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SICKNESS ABSENCE AND SICK PAY

Drafted by: HR in consultation with Judicium

Reviewed: February 2022

Next Review: November 2023

This policy applies to employees of the school only. It does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and is not intended to have any contractual effect. The school reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

1. SICKNESS ABSENCE NOTIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1.1 TEACHING STAFF

For absences not known in advance, the following steps should normally be taken when informing absence and upon returning to work after an absence.

Teaching staff are required to contact the Cover Supervisor responsible for arranging cover by calling 020 8829 2561 before 7.30 am on the first day of absence, informing her of:

- the fact of their sickness absence;
- the reasons for it;
- its expected duration; and
- the action the employee is intending to take e.g., visiting their G.P, seeking advice from a pharmacist etc.

When informing the Cover Supervisor, teaching staff should also provide cover work to be carried out in their classes. The Cover Supervisor will then ensure that work is either handed over to the cover

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supervisor or supply teacher. Alternatively, an email can be sent to coverabsence@woodsidehighschool.co.uk.

Teaching staff must contact the Cover Supervisor who is responsible for arranging cover and if possible, the Head of Department on each day of absence to ensure that appropriate work is being set for the classes. The Cover Supervisor and the Head of Department will ensure that all absences in the employee's department have been covered.

In exceptional circumstances when it is not practical to contact the person responsible for arranging cover **and** the Head of Department on the first or subsequent days of absence, each department should have contingency arrangements to ensure appropriate work is being set. When a member of teaching staff intends to return to work after a period of absence lasting more than one week, he or she should inform the person responsible for arranging cover **and** the Head of Department on the day **before** he or she returns to work.

1.2 SUPPORT STAFF

All office staff need to be in by 8.30 am at the latest except for those who have an agreed different start time. If staff are going to be beyond this time, they must notify their Line Manager / Headteacher.

For absences not known in advance the following steps must be taken when informing absence and upon returning to work after an absence.

Employees are required to notify their Line Manager by 7.30 am or an hour before their usual start time on the first day of sickness absence. They can also call the absence line on 020 8829 2561 (Catering staff only, to call 020 8829 2509, Site staff to call 07515 851 674)

Employees should notify their Line Manager personally by telephone informing him or her of:

- the fact of their sickness absence;
- the reasons for it;
- its expected duration;
- the action the employee is intending to take e.g., visiting their G.P, seeking advice from a pharmacist etc; and
- any scheduled work that needs to be completed.

Absence records will be kept by HR who are responsible for monitoring staff absence and who will provide statistics for the Headteacher and the Governing Body.

When a member of support staff intends to return to work after a period of absence lasting more than one week, he or she should inform the Cover Supervisor who is responsible for arranging cover **and** the Head of Department or their Line Manager on the day **before** he or she returns to work.

1.3 GENERAL NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO ALL STAFF

Text messages, e-mails, messages through social media or messages left with colleagues will not satisfy the school's sickness absence notification requirements and may result in any absence being deemed to be unauthorised. Cases of unauthorised absence may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure and may result in loss of pay to which the employee may otherwise have been entitled to for the period of unauthorised absence.

Notification must be by the employee him or herself unless his or her incapacity is such that this is not possible in which case the employee should authorise a family member or friend to contact the school in his or her behalf.

2 DURING SICKNESS ABSENCE

It is essential that employees keep the school updated on the circumstances of their absence and its estimated duration and employees are required, where they have not indicated a likely return date on the first day of their sickness absence, to telephone the school on each subsequent day of absence.

Where an employee's sickness absence lasts more than seven calendar days the employee is required to notify the Cover Supervisor, their Line Manager or Head of Department of the fact and a Fit Note stating that he or she is not fit for work and the reason(s) why, completed and signed by a medical practitioner must be forwarded to his or her Line Manager or Head of Department or Cover Supervisor or HR to cover the period of absence. Thereafter, Fit Notes must be submitted for any continued sickness absence on a weekly basis, or at those intervals determined by the employee's Fit Note.

3 COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL DURING SICKNESS ABSENCE

During any period of sickness absence employees may be required to respond to any enquiries from the school during normal working hours, to attend meetings or receive home visits from authorised school personnel to discuss their absence and to liaise with Occupational Health, where the school considers this is required.

4 STRESS

In the event that an employee is suspended from work pending or during an investigation or has been informed that the school may be or is investigating potential misconduct or issue of poor performance, or a grievance outcome has been received and the employee is then absent due to sickness and produces a Fit Note with diagnoses such as "stress", "stress-related illness", "anxiety" or "depression"

or any other similarly worded diagnoses, these Fit Notes will not normally be accepted as a reason for refusing to attend a meeting under the School's Disciplinary, Grievance, Capability, Managing Sickness Absence or any other policy.

