



Inspire Partnership Multi Academy Trust

Staff Attendance Management Policy

Policy Review Date – June 2018

Date of Next Review – August 2020

Personnel Responsible – Chief Operating Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Inspire Partnership Multi Academy Trust is committed to maintaining the health, safety and welfare of its staff, seeks to provide a positive and healthy working environment and recognises the value of its employee's work/life balance. Regular attendance at work is an integral part of every employee's contract of employment. However, it is recognised that employees will on occasion have genuine and acceptable health reasons to be absent from work and on those occasions the Trust and its Academies will aim to support an employee during the period of absence, with the aim of assisting their return to work at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.2 The overall aim of the policy is to minimise absence levels across the Trust and provide information on how the Trust may support those employees who are unable to attend work due to ill health. This policy also aims to provide a fair and consistent framework for managing attendance and should inform all employees of their responsibilities regarding attendance at work.
- 1.3 In accordance with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, Inspire Partnership Multi Academy Trust will make all reasonable efforts to allow employees with a disability to continue their employment.
- 1.4 The Trust may depart from its terms where circumstances dictate. In particular the Trust may depart from the terms of this policy in the first two years of the employee's employment eg, life limiting illness.

1.5 THE ACADEMY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Treat all employees fairly and consistently
- To inform all employees of attendance management procedures
- To make employees aware of the conditions of the sick pay scheme.
- To record all sickness absence upon notification.
- To meet with employees on their return to work, regardless of the duration of the absence.
- To monitor and review sickness absence across each individual school.
- To decide if a meeting with an employee when their sickness absence level has reached a trigger point is appropriate.
- To maintain reasonable contact with employees during a period of absence.
- Reasons for absence can be of a sensitive nature and therefore should be approached with a sympathetic manner and confidentiality maintained at all times.
- Maintain health and safety standards and undertake appropriate risk assessments.
- Where applicable, consider and implement reasonable adjustments for employees.
- Ensure adherence to the equality act and/or other appropriate legislation, where reasonable to do so.

1.6 THE EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- To attend work when fit to do so.
- To comply with the Academy's notification of sickness absence procedures.
- To maintain reasonable contact with the Academy and to meet with the Academy when required during periods of absence of four weeks or longer ("long term sickness absence").
- To raise with their manager at an early stage any health issues that may impact on their ability to work effectively and safely;
- If requested to do so by the Academy, to attend occupational health (and potentially other medical) appointments.

2. STAFF ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

How to Report Sickness Absence

- 2.1 The purpose of having a clear reporting process is to ensure that the Academy and Trust can make appropriate arrangements to minimise the impact of sickness absence. This may involve arranging for supply cover or longer term arrangements in the event that an employee is absent for a longer period of time.
- 2.2 As such the Trust has set the following absence reporting procedure, which must be followed in the event of sickness absence. A failure to follow this procedure may result in sick pay being withheld and/or the absence being treated as an unauthorised absence in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary procedure.
- 2.3 On the first day of sickness absence the employee must personally telephone the Headteacher no later than 7.00am (teachers) and 8.00am (support staff) on a daily basis, stating the reason for absence. If the Headteacher is unable to take the call, the employee is expected to leave a message. The Headteacher will endeavour to return the call to the employee but in the case of the employee not receiving a call back from the Headteacher by noon they will be expected to call the Headteacher again. If the sickness absence occurs during the school holidays and there are no members of staff at the School, the employee should contact the external HR provider directly on 01924 827869.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. if the employee is in hospital) someone may call on their behalf.

- 2.4 Unless and until the employee is certified by a doctor's fit note, the employee must telephone the Headteacher daily by no later than 3pm to advise if they are expecting to remain absent the following day, unless instructed otherwise. The employee has an ongoing duty to maintain contact with the Academy for the duration of their absence.

- 2.5 If the employee's absence persists for longer than seven consecutive days (including weekends), then the employee must submit a doctor's fit note to the Academy.

