



*In the Light of Jesus
we Learn to Shine*

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure

Ratified by Governors

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This policy must be reviewed every year

We have carefully considered the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our school is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of its employees and seeks to protect their health and safety by providing a safe working environment. When illness or injury occurs, the school will treat absences in a prompt, sensitive and consistent manner. Employee attendance is a vital factor in providing an effective and high-quality education and in ensuring the operational effectiveness of our school. High levels of absence can impact on both the quality of education and also on wider aspects of staff morale and productivity.
- 1.2 This policy and procedure applies to all school employees and to centrally employed staff in a multi-academy trust, excluding employees in their probationary period. It provides a framework to support employees who are unable to work due to illness and to assist them to return to work and achieve acceptable levels of attendance.
- 1.3 The aim of this policy is to support the headteacher, governing body and employees in maximising attendance and ensuring that all employees are treated fairly, considerately and with respect in order for them to fully recover from any sickness absence and attend work.
- 1.4 Where this procedure is used within a multi-academy trust (MAT), the roles and responsibilities set out within this procedure should be read alongside the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. Template letters may need to be adapted accordingly.
- 1.5 This procedure covers all absence for reasons of sickness or injury. The school's Leave of Absence Policy should be referred to where employees require time off for instances other than sickness, for example compassionate leave.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of the headteacher or designated manager to manage sickness absence. Managers responsible for managing sickness absence should apply the policy consistently, fairly and handle medical information sensitively and confidentially. It is essential that employees are made fully aware of the school/trust's Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure as it sets out the steps and possible consequences for continual short or long-term sickness absence.
- 2.2 Adequate sickness records must be maintained by a staff member designated by the headteacher in order to confirm the duration and reason for all periods of employee absence. This will vary between schools.
- 2.3 All sickness matters must be dealt with in the strictest confidence.
- 2.4 Employees are expected to maintain good attendance at work and care for their health, seeking medical help when appropriate. They are required to keep their manager fully informed of the position should they be unable to attend work.

3. Reporting sickness absence

- 3.1 All employees should be made aware as soon as they start employment of the requirements of how and when to notify the school that they are not able to attend work for reasons of illness or injury.
- 3.2 Employees should be made aware that they should not attend for work if they may not be fit to do so. Employees should be mindful of any impact of their attendance on colleague's health.
- 3.3 The following procedure must be followed by employees. Failure to follow this procedure may result in disciplinary action and/or non-payment of sick pay.

First day of sickness

- 3.4 On the first day of sickness the employee must contact the headteacher or the designated senior member of staff directly to inform them that they are ill; giving reasons for the absence and, where possible, stating how long the absence is likely to last. Please follow the school's absence reporting process by telephoning your line manager and sending an email to the designated sickness absence email staffabsence@stjosephs.primaryluton.co.uk at the earliest opportunity and prior to the start of the school day.
- 3.5 Unless the employee's health renders them unable to speak, the call must be made by the employee themselves. In the exception that this is not possible, their absence may be reported by email/text message or by a nominated third party e.g. a relative or friend.
- 3.6 The designated member of staff receiving the call must, in a sensitive manner, make enquiries as to the nature of the illness and its expected duration.
- 3.7 A record of the call and reasons for absence must be taken and recorded on the employee's absence record. The absence must also be recorded on the electronic sickness return spreadsheet and sent to the school's payroll provider.
- 3.8 In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the school to contact the employee for further information regarding their absence, for example where the employee has left a message on the school's answer phone without details in relation to their absence. The school should be mindful of whether making contacts is proportionate in the employee's circumstances and reasons for absence.

Fourth to seventh day of absence (self-certified sickness)

- 3.9 If the absence continues into the fourth day (including weekends, rest days and public holidays) the employee should again notify the designated member of staff giving some further indication of the nature of the illness and likely length of absence.
- 3.10 Where an employee fails to make contact in line with the procedure, the headteacher should take immediate action to find out why.

Sickness Absence which lasts for eight or more days (medically certified sickness)

- 3.11 If the absence continues into an eighth day (including weekends, rest days and public holidays) the employee should obtain a medical certificate from a doctor and send it immediately to the headteacher or designated member of staff. If an employee is still not fit to return by the time their medical certificate expires, they must obtain a further medical certificate so that their entire period of absence is covered and send this to the school at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.12 It is reasonable that regular contact be maintained between the school and employee throughout any prolonged period of absence. At an early stage, arrangements should be made as to the frequency and form of such contact.
- 3.13 Doctors no longer issue certificates to confirm an employee is fit to return. If an employee is due to return when their medical certificate expires after a long period of absence and the school is concerned about whether they are fit to return the school should contact their occupational health provider to discuss.

Completion of self-certification form and production of medical certificates (fit note)

- 3.14 All sickness absence of up to seven days (including weekends, rest days and public holidays) must be backed by a self-certification form. This should be completed, ideally, on the employee's first day back at work. The self-certification form must be counter-signed.
- 3.15 Continuous sickness must still be recorded on the sickness return spreadsheet without an end date until it is known. When an employee returns, their details should be deleted from the sickness return for the following month. Occupational sick pay entitlements can be found in appendix 1.

School holidays

- 3.16 Where an employee is continuously not fit for work on the last day of term and first day of the next, a medical certificate should be provided to cover the school holidays.

Fit notes which recommend adjustments

- 3.17 A fit note (medical certificate) may contain adjustments recommended by an employee's GP. The school will give reasonable consideration to such recommendations (seeking Human Resources and Occupational Health advice) where it is stated that the employee is fit to return to work if certain amendments can be made. However, where the school determines that it is unable to make the adjustments, the reason why the adjustments cannot be made should be explained to the employee and the employee will remain sick in accordance with the fit note. The employee does not need to return to the doctor to confirm this.
- 3.18 Where the doctor recommends reduced hours, where agreed, these should usually be for a maximum of four weeks, but will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The employee will usually be able to perform some of their duties, in line with any other reasonable

adjustments advised by the GP/doctor or OH. with weekly increments up to their full hours and duties by the fourth week. Advice may be sought from Luton HR Traded Services team or Occupational Health before agreeing to reduced hours. Employees on an agreed phased return will receive full contractual pay.

