

Attendance Management Policy – Schools

Policy purpose

We are fully committed to promoting the health, safety, and wellbeing of all school colleagues. This policy is designed to provide a supportive framework to assist you in maintaining good health and attendance at work. This includes effective and timely management of sickness absence when it occurs. This policy provides a framework for managing attendance using a consistent approach. Whilst the desired outcome of the attendance management process is for all colleagues to maintain good health and attendance at work, the attendance management capability stage outlined in this policy acknowledges that sometimes poor health and attendance mean that a colleague can no longer continue to effectively fulfil their role.

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1. Overview

- 1.1 The Council, in consultation with recognised trade unions, has agreed this policy for adoption by those employed under the delegated powers of Governing Bodies of schools. Governing Bodies of Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools are required to adopt this policy for all employees within their delegated powers.
- 1.2 Governing Bodies of non-Derby City Council schools, for example Academies, may wish to adopt this policy within their delegated powers.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all school colleagues.
- 1.4 Please refer to Appendix 1 for definitions of roles and Appendix 2 for a glossary of terminology used in this policy.

2. Roles and responsibilities

All school colleagues

- 2.1 Regular, punctual attendance at work is an implied term in your contract of employment. You are expected to take personal responsibility for your own health, wellbeing and attendance so that you can perform at your best at work. This includes accessing provisions put in place to support you and your good attendance at work, such as an [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) and any [wellbeing support](#). Details of support available can be accessed via the Schools' Information Portal (SIP), or via your Headteacher, manager or a Trade Union representative, if you have one.
- 2.2 You are expected to attend and engage in any informal or formal discussions related to your attendance and any medical appointments with the school's selected Occupational Health provider as requested by your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative during or after periods of sickness absence.

Governing Bodies, Headteachers, managers and the appointed representative

- 2.3 Governing Bodies, Headteachers, managers and the appointed representative are expected to help and support you to achieve good health, wellbeing and attendance. Governing Bodies, Headteachers, managers and the appointed representative should foster a supportive and open culture about attendance management; communicate this policy, along with expectations for attendance levels in your school and signpost you to access support provisions available. Governing Bodies, Headteachers, managers and the appointed representative are expected to approach sickness absence sensitively and confidentially. Governing Bodies, Headteachers, managers and the appointed representative should monitor absence levels within their school and teams and address any concerns they may have promptly.

- 2.4 Headteachers, managers and the appointed representative are expected to complete return to work discussions promptly upon your returning to work after an absence. Headteachers, managers and the appointed representative are expected to keep accurate sickness absence records in school colleague employee files, and in any other absence recording and payroll systems in place in the school. Sickness absence records include: sickness notification forms, return to work records, fit notes, Occupational Health records and any correspondence and meeting notes.
- 2.5 With regard to the management of attendance of the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will assume responsibility for the actions described in this policy as being the responsibility of the Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative.
- 2.6 Please refer to Appendix 3 for a table of roles in the attendance management process which details who will carry out each stage of the attendance management process in the case of long-term or persistent absence.

3. If you know you will be absent

- 3.1 If you know you need time off work, for example for a medical appointment, you should request the time off by informing your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative as soon as possible to get their approval. Where possible, you should try to make medical appointments outside of work time.

4. If you are sick or injured

- 4.1 If you are sick or have suffered an injury and are unable to attend work, you should follow the schools internal process for notifying your sickness absence as soon as you can. You should always report your sickness absence yourself, unless you are unfit to do so, for example, you are in hospital. You should inform your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative as soon as you know what date you will be returning to work. If you are not able to return to work on the date you have given, you should inform them of the new date as soon as possible.
- 4.2 Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will attempt to contact you if you are due to attend work but have not reported any sickness absence.
- 4.3 If you are injured at work, you should notify your line manager as soon as possible in line with the [Accidents, diseases, and dangerous occurrences policy](#).
- 4.4 If you become ill part way through the working day and are no longer able to attend work you should follow the same reporting process described in 4.1. This absence will be recorded as a half-day sickness absence.

