

# Sickness Absence Policy

## (School Support Staff)

### Summary:

The school aims for a high level of attendance in order to deliver services efficiently and effectively.

- You are responsible for your own attendance at work.
- Your manager is responsible for managing absence fairly and in a consistent manner.

## Quick Glance

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Who does this policy apply to?	It applies to all school support staff employed on "Green Book" conditions.
What should I do if I am sick and cannot come into work?	<p>You must inform your manager as soon as possible but in any case before your normal start time or as determined by the school.</p> <p>If you are sick for more than three consecutive days you must ring and up-date your manager on the fourth day.</p> <p>You will need to complete a self certification for any absence up to seven calendar days.</p> <p>If you are sick for eight calendar days or more, you must supply a doctor's fit note and ring and speak to your manager on the eighth day.</p> <p>You should then continue to update your manager before the expiry of every fit note and maintain continuous fit note cover.</p> <p>If you fail to follow the reporting procedure your manager may suspend your sickness pay.</p>
Do I need a doctor's fit note?	You should complete a self certification for the first seven days and if you are still sick you must obtain a doctor's fit note from

What do I do if my fit note says I may be fit for work?

day eight onwards, until you are fit to return to work.

If your doctor believes you may be fit for work, they will provide guidance on the fit note. You should send your fit note to your manager as normal and ring them to discuss the details. Your manager will discuss with you whether or not the advice on the doctor's fit note can be accommodated, bearing in mind the needs of the school/service. If for any reason it is not possible to accommodate your return to work at this stage, you will remain off sick.

If your manager is able to accommodate the guidance you must return to work. Should you refuse, your manager will need to consider taking action under the [Conduct Policy](#).

Will I be paid when I am off sick?

Yes, provided you follow the requirements of the policy you will receive pay in line with your conditions of service. If you fail to follow the requirements, your manager may suspend your sickness pay.

The amount of sickness pay depends on your length of service as follows:

- First year of service one month's full pay and (after completing four month's service) two month's half pay.
- Second year of service two month's full pay and two month's half pay.
- Third year of service four month's full pay and four month's half pay.
- Fourth and fifth year of service five month's full pay and five month's half pay.
- After five years service six month's full pay and six month's half pay.

Will my manager refer me to Occupational Health (OH)?

Your manager may refer you to OH if they feel their input would be helpful, particularly if:

- You have had a total of eight or more day's absence (whether on one occasion or accumulated over several occasions) during the last 12 months.
- Your absence is related to mental illness or musculoskeletal issues.
- They become aware that you have a medical condition that is likely to result in long term absence.
- Your absence continues after a period of four weeks.

What happens if my manager asks me to attend OH?

The school may ask for your consent for OH to contact your doctor for access to information based on your medical records. The details provided by your doctor are entirely confidential to OH and will not be shared with anyone else.

The purpose for requesting this information is simply to allow OH to have a full picture of your medical situation. This helps

What happens if the medical advisers recommend a phased return to work?

to ensure that any advice subsequently provided by OH to your manager regarding the effect of your health on your employment is based on the full facts of the situation, rather than what otherwise might be an incomplete picture. However, you do have a legal right to refuse consent for OH to contact your doctor or, if you do provide consent, to see and comment on the report before your doctor sends it to OH.

Your manager will use the advice and guidance from OH as a basis to talk to you about managing your health and/or return to work and to help make informed decisions about the potential effect of your health on your employment. OH and your manager will only be able to make decisions about your employment based on the information they have.

An employee who unreasonably fails to co-operate with their employer in the appropriate management of their sickness absence may have their contractual sickness pay suspended.

Where a short (normally no longer than two to four weeks) period of rehabilitation is recommended by OH or your own doctor, the school will in discussion and agreement with you, implement it (wholly or in part) if possible, giving due consideration to the needs of the school/service. It may be unsafe if you are partially fit to attempt to return to normal duties but for rehabilitation you can attend work, with appropriate support, during your sickness absence. In these circumstances you normally continue to submit fit notes and will receive normal entitlement to sick pay.

Your manager may use their discretion to agree an appropriate arrangement for a phased return depending on the situation and with reference to the guidance, available to managers, linked to the [Attendance Policy](#).

