



Absence Management Policy **(Including leave of absence (planned absence requests))**

Introduction

The school understands that employees may, at times, require time off due to sickness. Whilst the School wishes to support the good health and welfare of employees, business needs and operational planning also need to be managed.

Scope

This policy outlines the procedures which will be followed where continued short periods of unrelated absence occurs and how the employer and employee can work together to manage attendance levels.

This attendance procedure is entirely non-contractual and does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The School may also vary this attendance procedure as appropriate in any individual case.

Reporting sickness absence

Employees must notify the Deputy Headteacher by email/via telephone / any appropriate means (deputy@ahsprep.co.uk) as soon as they are aware they will be absent for any reason by 7.00am at the latest on the first day of absence. If after 6.30am, you must leave a voicemail on the School Office telephone (020 8504 1749) instead of emailing the Deputy Head directly. The likely duration of the absence should be given if possible. The Deputy Head will arrange cover as necessary. A note of the absence will be put on the iSAMS daily bulletin so all staff are aware of absences.

Employees must then email the Deputy Head each morning they are unable to return to school unless a doctor's certificate supporting sickness absence has been received by the school.

In the case of severe sickness or accident, a third party may report the absence. However, contact from the employee will be expected at the soonest practicable moment. Further guidance on this is in the School Handbook.

Failure to make contact and advise of an absence could result in disciplinary action for unauthorised absence in line with the School's Disciplinary Policy.

Going home sick during the working day

Where an employee leaves work part way through their day, if they leave after completing 50% of their working hours, that absence would be recorded as half a day sickness absence.

Where the employee leaves work before completing 50% of their working day, that day would be noted down as absence from the time they leave / as an absent day.

Infectious or contagious illness

Employees who have an infectious or contagious illness must report this to the Welfare Administrator immediately to ensure Health and Safety requirements are followed. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action for gross misconduct.

Managing minor attendance issues

Minor attendance concerns will be dealt with informally through return-to-work interviews. Informal discussions may be held with a view to clarifying the required attendance levels expected of the employee, establishing the likely causes of unsatisfactory attendance, setting targets for improvement and agreeing a timescale for review.

Formal Absence Management Process

This attendance procedure does not apply to any employee who has been employed by the School for less than two years.

In cases where informal discussion with the employee does not lead to a satisfactory improvement in their attendance, or where the unsatisfactory attendance issues are more serious, such as where the employee has been absent on a number of unrelated occasions in a short period of time, this formal attendance procedure will be used.

Investigation

At all stages of the procedure, an investigation will be carried out in order for the School to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts relating to the employee's unsatisfactory attendance issues, before deciding whether to proceed with an absence management meeting.

The Company will monitor certain trigger points which will start formal discussions with employees regarding their attendance levels. For example; Three absences over a 6-month period / Two absences over a 4 months period etc.

Employees must cooperate fully and promptly in any investigation. This will include attending investigatory meetings if required.

Formal Attendance Management Disciplinary Meeting

Following any investigation, if the School considers there are grounds for formal attendance management, it will notify the employee in writing of the concerns over their unsatisfactory attendance levels and will invite them to an absence management meeting to discuss the matter.

The School will provide sufficient information about the employee's unsatisfactory attendance record and its possible consequences to enable them to prepare to answer the case. This will include the provision of copies of written evidence where appropriate.

All employees must treat as confidential any information or evidence communicated to them in connection with an investigation or absence management matter.

Having given the employee reasonable time to prepare their case, a formal absence management meeting will then take place, conducted by a senior member of staff, at which the employee will be given the chance to state their case, accompanied if requested by a trade union official or a fellow employee of their choice. The employee must make every effort to attend the meeting. If the employee fails to attend without good reason, or is persistently unable to do so, the School may have to take a decision based on the available evidence.

The purposes of the absence management meeting include:

- to discuss the reasons for, and the impact of, persistent short-term sickness absence and the likely causes of the employee's unsatisfactory attendance record
- to determine the likelihood of further absences
- to set out the required levels of attendance that the School considers the employee has not met
- to consider whether medical advice or evidence is required (or to consider any medical advice or evidence that has been received)
- to allow the employee the opportunity to explain their unsatisfactory attendance record and to ask any relevant questions.

Except in the case where dismissal is proposed, the purposes of the absence management meeting also include:

- to discuss what, if any, measures may improve the employee's general health or attendance levels
- to set targets for improvement
- to set a reasonable timescale for review (reflecting the circumstances of the case).

In a case where dismissal is proposed, the purposes of the absence management meeting will also include:

- to establish whether there is any reasonable likelihood of the required levels of attendance being achieved within a reasonable time
- to consider the possibility of termination of employment
- to discuss whether there is any practical alternative to dismissal, such as redeployment (with the employee's agreement) to any suitable available job at the same or lower grade either as a reasonable adjustment for a disability or to otherwise improve attendance levels.

If, at any time, the School considers that an employee has taken sickness absence when they are not ill or unwell, i.e. the sickness absence is not genuine, or they have falsely claimed sick pay or there is any other suspected misconduct relating to sickness absence,

the matter will instead be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure for unauthorised absence or other gross misconduct.