- 4.5 It is important that both you and your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative maintain contact with each other during any absence, to ensure appropriate support is offered and up-to-date medical information is received. If you do not keep in contact with your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative, they will make every effort to contact you. You and your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will agree a communication plan, specifying the method of communication, frequency of contact and who you should contact.

5. Evidence of sickness or injury

- 5.1 It is your responsibility to make sure fit notes are supplied for all periods of absence that last over seven calendar days. A fit note should be sent to your manager within three days of you receiving it. It is acceptable to send a copy of your fit note electronically. Original fit notes should be copied by your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative and returned to you. Fit notes should include any school holiday periods where applicable.
- 5.2 You must return to work as soon as you are fit. You must not resume work if a medical certificate covers your illness until a medical professional certifies you are fit to work.
- 5.3 Additional fit notes will be required if you remain absent beyond the expiry date of a previous fit note.
- 5.4 In some circumstances, for example where there is a concern about the reason for absence, you might need to provide fit notes for an absence of less than eight calendar days. If this is the case your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will discuss this with you and confirm this in writing. Any charge for such fit notes will be paid for by the school.
- 5.5 Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will refer to any medical advice provided on fit notes that say you may be fit for work, discuss any suggested temporary arrangements with you, and attempt to accommodate changes where possible to facilitate your return to work. Advice can be sought from the school's selected Occupational Health provider when considering and putting in place temporary arrangements because of medical advice on a fit note.

6. Payment for sickness or injury

- 6.1 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) usually starts on the fourth day you are off work and can be paid for up to 28 weeks. If you are entitled to SSP under the statutory requirements, it will be taxed, and NI contributions will be deducted.
- 6.2 You qualify for organisational sick pay immediately. You will be paid as long as you comply with this policy and your other contractual obligations.

- 6.3 You will find details of sick pay entitlements at Appendix 4.
- 6.4 If you do not report your absence and/or do not provide required evidence as detailed in paragraphs 4.1 to 5.4 your absence will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence will not be paid. Non-compliance with this policy will be addressed through the [Disciplinary policy](#).
- 6.5 Any abuse of the Attendance Management process will be addressed under the [Disciplinary Policy](#).

7. Returning to work

- 7.1 Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will hold a return to work discussion with you when you return to work after being absent due to sickness or injury. The return to work discussion should be held promptly and no later than three days following your return to work. During the discussion your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will talk with you about why you were off work, make sure you are fit to be back at work and discuss any support that you might need.

Phased returns

- 7.2 Phased returns can be used to help you get back to work after periods of long-term absence. Phased returns are designed to ease you back to work, usually over a period of no more than 6 weeks. Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will agree on a plan with you for how long the phased return will last and support you to gradually return to your regular work and working pattern. A phased return could include temporarily reorganising or reducing your working hours or pattern of work and/or temporarily removing some duties attached to the job.
- 7.3 Periods when you are not at work during a phased return can be covered by:
- sick leave – with appropriate fit notes
 - annual leave – where your contract permits
 - flexi-leave – if available for you
 - temporary reduction in hours – this will result in a temporary reduction in your pay
 - disability leave – in some instances, if you are a disabled colleague
- 7.4 Sick pay entitlement, during a phased return, will be calculated from the start date of each period of absence during the phased return plan.

8. Disabled colleagues

- 8.1 Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will consider reasonable adjustments to your role, workspace and/or working arrangements if you are a disabled colleague. Reasonable adjustments may include adjustments to work equipment, hours, role or location. Where medical evidence supports it, consideration will be given to adjustments to either frequency or length of absence triggers and/or any absence targets set.
- 8.2 If your absence is disability related you should inform your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative, so it is recorded accurately. All absences, including disability related absence, must be recorded and monitored under this policy.
- 8.3 Disabled colleagues who need time off for treatment, rehabilitation or assessment concerned with their impairment may take paid disability leave. This type of leave is not sickness absence and should not be treated as such. This leave will generally be for one-off or short-term absences. Disability Leave should be applied for in advance using the disability leave application form on the Schools' Information Portal (SIP).

