



## **Supporting and Managing Attendance Policy**

**Status: Statutory**

**Member of Staff responsible: Principal and Chair of Governors**

**Associated Policies and documentation:**

- **Equal Opportunities - Staff**
- **Health & Safety**
- **National Teacher Standards**
- **Safeguarding & Child Protection**
- **Staff Handbook**
- **Stress Management Policy**

**Implementation Date:** September 2013

**Review Date:** Sept 2021

**Next Review Date:** Sept 2022

## **Supporting and Managing Attendance Policy Statement**

**The aim of this policy is to ensure that all absences related to ill-health are reported, recorded, monitored and managed in a fair and consistent manner.**

The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that all employees have a safe and healthy working environment, which minimises any contribution to ill-health or injury.

It is the Trust's aim to support employees who may experience periods of absence, however, the Trust must also endeavour to ensure that any non-attendance is managed effectively in order to minimise the disruption to students, the business and also to colleagues.

Employees who are absent from work should follow reporting procedures. Absence should be reported in a timely manner, normally by the usual time that the employee commences work. Communication between employee and manager thereafter should be appropriate to ensure that both the manager and employee are kept informed.

Records of sickness absence may be retained manually or electronically. Confidentiality will be respected at all times by all parties involved in the handling of absence information. Routine monitoring of both absence frequency and the overall amount of absence will be undertaken for all employees.

Occupational health provision is available to support both employees and their managers in issues such as prognosis for return to work, support/adjustments on return to work, lifestyle advice, redeployment, ill health termination and ill health/early retirements.

An employee will normally be referred to Occupational Health following frequent absence, significant length of absence or a combination of both, or when the reason for absence suggests that intervention is immediately appropriate, for example work related stress. The Trust also has a Stress Management Policy that should be read in conjunction with this policy.

The Trust also offers support to employees through a confidential counselling service. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is currently provided by an external organisation.

Where absence is such that the employee's attendance record falls below acceptable standards, the disciplinary policy may be invoked. Where an employee's attendance record falls below acceptable standards and is or is likely arising from a disability the Trust will seek advice from HR at Sheffield College on Supporting and Managing Disability in the Workplace.

# Supporting and Managing Attendance in the Workplace Procedure

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## **1. Introduction**

This procedure provides detail for implementation of the Trust's Policy for Supporting and Managing Attendance.

The aim of this procedure and associated policy is to ensure that all absences are reported, recorded, monitored and managed in a consistent manner.

Absences that are not linked to sickness absence are covered by other Trusts policies, e.g. requests for a leave of absence in term time.

## **2. Absence reporting and recording**

### **Notification of sickness absence**

The Trust has a clearly published process for sickness notification which must be followed.

Notification should, wherever practicable, be as early as possible and not normally after your scheduled start time unless there is a genuine reason for delay. Where the absence is due to an injury sustained by an accident at work, employees must provide details at the time of notification of absence and ensure UTCs health and safety reporting procedures have been followed.

Line managers / the Principal should record any incidents where you are taken ill whilst at work and subsequently leave work part way through the day.

Should you become sick during the course of annual leave, you shall be regarded as being on annual leave unless a fit note is provided for part or all of the said period.

### **On-going Communication between you and your manager**

You should ensure that your Line Manager remains informed of your progress and the anticipated duration of absence, indicating wherever possible a return to work date. The frequency and nature of such communication may vary according to the circumstances and should be agreed by both yourself and your Line Manager.

In addition, your Line Manager should normally ensure appropriate contact with you in order to monitor progress, ensure current work is managed and subject to the nature of the illness, provide you with relevant information.

Where your Line Manager is persistently unable to make contact with you whilst you are absent from work, the Business & Operations Director must be informed immediately and consideration will be given on what, if any, further action should be taken. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for contact to be between your line manager and your representative/ nominated person.

Where an absence is more than seven consecutive days (including non-working days and weekends) you are required to obtain a fit note from your General Practitioner (GP) and forward to the Business & Operations Director (care of the PA in each UTC) without delay.

If you chose to return to work or work from home whilst in receipt of a current medical certificate (now known as a fit note) detailing you as unfit for work, you must ensure that you have a return to work meeting with your manager to assess any risk.

In the event that you are absent in relation to an accident involving a third party e.g. car accident, it is necessary that you communicate this when giving notification of absence. In the event that you are able to seek compensation from the third party, the said claim must include the reimbursement of sick pay, which should then be repaid to the Trust.

If at any time it becomes known, that the Trust's attendance management procedure has been abused, Line Managers must contact the Business & Operations Director (who will liaise with HR at Sheffield College if necessary) to discuss what, if any, action should be taken.

