

Hellesdon High School
A Community Technology College

Attendance Policy - Staff version

Guidance for members of staff

Attendance and sickness absence

November 2007

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HELLESDON HIGH SCHOOL
STAFF ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Hellesdon High School has a stable and highly committed workforce, which we seek to support and develop. We recognise that our staff are our most valuable asset and by offering fair working opportunities, in a monitored well-being environment, we hope the staff will play an active role in the development of individuals and assist in raising the attainment of all, both pupils and colleagues.

The key to our success lies in the motivation, competence and capability of the people we employ. All staff are encouraged to give of their best and share the values and objectives of the school. All staff have an essential role to play in delivery of their work and should be clear about their accountability and responsibilities for their own achievements within their levels of competence.

High attendance rates are essential for the orderly running of the school. A positive approach to the management of absence is required in order to optimise attendance rates and enable the school to move forward and achieve its goals. The management of absence is considered an integral part of performance management.

THE POLICY

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to:-

- Clarify expectations for both management and all members of staff.
- Harmonise the school's approach to the management of absence.
- Enable a consistent standard to be applied to all employees of the school.
- Optimise attendance and minimise absence through standard setting and monitoring.
- Protect and promote the interests of those who are genuinely incapacitated.

The policy of the school is to encourage positive action to be taken in the event of sickness and to prevent a culture developing where sickness absence is thought to be an inappropriate subject for management.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following standards, expectations and roles will be adopted.

STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

A member of staff who is absent from work due to illness should rightly feel that the school is concerned for his/her well-being and will provide appropriate support prior to and following return to work.

It is recognised that from time to time personal/domestic/unforeseen circumstances may affect members of staff. To ensure that staff are able to deal with such circumstances and enable staff to return to normal duties afterwards, the 'Special Leave Policy' should be adopted rather than the use of sick leave in such circumstances.

In the majority of cases absence may be tolerable because it is short in duration and/or non-recurring. Occasionally however, individual cases arise where attendance falls below 'normal' expectations. Managers expect and plan for 'normal' levels of absence based on the general health of the majority of staff. Where attendance falls below such expectations, pressure is placed on the school and department to continue to perform to the level of output planned.

In some cases it may be more appropriate to classify certain types of absence as 'disability leave' rather than sickness. Disabled employees' needs for time off for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment should not be counted as sickness absence but should be recorded separately as disability leave. Where an individual has time off work which is a result of their disability, but during which they are not taking rehabilitation, assessment or treatment, then this will be counted as sick leave. (The management will make every effort to make reasonable adjustments to working practices, premises or employment arrangements to enable an employee who is disabled to continue working.) (In line with Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2001).

Staff should be aware of the policies and procedures regarding sickness and governing attendance. Procedures must be followed to ensure consistence and fairness.

The management of absence is the responsibility of the senior management team.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STAFF

- Know and agree that the contribution of every member of staff to the daily functioning of the school is important.
- Follow set procedures when forced to miss work through illness or injury.
- Appreciate that frequent or inappropriate absence is a serious problem for the school.
- Seek help as appropriate from their head of department or the Senior Management Team should problems occur that may affect their attendance.
- Remember that the Headteacher has discretion to award special leave for domestic, personal and family reasons, and to ask for such leave when needed rather than use the sickness procedures.
- See their head of department on return to work to discuss their absence and their ability to resume their duties.
- Note that full attendance except for agreed planned absence is the target and agree to work towards that standard for their department.
- Recognise that action will be taken to gain improvements in attendance where possible should it fall short of expectations.
- Appreciate that false claims of sickness are a matter that will lead to disciplinary action being taken against them.
- Individual members of staff are responsible with their heads of department for ensuring they adopt safe working practices, and utilise safety equipment provided to reduce the incidence of sickness absence caused within the working environment.
- Understand each member of staff has a responsibility for the health and safety of themselves, pupils and other staff in their working environment.
- Understand you may be referred for an independent medical assessment at the discretion of the Headteacher.

HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

- Focus on attendance and concentrate on achieving optimum attendance.
- Encourage open communications with members of staff, which must always be kept in confidence with Senior Management.
- Communicate with staff the policy for attendance and explain the procedures to be followed when absence occurs.
- Communicate to staff expectations of attendance and standards set in the area concerned.
- Establish contact in an appropriate way with staff at least after the first week of absence to express an interest in their well-being.
- Investigate reasons for an unusual level or pattern of unplanned absence and discuss with staff if and how improvement in attendance might be achieved.
- Arrange for any support mechanisms to be implemented.
- Seek the advice of the SMT Link if there is a continued pattern of short-term absence and at an appropriate time for cases of long-term absence.