3. SICK PAY

- 3.1 Sick pay is based on length of service. For teachers this is aggregated teaching service within any Local Education Authority and any Academy and for all other staff it is continuous service within any public authority to which the Redundancy Payments Modification Order 1985 applies.
- 3.2 If the Academy is concerned that the reason(s) given for the employee's absences are not genuine, the Academy may commence an investigation which could lead to action under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. In this case the Academy is considering the employee's conduct.
- 3.3 The Academy/Trust reserves the right to withhold sick pay in circumstances which are described in the relevant paragraphs of the conditions of service for teachers and support staff.
- 3.4 Employees who are absent from work on sickness absence must not participate in any other form of work (paid or unpaid) during or outside of their normal working hours without the prior written authorisation of the Academy/Trust. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Academy if undertaking therapeutic work whilst off sick and to avoid misunderstandings it is advised that the employee should consult with the Academy and Occupational Health as to the advisability of such activity.
- 3.5 The Trust are aware that sick pay is per employment, not per person. Therefore, the employee may have a valid argument that attending the second job will actually help them overcome the issues surrounding absence, especially if problems are work-stress related. This will also apply where the health condition does not affect the second job.
- 3.6 Sick pay will be paid in line with the employee's contractual pay and conditions.

4. SURGERY NOT FOR MEDICAL REASONS

- 4.1 Time off for surgery that is classed as purely elective will be reviewed by the Trust and will not ordinarily be paid.
- 4.2 Any leave granted, whether paid or unpaid, will be subject to the availability of staff to cover the employee's period of absence.

5. RETURNING TO WORK

- 5.1 Where a doctor advises the employee that "you are not fit for work" the doctor will state the period (or dates) that this will be the case and whether they will need to assess the employee again. If the doctor has not stated that they need to assess the employee again, it will ordinarily be assumed that the employee will return to work on expiry of the fit note. There may be occasions where it is advisable to ask the employee to seek further advice from their doctor regarding

a return to work or to seek advice from an occupational health advisor before the employee is allowed to return to work. The employee is required to attend such an additional appointment as reasonably instructed by the Academy.

- 5.2 During such additional period of assessment (unless the employee refuses to attend such an appointment), the employee will remain entitled to sick pay in accordance with the employee's terms and conditions of service.

The fit note offers a new option - 'may be fit for work taking account of the following advice'.

- 5.3 A doctor may be able to suggest ways of helping an employee get back to work. This might mean discussing:

- A phased return to work.
- Flexible working.
- Amended duties.
- Workplace adaptations.

- 5.4 It is important that employees contact the Headteacher as soon as possible on receipt of such advice and in any event significantly prior to their return to work to discuss any adjustments suggested by their GP. Employees should inform the Academy of their proposed return to work date as soon as possible.

- 5.5 The Academy will investigate reasonable suggestions made by a doctor of steps that may assist an employee to return. However various factors may prevent the Academy from acting on such advice including (but not limited to) maintaining education standards, the impact on pupils or other staff, practicability, disruption to school life and cost. The Academy will provide written feedback of the decision to the employee.

- 5.6 On their return to work, the employee must contact the Headteacher and complete the Sickness Notification Form as directed. If the employee is fit to resume work during the school holidays and there are no members of staff in School, they should contact [Fusion Business Solutions] on [01924 827869].

6. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

- 6.1 The Academy may refer the employee, with their consent, to an occupational health advisor who will be able to advise on matters such as:

- When the employee may be able to return to their role.
- The employee's ability to carry out their role.
- Whether the employee falls under the auspices of the Equality Act 2010, and whether any adjustments or modifications could be made to assist the employee in carrying out their role.
- Whether the employee is (or will soon be) unable to carry out their role and/or the employee's ability to carry out alternative duties either within the Academy or within the Trust.
- Whether any adjustments or modifications could be made to assist the employee in carrying out such alternative duties.

