



# St. Patrick's R.C. Primary School



Staff Attendance and Absent Management Policy		
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Very few people go through their working lives without losing some time through sickness absence. It is accepted that a certain level of absence is unavoidable, but schools still need to have a procedure in place for managing sickness absence.

Sickness absence involves indirect costs, as well as the direct costs of sick pay. Employees who are not at work do not make any direct contribution to the school and often need time to readjust to their role on their return. There is also a cost to colleagues who have to take on additional work during the absence. Managers also have to deal with other effects of the absence such as disruptions, demotivation and sometimes a decline in the education of pupils. For some areas temporary cover is a statutory requirement and for others it is essential for the continued provision of education. Consequently, whenever temporary cover is used there are the costs for this support.

The Governing Body of the school feel that a clearly understood and well-communicated absence management policy is an important part of a positive, proactive approach to staff management. The aim of the policy is not to "forbid" sickness, but to manage any absence within the demands of the school.

The purpose of this policy is to develop a procedural framework, resulting in a co-ordinated approach to the management of absence and to ensure that all members of staff are treated in a fair and consistent manner. The policy will ensure that all staff are fully aware of the way in which their absence will be managed. The policy recognises different types of sickness absence and provides a framework whereby absences will be dealt with appropriately and sensitively. It is hoped that the management of sickness absence will lead to the earlier detection of problems (both work related and personal), and that this will lead to speedier medical, management or individual responses.

By adopting a positive and proactive approach, the school's aim is that its staff feel valued and understand that their contribution is an important part of the school's successful operation.

#### **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SICKNESS ABSENCE**

##### **THE ROLE OF THE EMPLOYEE**

Each employee should:

- Attend work when they are fit to do so.
- Discuss any health-related problems where appropriate, which they feel are affecting their performance, with the Head Teacher (or delegated member of senior staff), at an early stage.
- When absent due to sickness, ensure that they act in accordance with the school's absence notification procedure.
- During a period of absence, keep the Head Teacher (or the Chair of Governors in the case of the Head Teacher) informed of their health status and any significant developments, especially their estimated date of return.
- Seek medical advice and treatment, where appropriate, in a timely fashion, in order to facilitate a return to work as quickly as possible.
- Provide the relevant certification (self certificates or medical certificates), as required by the length of absence.

A self-certification, SSC1 form is available from the school, an example is attached at APPENDIX 4 of this document.

**THE ROLE OF THE HEAD TEACHER (AND / OR DELEGATED MEMBER OF SENIOR STAFF)**

The Head Teacher is responsible for managing the attendance of **all** staff in the school:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the rules and procedures for sickness absence and follow the sickness absence notification procedures.
- Applying the attendance and absence management procedure fairly and consistently.
- Ensuring that accurate sickness records are maintained, that these are monitored effectively, and that further action is taken under the procedure where necessary.
- Ensuring that, where appropriate, action is taken with employees who do not comply with the sickness absence notification procedures.
- Seeking advice from Human Resources where necessary.
- Ensuring that they make themselves available to staff who wish to discuss performance problems, which may be related to health or other more personal problems.
- Ensuring that regular contact is made with the absent employee to discuss and receive an update on the absence and offer measures to help them return to work.
- Ensuring that policies and procedures which are related/complementary to the attendance and absence management policy are in place – for example, a Health and Safety Policy (which may include specific issues like HIV/Aids, Smoking or Stress), Induction Procedures, Disciplinary and Capability Procedures and an Equal Opportunities Policy (including reference to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005).
- Ensuring that confidentiality is paramount and applied in all stages of the procedure.

**DISTINGUISHING LONG-TERM AND FREQUENT SHORT-TERM ABSENCE AND THE MANAGEMENT ACTION REQUIRED**

**The Head Teacher or the delegated member of staff will monitor all staff absence. Long term and short-term absences need to be treated differently and therefore will need to be clearly defined in order to be treated appropriately.**

**LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE**

This is defined as absence of more than four calendar weeks with no immediate prospect of return. It can also include repeated shorter spells linked to one specific medical problem E.g. hospitalisation, an operation, ongoing therapy etc.