The purpose of a phased return is:

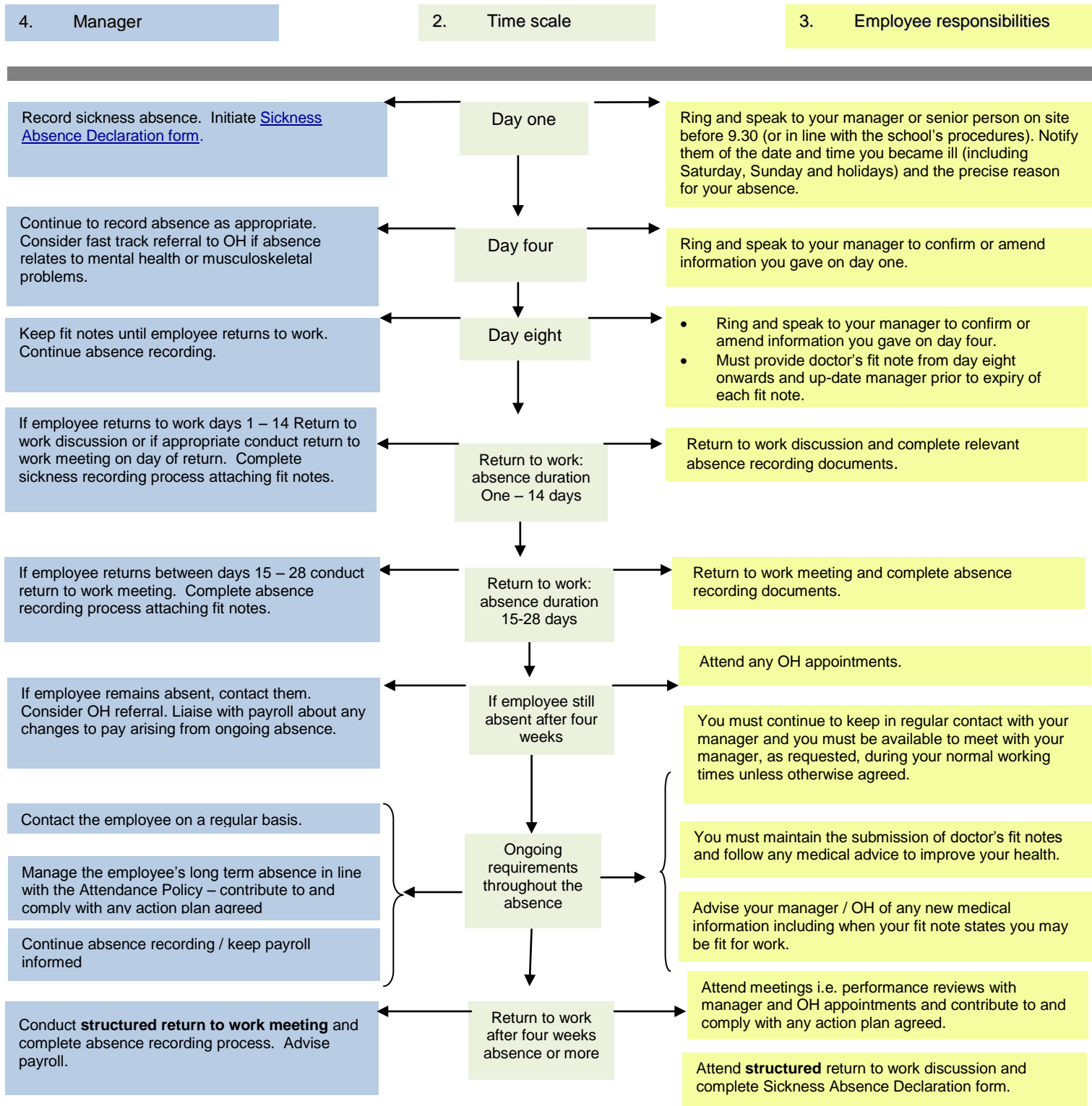
- To allow you an opportunity to return to work in a structured way when you have recovered. This helps you to build up your stamina and confidence for a full return to work after a long period of absence.
- To allow you to experience a gradual return to work to enable you to test your own ability to do the job in relation to your medical condition.
- To allow your head teacher (or Chair of Governors - in the case of a head teacher) managers and OH provider to assess your actual level of fitness reached and the advisability and timescale for a return to normal duty.
- To allow the school to meet its obligations under the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