9. Pregnant Colleagues

- 9.1 Pregnancy-related sickness absences will be disregarded for the purpose of absence triggers.
- 9.2 If you are off work for a pregnancy-related illness in the four weeks before your due date, your maternity/birthing leave will automatically start on the first day of the pregnancy-related sickness absence.

10. If you are off work long-term, or persistently absent

- 10.1 You will find details of attendance triggers at Appendix 5, which indicate the points at which absence becomes a cause for concern.
- 10.2 You may find this process difficult and upsetting. The aim of the attendance management process is to support you and to help you in maintaining good health and good attendance at work. However, no organisation can continue employing people indefinitely if they are not able to work or meet acceptable attendance standards.

Informal Stage

- 10.3 For instances of long-term absence and persistent short-term absences, the first stage of the attendance management process is an informal discussion with you.

- 10.4 As well as using trigger alerts to prompt an informal discussion about attendance, your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will be mindful of other areas for concern with your attendance, for example, patterns of absence. Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative do not need to wait for a trigger alert to discuss your attendance with you if they have a concern. Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative should also consider whether any reasonable adjustments to triggers may apply for disabled colleagues as per paragraph 8.1.
- 10.5 During the informal discussion your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will talk with you about your attendance record, the reasons you are absent and review any medical evidence available. Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative may explore whether requesting further medical information would be helpful. Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will discuss with you if there is anything the school can do to help improve your health and/or make it easier for you to attend work.
- 10.6 For instances of short-term absence, you will be set a zero-absence target and a monitoring period, unless the absences are disability related and paragraph 8.1 applies.
- 10.7 For instances of long-term absence, you will be set a review period based on the current information about your sickness absence.
- 10.8 At the end of the monitoring/review period, your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will meet with you to discuss whether you have met your target or returned to work.

Formal Stage

- 10.9 You will move to a formal meeting with your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative about your attendance if:
- following an informal discussion and monitoring/review period, you have not met the target set
 - there is no return to work date or likelihood of your imminent return to work
- 10.10 You will be invited in writing to a formal meeting. You may be accompanied at the meeting by a companion if you choose to.
- 10.11 During the meeting your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will talk with you about your attendance record, the reason(s) for your absence and review any medical evidence available.

- 10.12 During this stage you and your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative may discuss making a referral to the school's selected Occupational Health provider for an Occupational Health report, if a referral has not already been made. Your consent is not required for your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative to make a referral for an Occupational Health report, but any referral will always be discussed with you in advance. Reports from Occupational Health or other medical specialists can help your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative to better understand your situation and explore whether reasonable adjustments (if you are a disabled colleague) or temporary arrangements are needed to help you either return to work, improve your attendance, or make it easier for you to do your job. The confidentiality of your privacy, wellbeing and dignity is paramount.
- 10.13 Your consent will be sought for your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative to have full access to any medical reports. If you do not give your consent, any decisions made will be based on the information the school has available at that time.
- 10.14 Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will discuss with you if there is anything the school can do to help improve your health and/or make it easier for you to attend work, with reference to any advice from the school's selected Occupational Health provider or other specialist medical reports. For example, temporary arrangements, reasonable adjustments, or medical redeployment could be recommended and discussed with you.
- 10.15 For instances of short-term absence, you will be set a zero-absence target and a monitoring period, unless the absences are disability related and paragraph 8.1 applies.
- 10.16 For instances of long-term absence, you will be set a review period based on the current information about your sickness absence.
- 10.17 You will be advised that the next stage of the process is an attendance management capability hearing. If at the end of the monitoring/review period, you do not meet the attendance targets set, or if, in the case of long-term absence, there is no return to work date or likelihood of your imminent return to work you will move to this stage. Your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will advise you that dismissal is a potential outcome of the attendance management capability hearing.
- 10.18 If you or your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative are considering Ill-health retirement as an option, to be eligible for consideration:
- If you are a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), you must have been a member for 2 years or more. Any Ill-health retirement application should be passed on to the school's selected Occupational Health provider, and they will arrange a consultation with an Independently Registered Medical Practitioner registered with Derbyshire Pensions. More information on Ill-health retirement can be found on the [LGPS website](#).

