



## HEATON ST. BARNABAS' C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

### POLICY FOR STAFF ABSENCE JANUARY 2017

#### The Principles

The Governors and Senior Management value the dedication and hard work of all staff of this school. This document is intended to provide a framework for school leaders to give consistent and fair interpretation of regulations and to ensure that the school is able to function efficiently and effectively.

It is important that any employer is aware of the health of employees and any welfare provisions that might be necessary. The procedures in this policy set out the course to be followed in respect of on-going sickness absence / absences.

#### Absence other than sickness

All staff are contracted to work at least Term Time. At this school, in the interests of fairness and equality, no paid or unpaid leave will be granted in Term Time other than those listed in the relevant Conditions of Service, or for truly exceptional circumstances.

For teaching staff national conditions of service apply (Annual pay and conditions documents)

For all school support staff conditions of service are in accordance with local agreements (Conditions of service for APT & C staff in Locally Managed Schools).

The above documents are available in school and give details of entitlements for most circumstances.

Medical Appointments should be, wherever possible, outside school time. Where this is impossible staff will need to ask the Head for leave of absence. This will normally be granted with pay provided the appointments are not too intrusive into school time. Staff have an entitlement to reasonable time off school, with pay, for breast screening or antenatal care.

The Local Authority regulations give up to one day's leave with pay to attend the funeral of a member of the immediate family. Staff should discuss the matter with the Head who has been given authority from Governors to exercise discretion in this matter.

Staff are entitled to one day leave in order to move house. This is normally granted as paid leave.

Staff are entitled to leave of absence to attend for interview for other paid positions. However, if this is to be paid leave, the total of school days missed must not exceed 4 days in any one period of twelve months. This is far more generous than the LA/national requirements.

Visits to schools prior to taking up a new position is by negotiation with the Head but should not normally exceed one school day.

The sickness of family members can cause problems and staff can expect up to three days of leave in any twelve months to be given with pay. More than this is by negotiation but normally will not be paid.

Where a religious festival falls on a school day, one day of absence will be allowed for religious observance

Work with examination boards must be discussed with the Head before any agreement is made to moderate or mark if this is likely to require absence from school. The school policy is that such examination work gives beneficial experience to the teacher and is to be encouraged.

## **SICKNESS ABSENCE**

The school is concerned for the health and welfare of the staff and seeks to protect the health & safety of staff by maintaining a sound working environment free from danger.

School leaders will ensure that when illness or injury occurs paid leave is given in accordance with the applicable conditions of service regulations. The school expects staff to:

- Care for their own health;
- Seek medical help whenever appropriate;
- To attend for work whenever able to do so;
- To keep the Headteacher (or other nominated person) fully informed if they are unable to attend.

### **The Head teacher (Or Other Nominated Member of Staff) Will Have Responsibility For:**

- Monitoring sickness absence;
- Making staff aware of this procedure;
- Ensuring staff awareness of the associated reporting arrangements.

## **The Procedure**

### **Reporting Absence**

Staff must ensure that their absence is notified to the Headteacher (or nominated person) at the earliest opportunity stating:

- The reason for their absence;
- What steps they are taking to assist recovery
- When they expect to attend work again, if known.

If the absence appears to be work related the Headteacher will ensure that:

- Any health & safety reporting requirements have been met;
- Occupational Health have been involved if appropriate;
- Where necessary, any remedial action is taken.

### **Return to Work following any absence**

When a member of staff returns to work after any absence they must report their return to their line manager and discuss the reason for absence. The conversation should ascertain that the employee is fit for work; if any temporary adjustment to duties is appropriate; whether or not any further steps are appropriate to reduce the risk of recurrence of the illness.

Line managers must ensure that the Headteacher (or a named person) is aware of any adjustments/action necessary and they are then responsible for ensuring that this is implemented.

The member of staff is responsible for working in accordance with the outcomes of the return to work interview.

Any recommendations of the employee's doctor included in the fitness for work note will be considered by the school and where deemed necessary by the Head Teacher and/or Chair of Governors or named governor a second opinion will be sought from the school's occupational health provider

### **Informal Absence Review**

This stage applies when an employee has had:

- Either: 15 or more working days absence due to sickness in the preceding 12 months;

Or

- 3 absences due to sickness of whatever length within the preceding 6 months.

The Headteacher (or nominated person) must inform the employee that this stage in the procedure has been triggered.

In the case of continuous absence the Headteacher, or nominated person, must confirm the reason for the absence.