4. Return to work discussion

- 4.1 A return to work discussion should be conducted with every employee on the day they return to work, or as near as possible thereafter, in order to review the absence with the employee. Before the commencement of the meeting the manager conducting the meeting should acquaint themselves with the employee's most recent sickness absence record and historical sickness absence.
- 4.2 The majority of discussions will be quick and straightforward but are a vital part in managing absence and improving attendance.
- 4.3 The meeting will be to welcome the employee back to work and acknowledge the employee's illness. It also provides the opportunity to discuss any additional support required and any measures which may assist the employee in their return to work and to improve their attendance where necessary.
- 4.4 At the meeting, the following points should be taken into consideration:
 - establish the reasons for absence and anything which may help to avoid a reoccurrence of the absence
 - discuss any temporary adaptations to the duties where this is suggested on the fit note - considering any adjustments in relation to a disability in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
 - consider whether a referral to Occupational Health is necessary
 - explain the impact of the absence on the workload within the school where necessary. This would be particularly relevant where the employee has persistent short-term sickness absence
 - ask the employee to complete the self-certification form where required
 - record the date and details of the discussion using the return-to-work form at appendix 12 and keep a copy on the employee's file

5. Monitoring sickness absence

- 5.1 Absence levels must be monitored and recorded for all employees. Accurate and consistent recording of all absences is a pre-requisite of fair and effective absence management.
- 5.2 The headteacher or designated senior member of staff must ensure that appropriate records of employee sickness absence are kept, and that absenteeism is reviewed on a regular basis. This will allow the headteacher or designated senior member of staff to identify patterns and frequency of absence as well as long term absence. Accurate records will also be essential should there be a need for formal action. Statistics may be used to inform the governing body at regular intervals, without referring to individuals by name.

- 5.3 It is the responsibility of the headteacher or designated senior member of staff to monitor absence levels and take further action as necessary when trigger levels are reached and/or where there are concerns about an employee's absence levels. It should be noted that each case should be dealt with according to its circumstances.
- 5.4 The trigger levels set out below determine when sickness absence becomes a matter for further investigation and help to identify any support required. The trigger levels apply to both short and long term absence. Short term absence may be typified by the frequency of absences, rather than total number of days.

For the purposes of this procedure the 'trigger levels' are:

- 7 working days absence during a term or rolling 13 week period
- 3 occasions of absence of any duration in the equivalent of a term
- When cumulative absence is 12 days over a rolling year or the equivalent of three terms or as soon as triggered
- 5 occasions of absence of any duration in the equivalent of three terms or as soon as triggered within that period

In some situations, it may be appropriate to make an adjustment to the above trigger levels as a result of an employee's medical condition or disability. If an employee believes that the trigger levels described above are not appropriate due to their medical situation, the headteacher, or designated senior member of staff, should contact Occupational Health for professional advice before making any adjustments to their trigger levels.

Disabled Employees

- 5.5 The headteacher or designated senior member of staff should be alert to the possibility that absence may be as a result of a disability and consider getting further advice from Occupational Health or Luton HR Traded Services team where this is the case. This could be as a result of a change in the impact of a disability on an employee's work or that an existing employee has acquired a disability during their working life. Managers should be aware that a key requirement of the Equality Act 2010 is for employers to make "reasonable adjustment/s" to enable the disabled employee to work by seeking to remove obstacles or barriers which may disadvantage them in the workplace.

6. Right to be accompanied

- 6.1 The employee may be represented/accompanied at both informal and formal meetings and hearings within the formal procedure by an accredited trade union representative or work colleague and should be informed of this. A trade union representative who is not an employed official must have been certified by their trade union as being competent to accompany the employee. It is the employee's responsibility to check with their trade union that their chosen representative has been certified as competent.
- 6.2 If the employee is accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague, that 'companion' will be allowed to address the meeting and to confer with the employee. However, the companion does not have the right to answer questions on the employee's

behalf, address the meeting if the employee does not wish it or prevent the employee from explaining their case.

- 6.3 To exercise the right to be accompanied, employees must make a reasonable request. It will not normally be reasonable for employees to insist on being accompanied by a companion whose presence would prejudice the meeting or by a companion whose lack of availability would delay the proceedings unnecessarily, if someone suitable and willing was more readily available.

7. Attendance Review Meeting (ARM)

- 7.1 This informal stage applies where the employee has met one of the trigger levels set out above, thus requiring investigation.
- 7.2 This investigation should be done in the form of a meeting. The employee should be informed in writing of the ARM and the date and time of the meeting. See appendix 4. If the employee is unable to attend, providing a reasonable explanation for their unavailability, they should be offered one alternative date. Failure to attend could result in a written statement of concern about absence levels and a review period being set in their absence. Wherever possible, employees should seek to attend in order that account can be taken of representations which they wish to make. If this is not possible, an employee may call upon the advice of a trade union representative or work colleague and/or make a written submission.
- 7.3 The meeting should be a two-way discussion, which serves to highlight the acceptable level of attendance and explore the reasons for, and possible remedies to, the situation. The school may provide a notetaker for this meeting.

Conducting the Attendance Review Meeting

- the meeting should take place in a venue which is private and free from interruptions
- the meeting should be approached in a caring and supportive manner demonstrating an understanding of what might be a difficult time for the employee
- gather all relevant information from the records for referral at the meeting including a record of the sickness absence, sickness triggers hit and medical certificates or information
- ask how the employee is feeling
- discuss the reason for sickness absence - this should be a thorough exchange of information, which actively seeks the views of the employee
- explain the effect of the employee's absence on the school and colleagues
- where necessary, discuss steps the employee is taking to reduce absence/facilitate their return to work
- explore ways in which a return to work and/or the employee's attendance can be improved and maintained, including any disability-related adjustments where this is relevant
- discuss a likely date for a return to work (where the employee is not in work)
- discuss a referral to/feedback from Occupation Health if applicable.