There is no prescribed time scale for determining when to pursue a course of action in relation to long term absences, since each absence needs to be assessed on its facts. In the case of teaching staff there are DfES regulations relating to certain types of illnesses. (See page 6 further information). Whatever the cause of the absence, the Head Teacher (or delegated senior member of staff) will monitor medical certificates from an early stage and maintain regular contact with the employee to ascertain what progress is being made and what the time scale is for a likely return to work.

If he/she feels it to be appropriate, the Head Teacher may visit a member of staff who is on long-term sickness absence at home. The aim of such a visit will be to discuss the employee's absence, their

progress towards recovery, if there is anything the school can do to assist them, and to generally provide an update on what has been happening at the school in their absence.

In considering such a visit, the Head Teacher should contact the member of staff first to check that they are happy to have a home visit. If a Head Teacher has any doubts as to whether a home visit is appropriate, they should approach the HR Service for advice and if appropriate, refer the case to a HR Officer.

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to maintain contact with the employee and seek advice for any issues arising/concerns from the HR Service. When a referral to Occupational Health is necessary the HR Officer advising on the case will arrange this. A Managers Referral form is attached at **Appendix 3**.

### **SHORT-TERM/FREQUENT INTERMITTENT ABSENCES**

These are the absences that are normally sporadic and attributable to minor ailments, in many cases unconnected. Often the employee will only be absent for a maximum of a week, but more often for single days. The difficulty faced by the school is the frequency and often the unpredictability of such absences. This can be the most difficult type of absence for a school to deal with and the problem can really only be addressed effectively through close monitoring systems and effective management action.

The school will record all absences in order to ascertain whether or not any pattern of absence is being established e.g. Fridays, Mondays etc. The principle of the return to work meeting will be followed for all staff and after every single absence. These meetings should be used to try to ascertain if there is an underlying problem behind the absences or whether they are unconnected. (See **Appendix 2** for return to work meetings).

If it is felt that there is a need to ascertain whether or not there is an underlying medical condition the Head Teacher will discuss the situation with a HR Officer, who will meet with the employee and then arrange a referral to Occupational Health for advice. Once a report is received the HR Officer will discuss the advice received with the employee and Head Teacher and agree an appropriate course of action. If there were an underlying medical condition it may be that the advice is that after a certain length of time the number of absences may be expected to noticeably reduce and the Head Teacher would then monitor this. It may be that it is necessary to consider what support an employee needs to continue working at an acceptable level and the HR Officer involved, if appropriate, would then facilitate the necessary action to access such support.

If, in the opinion of Occupational Health, there is no underlying medical reason for the number of absences informal guidance or formal disciplinary action may be considered. If any type of disciplinary action is considered this will be undertaken by the Head Teacher, in conjunction with the HR Officer, who will have an advisory role in the proceedings in accordance with the school's established procedure.

### **SICKNESS ABSENCE AND CAPABILITY (PERFORMANCE) PROCEDURES**

Both the Government and ACAS have made it clear that automatically delaying capability procedures because of sickness absence is unacceptable. In such situations, ill health absences will need to be assessed on an individual basis with the assistance of a medical opinion from Occupational Health.

Where the monitoring and assessment of performance has reached a stage where the absence of a member of staff would not significantly affect the outcome of a capability procedure, it may be possible to continue with and complete a capability procedure in the member of staff's absence. This course of action is unlikely to be viable if the member of staff goes off sick at an early stage of the capability procedure. The school is unlikely to have gathered enough evidence at this stage on which to base an assessment of a member of staff's competence.

Where sickness absence starts before a school has had an opportunity to assess performance, the only reasonable option available will be to commence the absence procedure and request medical advice as to what further action can be taken and whether the employee is able to engage in the procedure

In dealing with such situations, schools are advised to seek assistance from the HR Service.

### **TEACHING STAFF- DfES REGULATIONS CONCERNING SICKNESS ABSENCE**

The DfES guidance document "Obtaining Occupational Health Advice on Fitness to Teach" sets out the procedures to be followed in order to obtain occupational health advice when teachers are absent from work or become unfit to work. A document sent to LA's and occupational health service providers entitled "Fitness to Teach – Occupational Health Guidance for the Training and Employment of Teachers" includes a comprehensive list of conditions that may preclude individuals from teaching on a temporary or permanent basis. Also listed are other conditions which occupational health service providers and employers need to give consideration to if teachers present with them. The HR Service will advise schools with teaching staff suffering from conditions that come under the above document to ensure that the DfES requirements are met.