Please note that it is prohibited for employees to record (whether covertly or otherwise) the proceedings at the absence management meeting, and at any appeal meeting, without the express permission of the School.

Following the absence management meeting, the School will decide whether or not formal action is justified and, if so, the employee will be informed in writing of the School's decision in accordance with the stages set out below and notified of their right to appeal against that decision.

Stage 1: First Written Warning

The employee will be given a formal Written Warning. This will set out the employee's unsatisfactory attendance record (including the dates and duration of absences over the initial assessment period), targets for improvement, any support that the School is providing or will provide for the employee, a timescale for review and the likely consequences of failing to improve to the required attendance levels within the review period. The written warning will be recorded but nullified after six months, subject to satisfactory attendance.

The employee's attendance record will be monitored and, at the end of the review period, the School will write to the employee to advise them of the next step.

If the School is satisfied with the employee's attendance levels, no further action will be taken. If the School is not satisfied with the employee's attendance levels, the matter may be progressed to Stage 2 or, if the School feels that there has been a substantial but insufficient improvement, the review period may be extended.

Stage 2: Final Written Warning

Failure to improve attendance in response to the procedure so far will result in a Final Written Warning being issued. This will set out the employee's continuing unsatisfactory attendance record (including the dates and duration of absences over the review period), targets for improvement, any support that the School is providing or will provide for the employee, a further timescale for review and the likely consequences of failing to improve to the required attendance levels within the further review period, i.e. that dismissal will probably result.

The final written warning will be recorded but nullified after twelve months, subject to satisfactory attendance.

The employee's attendance record will again be monitored and, at the end of the further review period, the School will write to the employee to advise them of the next step. If the School is satisfied with the employee's attendance levels, no further action will be taken. If the School is not satisfied with the employee's attendance levels, the matter may be progressed to Stage 3 or, if the School feels that there has been a substantial but

insufficient improvement, the review period may be extended.

Stage 3: Dismissal

Failure to sufficiently improve attendance in response to the procedure so far will normally lead to DISMISSAL, with appropriate notice. A dismissal decision will only be made after the fullest possible investigation. Dismissal can be authorised only by a senior member of staff or a Director. The employee will be informed of the reasons for dismissal, the appropriate period of notice, the date on which their employment will terminate and how the employee can appeal against the dismissal decision.

Appeals

An employee may appeal against any decision under this attendance procedure, including dismissal, to a senior member of staff within five working days of the decision.

Appeals should be made in writing and state the full grounds for appeal. The employee will be invited to attend an appeal meeting and will again be given the chance to state their case. The employee will also have the right to be accompanied by a trade union official or a fellow employee of their choice.

Following the meeting, the employee will be informed in writing of the appeal decision. The School may confirm the original decision, revoke the original decision or substitute a different penalty. The School's decision on an appeal will be final.

If the appeal is against dismissal, the date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be removed and the employee will be reinstated with no loss of continuity or pay.

Disability and Long-term Sickness Absences

At all stages the School will give consideration to whether the employee's unsatisfactory attendance record is related to a disability and, if so, whether there are any reasonable adjustments that could be made to either the requirements of the employee's job or other aspects of the working arrangements to improve attendance or to the trigger points for taking action under this attendance procedure.

The School will also seek to understand if the absences are related to a medical condition and may seek to obtain medical records.

Planned absences:

Staff requiring special leave of absence in term time, for funerals, family care, urgent medical appointments that cannot take place outside working hours etc, should submit to the Bursar an Application for Special Leave of Absence Form available in the Templates folder in the T Drive (appendix 1). This will then be given to the Head Teacher for consideration and the member of staff will be notified of the outcome (this leave may be granted but unpaid).

The School will grant up to two days per academic year of paid special leave at the discretion of the Head Teacher for requests that include (but not limited to):

Circumstances	Provision/Details	Maximum allocation in a year	Paid or Unpaid
Bereavement (partners or close family members only)	- Normally 1 day (but up to 5 depending on circumstances) Headteacher should consider: - The nature of the relationship - Whether the employee is responsible for making the funeral arrangements, etc. - The impact on the employee Note: Time off may also be considered to attend the funeral of a work colleague.	10 days if multiple bereavements	Paid
Close Family Weddings	Close family weddings of Mother, Father and siblings will allow one day paid. Any other family weddings will be granted unpaid at the Headteacher's discretion.	1 Day	Paid
Serious Illness or Accident involving close family member	- Normally 1 day's paid special leave may be granted - The feasibility of flexible working arrangements (e.g. remote working) will be taken into account	3 days	Paid

