



Eastbrook School Schools Sickness Absence

Department of Children Services

Introduction

Eastbrook School is interested in the personal development and contribution of all staff members. We also care about staff health and welfare and the impact of their absence on the school and its pupils.

We have set out arrangements for information which are in line with arrangements across the Local Authority. To be fair on all staff, these procedures will be used at all times unless there are appropriate extenuating circumstances.

Staff responsibilities when unwell:

- To notify the Headteacher and/or the School, as early as possible, of the intention not to attend work, with reasons, on the first day of sickness, **not later than 30 minutes before the start of the school day**. Phone (not text) (to arrange cover) and your Line Manager (with cover work arrangements).
- To provide a self-certificate for periods of sickness absence up to seven days (five working days) and a GP's Statement of Fitness for Work or „Fit Note“ for any absence period over seven days (five working days).
- To maintain regular contact with the School during sickness absence, to ensure that they are aware of a return to work date.

What to expect during periods of sick leave:

During all Absences

- Regular contact from the School during absence, to see if any support is needed and to establish expectations for a return to work.
- Sick pay entitlement as defined in the National Scheme of Conditions of Service.
- Referral to the Council's Occupational Health Department if a member of staff is unfit to work for long term continuous periods or have irregular/high levels of short term sickness. The usual „trigger“ period for long term sickness absences is four weeks continuous sickness absence or two weeks, if the reason for absence is stress or back-related.

Short Term Sickness Absences – “Trigger Levels”

Short term sickness absences taken over three separate periods amounting to seven days or more in any 12 months are seen to cause concern and hit Borough “trigger levels”. This

Reviewed October 2017

Borough set “trigger level” is based on statistical evidence which demonstrates that the **average** number of days taken off for sickness absence within a year is seven days.

- An informal meeting with a senior member of staff if absent on a self-certificated basis totalling seven working days or more spread over three or more separate periods.
- Informal and/or formal meetings as clearly identified in the Schools Sickness Absence Policy if absence/s reach defined “trigger levels”.

Long Term Sickness Absences

Long term sickness absence is defined as any sickness absence which is continuous for more than four calendar weeks. As detailed above, should you reach this long term “trigger” or, have linked absences relating to an underlying medical condition or, have 2 weeks continuous sickness absence relating to stress or back problems, then your Headteacher is advised to refer you to the Council’s Occupational Health Service.

If, upon receipt of an Occupational Health report, you are unlikely to return to work within a four week period, an informal stage one long term sickness absence meeting may be arranged. Further details regarding the full procedure can be found in the School’s Sickness Absence Policy.

Who monitors your absence?

- The school completes an absence return form on a weekly basis and send it to Human Resources.
- Either Human Resources or the School enter staff absence and reason for absence onto a computerised system (Oracle).

Short Term Absences

- Print-outs of persons who have taken over seven days self-certificated sickness for three separate periods or more are generated regularly and sent to each School.
- Human Resources issue two copies of standard letter notification of concern to Headteacher, who will hold a short-term informal meeting with the member of staff and deliver the LA letter, unless, in their judgement, there are extenuating circumstances. This meeting and further details on this process can be found in the Schools Sickness Absence Procedure.
- Recommended proformas to be used during the informal stage of the Short Term Monitoring process are attached to this document as appendices.

Long Term Absences

- Notification that staff have had over four weeks continuous long term sickness absence or two weeks continuous absence for stress and back pain can either be received by Schools HR from the School or Headteacher directly, or through Human Resources monitoring long-term sickness absence cases, following the regular receipt of absence return forms.

Details of Short Term Informal Sickness Monitoring Meeting

Name: _____ School: _____

Number of days sickness absence: _____ over _____ periods

PERIOD	REASON
1 _____	1 _____
2 _____	2 _____
3 _____	3 _____
4 _____	4 _____
5 _____	5 _____
6 _____	6 _____

Issues Headteacher* might wish to cover (N.B. Further advice is available from Schools Human Resources)

- a Explain that the frequency of the absence is over the departmental average.
- b Ask if the individual is experiencing any difficulties at work/home or has any other mitigating circumstances.
- c Consider if there is a need for referral to the Occupational Health Service (i.e. if a disability or long-term health condition is identified).
- d Get an undertaking from the member of staff to reduce and sustain the level and frequency of the sickness (unless absences are related to a disability or are pregnancy related, which should not be monitored without further advice from Human Resources).
- e Set a date to review the situation after a specified period of time (3 months) and set a target number of absence days during that period.
- f Indicate that failure to meet the target, could result in progression to Formal Stage 1 of the Sickness Absence Procedure and ensure they are given a copy of that Procedure.
- g Continuously appraise the situation during the 3 month review period and ensure that the informal review meeting is held when scheduled.

* or delegated individual

N.B. It is advised that you make some detailed notes of the meeting you have with this individual. Note sheet is attached.

Reviewed October 2017

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Notes of the Meeting

Date: _____

Present: _____

**Issues covered
i.e. points a-g**

Any mitigating circumstances highlighted by individuals

Review date and targets set

Signed: _____
(Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher/ Manager)