- 6.2 The Academy has a duty of care to its employees to consider appropriate support options including reasonable adjustments or phased returns to work (maximum of 4 weeks on full pay).
- 6.3 It may be appropriate for employees experiencing a psychological illness i.e. stress/anxiety/depression or a musculoskeletal complaint i.e. neck/shoulder/back condition, that an immediate referral to occupational health is made.

7. RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW (see guidance at the end of the document)

- 7.1 Following a period of sickness absence, the employee will be required to attend a return to work interview. It is imperative that employees are felt supported at the return to work interview which will be arranged on the employee's first day back to work.
- 7.2 The meeting will normally be held by the employee's line manager or Headteacher. The purpose of the interview is to welcome the employee back to work, inform them of any changes during their absence and to seek reassurance on the part of the Academy whether the employee is completely fit for work or needs extra support at the time. It is also to demonstrate the Academy's commitment to monitoring the health and well-being of its employees. It may be that a referral to occupational health for investigation of the employee's health problems is necessary to gain advice on medium and long term fitness for work and if there is an underlying condition requiring reasonable adjustments to be carried out.
- 7.3 In a Return to Work interview employees should be made aware when they are near to reaching the trigger points and that reaching these could result in a Stage 1 Absence Meeting (and that a Stage 1 live review period could be set at this meeting). Employees should be offered support to prevent this. Should the employee have hit the trigger points by this stage they will be informed at the Return to Work interview that they could be invited to an Absence Meeting. Should a live review period already be on file for the employee, and they have exceeded their absence target, they will be notified at the Return to Work interview that they could be invited to a meeting at the next stage of the procedure. A record of the interview should be made using the Return to Work interview Form, this is to be signed by the manager and employee and copied to the employee and placed on the employee's personnel record file.
- 7.4 It is the intention that the Academy will manage absence in a pro-active manner through the effective completion of return to work interviews.

8. SHORT TERM ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 When considering trigger points, the circumstances of the employee will be carefully and sensitively considered in order to treat all employees fairly, consistently and compassionately.

9. HOW ATTENDANCE WILL BE REVIEWED

9.1 In order to manage attendance effectively it is important that sickness absence is consistently reviewed. The Academy/Trust have trigger points which can alert them if an employee's attendance has reached a point where there may be cause for concern. The following trigger points are in place to monitor employee attendance:

- 3 or more occurrences of sickness absence in any 12 month period
- 7 or more day's sickness absence in any 12 month period
- When operational need dictates, for example if the number or pattern of absences causes concern.

10. PROCEDURE

10.1 This procedure is designed to deal with persistent short-term ill-health cases.

If the employee's attendance levels have not improved to a satisfactory level following informal action through the return to work interviews, and having taken into consideration the trigger points, management may choose to obtain medical advice from occupational health (if appropriate) or may proceed to a Stage 1 Absence Meeting.

11. STAGE 1 ABSENCE MEETING

11.1 If an employee's sickness absence levels have not improved despite being addressed in their Return to Work Meetings, and the employee has reached the trigger points, the Line Manager/Headteacher may invite the employee to a Stage 1 Absence Meeting.

11.2 The Academy will provide at least 3 working days' notice of the Stage 1 Absence Meeting in writing. They should inform the employee of the time, date and place of the meeting, the reason for the meeting, issue any evidence to be discussed at the meeting and state that they have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague not involved in the case.

11.3 The Line Manager/Headteacher should prepare for the meeting by ensuring that they have identified the employee's sickness absence levels and the support that has been provided via the Return to Work meetings. Any medical evidence or documentation that the employee wishes to be considered should be submitted prior to the meeting.

11.4 In the Stage 1 Absence Meeting the Line Manager/Headteacher will be supported by the Trust's HR advisor. The Line Manager/ Headteacher shall ordinarily :-

- Explain the concern about the absence level and reasons for that concern, such as operational difficulties caused.
- Listen to reasons and respond appropriately.
- Consider whether to refer the case to occupational health, if they have not already done so.

- State that sustained improvement in attendance is expected and set an appropriate monitoring period and targets for improvement.
- Identify any support required.