	<p>Where the school is being asked to consider longer periods of rehabilitation, the school may agree with you a temporary adjustment to your contract of employment.</p>
Can my manager contact me when I am off sick?	<p>Yes. You and your manager should keep in regular contact during any period of sickness absence and this could reasonably include a meeting with you.</p>
What if I am sick during a school closure period?	<p>You should continue to submit fit notes if sick during closure periods.</p>
What if I feel I am fit to return to work before the end of my doctor's fit note?	<p>Where a doctor's fit note says you are not fit but during the period of the fit note you feel you have recovered sufficiently and want to return to work, you should contact your manager to discuss. In considering your return to work you and your manager will undertake a risk assessment. Any early return to work should be confirmed in writing.</p>
Will my manager ask me to attend a return to work meeting?	<p>Your manager will discuss your sickness absence on your return to work and may ask you to attend a return to work meeting after any period of sickness absence but particularly when you have had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• short term absence totalling eight days accumulated over the last 12 months, or</li><li>• a single period of absence of more than 14 consecutive calendar days</li></ul>
What is the purpose of a return to work meeting?	<p>The purpose of the meeting is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• welcome you back to work</li><li>• ensure you are fit to return, particularly if you have been absent for a prolonged period of time</li><li>• identify the cause of the absence</li><li>• together you will address any problem that may be causing or contributing to the absence</li><li>• agree priorities for the post-absence period</li><li>• agree any initial support that may be needed when you return</li></ul>
What will happen if I do not follow the reporting procedure?	<p>Your absence will be unauthorised and dealt with as a disciplinary matter. Your sickness pay will be suspended.</p>
What about Ill	<p>You have to be a member of the Local Government Pension</p>

Health Retirement?	<p>Scheme (LGPS) to be considered for ill health retirement.</p> <p>All ill health retirements have to be explored with medical advice from OH, as there are very specific criteria around ill health retirements which only the OH doctor can apply</p>
Can I be dismissed from my job for being sick?	<p>Sickness absence is managed through our <a href="#">Attendance Policy</a> and the aim is always to secure sustained improvement in attendance at work. However, poor attendance or an inability to carry out the role for which you are employed can result in dismissal.</p>
I have a disability. Will this be taken into account when dealing with my sickness absence?	<p>Yes. Your manager will comply with The Equality Act (2010) and seek to make reasonable adjustments to support you to do your job. When appropriate they will take advice from OH and HR.</p>
I have a disability, is there any support available?	<p>Yes. The Access to Work Service offers financial and practical assistance to people with a disability to try and enable them to continue in work.</p> <p>You contact the <a href="#">Access to Work Service</a> through Jobcentreplus. More information can be found on this website: <a href="http://disabilityrightsuk.org/access-work">http://disabilityrightsuk.org/access-work</a></p>
What happens if my disability means I can't do my job?	<p>If you cannot do your current job after reasonable adjustments have been fully explored the school will seek to redeploy you. However if no suitable employment is available you may be dismissed.</p> <p>If you are permanently disabled, your manager may seek advice from OH in respect of ill health retirement.</p>
I am not sick but need time off for an emergency, what should I do?	<p>Speak to your manager to see if you can take leave, under the '<a href="#">Authorised &amp; Special Leave Policy</a>', which covers compassionate leave and family care leave.</p>
What happens if I am absent as a result of an accident for which a third party is liable?	<p>In this case you should advise the school immediately. The school will expect you to provide details of any settlement of a claim for damages related to the injury/condition which has caused the absence and may require you to pay back part or all of the sick pay paid but this amount will not exceed any damages recovered.</p>
Are there any other circumstances in which my sick pay	<p>If, in the opinion of the governing body, the injury/condition has arisen due to your misconduct, if you have failed to comply with the conditions of this scheme or have behaved in a way prejudicial to your recovery, sick pay may be suspended. In this case you will be allowed to meet with the</p>

may be withheld? governing body to respond to the concerns.

**Flowchart**  
1. Sickness absence from work  
**Manager and employee responsibilities during sickness absence**



**Note: Reporting sickness absence**

In certain cases it may be necessary to warn an employee that failure to notify sickness absence as outlined above will result in loss of pay and / or exclusion from the relevant sick pay scheme and that formal action may also need to be taken under the Attendance Policy.