- agree a period of review and set a clear and appropriate target for attendance during this review period, including a date for a return to work (where the employee has not returned to work). The period of review will usually be a period of three months but may be shorter, where appropriate. Consideration may be given to the number of weeks of school closure periods that fall during the period of review
 - ensure the employee understands the target and what is expected of them in the future
 - advise the employee to read the Sickness Absence Policy so they are fully aware of next steps should their attendance at work fail to improve within the target set
- 7.5 On completion of the meeting, make a note of all the details, the review period and the target that was set. This information should be included in the ARM outcome letter (See appendix 5) which should be sent to the employee following the meeting. This information is important as it will be needed to establish whether an improvement to their attendance has occurred. This letter also makes clear that satisfactory improvement must be maintained for 12 months following the ARM.
- 7.6 It is important to ensure that attendance is reviewed at the end of the review period, regardless of whether or not there has been any improvement, and that either further action is taken or that satisfactory improvement is recorded. Appendix 7 may be used as a model letter to advise that attendance has improved to a satisfactory level and must be maintained. Decisions taken at this review stage should not be regarded as a rigid procedure and may need to be adapted according to the individual circumstances. However, in most cases the actions and stages set out below will provide a reasonable framework.

Occupational Health advice

- 7.7 Where an employee's sickness absence is giving cause for concern, the employee can be referred at any stage to the school's Occupational Health advisors. In the cases of long-term absence, a referral should be considered where absence has continued for a period exceeding four weeks and appears likely to continue. Further advice on undertaking a referral can be obtained from Luton HR Traded Services team. Occupational Health will provide advice on the nature of the illness, how soon the employee is likely to be fit for work, likely future treatment and any adjustments that may be appropriate. This advice should be used to inform any review with the employee.
- 7.8 The referral form at Appendix 3 should be used to make a referral to Occupational Health.

8. Formal Review Meeting

- 8.1 Where the above stage does not achieve the required improvement in attendance as per the targets set at the ARM, or during the 12 months following the ARM (an employee may meet the initial target set but be unable to maintain an acceptable level of attendance by hitting the school's trigger levels in the following nine-month period) a Formal Review Meeting should then be arranged. Again, the meeting should be approached in a caring and supportive manner demonstrating an understanding of what might be a difficult time for the employee.

- 8.2 It is advised that the school may seek up to date medical/occupational health information, if appropriate, prior to the formal meeting. This may be more relevant in the case of long-term sickness absence.
- 8.3 The employee should be invited in writing (see invite letter at appendix 6) to the formal review meeting. They should be given at least five school working days' notice of the meeting. If the employee is unable to attend the meeting, providing a reasonable explanation for their unavailability, there will be one further attempt to schedule the meeting. Failure to attend the rescheduled meeting could result in the meeting progressing in the employee's absence. If the employee does not feel able to attend the meeting, they may request a trade union representative or work colleague attend on their behalf or they may make a written submission.

A notetaker should be in attendance to make a record of the meeting.

- 8.4 The purpose of the meeting will be to:
- make reference to the ARM and the number of and/or length of absence(s) since that meeting
 - find out how the employee is feeling and gain an update on their current health/condition
 - discuss the reasons for absence since the ARM and any underlying reasons for sickness
 - give the employee the opportunity to respond accordingly about the continued unsatisfactory work attendance and provide details of any steps they are taking to reduce absence/facilitate a return to work
 - discuss practical steps which may be taken to improve the employee's attendance level or facilitate a return to work. Where relevant, this might include reasonable adjustments to their duties by the school
 - discuss a referral to Occupational Health if no referral has previously been made
 - check if ill health retirement has been explored where relevant
 - advise the employee of the service and cost implications of their absence, for example the impact on children and/or colleagues
 - inform the employee that if their sickness absence continues to give cause for concern, what the consequences may be

During the meeting, the delegated manager may conclude one of the following possible outcomes:

- adjourn the meeting and reconvene at a future date in order to obtain/wait for further medical advice from either occupational health or the employee's doctor. The meeting should be reconvened as soon as the information is available but no longer than 3 months following the initial meeting
- set appropriate targets to improve attendance during an agreed review period. The review period will usually be a three-month period but may be shorter where appropriate

- set a target to return to work at the end of the current medical certificate (or appropriate date) where the employee remains absent from work (with a phased return where appropriate such as in cases of long-term sickness absence or injury) and/or set a further target in relation to maintaining attendance on the employee's return to work for the remainder of the three-month review period

The review period set will start from the **date of the Formal Review meeting** irrespective of whether the employee is currently off sick or in work.

At the end of the meeting the delegated manager:

- must advise the employee that failure to improve attendance could result in progression to the next stage of the process - a Final Formal Meeting with the headteacher, where dismissal is a potential outcome
- must make clear to the employee that their employment could be at risk should they fail to achieve an acceptable standard of attendance
- must highlight to the employee that their attendance will remain under review for 12 months following the formal meeting
- must advise the employee that at any point during this review period, i.e. twelve months from the formal meeting, that the matter could progress to a Final Review Meeting should an unsatisfactory level of absence, as per the school's trigger levels, recur (in exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to revert back to an additional formal review meeting)
- should advise the employee that they will receive written confirmation of discussions in writing

- 8.5 The outcome of the meeting must be confirmed in writing to the employee within seven calendar days of the meeting. See appendix 8 for the template outcome letter.
- 8.6 The situation should be reviewed at the end of the review period. From the results of regular monitoring, where the employee's attendance has improved during the review period, they should be advised that it is expected that the improvement is maintained. This may be confirmed with the employee using letter at appendix 7.
- 8.7 Where an employee feels that they have been unfairly treated in respect of the application of this policy, they may request a review of their concerns by an independent member of the SLT or a governor. This request should be made in writing to the headteacher within seven days of receipt of the outcome letter. The person appointed to undertake the review will review the process, all relevant paperwork to date and will usually speak to the employee and to the manager involved. Employees will be entitled to be accompanied by their work colleague or trade union representative at any meeting.