Conditions, which may present a particular risk, are pulmonary tuberculosis, epilepsy and psychiatric disorders (including drug and alcohol misuse). The role of the Local Authority in such cases is to consider, in conjunction with the school, whether the health, education or welfare of pupils will be put at risk by the teacher's condition. If a Head Teacher feels that a teacher is unfit to remain at work the HR Service should be contacted without delay for advice as to what action should be taken with immediate effect.

All employers have wider responsibilities for the health and safety of their staff and this includes a requirement to maintain a safe and healthy working environment. In addition Governing Bodies and Head Teachers should consider adopting or participating in health awareness programmes for their staff, and encouraging staff to make full use of support mechanisms in order to minimise sickness absence.

### **SERVICES PROVIDED BY HUMAN RESOURCES IN RELATION TO ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE MANAGEMENT**

The main functions of the Human Resource Service in respect of sickness absence are as follows: -

#### **TRANSACTIONAL – ABSENCE MANAGEMENT TEAM – XENTRAL SERVICES**

- The Absence Management team collates and processes absence levels within the Council and Schools. All sick note information is collated, logged and filed within this team.

The following services are provided by Xentrall Services to those schools that are participating in the First Day Reporting Programme:

- Processing all Day 1 reporting forms, which are used to notify the start of an absence and return to work forms. All sick note information is collated, logged and filed.
- Arrangements for referral to specialist teams for employees who may be absent from work for a specific reason such as stress or muscular-skeletal pain and will work with Managers and Head Teachers to provide absence statistics where required.

### **CHILDRENS ADVISORY TEAM:**

- Monitoring sickness absence records, both long term and frequent short-term absences, in order to consult with Head Teachers as to appropriate courses of action, and, where appropriate and when recommended, particular courses of action.
- Consultation with individual employees about any of the issues arising from their absence e.g. duration of absence, effects of their illness, need for referral to the Occupational Health Service, support on return to work.
- Referral of individual cases to Occupational Health for advice on such matters as the expected duration of a particular absence, what types of support an employee might need to enable him/her to return to work and once they have returned to work.
- Ongoing consultation with all parties once the Occupational Health advice and recommendations have been received.
- If it has become apparent that a return to work or a satisfactory level of attendance is not going to be achievable, consultation with all interested parties as to what appropriate courses of action can be taken. This could include providing advice on ill health retirement for the individual, consultation with other Schools/Departments of the Borough Council about the possibility of redeployment to other posts or taking the appropriate steps to instigate termination of employment if this is deemed necessary.
- Provision of advice and/or information at any time to employees and schools about any aspect of issues such as sick pay, sickness monitoring, support in the workplace, retirement benefits etc.
- Provision of information regarding the Stockton Borough Council Wellworker Counselling Service.
- Provision of information and possible referral to the Council's Back Care Programme which is designed to offer advice and physiotherapy to employees suffering from musculoskeletal pain.

As indicated above the HR Service monitor sickness absence and the HR Officers in particular have an important role in assisting schools in managing the effects of such absences. If requested by the school and it is not appropriate for the Head Teacher, a home visit will be arranged in exceptional circumstances by a HR Officer, who will take that opportunity to discuss with the employee all aspects of the absence e.g. prognosis for recovery and return to work, any difficulties expected on the return to work etc.

The HR Officer undertaking such a visit will discuss the absence and any related issues with the Head Teacher before arranging the visit and will have further discussions afterwards and again, if a

referral to Occupational Health has been deemed appropriate, once their report has been received. In agreement with the Head Teacher and the employee the HR Officer will then continue to be in regular contact with both the employee and Head Teacher for the duration of the absence, especially if there are issues to be resolved before or on the return to work of the employee e.g. physical adaptations to be made to assist the employee.

At all times it is made quite clear to the employee that the involvement of their union/professional association representative is welcomed and is their right at any stage of these processes and that HR Officers are happy to discuss all aspects of the absence with them.