The Headteacher (or nominated person) must check with them whether or not there is a good prospect of recovery or return to work in no more than a week's time (in which case there may be no need for further action)

The Headteacher (or nominated person) must check whether any facilities or actions are necessary to help speed the return, reference to any 'fit' note should be made. If any are identified these should be considered.

The Headteacher (or nominated person) must inform the employee that any absence beyond the further week will need to be considered under the formal absence review procedure.

The Headteacher (or nominated person) must, in the case of repeated absences, discuss with the employee whether there are underlying factors causing the absences and whether or not there is anything that either employee or employer can do to minimise the chance of repeated absences.

### **Formal Absence Review**

This stage applies where the situation continues beyond the provisions of the informal stage above.

A representative nominated by the Headteacher must hold, if possible, a formal absence review meeting with the employee (this could be by home visit, with the employee's agreement). The purpose of the meeting is:

For continued absence:

- To explore the possibilities of a return to work and how workloads can be handled, reference should be made to any 'fit' note where appropriate.
- To consider and put into action reasonable adaptations that may be made to assist return.
- Where there is continuing concern and there is either dispute between the employee and their GP, or the 'fit' to work recommendations are considered inappropriate the employee should be asked to agree to a referral to the Occupational Health Service.

For repeated absences:

- To alert the employee to the difficulties caused by their absences.
- To identify any underlying cause for the absences, referring as appropriate to any 'fit' note.
- Where such cause might be work related, to make reasonable adaptations to the job/premises.

- To consider referral to the Occupational Health Service to obtain a second opinion in addition to any 'fit' note.

**The employee must be told that this is the first formal stage of the absence monitoring procedure.**

In both cases a date for a review meeting should be set (perhaps one month later). At this meeting the reviewer will decide:

That:

The employee's return to work / level of attendance is satisfactory, and the procedure can be halted at this stage but may resume if a similar level of absence recurs within one year.

Or:

To arrange a further review meeting before the employee's sick leave expires where the Occupational Health Service envisages a return to work.

Or:

To give the employee a formal written notification that attendance is unsatisfactory and that the matter will progress to the next stage, final absence review, of the procedure.

The employee can appeal this decision, within one week of receiving it, to the Headteacher (if not the reviewer), or to a nominated governor who is not a member of the dismissal or appeal committee of the governing body.

Where an appeal is upheld a further review meeting will be set and the procedure will be resumed at the formal stage.

**Final Absence Review**

This stage applies where the employee has either no prospect of return within their period of paid sick leave or has an unacceptable continued absence or pattern of absences calling into question their capability to carry out the requirements of their employment.

The Headteacher or their nominee will where possible hold a meeting with the employee to consider the prospects of the employee's return to work / an acceptable level of attendance. Where he/she is not satisfied that the employee will achieve this within a reasonable time (perhaps one month), he/she will:

- Explore the possibilities of redeployment / reducing responsibility etc.
- Further consider any adaptations to the job or premises that will help the employee.
- Ensure that any reasonable adaptations are made:
- Set a review period (perhaps one month) within which time a return to work / acceptable level of attendance is achieved:
- Set the date for a further review meeting.

If the employee has returned to work and an acceptable level of attendance has been achieved, the procedure can be halted at this stage but may be resumed if a similar level of absence recurs within one year. The employee must have complied with the recommendations of their doctor included on any fitness to work note and/or the school's occupational health provider

Where the employee has not returned to work / achieved an acceptable level of attendance by the time of the follow-up meeting, the reviewer can give a final warning in writing. This should state that the situation is unacceptable and that the case will be passed to the governors for consideration by their dismissal committee, unless the necessary improvement is achieved within a specified period (perhaps one-month).

- The employee can appeal this decision, within one week of receiving it, to the Headteacher (if not the reviewer, or to a nominated governor who is not a member of the dismissal committee or appeal committee of the governing body.
- Where such appeal is upheld a date for further review will be set and the procedure will be resumed at the final stage.

## **Consideration of Dismissal**

Any such consideration will be by the Dismissal Committee of the governing body and will be in accordance with the Dispute Resolution Regulations 2009.

The grounds for consideration will be that the employee is incapable of fulfilling their duties by reason of continued absence / absences following a final warning under this procedure.

The proceedings for the dismissal committee will be as under the school's disciplinary procedure. The rights to appeal for the employee will be as set out for the school's disciplinary procedure.

*This policy is based on CEFM's original policy but adapted / amended for use by Heaton St Barnabas School.*