Following a thorough review, the person appointed will respond to the employee describing their findings and any recommendation in relation to the management of the employee's sickness absence.

9. Final Review Meeting

- 9.1 Where an employee fails to meet the target set at the formal review stage, a Final Review Meeting may be arranged. This meeting will be with the headteacher. If it is the headteacher that is being managed for sickness absence, this meeting will be with members of the governing body.
- 9.2 A Final Review Meeting could be required where the employee has failed to return to work or has not achieved an acceptable level of attendance in spite of the advice provided that their employment could be at risk if they continued to have an unsatisfactory level of attendance, either during the review period set at the previous formal meeting or within the 12 months following that formal review meeting. The meeting will constitute a Final Review Meeting where dismissal is a possible outcome.
- 9.3 The precise timing of the Final Review Meeting will depend on the circumstances of the individual case. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to meet to extend the period of review set at the first formal review. In other situations, where the absence has continued at a rate which has failed to meet the target set at the formal review meeting, the individual may be invited to a Final Review Meeting before the end of the set review date.
- 9.4 Where available, up to date medical/occupational health information should be sought prior to arranging the Final Review Meeting. Sufficient detail of the employee's job, reasons for absence and the availability or lack of alternative employment for the employee should be provided to Occupational Health in order that their opinion is given in the correct context. If an approach is made to the employee's own medical practitioner, it can only be made by an occupational health adviser, with the employee's consent. (See Occupational Health referral form at appendix 3).

Advice should also be sought from the Luton HR Traded Services team. For community schools, a member of the Luton HR team must attend the Final Review Meeting so dates must be arranged in advance with the team.

- 9.5 At the Final Review Meeting the reasons for the absence must be investigated and considered. It is therefore essential that as much information as possible is gathered to inform the meeting. This will involve assembling the following information:
- length and dates of absence
 - reasons for each absence
 - impact on workload and disruption to the school
 - outcomes of the ARM and Formal Review Meeting
 - previous attendance records detailing total days sickness absence, periods and patterns of absence

- any further medical advice to ascertain whether there is an underlying medical cause for the absence
- 9.6 The employee should be informed in writing of the date and time of the Final Review Meeting, giving 14 calendar days' notice (see invite letter at appendix 9). If the employee is unable to attend the meeting on the proposed date, and provides a reasonable explanation for this, they should be offered one alternative date. Failure to attend could result in a decision being taken in the employee's absence. Wherever possible, employees should seek to attend in order that account can be taken of representations which they wish to make. If this is not possible, an employee may call upon the advice of a trade union representative or work colleague and/or make a written submission. The Final Review Meeting must be held by the headteacher where dismissal is a potential outcome.
- 9.7 Paperwork to inform the Final Review Meeting will be sent to the employee, and the headteacher, at least seven calendar days before the meeting. A contents page outlining the information that should be provided to the employee in advance of the meeting can be found at appendix 13. Should the employee wish to submit any documentation to inform the meeting, this should be sent to the headteacher and the presenting manager at least seven calendar days before the meeting. This documentation may include any medical advice or information that they wish to be considered at the meeting.
- 9.8 The procedure to be followed at the Final Review Meeting is at appendix 2.
- 9.9 At the Final Review Meeting, the headteacher may be advised by a member of the Luton HR Traded Services team. In community schools, the headteacher must be advised by a representative of the Director of Children, Families & Education Services. Within a MAT, the headteacher may also be supported by a member of the Trust, as per their Scheme of Delegation.
- 9.10 At the meeting, the headteacher will consider all available information and relevant factors to decide on the action to be taken. This will include consideration of whether or not to dismiss the employee on the grounds of their continued absence(s) following the advice provided to them that their job was at risk if they continued to accrue sickness absence.
- In exceptional circumstances, the Final Review Meeting may be adjourned and reconvened following a further period of review set by the headteacher, for example where a return to work appears likely following an operation.
- 9.11 The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing to the employee within seven calendar days, see appendix 10. A possible outcome of the meeting is dismissal. For community schools, the school will advise the council of any requirement to dismiss at the same time.
- 9.12 Where it is concluded that the employee's attendance has improved to an acceptable level, they will be advised that it is expected that the improved attendance be maintained, or the procedure will be invoked again. This will be at the Final Review Meeting stage, if deterioration is within a year of the meeting.

10. Right of Appeal

- 10.1 Should the employee wish to appeal against the sanction they should submit this in writing to the chair of governors within seven calendar days of receipt of notification.
- 10.2 The appeal panel comprising members of the governing body will convene a hearing as soon as possible. See template letter at appendix 11. With the support of HR, the panel will consider all medical evidence available, representations for the Director of Children, Families & Education Services for community schools, or for a MAT as per their scheme of delegation, and the representations of the employee, who may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- 10.3 The decision of the appeals panel will be confirmed to the employee, in writing, within seven calendar days of the appeal hearing.
- 10.4 The decision of the appeal panel will be binding. There is no further recourse beyond the appeals panel of the governing body.
- 10.5 In the case of a teacher who has not applied for ill health retirement, the council/school/trust will submit appropriate documentation to Teachers Pensions, if requested to do so, to support retirement from teaching on ill health grounds, subject to authorisation from the Occupational Health adviser.

11. General information

- 11.1 An employee who is absent from work due to ill-health is expected:
- to be available to be contacted by the school or Occupational Health or Luton HR Traded Services team as appropriate - where the employee is not residing at their usual home address, they should inform the headteacher of this, providing the address at which they may be contacted
 - not to undertake any activity inconsistent with their illness or recovery
 - not to go on holiday or abroad without requesting permission from the headteacher
 - to attend any appointments with the school's occupational health adviser
- 11.2 An employee's failure to comply with a referral to the school's occupational health adviser without good reason or any other breach of the sickness procedure could be regarded as misconduct.
- 11.3 Redeployment to another role within the school can be considered at any stage of the procedure where the nature of the sickness absence means this is a suitable option. Occupational Health must advise on whether this would be a suitable option. This is unlikely to be recommended until the later stages of the procedure have been reached.
- 11.4 Employees are required to follow the leave of absence procedure when needing to attend medical appointments during their working hours.