- If you are a member of the Teachers' Pensions scheme you must have been a member for 2 years or more. Any Ill-health retirement application should be passed on to the school's selected Occupational Health provider, and they will arrange a consultation with an Independently Registered Medical Practitioner registered with Teachers' Pensions. More information on Ill-health retirement can be found on the [Teachers' Pensions website](#).
- 10.19 If you are diagnosed with a terminal illness, we are committed to supporting you and have demonstrated this commitment by signing the Dying to Work charter. The charter sets out an agreed way in which you will be supported, protected, and guided throughout your employment, following a terminal diagnosis.
- 10.20 At the end of the monitoring/review period, your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will meet with you to discuss whether you have met your target or returned to work.
- 10.21 For instances of short-term absence, if you have met your target, you will be removed from the attendance management process. If you reach an attendance trigger point again your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative may manage your attendance from the stage at which you were previously removed.
- 10.22 For instances of long-term absence, upon your return to work your Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative will monitor your attendance in line with this policy.

Attendance management capability hearing

- 10.23 If, following a formal meeting and monitoring/review period, you have not met the target set or if, in the case of long-term absence, there is no return to work date or likelihood of your imminent return to work, you will be invited to an attendance management capability hearing.
- 10.24 You will be invited to the capability hearing in writing. You may be accompanied at the hearing by a companion if you choose to.
- 10.25 If you choose to be accompanied at the hearing by a companion, they can, if you wish explain the key points of your case. You can also confer with them during the meeting. However, they must not answer questions put directly to you or try to prevent management asking questions or outlining their case.
- 10.26 The Chair will provide an outcome after hearing the case. Possible outcomes of the capability hearing are a further target and monitoring period, a further review period or notice of your dismissal.

- 10.27 You have the right to appeal the outcome of an attendance management capability hearing. Use the appeal form available on Schools' Information Portal (SIP) or the paper copy in your outcome letter. Further details on the appeals process can be found in the [Appeals Policy](#) and the [appeals pages](#) on Schools' Information Portal (SIP).
- 10.28 This is the end of the internal process; you do not have any further right to appeal.

11. Support and guidance

- 11.1 A full description of the process including guidance, supportive information and documentation can be found on Schools' Information Portal (SIP) at:

[Attendance management \(school colleague guidance\)](#)

[Attendance management \(teacher specific guidance\)](#)

Other related guidance, policies and supportive provisions mentioned in this policy can be found at:

[Health, wellbeing and attendance](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing guidance and support](#)

[Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#)

[Accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences policy](#)

[Reasonable Adjustments ACAS guidance](#)

[Disciplinary Policy](#)

[Local Government Pension Scheme \(LGPS\)](#)

[Teachers' Pensions](#)

[Appeal Policy](#)

[Appeals guidance](#)

Colleagues without access to this information can ask their Headteacher, manager or the appointed representative for a printed copy.

Role definitions

In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions have the following meanings:

‘Appointed representative’ means a person who has been delegated to undertake attendance management tasks.

‘Chair of Governors’ means the Chair of the Governing Body as elected.

‘Chair of Hearing’ or ‘the Chair’ means a suitable manager or member of the Governing Body appointed to the process role of Chair of the absence management capability hearing.

‘Companion’ means a work colleague, a trade union official, or a workplace trade union representative who’s certified or trained in acting as a companion.