### **Healthy Workplace Initiatives**

Stockton Borough Council have a number of support initiatives that employees can take benefits from. If your school has entered in to the absence management scheme and therefore use the Day 1 reporting process, the school will be contacted as to whether HR involvement is required at an early stage for those absences that can be supported by the in-house initiatives as detailed below:

#### **Back Care Programme**

A Back Care Programme has been devised to provide a multi-faceted approach to help employees with any muscular-skeletal problems. The Programme consists of a Back Care Advisor; a part time Physiotherapist; and access to the 'Fitness on Prescription Scheme'. All employees requiring access to the Programme can contact the Back Care Advisor at the Health & Safety Unit or be referred by Human Resources. The Back Care Advisor then arranges to carry out a workplace assessment, undertakes a risk assessment of the workplace or provides advice and training on back care. A report is produced and forwarded to the Head Teacher following all workplace assessments. The Back Care Advisor may also refer an employee to the Physiotherapist, as appropriate.

If the employee is referred to the Physiotherapist they will be assessed and provided with appropriate treatment or advice within a much-reduced timescale compared to a referral via their GP. **There is a direct cost to Schools for this service.**

#### **Managing Pressure in the Workforce**

It is important that Head Teachers recognise that employees may cope with pressure in different ways and this can impair an employee's ability to contribute fully to the needs of the school. Head Teachers should develop a positive and understanding approach towards the management of such pressures in the workplace.

Workplace pressures can be prevented through the correct recruitment and selection procedures, training of employees; not only on specific job related needs but also in general Authority-wide training and health and safety policies.

#### **Counselling Services**

The Stockton Borough Council Counselling Service, Wellworker, can provide a supportive counselling and therapeutic service to help all staff in schools in dealing with stress whether this emanates from home or work and to help staff to return to work as quickly as possible following an absence from work.

The service offers one to one counselling, confidentiality, and professionally qualified support. It is necessary for the Head Teacher to make the referral request via a HR Officer.

**At the time of writing there is no cost to schools for this service. Future funding arrangements will need to be reviewed.**

### **Mediation Services**

Wellworker, also provides a mediation and conciliation service that can be accessed by schools. This includes team building or conflict management in order for employees to return to normal working relationships. Where this service is appropriate, it will be discussed with the employees affected by the situation. **There is a direct cost to schools for this service.**

### **Policy on Smoking and Health**

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's policy on preventing employees and others from the harmful effects of second hand smoke, extended to include the curtilage of its premises on the 1st January 2006.

It is now against the law to smoke in virtually all enclosed public places, workplaces and in public and work vehicles.

Long term exposure to cigarette smoke can increase your risk of developing serious illness including lung-cancer, heart disease or triggering asthma attacks. It also puts the health of children at risk of serious respiratory disease and sudden infant death syndrome.

Around 70% of smokers say they want to stop smoking, and the new smoke free law could provide the extra motivation to do so.

If you would like to quit, there is excellent support available from:- The Teesside Smoking Cessation Service. Tel. 01642 223923.

## **SERVICES OF THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROVIDER Occupational Health Services**

The Contract for Occupational Health Services is currently held by:

The Teesside Centre for Occupational Medicine  
Woodlands  
106 Yarm Lane  
STOCKTON ON TEES  
TS18 1YE

The following services are available:

- pre-employment health screening (by questionnaire)
- pre-employment medical examinations
- medical examination of existing employees where absence from work or any medical condition that gives rise to concerns about their health, safety and welfare at work
- LGV / PCV medical examinations
- audiometry testing
- vaccinations

- hand/arm vibration syndrome screening/testing
- general advice

Schools can access all of the above services by contacting Human Resources.

The cost of pre-employment health screening/medical examinations, medical examinations for existing employees and general advice is encompassed within the Service Level Agreement with HR. There will be a direct cost to schools for all the other services as described above.

It is important that employees attend for an appointment that has been arranged for them. Any employee who is unable to attend an appointment must contact Teesside Centre for Occupational Medicine to inform them as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the appointment. A charge will be made if employees do not attend an appointment without adequate notice.

The Authority's Occupational Health Service is concerned with how an employee's health can affect his/her ability to do a particular job and also how work and the work environment can affect an employee's health. Although decisions about an employee's future employment when there are health problems are managerial ones, they are largely based on medical opinions provided by Occupational Health.