11.5 Accidents at Work / Notifiable Industrial Diseases

Absences as a result of accidents at work are covered by this procedure and are included in the school's sickness absence statistics.

Where an incident occurs at work, all managers are required to investigate the incident and assess whether it meets the definition of the RIDDOR Regulations (Reporting of Diseases, Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). The same is true of any notifiable occupational disease as prescribed under RIDDOR. Further details can be obtained from the council's Health and Safety team or from your Health and Safety provider.

Advice should be sought from Luton HR Traded Services team where any sickness absence case involves absence relating to accidents at work or a notifiable industrial disease. Where there is evidence that shows an employee's absence is the result of an infectious or contagious disease, accident, injury or assault arising out of their employment, advice should be sought in relation to the impact on sick pay and leave.

11.6 Pregnancy related absence

All sickness absence during a woman's pregnancy, pregnancy related or not, should be recorded as sick leave in the usual way. However, pregnancy related absences are not included as part of sickness monitoring. Pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off for antenatal care, (evidence of appointments should be provided), and should be recorded as antenatal time off.

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Occupational Sick Pay

During a period of sickness absence, employees are entitled to occupational sick pay as follows:

Teaching staff

During the first year of service:	full-pay for 25 working days and, after completing four calendar months half-pay for 50 working days.
During the second year of service:	full pay for 50 working days, half pay for 50 working days.
During the third year of service:	full pay for 75 working days, half pay for 75 working days.
During the fourth and successive years:	full-pay for 100 working days, half pay for 100 working days.

Days are aggregated in any one financial year. A new entitlement starts on 1 April provided the employee has returned to work in the new financial year.

Non-teaching staff

During the first year of service:	1 month's full pay and, after completing 4 months service, 2 months' half-pay.
During the second year of service:	2 months' full-pay and 2 months' half-pay.
During the third year of service:	4 months' full-pay and 4 months' half-pay.
During the fourth and fifth years of service:	5 months' full-pay and 5 months' half- pay.
After 5 years service:	6 months' full-pay and 6 months' half-pay.

Days are calculated over a rolling 12 months.

Procedure for Final Review Meeting

The following procedure should be used:

Round table introductions to be made so all in attendance are aware of who is present. If the school is a member of a Multi Academy Trust, a representative from the Trust may be in attendance in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

A notetaker independent of matters to be discussed must also be present to take notes for management purposes.

The headteacher should explain the procedure to be followed prior to the commencement of the hearing to check the understanding of all present.

The reviewing manager (may be supported by an HR Adviser) will present first.

Presentation of the case against the employee

- a. The reviewing manager makes an opening address outlining the case.
- b. The reviewing manager will submit any medical evidence available.
- c. The reviewing manager may submit occupational health advice and update.
- d. The reviewing manager will include a summary about the action taken by the school the management of the sickness absence to date including the support given.
- e. Upon the conclusion of the case being presented, the employee and the headteacher will have the opportunity to ask questions and seek further clarity, if necessary, from the reviewing manager.

Presentation of the employee's case

- a. The employee or their companion will be asked to make an address outlining their case. The employee's trade union representative or work colleague can read the statement of case or present on their behalf. However, the employee must answer any questions raised directly. The representative should not answer on their behalf.
- b. The employee may submit any medical evidence and any other relevant information available to them that they have been unable to do so to date.
- c. Upon the conclusion of their case, the reviewing manager and the headteacher will have the opportunity to ask questions and seek further clarity if necessary.

Summing up and withdrawal

- a. The reviewing manager will have the opportunity to sum up their case if they wish to do so. The employee will then be given the opportunity to have the last word to sum up their case.

- b. Both parties then withdraw.

The decision

- a. The headteacher, with the Director of Children, Families & Education Services or their representative, (or the Trust representative if applicable), will deliberate in private, only recalling the parties to clear points of uncertainty on evidence already given. They shall consider the evidence, the representations and any other medical evidence available, including such evidence which has been furnished in confidence. If recall is necessary, both parties are to return even if only one is concerned with the point giving rise to doubt.
- b. The decision will be announced at the close of the hearing whenever possible. The headteacher will confirm the decision in writing within seven days of the decision.

Checklist of considerations at the hearing:

The headteacher will need to take into account all relevant factors. In making a decision the headteacher/governor panel may wish to give consideration to the following factors:

- the reasons for absence and the employee's absence record
- the need for the employee's work to be done and impact on the school, including the effect on other employees.
- any recent improvement/or reasons for the lack of improvement
- advice received from the Occupational Health adviser or medical information from the employees GP or consultant
- any equalities issues e.g. are these absences disability related?
- any work-related issues - this may include levels of overtime worked or type of duties undertaken
- the employee's length of service
- statutory requirements in relation to teachers
- how long the headteacher can reasonably be expected to wait for the employee's return (including the possibility and viability of obtaining a temporary replacement for the sick employee)
- whether the individual is likely to return and be able to resume the full duties of the post, and if so an estimate of when
- where appropriate, has consideration been given to whether any reasonable adjustment to the role is required/practical?
- if the individual is unfit to carry out the duties of the post, has consideration been given to whether redeployment would be appropriate, if available within the school?

Procedure to be followed at an appeal hearing (appeal against dismissal)

The following procedure must be used:

Round table introductions to be made so all in attendance are aware of who is present. If the school is a member of a Multi Academy Trust, a representative from the Trust may be in attendance in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

A notetaker independent of matters to be discussed must also be present to take notes for management purposes.

The appeals panel will select a chairperson to chair the hearing.

The chairperson should explain the procedure to be followed prior to the commencement of the hearing to check the understanding of all present.

The chairperson may clarify the grounds of appeal prior to the commencement of the hearing.

As the employee has exercised their right of appeal, they present their grounds of appeal first.

Presentation of the employee's case

- a. The employee or their companion makes an opening address outlining their grounds of appeal.
- b. The employee will submit any new medical evidence or relevant information.
- c. The headteacher or dismissing manager/governor and the appeals panel have the opportunity to question the employee to seek clarification.