‘Governing Body’ means the governing body of the school in accordance with the Instrument of Government.

‘Headteacher’ means the most senior teacher in the school who is responsible for leadership and the day to day running of the school.

‘Your Manager’ means the person that you report to.

Glossary

In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions have the following meanings:

‘12 month rolling year’ means today, or for instance the start day of a period of absence, and the 364 immediately preceding days.

‘Attendance trigger’ means a point at which absence(s) become a cause for concern. For example, a number of working hours lost or a number of occasions of sickness.

‘Fit note’ means the note issued by a doctor, usually your GP, which includes details of the advice you have been given about whether you are fit for work or not, and how your health affects what you can do at work.

‘Ill-health retirement’ means retiring due to ill health. The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) or the Teachers’ Pensions scheme can consider paying pension benefits on the grounds of ill-health to anyone at any age who has LGPS benefits and fits the eligibility criteria.

‘Long-term absence’ means an absence lasting 28 calendar days or more.

‘Persistent short-term absence’ or ‘short-term absence’ means multiple absences of short duration (1 to 27 days) that have become a cause for concern.

‘Phased return’ means a period, of usually no more than 6 weeks, where changes are put in place temporarily that might help you return to work after a period of sickness absence. For example, reduced hours or amended duties.

‘Reasonable adjustments’ means adaptations that can be put in place that might help disabled colleagues to remove barriers at work. For example, dedicated parking or equipment such as hearing loops or ramps.

Roles in the Attendance Management process

The table below sets out who will lead each stage of the attendance management process, in the case of long-term or persistent absence.

Long-term or persistent absence relates to	Informal stage	Formal Stage	Capability Hearing	Appeal Hearing
A member of staff (other than the Headteacher)	Headteacher, manager or appointed representative	Headteacher, manager or appointed representative	Headteacher (if appropriate and if preceding stages have been led by another manager or appointed representative) or a member of the Governing Body	The Chair of the Governing Body
The Headteacher	A member of the Governing Body	A member of the Governing Body	An alternative member of the Governing Body that was not involved in the preceding stages	The Chair of the Governing Body

Sick Pay Entitlements*Teaching staff*

During the first year of service	full pay for 25 working days and after completing four calendar months service, half pay for 50 working days
During the second year of service	full pay for 50 working days and 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 fourth and subsequent years	full pay for 100 working days and half pay for 100 working days

Extensions of the entitlement for teachers with long service (full and half pay not to exceed 200 working days in total):

10 years' service but less than 20 years	Additional 23 working days at full pay
20 years' service but less than 30 years	Additional 46 working days at full pay
30 years' service and over	Additional 69 working days at full pay

For the purpose of calculating entitlement to sick leave the year is deemed to begin on the 1 April each year and end on the 31 March of the following year.

Support staff

During first year of service	1 month full pay and after completing 4 months service, 2 months half pay
During second year of service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During third year of service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During fourth and fifth year of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After five years of service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

Sick pay will be calculated on a 12 month rolling year basis.

Attendance Triggers

5 occasions of absence in any rolling 12-month period

Regardless of how many days you are contracted to work each week, this trigger point is reached after 5 separate occasions of sickness absence (of any duration).

1 or more separate episodes of absence totalling 2 weeks or more in a rolling 12-month period

This trigger point takes into account that 2 weeks will have a different number of working days for some colleagues that work part-time. For example, a colleague that works 5 days a week will trigger this alert if they have sickness absence totalling 2 weeks (or 10 days) in a rolling 12-month period. Whereas, for example, a colleague that works 3 days a week will trigger this alert if they have sickness absence totalling 2 weeks (or 6 days) in a rolling 12-month period.

Absent continuously for 4 weeks (28 calendar days)

Regardless of how many days you are contracted to work each week, this trigger point is reached after 28 calendar days of continuous absence. At this point, the absence will be classed as long-term.