The school reserves the right to suspend any or all payment of school sick pay or any other payment where the timing of and/or reason for i.e., the trigger for the sickness absence for stress, depression, anxiety etc coincides with any or the above procedures.

For further details, please see "Suspension of School Sick Pay" below.

5 CONDUCT DURING SICKNESS ABSENCE

In all cases of sickness or injury, which necessitate taking time off work, it is expected that employees will do their utmost to facilitate a speedy return to fitness and to work. In this regard, employees are expected to act sensibly and honestly. As detailed above, employees are expected to keep in regular contact with the school during any period of sickness and employees are expected to be honest and open about the progress of their illness or injury.

The school would not in the normal case expect any employee who is absent from work due to sickness or injury to:

- a) Participate in any sports, hobbies or social, political, union or any other activities, meetings etc which are in any way inconsistent with their illness or injuries, or which could aggravate the illness or injury, or which could delay recovery. Healthy exercise, however, as an aid to recovery would of course be sensible and would cause no concern on school's part;
- b) Undertake any other employment whether paid or unpaid. If an employee declares themselves as unfit for work in relation to their employment with the school, it may be deemed gross or serious misconduct to undertake any other duties whilst absent, unless the employee has discussed this with the school prior to undertaking such other employment and demonstrated that doing so will not delay their recovery;
- c) Engage in any work around the home in terms of home improvements or the like or outside the home such as gardening or cleaning cars or doing any work on cars etc where this contradictory to the symptoms, injury or illness reported by the employee;
- d) Engage in any activity which is inconsistent with the nature of the illness or injuries reported by the employee (e.g., be seen walking around town with bags of shopping with an alleged injury);
- e) Have elective surgery or any form of cosmetic treatment unless this has first been authorised in advance by the Headteacher. It is up to the Headteacher's discretion whether this is counted as paid or unpaid sick leave or whether the school asks the employee to take paid holiday for this purpose;

- f) Take any holiday whether planned or unplanned unless this has first been authorised by the Headteacher. Holiday advised in writing by the employee's doctor for recuperative purposes will be allowed as part of sick leave and will not be counted as holiday;
- g) Call in sick or write in sick once the employee has started any period of leave, holiday, vacation etc. Once the employee starts their holiday, they are deemed to be on holiday, and this will not count as sick leave. However, if the employee is too ill to take any holiday just before they are due to start any annual leave, then at the Headteacher's discretion and subject to providing satisfactory medical evidence, this absence may be permitted to count as sick leave and not annual leave and the employee will then be permitted to take holiday at another time.

Please note that the school may request a Fit Note for any sickness absence one day before, during or one day after a bank holiday or school holiday period before any school sick pay is paid.

6 ARRANGEMENTS FOR RETURN TO WORK

If an employee's doctor provides a certificate stating that he or she "may be fit for work", the employee should inform the Headteacher immediately. The school will discuss with the employee any additional adjustments or support that may be needed to assist them in returning to work, taking account the medical advice. This may take place at a Return-to-Work interview on the employee's return to work after a period of sickness absence or prior to a return to work being agreed as appropriate.

On return from a period of sickness absence of less than 7 days, employees are required to complete a sickness absence self-certification form and submit this to his or her Line Manager or Head of Department.

Employees may be required to attend a Return-to-Work interview on or prior to their return to work after any period of sickness absence. This will usually be held by the employee's Line Manager/Head of Department or the Headteacher and during the meeting the reasons for the employee's absence will be discussed and the employee's Fit Note(s) (where appropriate) will be considered.

7 FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE ABOVE

Failure to comply with the school's sickness absence notification and certification procedures above may result in rendering the employee's absence unauthorised.

Cases of unauthorised absence may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure and may result in loss of pay to which the employee may otherwise have been entitled to for the period of unauthorised absence.

8 REQUIREMENT FOR MEDICAL OR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REPORT

From time to time, it may be necessary for the school to require the employee to be examined by and obtain a medical or occupational health report from an employee's doctor, a medical practitioner nominated by the school or an occupational health adviser to gather information about the employee's medical condition, its probable effect on the employee's future attendance at work or ability to do his or her job. Employees are required to co-operate with the school in obtaining such information and should be aware that failure to do so may constitute a breach of the terms of his or her contract of employment with the school and result in the school having to proceed with sickness absence management without the benefit of specialist advice on the basis of the existing information available. It may also result in the loss of any school sick pay to which the employee would otherwise have been entitled to.

9 ACCESS TO MEDICAL REPORTS ACT 1988

Employees have certain rights under the Access to Medical reports Act 1988. Should the school find it necessary to obtain a medical report concerning an employee's fitness for work or any other relevant matter the employee will be asked for his or her written consent. At the time of the request the employee will be advised of his or her rights under the Act.