### **3. Management of Sickness Absence**

#### **Management of short term absence**

Line Managers are responsible for:-

- Recording sickness absence in accordance with the established procedures
- Prioritising and re-allocating workloads of absent employees
- Facilitating a 'return to work' interview with the member of staff. This should be conducted in a confidential manner, offering support and assistance, particularly when there have been a number of absences in a short period of time and also where the diagnosis or pattern of absence is consistent. Where necessary this may also entail referral to Occupational Health for clarification on fitness for work.
- Monitor and review as necessary

#### **Management of long term absence**

Long term absence is normally referred to as a period of 4 or more continuous weeks. Where such an absence has occurred or is likely to occur the Business & Operations Director will inform HR at Sheffield College without delay in order for an Occupational Health Appointment to be booked.

The Occupational Health Adviser (OHA) in consultation with you will provide the advice about possible supportive frameworks which the manager in consultation with the member of staff will agree. This information will be provided in a report form to the Business & Operations Director and Sheffield College HR.

If the OHA indicates that you are not able to fully return to work either in the near future or at all, then the following options may be considered:

- Changes to duties
- Changes to work pattern
- Whether alternative work is available

Where the change becomes permanent you will be expected to accept any reduction in earnings.

Where there appears to be no possibility of return to work in the foreseeable future, consideration will be given to either ill-health early retirement (subject to the terms and conditions of the relevant pension scheme) or ill-health termination of employment. These cases would be seen as a last resort when all other possibilities have been exhausted.

The procedure for ill-health termination should follow a similar procedure to that in the disciplinary procedure, specifically the need for an investigation of the facts and a formal meeting. However, the stages of disciplinary warnings do not apply and there is the potential to move straight to dismissal with notice.

#### **Requests to take annual leave during long term absence**

You are legally allowed to request to take annual leave as part of long-term absence. Such requests must be made in writing to the Business & Operations Director.

## **4. Support Programmes**

### **Occupational Health service**

The Trust has access to an occupational health provision which acts as an advice avenue to employees and management. You will be expected to engage with the OHA if you are referred by your manager.

### **Occupational Health Referral**

Line Managers should liaise with the Business & Operations Director who will contact HR at Sheffield College in order to facilitate a referral of an employee. However, the following circumstances would normally require a referral to the OHA:-

- An accident at work resulting in on-going difficulties or a notifiable disease.
- Where an employee has been off on long term sickness absence
- Where an employee is off work with stress or depression
- Where an employee has repeated intermittent sickness absence (four occasions in any 12 month period or three occasions in any six month period)
- Where you are concerned about particular aspects of an employee's health in relation to their ability to do their job.
- During return to work discussion, your manager feels the reason for absence requires investigation in relation to health or wellbeing.

### **Self-referral**

Any employee may request an appointment with the OHA. However, such requests need to be made via the Business & Operations Director. You would not be expected to disclose any medical information at the request stage. However, the reason for referral should be a health related problem affecting performance or attendance at work. A management report will be provided to the Business & Operations Director and HR. If the reason for self-referral is a personal issue rather than a work related health issue, it is recommended that you use the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) instead.

### **Occupational health advice to Managers**

Occupational health advice shall be provided to Line Managers, the employee and the relevant HR contacts in report form which will cover all relevant information and provide appropriate advice.

### **Employee Assistance Programme**

The Trust has access to a confidential counseling service, available to all employees, through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

## **5. Return to work**

Once you are aware that you will be returning to work, you should inform your Line Manager or Business & Operations Director so that any necessary work related arrangements can be made.

After each period of sickness absence you must co-operate to enable a return to work discussion, which should be arranged and conducted by your Line Manager, ideally on your first day back at work. The nature of this discussion will depend on the length of absence and absence history e.g. however it is usual to discuss the reasons for your absence, whether you visited your GP, whether there is likely to be any after effects from your absence.

At your return to work discussion your manager may set a date for a review within a realistic timeframe or make a referral to Occupational Health. A stress risk assessment may be carried out depending upon the nature of absence from work.

## **6. Monitoring of Attendance**

The current method for monitoring is based on frequency of absences. Employees who fall below the acceptable standards (**four occasions in any 12 month period or three occasions in any six month period**) will normally be referred to Occupational Health, and in some cases, where necessary, the disciplinary process may be invoked. In most cases a formal investigatory meeting will not be required as this will merely be a collection of data from return to work discussions, absence records and Occupational Health advice.

## **7. Occupational Sickness Payments Scheme**

The Trust operates an enhanced Occupational Sickness payment Scheme as detailed in your contract of employment.