11.5 Potential Outcomes:

- Give the employee a Stage 1 warning, to remain on file for 6 months, and explain that continued failure to improve attendance to the specified level may lead to a Stage 2 Absence Meeting which could lead to his/her employment being put at risk.
- Consider reasonable adjustments.
- No further action is required at this stage.

In any event the Line Manager/Headteacher should fully record the details of the meeting and send a letter to the employee.

12. STAGE 2 ABSENCE MEETING

12.1 If the employee's attendance drops below the required level within the set monitoring period the Line Manager/Headteacher will ask the employee to attend a Stage 2 Absence Meeting.

12.2 The Line Manager/Headteacher will provide at least 3 working days' notice of the Stage 2 Absence Meeting in writing. They should inform the employee of the time, date and place of the meeting, the reason for the meeting, issue any evidence to be discussed at the meeting and state that they have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague not involved in the case.

12.3 In the Stage 2 Absence Meeting the Line Manager/Headteacher will be supported by the Trust's HR advisor. The Line Manager/ Headteacher shall ordinarily:-

- Explain the concern about the absence level and reasons for that concern, such as operational difficulties caused.
- Listen to reasons and respond appropriately.
- Consider whether to refer the case to occupational health, if they have not already done so.
- State that sustained improvement in attendance is expected and set an appropriate monitoring period and targets for improvement.
- Identify any support required.

12.4 Potential Outcomes

- Give the employee a Stage 2 warning, to remain on file for 9 months and explain that continued failure to improve attendance to the specified level will lead to a Stage 3 Absence Hearing which could result in dismissal.
- Consider reasonable adjustments.
- No further action is required at this stage.

12.5 In any event the Line Manager/Headteacher should fully record the details of the meeting and send a letter to the employee.

12.6 If at any stage an employee has reached a level of improvement acceptable to the Academy/Trust, monitoring should revert back to informal arrangements.

13. STAGE 3 ABSENCE HEARING

13.1 If the employee's attendance drops below the required level within the set monitoring period the Line Manager/Headteacher will ask the employee to attend a Stage 3 Absence Hearing.

13.2 The Line Manager/Headteacher will provide at least 5 working days' notice of the Stage 3 Absence Hearing in writing:

- the purpose of the hearing.
- details of the employee's attendance.
- the stage reached in the procedure.
- when and where the hearing will be conducted.
- the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague not involved in the case.
- the requirement for the employee to provide, in at least 2 working days before the hearing, all documents that he/she intends to present at the hearing.

13.3 The Stage 3 Absence Hearing will be conducted by the Headteacher and Trust Representative and supported by the Trust's HR advisor. The Trust will consider medical evidence from OHU and/or GP, obtained at their expense. Any additional medical evidence or documentation that the employee wishes the Headteacher to consider should be submitted at least 2 working days prior to the hearing. The purpose of the Stage 3 Absence Hearing is to consider whether the employee is capable of continuing employment with the Academy/Trust in light of their health, the longer-term prognosis of the health condition/s, their attendance and their ability to perform the role with reasonable effectiveness. The hearing also takes into account whether the Academy /Trust can reasonably sustain the employee's level of attendance. The Academy/Trust will also consider reasonable adjustments so the employee can remain in employment

13.4 Potential Outcomes:

- An extension of monitoring and support within Stage 2 of the formal process
- Redeployment
- Reasonable adjustments
- Ill health
- If the Headteacher and Trust Representative decides that the employee's attendance is not acceptable and is unlikely to improve to an acceptable level, the employee may be dismissed with notice on the grounds of failure to sustain required levels of attendance.

13.5 If the Headteacher and Trust Representative decide to terminate the employee's employment on the grounds of the above, the employee will be informed of the decision to dismiss in writing and the employee will be advised of their right of appeal.