Primary School children events in school	For nativities, sports days and any other school events	n/a	Up to two days paid per academic year
Emergency care for child or other dependent	Reasonable time off to deal with unexpected problems and to make arrangements for resolving (e.g. breakdown in childcare arrangements)	n/a	Up to two days paid per academic year
Other domestic emergency (e.g. flooding, burglary)	Special unpaid leave may be granted to deal with the immediate emergency only (e.g. making property secure) or consider remote working.	n/a	Unpaid
Doctors, hospital, dental, optical appointments	- Should be taken outside of work hours wherever possible. If this is not practicable, appointments should be made in liaison with the Headteacher. Where possible, staff must provide an appointment letter or card or text message print screen when requesting time off for medical appointments. - Staff appointments may not be granted if less than 7 working days' notice is given. - Unauthorised absence to attend appointments may result in disciplinary action. - If a series of appointments cannot be taken out of work hours, manager and employee to agree making the time up or unpaid leave	n/a	At the School's sole discretion, paid or unpaid time off for appointments may be given, or hours offset to accommodate appointments.
Cancer screening appointments	Appointments for health screenings (e.g. cervical, breast, prostate cancer)	n/a	Paid

	Headteacher's approval must be obtained in advance.		
Blood donors	Should be arranged outside of work/core hours. If the donation service does not operate outside of the employee's core work time, up to one-hour additional paid time may be granted.	n/a	Paid
Cosmetic	None. Must be taken from annual leave	n/a	n/a
Fertility and IVF treatment	Appointments for Fertility and IVF treatment) should be arranged outside of the employee's core hours using annual and/or make up time wherever possible. Where this is not possible, unpaid special leave may be granted. Approval from the manager must be obtained in advance	n/a	Unpaid
Redundancy/redeployment	Reasonable time will be granted to attend interviews	n/a	2 day paid per year, any additional days unpaid (and granted at the sole discretion of the headteacher)
Religious festivals and religious observance	Employees who wish to take time off for religious festivals must use their annual leave in the first instance. If they do not have sufficient annual leave they may apply for unpaid leave.	n/a	1 day paid and 1 day Unpaid
Public appointments (e.g. School Governor, Justice of the Peace, Member of a local authority)	All public appointments must be discussed with the Headteacher and should be declared as a non-pecuniary interest in	12 days	Paid

	accordance with the Code of Conduct • Employees must notify their manager in advance of any known attendance requirements for the public appointment which may occur during their working hours and seek agreement for special leave to attend • Where public duties cannot be undertaken outside of the employee's working hours, paid special leave may be granted		
Parliamentary candidates	• Unpaid leave may be granted to support an employee who has been adopted as a parliamentary candidate to devote time to their election campaign. • Unpaid leave may be granted for any specified time from the start of the election campaign up to the date of the election.	n/a	Unpaid
Reservists	• Employees should seek permission from the Headteacher before volunteering for service as a reservist. • Reservists may, on application to the Headteacher be granted one week's special leave with pay to attend summer camps. Additional time off must be taken as part of annual leave entitlement or as unpaid leave (up to one week).	10 days	Paid
Special Constables	• Employees considering applying to be Special	n/a	n/a

	Constables should discuss this with their manager. No special leave will be granted. Employees must use annual leave.		
Jury service/court summons	The amount received is recoverable from the employee on proof of the "Receipt of Loss of Earnings". Managers of employees called for jury service must complete and send the Jury Service Witness Summons Form to the Bursar immediately. - The employee should give their manager as much notice as possible of the dates when they are required to attend. The manager should advise the employee if they are expected to return to duty for full or half days where reasonably practicable for any periods where they are not required to attend at court. - If an employee fails to make a claim for loss of earnings or does not notify the Bursar of the amount they have received from the Court, then an amount equal to the maximum receivable for the period of their attendance will be deducted from their pay. - Employees released early from jury service must inform their manager immediately, or report to their normal place of work at the earliest opportunity.	n/a	Paid
Study/Examination Leave	If an employee has been funded by the School to	3 days	Paid

	study for a recognised qualification, or where the course of study is of direct benefit to their work with the School, then the SLT may grant them ½ days paid leave per subject/paper to prepare for examinations, which form part of the qualification. This is in addition to the paid leave granted to sit the examination		
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Appendix 1- (Special Leave of Absence during term time form)



Application for Special Leave of Absence during term time

This document is confidential and will be shared with the Head Teacher and members of senior management as appropriate. The school reserves the right to decline leave of absence requests.

NAME:		
CLASS:		
AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:		
Date when leave is required:		
FROM	TO:	TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS OFF:
Please specify if cover is required, if so, what lessons etc.		
REASON FOR ABSENCE:		
Employee's Signature:	Date:	

ACTION TAKEN:	
Paid Leave:	Unpaid Leave:
Head Teacher's Signature:	Date:

If this leave of absence is granted, it could be withdrawn at short notice on the grounds of school events such as inspection.

**Data protection**

The School will ensure that all information relating to an employee during this process will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Continuing to work together

The School will continue to work constructively with employees to support their attendance levels, health and wellbeing, and will deal with each individual case with sensitivity and fairness.

Reviewed August 2020 SFBC

Reviewed August 2021 SFBC

Reviewed August 2022 SFBC

Reviewed August 2023 SFBC

Reviewed August 2024 SFBC

Reviewed November 2024 JW

Reviewed December 2024 JW

Reviewed August 2025 SFBC