Presentation of the case against the employee

- a. The headteacher or dismissing manager/governor will address the grounds of appeal.
- b. The employee/their representative and the appeals panel have the opportunity to question the headteacher/dismissing manager to seek clarification.

Summing up and withdrawal

- a. The employee will have the opportunity to sum up their case if they wish to do so. The dismissing manager will then be given the opportunity to sum up their case.
- b. Both parties then withdraw.

The decision

- a. The appeals panel, with the Director of Children, Families & Education Services or their representative (and the Trust representative if applicable), will deliberate in private, only recalling the parties to clear points of uncertainty on evidence already given. The panel shall consider the evidence, the representations and any other medical evidence available, including such evidence which has been furnished in confidence. If recall is necessary, both parties are to return even if only one is concerned with the point giving rise to doubt.
- b. The decision will be announced at the close of the appeal hearing whenever possible. The chairperson will confirm the decision in writing to the employee within seven days of the decision.

Referral to Occupational Health

Consider referring an employee to Occupational Health when:

- continuous absence exceeds four weeks and your discussions with the employee during the ARM indicate that it seems likely to continue for a lengthy or indeterminate time - and in all cases before continuous absence exceeds six months
- an employee fails to return following pre-planned absence (e.g. after the expected recovery time for operation/treatments)
- following a Formal Review Meeting
- advice is needed concerning an employee unable to undertake full duties of their substantive post
- advice is needed concerning reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010

Referral to Occupational Health

Relevant senior manager to complete and sign the form below for all employees they wish to refer to Occupational Health.

Please note that incomplete forms, or without relevant information attached, will be returned to the school. Therefore, please ensure that the attached checklist is complete.

It is the school's responsibility to inform the employee of the referral.

-

School:

School Telephone Number:

Name and contact details (including email) for the Manager to whom the Occupational Health report should be sent:

.....

Employee Name: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Employee Address:

Employee Telephone Number:

Date of birth:

Post Title:

Date most recent/current absence began:

Date returned (if applicable)

Reason given on certificate for most recent/current absence:

Details of all relevant contact made with employee:

(Include details of any meetings, indicate whether held under Sickness Absence Procedure e.g. Attendance Review meeting etc. Include details of any relevant conversations, include dates of both and please attach a copy of any notes taken, including targets set).

Notes and outcome letters for all sickness meetings must be provided with the referral form. Please note that failure to provide these may delay the referral process.

Any further information you think may be relevant:

Brief description of job and responsibilities:

Health & Safety Hazards and Risks: Please mark X

	<i>Risk Factor</i>		
	High	Medium	Low
Manual Handling			
Physical Activity/Exertion			
Physical/Environmental Hazards			
Chemical Hazards			
Driving			
Display Screen Equipment			
Long Periods of Sitting			
Exposure to Physical Abuse			
Exposure to Verbal Abuse			

Any additional risks not covered in the above table:

Details of any reasonable adjustments currently in place:

Sickness Record Template

Please use a separate line for each certificate received

Please record ALL sickness absence in the last 2 years

Date Absent From	Date Returned	Reason given on sickness certificate/Self certificate/RTW notes

-
I confirm that all of the information required to make a referral is attached. The employee has been advised that an appointment will be arranged with Occupational Health.

Manager (managing the employee's absence)'s name:

.....

Signed:..... Manager Dated.....

Additional Comments

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Date

Dear

Invitation to an Attendance Review Meeting (ARM)

I am pleased you are now fit to return to work/I am sorry you are still unwell and hope you are beginning to feel better*. I need to write to you because your recent absence means you have hit the trigger levels for me to meet with you.

I would, therefore, like to meet with you to discuss your sickness absence. This meeting is an informal attendance review meeting in accordance with paragraph seven of the school's Sickness Absence Procedure (copy attached/already supplied to you*).

At the meeting we will discuss the number of absences and the reasons for the absence. We will explore with you whether a referral to Occupational Health would be of benefit and explore whether there is anything the school can do to support you in reducing the number of absences.

At the meeting we will agree a date to review your sickness absence record and agree future actions and any level of improvement expected.

You are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague ('a companion').

Should you not be well enough to attend, able to send a 'companion' or decide not to make a written submission, then I advise you that your absence record may be considered in your absence and any relevant action taken in accordance with the procedure. You may submit written information for my/our* consideration.

The meeting has been arranged to take place at **TIME**, on **DATE**, at **VENUE**. **(I shall be accompanied by _____)***. I do hope you are able to attend. Please confirm your attendance and/or representation and/or intention to supply written information by **DATE**.

Yours sincerely

* delete as appropriate

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Date

Dear

Record of Attendance Review Meeting (ARM)

This letter summaries the discussion we had at the Attendance Review Meeting (ARM) on **DATE**.

At this meeting we discussed your sickness absence over the past _____ months, summarised as follows:

***LIST DATES OF AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

*****(Under each of the headings/topics below insert contents of conversation in relation to this – then delete the sentence from letter)***

RECORD HOW THE EMPLOYEE IS FEELING

RECORD STEPS EMPLOYEE TAKING TO REDUCE ABSENCE/FACILITATE RETURN TO WORK

RECORD REFERRAL TO/FEEDBACK FROM OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH IF APPLICABLE (see appendix 3)

RECORD ANY ADJUSTMENTS AGREED

ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DISCUSSED

The detrimental impact of your absence on pupils, teaching and learning, colleagues and school resources was emphasised. I made it clear that the school could not continue to sustain sickness absence at this level, and that further absence could result in a more formal meeting under the procedure.

(Delete below paragraph - if school does not buy into OH EAP service)

(May I take this opportunity to remind you that you do have free access to the Spectrum.life Employee Assistance Programme helpline and counselling service, which the school subscribes to on your behalf. This may be accessed by yourself or your family and the contact number is 0808 196 2016 or you can visit the online platform <https://app.spectrum.life/login>. The organisation code is LUTON)

Target Details

The following targets for your attendance were set as follows: e.g. zero/or no more than x days on x/zero occasions over the next x months/return to work by x date with zero absences to x.