The following are the major areas in which Occupational Health become involved: -

- pre-employment health screening i.e. is the employee fit to do the job, whether he/she will need any support/special equipment
- full pre-employment medical examinations of newly qualified teachers who have not had a medical at their training institution
- investigations when employees have been referred because of long-term or frequent short-term absence and provision of advice as to how soon an employee might return to work, whether the employee be fully fit on their return, whether a period of rehabilitation be necessary, and if there is a genuine medical reason for the absence.
- when an employee is not absent but is experiencing difficulty in performing the duties of his/her job, Occupational Health can provide advice about the type of support necessary to enable the employee to continue in employment.
- in considering whether or not an employee will become fit enough to return to work in the foreseeable future and what the time scale for this will be e.g. 1 month, 6 months, 18 months
- assessment of a teachers' application for ill health retirement through Teachers Pensions
- whether a suspension from work on medical grounds is appropriate

### **ACCESS TO MEDICAL REPORTS ACT 1988**

Upon referral to Occupational Health, it may be decided that a medical report is required from the employee's GP/Consultant/Specialist. There are statutory requirements that must be adhered to when considering access to medical records and information, which are set out below.

### **Scope of the Act**

The Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 affords individuals the right to check the accuracy of medical reports prepared by a medical practitioner (who is or has been responsible for the clinical care of the individual), in response to a request from an employer or insurance company.

### **Procedures**

Under the Act an employer cannot apply for a medical report from a practitioner as defined by the Act unless:

- a) the individual has been notified by the employer that there is a proposal to make the application, and
- b) the individual has notified the employer that he/she consents to the making of that application. If an individual does not give his/her consent, the employer will not be able to apply for a medical report.

The current working arrangements are that the Council's Occupational Health Provider request consent from employees referred to the service and informs the employees of their rights in this connection.

### **Individual's Rights**

The employer's notification to the individual seeking consent to apply for a medical report must also give the individual the opportunity to state that they wish to see the report before it is supplied to the employer. If the individual indicates that they wish to see the report first, the employer must notify the individual that an application for a report has been made and notify the medical practitioner concerned that the individual wishes to have access to the report first. The onus is then on the individual, within 21 days of the employer's application being made, to make arrangements with the medical practitioner to see the report. The individual can request that the medical practitioner amend any part of the report, which, he/she considers being misleading and where there is a difference of opinion the individual may attach a written statement giving his/her views on its contents. The medical practitioner will not be able to supply his/her report to the Occupational Health Provider without the further consent of the employee.

### **Implications**

Because an employee has the right to see the medical practitioner's report before it is sent to the Occupational Health Provider, this can result in considerable delay before the Provider has all of the information required in order to provide proper advice to the school.

Should an employee exercise his/her right not to give consent then the Occupational Health Provider will provide advice/ give an opinion based on the evidence available at the time.

Likewise, any managerial action to be taken in school will be based on the information available at the time.

### **Status of Medical Reports Received from Occupational Health**

The Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 does not apply to letters and reports requested and received from the Occupational Health Provider because our employees are not under the direct clinical care of that service. However, an employee will always be informed that their case is being referred to the Occupational Health Provider and all correspondence from the service is confidential and written on that assumption. However, the HR Officer involved in the case will give an interpretation of the general message or conclusion of the Occupational Health report to both employee and the school.

## **DfES GUIDELINES FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

All occupational health professionals providing a service to institutions training and employing teachers are required to follow the guidelines for service provision set out in the December 2000 guidance document – “Fitness to Teach – Occupational Health Guidance for the Training & Employment of Teachers”. The HR Service has a copy of this document and is fully aware of the level of service required from the Occupational Health Provider, and in addition what information the LA/schools must provide an Occupational Health Provider at the referral stage in order to assist as far as possible.

### **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (1995) 2005**

**It is against the law for an employer to treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else because of his or her disability, unless there is good reason. This applies to all employment matters.**

Under the Act, a disability is classed as “a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. It also allows this basic definition to be modified for people who have mental impairments and progressive conditions, so that it sets out when people are to be treated as disabled. For example people with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis (MS) will be deemed to be covered by the DDA effectively from the point of diagnosis.

All employers are expected to make reasonable adjustments to premises and employment arrangements if these present substantial disadvantages to a disabled member of staff (or potential member of staff).