14. APPEALS

- 14.1 Any appeal arising as a result of a warning or dismissal must be made in writing to the Trust within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of the hearing.
- 14.2 If the employee submits an appeal, he/she will be invited to an Appeal Hearing where their case will be heard by a member of the Trust management team supported by the Trust's HR Advisor. In the event that a decision was taken by the Headteacher any appeal will be heard by the Chief Executive Officer supported by the Trust's HR Advisor. The outcome of the Appeal Hearing will be confirmed in writing to the employee. There is no further level of appeal.

15. MANAGING HEADTEACHER SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 15.1 In the case of Headteacher sickness absence, The Staff Absence Management Procedure will be managed by Chief Operations Officer supported by the Trust's HR Advisor.
- 15.2 All Sickness Absence Hearings relating to Headteacher sickness absence will be conducted by the Chief Executive Officer supported by the Trust's HR Advisor and any appeal by a member of the Trust Board supported by the Trust's HR Advisor.

16. LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

- 16.1 Where an employee is or is reasonably expected to be absent from work for four weeks or more (including any period of holiday) or where the employee has been unable to sustain regular and efficient attendance due to a long term condition they will fall within the scope of the long term sickness absence management procedure.
- 16.2 It may be appropriate for employees experiencing a psychological illness i.e. stress/anxiety/depression or a musculoskeletal complaint i.e. neck/shoulder/back condition, that an immediate referral to occupational health is made.
- 16.3 The Academy will maintain regular, sensitive and supportive contact with the employee, which may include regular review meetings to discuss the employee's continuing absence, when the employee may be able to return to work and any reasonable adjustments that the School may be able to make to assist the employee in returning to work.

17. ALTERNATIVE VENUES

- 17.1 In some circumstances where employees are unable to attend a meeting at the Academy /Trust it may be appropriate for management to arrange an alternative venue. This may include the employee's home with their agreement or a neutral venue.

18. MEDICAL SUSPENSION

- 18.1 There are a number of circumstances where it may be necessary to medically suspend an employee.
- 18.2 Reasons for such a decision may include consideration for the protection of the person's own health, as well as the health and welfare of other staff and pupils who may be put at risk by the medical condition of an employee. Occupational health may recommend medical suspension to management.
- 18.3 Medical suspension will be on full pay.

19. WHEN MEDICAL CAPABILITY IS BEING CONSIDERED

- 19.1 If, following advice from occupational health, it appears that the employee is probably not going to be able to return to their role or to provide regular and efficient attendance within a reasonable period of time the employee may be invited to attend a Medical Capability Hearing.
- 19.2 Prior to a medical capability hearing a preliminary meeting will ordinarily be arranged in order to discuss the following:
- The history of the employee's absence, including the number of absences or duration of absences.
 - Any reasonable adjustments that have been made or considered.
 - If and when the employee may be able to return to work or to provide regular and efficient service.
 - Any redeployment options that have been considered within the Academy/Trust.
 - The up to date medical advice.
- 19.3 The employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- 19.4 If, following the preliminary meeting, management remain of the opinion that the employee is not able to return to work within a reasonable period of time and that their absence cannot be sustained or that the employee will not be able to provide regular and efficient service in accordance with their contract of employment, the employee should be invited to attend a Medical Capability Hearing.

20. MEDICAL CAPABILITY HEARING

- 20.1 The Medical Capability Hearing will be conducted by the Headteacher and a Trust Representative supported by the Trust's HR Advisor. The purpose of the Medical Capability Hearing is to consider the viability of the employee's continuing employment with the Academy. The employee should be given written notification of the meeting giving 5 working days' notice.
- 20.2 The Headteacher and Trust Representative will consider dismissal on the grounds of medical capability where having considered any medical advice and

any representations by the employee the Headteacher and Trust Representative reasonably believes that:

- the employee is permanently unfit to work.
- they are unable to reasonably determine when the employee will be able to return to work or to provide regular and efficient service.
- the employee is unlikely to be able to provide regular and efficient service.