Your absence record will be reviewed in approximately three months time. Further sickness absence during this period of review may result in us moving to a formal process. The review may take place sooner if the target is not met. Please be advised that should your attendance have reached an acceptable level, your absence will continue to be monitored under the procedure for 12 months from the date of the Attendance Review meeting. Please be aware that if an unsatisfactory level of absence recurs within the 12 months, a review will take place at the formal stage of the procedure.

If there is any further, reasonable support the school can give you in order to achieve an improvement in attendance, please do not hesitate to bring it to my attention so that we might explore strategies together.

Yours sincerely

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Date

Dear

Invitation to a Formal Review Meeting

I write to request your attendance at a review meeting to consider your sickness absence since our Attendance Review Meeting on **DATE**. This meeting is a formal review meeting in accordance with the school's Sickness Absence Procedure (copy attached/already supplied to you*).

You are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague ('a companion'). Should you not be well enough to attend, or able to send representation, then I advise you that your absence record may be considered in your absence and any relevant action taken in accordance with the procedure. Should this be the case, you may submit a written representation to the meeting.

The meeting has been arranged to take place at **TIME**, on **DATE**, at **VENUE**. **(I shall be accompanied by _____)***. I do hope you are able to attend. Please confirm your attendance and/or representation by **DATE**.

Yours sincerely

* delete as appropriate

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Date

Dear

Record of satisfactory first review (following Attendance Review Meeting)*

or/

Record of satisfactory second review*

I write to confirm the outcome of the review meeting, held on **DATE**, to consider your attendance at work.

I am pleased to confirm that your attendance at work has now improved to a satisfactory level. It is, of course, very important that this improvement is sustained. In the event that this should not be the case, then the school's sickness absence procedure will again apply. If this is within twelve months of the date of the attendance review meeting/first formal review meeting*, a formal meeting under the procedure will be convened. However, I hope this will not be necessary.

May I assure you that, should your health again give you cause for concern, or if there is any reasonable support we can give you at any time then please do not hesitate to speak to me.

Yours sincerely

***delete as appropriate**

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Date

Dear

Record of Formal Review Meeting

I write to confirm the outcome of the formal review meeting, held on **DATE**, to consider further your attendance at work. I chaired the meeting and was advised by (insert name), HR Adviser. You were aware of your right to be accompanied and attended with your TU rep (insert name) or you attended unaccompanied*.

A notetaker was in attendance. A copy of the notes will follow shortly/are attached* delete as applicable.

As you are aware the meeting was convened to discuss your sickness absence record which continues to give cause for concern.

At the meeting we explored your absence since the attendance review meeting held on **DATE** as detailed below:

***LIST DATES OF AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

We also discussed the following:

*****(Under each of the headings/topics below insert contents of conversation in relation to this – then delete the sentence from letter)***

RECORD HOW THE EMPLOYEE IS FEELING

**RECORD STEPS EMPLOYEE TAKING TO REDUCE ABSENCE/FACILITATE
RETURN TO WORK**

**RECORD REFERRAL TO/FEEDBACK FROM OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH IF
APPLICABLE (see appendix 3)**

RECORD ANY ADJUSTMENTS AGREED if applicable

INSERT ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DISCUSSED

I outlined to you the fact that high levels of absence impact not only the quality of education for our pupils but also on the wider aspects of staff morale. There is also a significant financial cost to the school.

I considered carefully all that we discussed at the meeting, and I considered that the most appropriate course of actions moving forward was:

DELETE AS APPROPRIATE

*to adjourn the meeting and reconvene at a future date to obtain/wait on further medical advice from either OH or the your doctor. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as the information is available but no longer than 3 months

*to set a target to return to work on the ***** based on ***** and to then have zero/no more than x days on x/zero occasions up to *date (*end of three month review period).
AND (if appropriate) After seeking advice from Occupational it was agreed that at a phased return was appropriate due *****.

*The following targets for your attendance were set - e.g. zero/or no more than x days on x/zero occasions over the next x months/return to work by x date and zero absences to x date. Your attendance will be reviewed in three months times.

As advised at the meeting the school cannot continue to sustain this level of sickness absence. If your sickness absence continues to give cause for concern and you fail to show appropriate improvement your employment may be at risk. Failure to improve attendance would result in moving to the next stage of this process which is a second formal review meeting with the headteacher where dismissal from post is a potential outcome.

Your attendance will remain under review for 12 months from the date of this meeting. At any point during this review period, the matter could progress to a Final Review Meeting should an unsatisfactory level of absence, as per the school's trigger levels, recur. I would of course, follow this up with Occupational Health prior to the Final Review Meeting in order to be as fully informed as possible of your health situation.

I sincerely hope this will not be necessary and I again offer you any reasonable support which may contribute to an improvement in your attendance record.

Delete below paragraph if school does not buy into OH EAP service

(May I take this opportunity to remind you that you do have free access to the Spectrum.life Employee Assistance Programme helpline and counselling service, which the school subscribes to on your behalf. This may be accessed by yourself or your family and the contact number is 0808 196 2016 or you can visit the online platform <https://app.spectrum.life/login>. The organisation code is LUTON)

Thank you for your co-operation with this process.

Yours sincerely

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Date

Dear

Invitation to a Final Review Meeting – Hearing with headteacher

I write to confirm the requirement to hold a Final Review Meeting with you under the remit of the school's Sickness Absence Procedure.

This meeting will consider:

1. your absence record since our Formal Review Meeting on **DATE** which is as follows:

ADD DATES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

2. your absence record
3. the most up-to-date feedback from Occupational Health, including any GP or other medical reports.
4. your ongoing absence record and causes of concern. A copy of all correspondence and meeting records will be provided prior to the meeting.
5. the effect and impact of your absence on the school.

A possible outcome of this meeting could be your dismissal from post.

