

SICKNESS ABSENCE PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOLS CHALLNEY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

The School is committed to promoting the health and well-being 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.

Excessive absence levels can seriously impact productivity and a school's ability to produce an efficient and high quality service. This policy aims to support Headteachers and Governing Bodies to improve levels of attendance by the use of a positive, fair and consistent procedure.

This procedure applies to all staff in schools with a delegated budget and covers 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.

There will be occasions when an employee is sick and unable to attend work. (The School has a policy that an employee should not attend for work if they have an infectious disease or a contagious virus which could spread and cause major disruption to the school and its community. Any such illness should be reported direct to the Headteacher and/or the School Business Manager.

(The school does provide an Employee Assistance Programme and encourages employees to contact this service at any time, particularly if issues are impacting on their health.)

The Headteacher has delegated the responsibility for managing sickness absence, in its early stages, to the following members of staff:

Mrs Sarah Hedley, School Business Manager and Mrs Sandra Smith, HR Manager.

Please be aware that the following procedure must be followed by all employees. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and/ or non- payment of sick pay.

REPORTING ABSENCE

First day of sickness

If an employee is not fit to attend work they should contact Ms Julia White (teaching staff) or Mrs Sandra Smith (support staff) by 7.30am on the School number, 01582 571427, giving reasons for the absence and, where possible, stating how long the absence is likely to last. If the School needs to make cover arrangements it is incumbent upon the employee to update the School about their state of health on a regular basis. If the designated member of staff is not available, the employee should leave a message with their contact details so that the designated member of staff can call them back.

Unless the employees' health renders them unable to speak, the call must be made by the employee themselves. In exceptional cases where this may not be possible, their absence may be reported by a nominated third party e.g. a relative or friend.

Fourth to seventh day of absence (Self – certified sickness)

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 return.

Where an employee fails to make contact in line with the procedure, the Headteacher will take immediate action to find out why.

Sickness Absence which lasts for 8 or more days (Medically Certified Sickness)

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 to the HR Manager immediately. If an employee is still not fit to return by the time their medical certificate expires they must obtain another certificate so that their entire period of absence is covered and send this to the School at the earliest opportunity.

The Governing Body assumes the responsibility for the sickness absence of the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors, supported by a panel of Governors will take any action in respect of the Headteacher when they are absent.

If an employee returns after a long period of absence and the school is concerned about whether they are fit to return the school should contact Occupational Health.

Return to Work Interview

The School will conduct a Return to Work Interview with an employee prior to or on their return to work. This will also ensure appropriate certification documents have been provided and to consider any Fit Note which may have been issued by the GP. For teaching staff the return to work discussion will be carried out by the School Business Manager and for support staff the discussion will be carried out by the HR Manager. Dependent upon your role, you should contact the appropriate member of staff to arrange a suitable time for the discussion as soon as possible on your return to work.

The school will continue to monitor sickness absence and has set the following triggers for more formal review meetings should absence be persistent or ill health long term:

- 7 working days absence in the equivalent of a term
- 3 occasions of absence of any duration in the equivalent of a term
- when cumulative absence is 12 days in 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.

The trigger levels apply to both long and short term absence.

Attendance Review Meeting

This meeting will be an informal discussion to explore the reasons for absence and discuss support which may be provided to improve attendance at work. The employee will be informed orally and in

writing of an Attendance Review Meeting, the date and the time. If this is inconvenient the employee will be offered one alternative date. Failure to attend could result in a written statement of concern about absence levels and a review period. The employee is encouraged to call upon the advice of a trades union representative or work colleague ('companion') and/or to make a written submission. The outcome will be confirmed in writing and a period of review will be set.

First Formal Review

If the absence continues at a high rate which hits the School's triggers, the employee may be interviewed before the set review date.

The employee will be informed in writing of the date and time of the review meeting. If this is not at a convenient time there will be one further attempt to organise the meeting. Failure to attend could result in a decision being taken in the employee's absence. The employee is encouraged to call upon the advice of a companion and/or to make a written submission.

If the employee's attendance has improved he or she will be advised that it was expected that the improved attendance would continue or the procedure will be invoked again. This will be at the First Formal Review stage if deterioration is within the last year.

Should the employee's absence have continued in the same way or worsened, the purpose of the meeting will be to continue to discuss the sickness absence and reasons, and to identify any underlying reasons for sickness, and finally to make the employee aware that if there is no improvement, then consideration may have to be given to the continued employment of the employee in that job. The employee will be given a warning that failure to improve attendance in line with the targets agreed during the period of review may result in further action being taken which could result in their dismissal. The warning will remain in place for one year and attendance will remain under review during this period. At any point during this review period, the matter could progress to a second formal review.

The employee will be referred to the school's Occupational Health provider.

The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to the employee in writing, within 7 calendar days.

Second Formal Review

If the absence continues at a high rate which hits the school's triggers, the individual may be interviewed before the set review date.

The second formal review will be held by the Headteacher. The meeting will constitute a formal hearing where dismissal is a possible outcome.

The employee will be informed in writing of the date and time of the review meeting. If this is not at a convenient time there will be one further attempt to organise the meeting. Failure to attend could result in a decision being taken in the employee's absence. The employee is encouraged to call upon the advice of a companion and/or to make a written submission. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to the employee within 7 calendar days. A possible outcome is dismissal from post.

If the employee's attendance has improved he or she will be advised that it was expected that the improve attendance would continue or the procedure will be invoked again. This will be at the Second Formal Review stage if deterioration is within the last year.

Formal Hearing

Paperwork to inform the hearing will be sent to the employee and the Headteacher, if they have not been involved in the review process previously, at least 7 calendar days before the hearing. Should the employee wish to submit any documentation to inform the hearing this should be sent to the Headteacher, and the reviewing manager if applicable, at least 7 calendar days before the hearing. There will be the right of appeal to the Governing Body.

General Information

An employee who is absent from work due to ill-health is expected:

- To be at home and available to be contacted by the School, Occupational Health or Human Resources as appropriate and as agreed.
- Not to undertake any activity inconsistent with their illness or recovery
- Not to go on holiday without requesting permission from the Head Teacher
- To attend any appointments with the School's Occupational Health Adviser

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 procedure could be regarded as misconduct.

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 suitable. This is unlikely to be considered or recommended until the later stages of the procedure have been reached.

Pregnancy Related Absence

All sickness absence during a woman's pregnancy, whether pregnancy related or not are recorded and should be reported by the employee 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 will be recorded as antenatal time off.