### **HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO THE MANAGEMENT OF SICKNESS ABSENCE?**

An employee experiencing poor health may become permanently or temporarily disabled. In such situations, with the advice and support of Human Resources, schools have an obligation to consider all reasonable adjustments that will facilitate the continued attendance or return to work of an employee.

The HR Service will be able to advise schools on all issues related to the Disability Discrimination Act.

### **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FOR ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT**

An employee may decide that he/she feels unable to continue working because of health problems and may then apply to be allowed to take early retirement on the grounds of permanent incapacity. This may be as a result of a long-term absence or the employee may still actually be at work, albeit not performing at full capacity.

Different procedures apply for Teaching and Support Staff because of their different pension schemes.

More specific advice and guidance on procedures is available from the HR Service.

## DISMISSAL – ON THE GROUNDS OF CAPABILITY DUE TO ILL HEALTH

The Head Teacher or the Governing Body, may reach a decision to take steps to dismiss an employee should any of the following circumstances arise:-

When the advice received from Occupational Health is that a member of staff is permanently unfit to continue working or there is no clear indication of a return to work in the foreseeable future.

An application for early retirement on the grounds of ill health by a member of staff, either teaching or support, be refused by the relevant body and the medical advice received is that the member of staff is not likely to be fit again for a considerable length of time.

Where frequent absences continue despite medical advice that there is no underlying medical condition, which would account for them.

Whatever the reason for the Head Teacher or Governing Body reaching the decision to follow this course of action, it is essential that the procedures for the dismissal of staff are closely followed otherwise it will not be possible to achieve a fair dismissal.

The following points should also be given close attention: -

1. That the Head Teacher is engaged fully with the employee regarding alternative work
2. Ensure that every possible course of action to avoid dismissal has been investigated e.g. changes in working arrangements, provision of equipment and physical aids, redeployment etc
3. Ensure that there is firm medical evidence that the employee is not likely to be fit enough to return to work in the foreseeable future
4. Ensure that full consultation has taken place with the employee and his/her representative at every stage of the process
5. Ensure that, if appropriate, the disciplinary procedure has been properly followed.

**It is strongly emphasised that whenever the dismissal of a member of staff is contemplated the HR Service should be consulted at the earliest possible opportunity.**

**APPENDIX 1 SICKNESS NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE**

**A copy of the following requirements should be provided to all new staff at the School and should be available in the school office/staff room for staff to refer to.**

Sickness absence must always be notified on the first day (or first available working day) of absence. Notification should be to the members of staff indicated below – messages must not be left with other colleagues. Staff are required to notify the school of their absence in person. A telephone call from a relative or friend will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances (i.e. where the member of staff is too ill to make contact).

**FIRST DAY**

If you are unable to attend work through illness or injury you must notify the Head Teacher by not later than 8.30 a.m. giving the reason for your absence and likely duration of the absence. Where this is not possible, you should arrange for someone to do this on your behalf. If you live alone or do not have access to a telephone, you should let the school know this in advance so that allowances can be made for any reasonable delay.

If the Head Teacher is not available you should then notify the Deputy Head Teacher.

A Sickness Self-Certification Form (SSC1) must be completed for absences of up to and including seven calendar days duration and submitted to your Head Teacher (who will forward it to the HR Service) on the day of your return to work or as soon as possible afterwards.

During the first seven days of absence (if the absence lasts this long), you are expected to keep in touch with the school and update the Head Teacher on the status of your health and when you expect to be back at work.

**EIGHTH DAY**

If you are still absent on the eighth day, you must obtain a medical certificate signed by a doctor. This, and any further medical certificates, must then be sent to the Head Teacher. During the course of an extended period of sickness absence you should visit your doctor regularly and submit his/her certificates without delay, with dates that run concurrently. You should also keep your Head Teacher notified of your progress on a regular basis rather than just sending in your medical certificates without comment. If the number or frequency of your absences reaches an unacceptable level, you may eventually be asked to obtain a medical certificate from your doctor from the first day of each absence and the school will reimburse any charges made by your GP for this service to you. NB – 'Regular basis' i.e. 1st day / 4<sup>th</sup> day / 8<sup>th</sup> day of absence and then weekly thereafter.