You are entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague ('a companion') to this meeting, or they may attend on your behalf. You are entitled to make a written submission for consideration at the meeting. Should you not be well enough to attend the meeting, the review may proceed in your absence.

The meeting has been arranged to take place at **TIME**, on **DATE**, at **VENUE**. I shall be accompanied by a representative of the Director of Children, Families & Education Services, Luton Borough Council (insert name of HR Adviser supporting the Head). **NAME** (insert name of Manager), will attend the meeting to present the evidence collated by the school for consideration, accompanied by **NAME** (HR Adviser supporting the manager).

If you wish to submit any written evidence or documentation and/or call witnesses to support your case at the hearing, this evidence/details must be submitted to me at least seven days prior to the hearing, that is by **DATE**.

If you have any requirements at the meeting in relation to a disability in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, please advise me as soon as possible.

I do hope you are able to attend. Please confirm your attendance and/or representation. Please confirm your attendance, or otherwise, and representation by **DATE**.

Yours sincerely

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Date

Dear

Outcome of Final Review Meeting

I write to confirm the outcome of the ill health hearing, held on **DATE**, at which the following was considered:

1. your absence record since our Formal Review Meeting on **DATE** which is as follows:

INSERT DATES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

2. your absence record over the previous 12 months
3. the most up-to-date feedback from Occupational Health, including any GP or other medical reports.
4. your ongoing absence record and causes of concern. I attach a copy of all correspondence and meeting records.
5. the effect and impact of your absence on the school.

Record what was discussed for each point. Ensure that you record both your views and that of the employee. Ensure that the following is specifically recorded.

***FEEDBACK/RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
ANY REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TRIED/DISCUSSED
ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DISCUSSED***

I explained that I had listened very carefully to what you and the reviewing manager had to say today but that, given the level of absence and the steps taken to date to support you to *reduce the level of absence/return to work**, I consider that the most appropriate outcome of the hearing is your dismissal with notice from your post as **POST TITLE**.

OR

I explained that I had listened very carefully to what you and the reviewing manager had to say today and taking account of the exceptional circumstances, my decision was not to arrive at decision today but to adjourn the hearing and reconvene on (insert date) when I will make a decision on your future employment with the School.

(Only if dismissed include the following paragraphs)

I have notified the LA of this decision and, in accordance with the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2003 they will advise you formally of this decision, in their role as employer*. *(Not applicable to VA or Foundation Schools).*

You have the right to appeal against this decision. If you wish to do so you should write to _____ (insert the name of the C.of G), the Chair of the Governing Body, at _____ (insert address for C of G) within 14 calendar days of the date you received this letter. Any appeal should include any and all issues you have in relation to any aspect of the ill health hearing.

**delete as appropriate*

Yours sincerely

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Date

Dear

Invitation to Appeal Hearing

Further to your letter, registering your appeal against the decision of the hearing panel, I write to advise you that your appeal will be heard on **DATE at TIME at VENUE**.

The Governor Appeal Panel will consist of **Name Surname**, **Name Surname** and **Name Surname**. The Panel will be advised by **NAME**, HR Adviser. The management case will be presented by **NAME**, Head teacher and he/she* will be supported by **NAME**, HR Adviser. There will also be a note taker to take notes of the hearing as a management record.

You are entitled to be represented at the Appeal Hearing by a Trade Union Representative or work colleague of your choice, but it is your responsibility to make the appropriate arrangements. It is recommended that you contact your representative as soon as possible and advise them of the date and time of the hearing.

A complete set of the documentation to be considered at the Appeal Hearing will be sent to you and to the Panel. If there is any paperwork that you wish to refer to during the course of the Appeal, if you have not already done so, you should ensure it is delivered to the school five working days prior to the Appeal Hearing and marked clearly for the attention of XXXXXX.

If you have any requirements in accordance with The Equality Act, please advise me as soon as possible.

Please confirm that you will be attending by informing XXXXXXXX at your earliest convenience.

If you should confirm your attendance and then fail to attend, without reason or for any reason considered unacceptable to the Governors, your appeal will not be heard.

If you have any queries on the content of this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Name

Chair of Board of Governors

(Insert School)

Return to work meeting

The information recorded on the form has been collected for the purpose of managing your attendance at work and in order to fulfil our duty of care to all employees. You are entitled to a copy of this form should you wish to receive one.

CONFIDENTIAL

First day of absence _____ **Date entered on Sims**

Last day of absence _____ **Date entered on Sims**

Returned to work _____ **Date entered on Sims**

Total number of working days absent: _____

Brief description of sickness/injury

Did you consult your doctor/hospital?

YES/NO

If yes, provide date seen and details:

Does this absence relate to an accident or violent incident at work?

YES/NO

Brief description of exchange

(please respect requests for confidentiality when completing this form)

Interview by: _____ **Date:** _____

Please delete as necessary

Did the employee say that the absence was due to a disability? YES/NO/DON'T KNOW

Did the employee say that the absence was pregnancy related? YES/NO/DON'T KNOW

For long-term absence, please supply dates of contact

Signed by _____
Line Manager

Declaration

I declare that I have not worked during the period of sickness, which I have stated, and that the information given is complete and correct.

I give my express consent for the data on this form to be retained on the School/Council's personal files and computer applications.

Signed by _____
Employee

Filed on personal file on

The data on this form is covered by GDPR and must be stored securely. It must not be used for any purpose other than sickness monitoring and analysis.

Final Review Meeting with the Headteacher - Contents Page

Part One

Job Description

Person Specification

Contract of Employment

Part Two

Sickness Absence Procedure

Part Three

Attendance Review Meeting invite letter

Attendance Review Meeting Outcome letter

Attendance Review Meeting Notes

Any letter confirming successful monitoring period

Formal Review Meeting invite letter

Formal Review Meeting Outcome letter

Formal Review Meeting Notes

Any letter confirming successful monitoring period

Final Review Meeting Invite letter

Part Four

Sims Print out of all sickness absence since the sickness absence process commenced

All doctors certificates

All Occupational Health Reports

Any reports from Health and Safety

All return to work forms

Part Five

Any other relevant documentation