Our Lady of Grace MAT

"Achieving Excellence Through Faith, Collaboration and Opportunity"

Staff Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure Expectations

An Overview For All Leadership & Staff

September 2025/2026-September 2026/2027

The Purpose of our Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure

- ✓To establish a clear and transparent framework for the effective management of staff sickness absence
- ✓To take into account and address the wellbeing of employees at any level contending with real ill-health of any form, while balancing this with the reality and the requirements of the Academy Trust Company to deliver continuous effective education to its pupils daily.
- ✓ To promote honest and constructive discussions surrounding staff illness and its attendant impact on school operations on the ground.
- ✓The Policy aids the Academy Trust with its commitment to provide a supportive working environment for all employees.
- ✓To ensure respect, objectivity and the dignity of treatment of each individual staff who falls ill, ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of this policy.
- ✓This commitment extends to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination throughout the schools in the Academy Trust group.
- ✓Track sickness absence trends

KEY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Academy Trust will:

- ✓Never ignore sickness absence
- ✓Always monitor sickness absence
- ✓Ensure that short term absences do not go unnoticed and are treated with the same seriousness as long term illness
- ✓Take swift, supportive action if the absence is work related
- ✓Keep accurate, up to date, employee attendance records (sign in logs etc.)
- ✓Handle attendance problems promptly and sensitively, in a supportive manner
- ✓Develop and maintain an atmosphere that encourages people to come to work daily and cover their remit fully
- ✓Ensure that employee wellbeing is monitored and that an atmosphere is developed in which employee wellbeing is given due importance (both those on the job and those off and ill)
- ✓ Deal with each member of staff as an individual
- ✓ Treat all staff fairly and consistently – apply policy and procedures to all
- ✓ Keep the Academy's staff sickness absence rate under strict monitoring and review
- ✓ Seek support and advice from its HR provider, Occupational Health and the Diocesan Schools Commission, as and where appropriate.

In Observing Employee Obligations & Expectations All Employees Must:

- ✓**Always be in attendance at work when fit to do so** covering your obligation to support teaching and learning, safeguarding and Health and Safety of children
- ✓**Comply with the Academy Trust /school's sickness notification procedure** –call, email, text Phase Lead, HT or Office within the agreed time frames to report illness and return to work
- ✓**Always seek medical advice and treatment where appropriate**, ensure that it is received as quickly as possible in order to facilitate a return to work causing as little disruption to school operations as possible
- ✓T**ake and follow the medical advice and treatment offered** by medical practitioners/ professionals to return to good health as quickly as is possible.
- ✓**Keep in regular touch** (consistent with your school's procedures) by Informing your Headteacher, Phase Lead or Line Manager as soon as you know you will be out due to illness within the set times
- ✓**Report any significant developments affecting the period of absence** to indicate your progress and your estimated return time to the school to the HT, Phase Leaders and or Office.
- ✓**Attend all medical appointments set**, (including Occupational Health appointments as required) Inform the Headteacher , Phase Lead, Line Manager immediately of any side effects or developments associated with your health condition and/or medication that could have an impact on your suitability to work with children.

All Staff Are Required To Follow Correct Sickness Absence Reporting Procedures

- ✓As soon as you are aware that you will be absent from work, you must contact the Academy Trust/school in accordance with sickness reporting procedures.
- ✓ If you do not report for work and you have not explained the reason for your absence then you should expect to be contacted by either telephone, email, letter or text by your Phase Lead/ Line Manager or HT/DHT to get the reason for absence.
- ✓Failure to make contact in the agreed time frame may lead to your absence being unauthorised and or unpaid
- ✓Ensure that you provide a doctor's note to cover your absence in the stipulated time frame
- ✓Excepting in unavoidable cases (serious accidents or emergencies etc.) you should contact the school personally and not ask third parties (such as members of your family or friends) to inform the school on your behalf.
- ✓If your absence is the result of an accident or an injury sustained at work then this information must be made known to HT,DHT,DSL or Phase Lead . You should indicate if the incident has been reported, when it was reported and to whom and ensure that it is recorded.
- ✓Those writing reports regarding accident/injury at work must verify the factual details surrounding the incident as much as is practicable with HT/DHT as these incidences can have serious implications for all parties concerned.

Return To Work Procedures For Staff May Be Held

- ✓**After Every Absence** your Phase Lead/Line Manager (or HT/DHT) will welcome you back to work within three Working Days of your return and discuss with you:
- ✓**To Establish the reasons for your absence**
- ✓Whether the appropriate notification(s)/ paper work was provided (Doctor's notes/ contacts) within the stipulated time frames
- ✓**To Establish Your fitness to work**; and whether there are any issues which require particular support from the Academy Trust /School which may include a phased return to work, risk assessments or reasonable adjustments where relevant.
- ✓**To Set Up Possible Phased returns** where relevant, taking into account the impact/ circumstances for their institution. Leaders must establish stipulated time frames within which phased returns should sit
- ✓**A record of return to work discussions will be placed on your personnel file** and you will be provided with an opportunity to provide details/comments written on the record of the return to work discussion form prior to it being included in your personnel file.
- ✓**Your line manager (or other appointed person)** may use the return to work discussion as an opportunity to bring you up to date with developments within the School/Academy Trust during your absence.
- ✓**It is anticipated that a return to work discussion will normally last up to 15 minutes or more dependent on the nature of the illness**- but this is an indication only, as time is relevant to the case and circumstances

Persistent Intermittent Absences and Trigger Points

- ✓ **Persistent intermittent sickness absence can be defined as frequent short-term absences from work that are normally sporadic** and attributable to minor ailments, in many cases such periods of absence are unconnected. If periods of persistent intermittent sickness absence are for the same illness, a referral to Occupational Health may be required.
- ✓ **Managerial problems can be created by the frequency of persistent intermittent absences.** The reasons behind persistent intermittent absences should always be investigated as such absences can only be addressed effectively through proper monitoring systems and effective management action.