I/C COVER (Teaching and non-teaching staff)

- Accurately record and report all relevant absence
- Set monitoring procedures
- Monitor attendance against expectations
- Take positive action to establish cause and duration of sickness and identify individual absence patterns emerging over time

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

- To accept referrals from heads of department in respect of individual members of staff.
- To accept referrals from individual members of staff on their own behalf.
- To contact and consult with members of staff who have been referred.
- To provide heads of department with clear advice relating to an individual's suitability, health wise, to undertake the full requirements of their role and anticipated length of absence (in long term cases) (NB no confidential health information will be disclosed).
- To provide advice to heads of department and staff that will lead to the earliest appropriate return to work.
- To ensure appropriate specialist help is made available to aid an early return to work.
- To ensure that 'Access to Work' procedures are put into operation should leave be classified as a long-term disability.
- Provide advice and support to heads of department in their efforts to maximise levels of attendance.
- Provide advice and support to individual members of staff.
- Assist heads of department in discussions and formal/informal interviews as required.
- Monitor trends and encourage heads of department participation.
- Where expected improvements to attendance following discussions do not materialise, adopt a more formal and planned approach depending on the reasons for the continued level or pattern of absence and refer to Headteacher for advice.

ROLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS/ASSOCIATIONS

- To assist individual members of staff with advice and support.
- To advise members of staff on other policies which might be applicable to them e.g. special leave, policy for employment of people with a disability etc.

ARRANGEMENTS

The guidelines and procedures for notifying absence, returning to work and recurring absence are contained in Section2 'Staff Guidelines on absence and returning to work'.

HELLESDON HIGH SCHOOL**Staff Guidelines on Absence and Returning to Work****Procedures for staff absence from school****1. Sickness**

- 1.1 If you are unable to attend work because of sickness (or any other reason), you must telephone the absence line giving reasons for absence as soon as possible. You should telephone at the earliest possible opportunity and before 7.30am on the day of absence. In cases where absence can be planned, e.g. treatment, notification should be given at the time the appointment is confirmed, in order that cover can be arranged for lessons.
In all cases you should give some indication of how long you might be absent and should keep the school informed of a possible return date.
- 1.2 You will need to contact your head of department and make arrangements for your work for the time of absence. Teachers are expected, in most cases, to set work for lessons.
- 1.3 If you are absent for over five working days (seven calendar days) you must obtain a Medical Certificate from an appropriate practitioner and send it to school as soon as possible.
- 1.4 It may be appropriate to classify certain types of leave as disability leave for which paid time off will be given rather than sick leave. Disabled employees needs for time off for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment should not be counted as sickness absence, but should be recorded separately as disability leave.
Staff need to aware that the Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a disability.

2. Returning from work – short absences

- 2.1 On your return from work following a short absence, your head of department will meet you to confirm that you have recovered sufficiently to continue your post.
- 2.2 Your Head of Department will bring you up to date with activities and events that occurred in your absence period.
- 2.3 Your Head of Department will ask if there is any cause for your absence that would respond to management action.

3. Returning from work – long absences

- 3.1 If appropriate during your absence your department will establish and maintain contact with you in order to offer support during this period.
- 3.2 You may be asked to attend an independent medical assessment to discuss your return to work or continued absence.
- 3.3 Every effort will be made to secure an early return to work for you. In some circumstances members of staff are unable to return to work due to their health. Specialist advice and support will be made available to you.
- 3.4 In certain circumstances it might be necessary to confirm your fitness to resume your job and in some instances the Headteacher may negotiate a phased return.
- 3.5 In the case of an employee with a disability, the Disability Discrimination Act makes it clear that it is particularly important for an employer to make every effort to make reasonable adjustments to working conditions, premises or arrangements to accommodate a return to work. Employees will be supported through an application to the 'Access to Work' scheme whereby independent assessment is made of

provision and resources required to enable the member of staff with the disability to remain in employment.

4. Recurring absences

- 4.1. If you are absent from school several times over the course of a year, your head of department may wish to discuss reasons for this with you, and establish if there is something that can be done to respond to the situation. Normally, the procedure will be used after your fourth period of absence in any twelve-month period, but this may be dependent on particular circumstances. A record of ten days per year of frequent or inappropriate absence is regarded as one which falls below levels of expectation and one which presents serious problems for the school.
- 4.2 Your head of department will agree a course of action with you if appropriate, and you may be asked to discuss the problem with the SMT link for the department.
- 4.3 Recurring absences that are due to an underlying health reason may be dealt with in the same way as long-term sickness.
- 4.4 The head of department or SMT link will complete a report of the meeting and ask you to sign to confirm you have seen it. A copy will be given to you to keep.
- 4.5 You may wish to consult your union representative for advice in such circumstances.
- 4.6 The SMT link may wish to refer the absence problem to the Headteacher
- 4.7 The Headteacher may refer you for an independent medical assessment.
- 4.8 Should the problem persist and attendance remains an issue that does not appear to improve despite all support being given and avenues open to the school to resolve the issue are exhausted, competency procedures may begin. The Headteacher may seek advice from the LEA.

5. Absence from work

- Following contact with a notifiable disease.
- Due to injury or accident contacted during the course of employment.
- Due to an accident.
- Due to a disability.

Specific guidelines cover the circumstances described above. Should such an occasion arise, the Senior Management Team will be able to clarify the procedures you should follow.

Ratified by the School Effectiveness Committee 04.02.08

Review Date 04.02.11