Disciplinary Process and Procedure for further information.

All notes will be kept in file at all stages for future reference. All notes will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Maternity/Paternity:-

- Any member of staff who is pregnant has the right to time off with pay for antenatal care. This includes appointments with the GP or hospital and parental craft classes.

- Members of staff must produce a card from the hospital or clinic confirming the appointment.
- An employee who stops work to have a baby has the right to a period of maternity leave. There are certain provisions concerning payment for time off and returning to work which the company considers on an individual basis.
- Members of staff should notify the Headteacher of their antenatal appointments at least 48 hours in advance.
- The Right to paternity leave is set out in the Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations 2002. The right applies to certain staff members where there is a sufficient relationship to the child or its mother. In order to qualify, the staff member must either be the father of the child or married to the mother. In the case of same sex partners, it must be the partner of the mother. In all cases the member of staff must have or is expected to have responsibility for the upbringing of the child.
- Paternity leave will be granted only if the member of staff has been continuously employed for a period of twenty six(26) weeks, calculated 14 weeks before the expected week of the child's birth, and has given written notice to the Headteacher. There are strict conditions with regard to notice a staff member must give to the school and the company. Therefore, a staff member is advised to contact the Headteacher as soon as reasonably practicable in order to make such a request. Failure to notify the school by the end of the fifteen (15) week before the EWC may result in the loss of this right.
- Paternity leave is currently two weeks paid at the current rate of SMP. The period within which the leave can be taken runs from the day the baby is born up to 56 days thereafter, or if later 56 days after the first day of the EWC.

Section 3: Leave of Absence (Non-ill healthy reasons)

The Staff Leave of Absence form should be filled in as soon as it is known that the leave of absence is required. This form is available on the drive. The form must be emailed to the HT for approval.

At least one week is required for approval to be granted.

Leave of absence will be granted for the following:-

Course Attendance (Professional development)

For course attendance or other forms of professional development, staff should:

- Complete a leave of absence form and email it to the headteacher for signature.
- Wait for confirmation that approval has been granted via e-mail from the HT.

Emergency Dependant Leave

Employees are legally entitled to reasonable time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. The website www.gov.uk notes that an official number of days is not given in law, but suggest that 1-2 days is sufficient.

Leave for Dependents is designed to support staff where emergencies that are related to children or dependents occur. Examples could include: illness of a child or illness of an elderly dependant relative.

This leave is normally unpaid. When making a decision, the Headteacher will consider the nature and extent of the emergency and likely impact on the staff member.

Discretionary Emergency Leave.

The purpose of this leave is to support staff where emergencies are unrelated to children or dependants. Examples could include: a road accident, accident involving the staff member, violent crime, fire or flooding at the staff member's home. This type of leave is not granted to deal with predictable domestic arrangements.

This leave is normally unpaid. However, the Headteacher has discretion to grant paid leave in exceptional circumstances.

Compassionate Leave

Compassionate leave will be granted in the following situations to all staff members.

On the death of an immediate family member -one week's (7 days) unpaid leave.

On the death of a relative - two days unpaid leave.

Spring Hill high School will permit time off for funerals, unpaid. In these circumstances, further compassionate leave will be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave is additional time off work that can be granted to employees who have recently experienced the death of a loved one. There is no statutory right for an employee to have paid leave after a bereavement, however, employees are entitled to a reasonable period of unpaid time off for dependents.

Spring Hill high School can allow further bereavement leave to be granted at the discretion of the Company Directors.

Medical Appointments for Spring Hill High School Employees.

The school recognises that from time to time, members of staff will need to attend medical appointments which cannot be organised outside of their working hours.

This leave is unpaid.

Parental Leave

Eligible staff members can take unpaid parental leave to look after their child's welfare, for example, look at new schools, settle a child into new child care arrangements, or care for their child after a planned medical operation. Employees must give 21 days notice prior to the start date to qualify for parental leave.

Parental leave is unpaid and subject to a limit of 2 weeks in a 12 month period. A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works in a week. Eg. If an employee works three(3) days a week, then one week of parental leave equals 3 days

Religious Leave

The school recognises and celebrates the multicultural backgrounds of its members of staff and is keen to maintain positive relationships with all employees. The right to time off for religious observance is not required by law, however, Religious occasions will be considered by managers/Directors and these may be accommodated where possible.

Jury Service

The School will not make any direct deduction to a staff members salary for the two weeks of Jury Service. After this date, any time off for Jury Service will be unpaid and the staff member will need to claim a loss of earnings allowance from the Court.

Spring Hill High school will complete the relevant sections on the Certificate for Loss of Earnings which the staff will receive from the Court.