20.3 In the event that an employee has failed to attend appointments with occupational health and therefore there is no medical evidence to consider, the Headteacher and Trust Representative may make a decision based on the information at the Hearing.

20.4 The employee has the right to be accompanied at the Medical Capability Hearing by a colleague or a trade union representative. Any documentation that the employee wishes to be considered should be submitted at least 2 working days prior to the Hearing.

20.5 In certain situations where medical evidence from an employee is in conflict with the medical evidence from occupational health, the Academy/Trust may decide to obtain a further medical report or may prefer either report.

20.6 Where an employee fails to attend the Medical Capability Hearing, the hearing may go ahead in their absence.

20.7 If the Headteacher and Trust Representative decides to terminate the employee's employment on the grounds of Medical Capability, the employee will be informed of the decision to dismiss in writing and the employee will be informed of their right of appeal.

21. APPEALS

21.1 Any appeal arising as result of a Medical Capability Dismissal should be made in writing to the Trust within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome of the hearing.

21.2 If the employee submits an appeal, he/she will be invited to an Appeal Hearing where their case will be heard by the Chief Executive Officer supported by the Trust's HR Advisor. The employee and the Academy may wish to provide additional medical information for consideration at the Appeal Hearing.

21.3 The outcome of the Appeal Hearing will be confirmed in writing to the employee. There is no further level of appeal.

22. REDEPLOYMENT

22.1 There may be some instances where an employee is fit to return to work but not necessarily to the role they were originally employed to undertake. Redeployment is where an employee is transferred into a suitable alternative post which they are able to undertake with or without reasonable adjustments and/or training. In respect of alternative work, managers are advised to look at

any existing and near future vacancies in the Academy and Trust in the first instance and discuss these with the employee in terms of their eligibility (including consideration of reasonable adjustments and training, as appropriate).

23. ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT

It may be possible that an employee who is contributing to the Local Government Pension Scheme or Teachers' Pension Scheme, could be considered for Ill Health Retirement. Employees must meet the criteria set out under the regulations of each individual pension scheme which relates to both service and health status. The Trust will support employees to establish their suitability for ill health retirement.

24. ACCRUAL OF ANNUAL LEAVE DURING SICK LEAVE

24.1 Employees have the right to accrue annual leave during sickness and to take this upon return or carry forward the annual leave into the next leave year. The time an employee takes leave will be agreed by management in line with the needs of the Academy /Trust. Full time employees are entitled to 28 days (5.6 weeks) of statutory annual leave under the Working Time Regulations 1998. Therefore, the entitlement to statutory annual leave can be offset by any periods of School closure, whether they occur before or after the period of sickness. Where there is insufficient School closure time to allow the statutory annual leave to be taken, the School may allow the employee to carry forward the leave to be taken in a school closure.

24.2 When an employee commences sick leave, the amount of leave an employee has had in the current leave year will be established by the amount of Academy closure periods that have already occurred during the leave year. If this exceeds the entitlement to statutory annual leave there will be no further entitlement to leave. For more information please speak to your HR Advisor.

Signature CEO :	
Signature Chair of Trust Board :	
Date :	10 July 2018

SELF CERTIFICATE ABSENCE FORM

As soon as you return to work after sickness, you must complete the self certification form covering the first seven days of absence. The Period of Sickness dates must be the first and last days of your actual sickness, even if these occurred on a weekend, public holiday or other day you would not normally work. Please return your completed form to your Line Manager.

Name of employee:	Job title:	
Department:	Date joined organisation:	
First day of absence:		<u>Date</u>
Last day of absence:		
Date of return to work:		
Total time absent:	days	hours
<p>This form must be completed by each employee on return to work following an absence of less than seven days.</p> <p>Please give details of the reason for your absence (sick or illness is not enough):</p> <p>When did you notify the School of your sickness?</p> <p>Whom did you notify?</p> <p>Did you consult your doctor? Yes / No</p> <p>Did you obtain a medical certificate? [if Yes, please attach] Yes / No</p>		
<p>Please provide any further relevant information:</p> 		

The following information is required to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of yourself and others.