10 MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

Long term or frequent absences may, in certain circumstances, lead to the termination of the employee's employment with the school in accordance with the school's Managing Sickness Absence policy.

11 STATUTORY SICK PAY

Employees who are absent from work because of sickness will normally be entitled to receive Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from the school provided they meet the relevant criteria.

Once the criteria have been met, SSP is not normally payable for the first three days of sickness absence, unless the employee has been absent and in receipt of SSP within the previous eight weeks. Thereafter the school will normally pay SSP at the statutory rate in force for a maximum of 28 weeks to employees who are eligible for SSP and who have satisfied the school's sickness absence and notification requirements above. The school reserves the right to withhold payment of SSP where an employee fails to follow the correct procedure.

If two periods of incapacity from work of four or more days (PIW) occur within 56 days of each other they are linked to form one PIW. Each PIW has an entitlement of 28 weeks payment and SSP is paid on a daily basis, in respect of qualifying days, which are those days normally worked.

12 SCHOOL SICK PAY

The school also operates a School Sick Pay Scheme in accordance with the national conditions of service for teaching staff and the national conditions of service for National Joint Council (NJC) staff.

12.1 TEACHING STAFF:

Teaching staff are entitled to the following sick pay in respect of bona fide sickness absence notified and certified in accordance with the required procedure set out above. All payments made to teaching staff under this Scheme will include SSP payments where they fall due.

During the first year of service	Full Pay for 25 working days and after completing 4 calendar months' service, half pay for 50 working days
During the second year of service	Full pay for 50 working days and then half pay for 50 working days
During the third year of service	Full pay for 75 working days and half pay for 75 working days
During the fourth and subsequent years of service	Full pay for 100 working days and half pay for 100 working days
During fifth year of service and in subsequent years	Full pay for 125 working days and half pay for 125 working days

For the purposes of the above scheme:

- "service" includes all aggregated teaching service with one or more local education authorities;
- "working days" means teaching and non teaching days within "directed time" or in the case of a Head-teacher, normal working days; and
- "a year" is deemed to begin on 1 April and end on 31 March.

The above entitlement will be pro-rated for part-time employees.

12.2 SUPPORT STAFF:

Support Staff on NJC Conditions for Local Government Services are entitled to the following sick pay in respect of bona fide sickness absence notified and certified in accordance with the required procedure set out above. In the case of full pay periods, payments under this Scheme will include SSP payments where they fall due. In the case of half pay periods, any payments under this Scheme will be paid in addition to any SSP payments where they fall due, so long as the total does not exceed the employee's normal pay.

During the first year of continuous service	1 month's full pay and after completing 4 months service, 2 months half pay
During the second year of continuous service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay

During the third year of continuous service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During the fourth and fifth year of continuous service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
During the sixth and subsequent years of service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

For the purposes of the above scheme:

- "month" means the employee's normal working days over the period of a calendar month.;
- "continuous service" will be calculated from the first day of sickness absence; and
- "a year" is deemed to be a rolling 12-month period.

The above entitlement will be pro-rated for part-time employees.

The calculation of School Sick Pay will take into account any previous payments of School Sick Pay made in the year (as defined above in relation to Teaching and Support Staff) immediately before the first day of the current sickness absence.

Employees should claim any Social Security sickness benefits such as invalidity or incapacity benefits to which they may be entitled and are required to notify the school of any such payments which the school will deduct from the employee's School Sick Pay.

The rules of the School Sick Pay Scheme do not imply that termination of employment may not take place before payment of School Sick Pay has been exhausted.

13 SUSPENSION OF SCHOOL SICK PAY

The school reserves the right to suspend any or all payments of sick pay where the sickness absence is:

- Caused by the employee's own misconduct;
- Extended by any conduct by the employee prejudicial to the employee's health or recovery;
- During the period after the employee has given or has received notice to terminate employment;
- Occurring after the employee has been informed that they are the subject of a disciplinary or grievance investigation or invited to an investigation meeting/hearing;
- Occurring after the employee has been informed that they are subject to informal or formal performance management processes;
- Occurring after the employee has been informed of the outcome of any meeting/hearing (such as issuing a formal sanction) which the employee does not like; or
- Occurring after the employee has received notification of any other decision by the school which the employee does not like.

The school may make a referral to Occupational Health in any of the above situations.

14 SICKNESS ABSENCE AND ANNUAL LEAVE

While it is recognised that during a period of sickness absence, time away from home (for example going on holiday or visiting family) may be therapeutically helpful, employees are required to seek prior approval from the school. A decision to take time away from home during a period of sick leave without giving prior notice to the school may result in a loss of school sick pay during that period.

Please note that the requirements in the employee's employment contract regarding requesting annual leave will continue to apply during any period of sickness absence.

Please refer to the school's Leave of Absence Policy for further details relating to this.