**RETURNING TO WORK**

Where you have submitted medical certificates (excluding any self certificates) you must obtain from your doctor a final certificate showing you are fit to return to work and give this to the Head Teacher on your return. It is also necessary to inform your Head Teacher that you are returning and when, so that any temporary arrangements can be terminated and a return to work meeting can be arranged.

**ILLNESS DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAY PERIODS**

If you become ill during a period of school closure you should attempt to let the Head Teacher know as soon as possible. If the school is likely to be closed for some considerable time e.g. during the summer holidays, you should send any medical certificates to the HR Service and notify the Head Teacher of the duration of the certificate as soon as possible.

### **ILLNESS DURING PERIODS OF ANNUAL LEAVE**

If you are a member of support staff employed whole time (i.e. not term time only) and you are ill during periods of annual leave, a medical certificate signed by a doctor should be obtained immediately, whatever the period of absence anticipated. This should be submitted to the Head Teacher as soon as possible in order for leave records to be amended.

### **ABSENCE DUE TO INDUSTRIAL INJURY OR DISEASE /ACCIDENT**

If you have had an accident at work, the accident form must be completed as soon as possible and details entered into the accident book. Where you are unable to complete the accident form/accident book, this should be completed by the supervisor/manager/colleague on your behalf.

**NB:** These records should always be completed if you have an accident at work even if you are not absent as a consequence.

If your absence is due to an accident, which is not work-related, e.g. a road traffic accident, you should notify the Human Resource Service accordingly. (You may be able to recover damages in the form of compensation from a third party and the Council will then wish to recover from you all or part of the allowance - equivalent to your sick pay entitlement paid to you if this is represented in the amount of damages ultimately paid to you.)

**This procedure applies to all staff within the school. If you fail to comply with these reporting arrangements, your non-attendance may be regarded as an unauthorised absence from work, rather than as sickness, and pay may be deducted accordingly.**

**WORK MEETINGS**

Return to work meetings are an important part of any effective sickness management policy, and will be held with each employee after every single absence. The aim of such meetings is to provide an opportunity for both parties to share relevant information, express any concerns, and discuss problems and possible solutions. It is important to ensure that the venue for the return to work meeting is private and that there will be no interruptions.

The Head Teacher or a member of the senior management team will undertake to hold the meeting on the first day back at work or as soon as possible thereafter.

The discussion will cover some or all of the following-:

- A general welcome back to the school and if necessary, an update on what has been happening in the member of staff's absence.
- The reason for the absence, (i.e. not just "sick"), and a review of absence records/patterns if necessary
- Whether there is a likelihood of further absences for the same reason e.g. doctor's/hospital appointments, physiotherapy etc
- Whether the employee is sufficiently recovered and able to recommence normal duties
- Are there any underlying problems causing the absence(s)
- Is there a need for support/advice of any kind or are any adjustments to working conditions/practices necessary
- A reinforcement of the importance of the employee's contribution to the school.

Often when an employee has been absent for a substantial length of time, an initial period of rehabilitation is beneficial when they return to work. There may be occasions where a phased return to work, or a return to partial duties in the short term, can be accommodated. Prior to their return the question of whether a phased return period would be of benefit, and if so, what assistance and support will be afforded to the employee should be discussed.

If a phased return to work programme has been agreed, the details of the programme, its length and review date should be confirmed in writing to the employee.

The return to work under the phased return programme should be approved by the GP (i.e. a sentence on the employee's signing off note) and/or from advice from Occupational Health. A rehabilitation period of up to four weeks is usually sufficient to ease the employee gradually back into the full duties/hours of their post. During this four-week period, the employee will receive their normal full pay, irrespective of the hours they work. Monitoring and regular discussion will identify an employee's progress and the areas, which require further improvement/support/training. At the end of the four weeks, or sooner, as appropriate a review should take place to assess their progress and to identify if they are able to work the full duties/hours of their job. Some employees may require a longer period to build up to a full work routine, if this is the case, an employee will be paid for the actual hours they work and a review period will be arranged to assess their progress and to consider working arrangements for the future.