Review or Trigger Points

- ✓ **When the following review points are reached, the Academy Trust /School will consider whether a Formal Absence Review Meeting is required:** Decisions will be taken on an individual basis and a Formal Absence Review Meeting will not take place automatically as soon as a review point is reached, it may also be appropriate in some cases to hold a Formal Absence Review Meeting prior to a review point being reached:
- ✓ **Sickness absence of 10 or more Working Days in any 12-month period, accrued over 3 or more periods of absence.**
- ✓ **Sickness absence of 6 or more Working Days in any 4-month period accrued over 2 or more periods of absence.**
- ✓ **Two periods of sickness absence of 4 or more Working Days in any 12-month period.**
- ✓ **After Any levels of absence which show a trend or pattern over time** example: Friday – Monday absences, monthly dates (e.g. last Friday every month) and any other notable dates such as just before or after school holidays.

Long Term Absences & Formal Absence Review

✓**Long-term absence,** (which is usually defined as an absence lasting at least 4 calendar weeks), is where an employee is absent from work for a considerable number of weeks or months as the result of a serious health problem or planned medical procedure which was declared.

✓**This can normally be distinguished from persistent intermittent absence in that, it tends to be continuous and is usually as a result of an established medical condition (eg. relating to heart/kidney disease) or as a result of a serious car accident or medical emergency** .

✓**Any long-term absence lasting 4 working weeks or more will normally lead to a Formal Absence Review Meeting** but each case must be judged individually.

An absence lasting 4 working weeks or more may not always automatically lead to a Formal Absence Review Meeting in cases where the reason is clear and was sanctioned- eg. undergoing major surgery and recovery, accidents and emergencies. these would only require a return to work interview.

In cases of long-term absence where a doctor's statement confirms that you will be absent from work for a period longer than 4 working weeks, any Return to Work or Formal Absence Review Meeting must be held towards the end of the certified period of absence.

Formal Absence Review Meeting-Core Procedure

- Where a **Formal Absence Review Meeting** is due to take place, The Academy Trust/School will appoint an Absence Reviewer in accordance with policy.The Absence Reviewer will write inviting the staff member to a Formal Absence Review Meeting.

Staff will be given at least 5 Working Days' written notice of such a meeting. At the same time as sending you the letter inviting you to the Formal Absence Review Meeting, the Absence Reviewer will also send you a copy of your Absence Report providing details of your absences from work indicating the reasons given for the absences on record.

- **The reviewer will provide details of any suggestions made by you, the School/ Academy Trust as to any reasonable adjustments that could be made to your working arrangements where needed.However, this is always with a view to reducing your absence or assisting your return to work.**
- **Documentation Including copies of staff's doctor's statements and all medical reports including those obtained from Occupational Health will be viewed to make a determination.**

✓ **In the letter inviting you to the Formal Absence Review Meeting it will state that one of the possible outcomes of this Procedure could be the termination of your employment where this is appropriate**.

At a Formal Absence Review Meeting you will have the opportunity to:

✓ **Present any medical evidence you think is relevant to make reasonable suggestions with regard to managing your return to work** including any phased return to work, flexible working, change or reduction of duties and/or working hours Make suggestions of other reasonable adjustments that could be made-some of these actions may have implications for a change of contractual arrangements.

✓ **Any evidence you wish to present at a Formal Absence Review Meeting should be provided to the Absence Reviewer at least two Working Days prior to the meeting.**

✓ **Formal Absence Review Meetings may be adjourned if further information is required by the Absence Reviewer.** You will be given at least 5 Working Days' written notice for any reconvened meeting and you should provide any evidence you wish to present at any reconvened meeting at least 2 Working Days prior to the meeting.

Possible Formal Sickness /Absence Outcomes

- **No action is required.** The Absence Reviewer may conclude that no action is required, and no further action will be taken pursuant to this Policy and Procedure being correctly applied and complied with.
- **Reasonable adjustments to working arrangements may be made but...**

These will vary on a case-by-case basis depending on the medical condition identified. Please note that reasonable adjustments may be made alongside a Stage 1 Absence Letter and/or a Stage 2 Absence Letter.

- **Other Possible Outcomes:**
- **Stage 1** Absence Procedure Applied
- **Stage 2** Absence Procedure Applied
- **Dismissal** :

  >Linked to proven deliberate and blatant breach of policy

  > Linked to proven repeated abuse of sickness absence systems resulting in protracted absences impacting school operations

  >Linked to the outcome of a formal disciplinary action