Are you taking any medication?	Yes / No
If Yes, please provide details:	
If Yes, have you been advised of any side effects that could affect your work or may be a safety hazard?	
Yes / No	
If Yes, please provide details:	
Declaration	
I certify that the above is a complete and accurate record of my sickness. I understand that if I provide inaccurate or false information about my absence, with the intention to mislead, this will result in disciplinary action and will affect my entitlement to sick pay.	
I understand these details will be held in confidence by the Academy/Trust and may be used for the following purposes in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the expected provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) :-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work of myself and other workers• the avoidance of discrimination on the grounds of disability• maintaining sick pay• supplying information on accidents where industrial injury benefits may be payable• ensuring the company is able to monitor and deal fairly with attendance and absence issues.	

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For completion by Line Manager/Headteacher:

Has a return to work interview been held?	Yes / No
Signature of line manager:	Date:
_____	_____
Name of line manager/Headteacher:	_____

NOTE: General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
When completed, this form may contain sensitive personal data as defined by Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). It must be kept secure and confidential.

RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW GUIDANCE

Surveys of employers indicate that return-to-work interviews do cut employee absence rates, making them an important tool for management. They should be treated as part of your good management practice, not a burden that is allowed to slip down a To-Do list, so always aim to hold the meeting as soon as possible after the employee has returned to work.

Return to work interviews will be conducted by line managers following every period of sickness absence, regardless of duration.

Your main focus & objectives for the Interview:

- Welcome the employee back
- Confirm they are fully recovered and fit to work
- Confirm the reasons for the absence
- Discuss further to your understanding from conversations during the absence any problems that may have caused or contributed to the absence
- Identify any short or medium term help they may require in order to facilitate a smooth return to work
- Discuss any further action that may be necessary
- Update the employee on tasking issues
- Outline the nature and effectiveness of cover for their absence

Preparing for the Interview:

- Have details of all recent absences available
- Check for any patterns, recurring trends, or underlying illnesses
- Book a meeting room, or find somewhere quiet and private to conduct the meeting
- Be ready to listen to anything the employee will add

Holding the Meeting:

- Remember, this is a return-to-work Interview, not a disciplinary hearing (if a disciplinary becomes appropriate, deal with this separately, and in accordance with your disciplinary procedures)
- Use open questions to gather as much information as possible
- Ensure the employee is fit to return to work employers consider any suggestions on the fit note where the GP has indicated the employee may be fit to return to work and carry out a risk assessment when the employee returns to work
- Identify the cause of the absence, and explore any ways this can be addressed for the future
- Be sensitive and considerate to the employee – they've just returned from sick leave, and you don't want to cause them more problems, but address what you can for the future
- Remind the employee that their continued employment could be influenced by poor attendance
- Determine whether there are any disability issues that might need to be allowed for
- Discuss any failures of the employee to properly notify you of the absence promptly and fully – including how they notified you of the absence

After the Meeting

- Prepare a note of your discussions, covering all the points raised, and keep this in the personnel records
- Consider any reasonable adjustments you can make
- Determine whether you need to deal with the poor attendance as a disciplinary issue
- Continue to monitor the attendance, and take further action where problems continue or return.

RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW FORM

Summary of sickness absence in the previous 6 months to 12 months

Number of days		Number of episodes	
Summary notes of return to work interview			
Follow up action proposed by management or employee (where required)			Timescales (if appropriate)
Referral to occupational health			
Referral to staff counselling services			
Referral to support agencies (e.g. Disability Employment Advisory Service, Access to Work)			
Adjustments to working arrangements agreed (hours / environment / duties etc)			
Any other e.g. continued monitoring and further reviews – please give details			

Employee

I confirm that this is an accurate record of my Absence Interview.

Signature	Date
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Line Manager/Headteacher

I confirm that this is an accurate record of the Absence Interview undertaken with the above.

Manager's Signature	Date
Print Name	