If an employee has a medical condition that will affect them at work on a longer term, or even permanent basis, greater consideration will need to be given to the organisation of their work and

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adjustments to the workplace. If it is not possible to accommodate the adjustments required, the opportunity for suitable alternative employment should be explored.

There may be cases where the cause of absence or ongoing medical condition may be of an intimate or very personal nature. In such cases the member of staff, at the discretion of the Head Teacher, will be allowed the opportunity of completing the return to work discussion with a mutually agreed, alternative senior member of staff with whom they would feel more comfortable discussing the matter.

If discussion of any of the above-mentioned issues indicates the need for further advice or support from the HR Service, this will be sought at the earliest opportunity.

Employees should be made aware that these meetings are standard procedure and apply to everyone. Every member of staff who is absent from work due to sickness should expect to be seen upon their return to work.

A written record of the discussion will be made and agreed with the employee. This record can then be referred to if the employee has further absences. Should it later become necessary to take further action it will be essential that an accurate record is available of when such meetings took place, who was involved and what was discussed. The notes from the meeting can be recorded on the back of the SSC1 form. A copy will be given to the employee and a confidential copy retained by the Head Teacher for future reference.

## APPENDIX 3

## REFERRAL TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

**Head Teachers/Line Managers Report:**

In order for Human Resources to make an appropriate referral to the Occupational Health Provider, Head Teachers/Line Managers should complete this form. The form will be forwarded to Occupational Health, together with any further relevant information available to the Human Resources staff. **Please note the information on this form may be disclosed to the employee.**

1. **Name of Employee:** .....
- School:** .....
- Position/Role of Employee:** .....
2. **Reason for referral and any questions to which the Head Teacher/Line Manager would like responses. Please use a continuation sheet and provide supplementary information, which will assist the Occupational Health Provider, if necessary.**

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3. **Please comment on the impact that the absence/health problems of the employee are having on the school**

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**4. Action the Head Teacher/Line Manager has taken or offered up to present date to enable the employee to cope in the work place**

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**5. Other actions it may be possible to take or offer in the future to enable a successful return to work/or to remain at work e.g. Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Reasonable Adjustments**

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**6. Other relevant comments and information from the Head Teacher/Line Manager, including details of any capability/disciplinary procedures, which may be relevant**

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**Form completed by:** .....

**Designation:** .....

**Contact telephone number:** .....

**Date of completion of form:** .....

Please return this form to Human Resources, Children's Advisory Team, Queensway House, West Precinct ,Town Centre, Billingham TS23 2YQ



## APPENDIX 4

## SICKNESS SELF-CERTIFICATION FORM

SSC1

This form should be completed by an employee returning to work after a period of sickness absence. It should account for:

- (a) absence of up to and including seven **calendar** days.
- (b) The first seven **calendar** days of any longer absence (even where a doctor's statement has been provided).

SURNAME ..... FORENAMES .....

SCHOOL ..... PAYROLL NO .....

Date last worked .....

Date sickness began (including Saturday, Sunday, Rest Days and Bank Holidays) .....

Date sickness ended (including Saturday, Sunday, Rest Days and Bank Holidays) .....

Date of return to work .....

The reason for my absence was .....

.....  
(Please note that words like "illness" or "unwell" are not enough)

**DECLARATION**

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the details given above relating to my sickness absence are correct. I understand that the deliberate provision of any false information may result in disciplinary action being taken, including the possibility of dismissal.

I understand that the School may require me to submit to a medical examination by the Authority's Occupational Health Provider.

SIGNED ..... DATE .....

**HEAD TEACHER/LINE MANAGER**

I have checked the above information and believe it to be correct.

SIGNED ..... DATE .....

THIS FORM TO BE RETURNED TO:

Xentrall, Wynyard House, Town Centre, Billingham TS23 2LN

**SICKNESS SELF-CERTIFICATION FORM SICKNESS ABSENCE RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW**

Date ..... Time .....

Venue .....

Present .....

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Dates of Absence .....

Reason Given

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Interviewer's Comments

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 Signed ..... Date .....  
 EMPLOYEE

Signed ..... Date .....  
 HEAD TEACHER/LINE MANAGER

<b>Headteacher:</b>	M. Ryan	<b>Date:</b>	September 2017
<b>Chair of Governing Body:</b>	G. Wilson	<b>Date:</b>	September 2017