



Staff Attendance Management Policy 2024-5

Date Ratified	December 2024	Next Review	November 2025
Governor Link	Adam Fagan	Committee	Full Governing Body
Staff Link	Headteacher Jo Kennedy office@hollickwood.barnet.sch.uk TEL: 020 8883 6880		

Statement of Intent

Hollickwood is committed to maintaining the health, safety, wellbeing and welfare of its staff. We seek to provide a positive and healthy working environment, and recognise the value of our employees' work-life balance. Regular attendance at work is an integral part of each employee's contract of employment. The staff at Hollickwood are the most vital and important resource for teaching and learning. To be as effective as possible, we need to have a full staff complement. Additional pressures are put on staff and the effective day to day running of the school if there is significant staff absence. The wellbeing and academic progress of pupils may also be adversely affected. However, we recognise that employees will, on occasion, have genuine and acceptable reasons to be absent from work. On those occasions, we will aim to support an employee during the period of absence, with the aim of assisting their return to work at the earliest opportunity.

We also understand that holidays are precious time away from the regular stress of work, and strongly encourage staff to take annual leave, where leave is not covered by the school holidays. We also recognise that, on occasion, leave may need to be taken due to unforeseen circumstances, and we will try our utmost to accommodate the needs of our staff.

This policy outlines provisions to minimise staff absence levels across the school, the school's duties regarding staff leave of absence, and the provisions for staff to follow when requesting leave, as well as information on how we support 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 informs all employees of their responsibilities regarding attendance at work.

In accordance with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, we will make all reasonable efforts to allow employees with a disability that affects their attendance at work to continue their employment.

Policy scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant documents on contractual terms and conditions (e.g. the Burgundy Book and the Green Book) which cover the terms and conditions of specific groups of staff. It should also be read in conjunction with the relevant London Borough of Barnet policies. This policy is intended as a summary document for staff to provide a helpful first reference point. Where unsure of an issue relating to staff attendance or absence management, the headteacher and/or School Business Manager will seek advice from Barnet HR and act in accordance with their specialist guidance.

Contents:

- (1) Roles and responsibilities
- (2) Sickness absence
- (3) Reporting absence due to sickness
- (4) Sickness pay
- (5) Annual leave
- (6) Special leave of absence
- (7) Medical and health-related appointments
- (8) Fertility treatment
- (9) Medical records
- (10) Occupational health
- (11) Fit notes
- (12) Sickness absence caused by industrial disease, a work-related accident or assault at work
- (13) Terminal illness
- (14) Ill health retirement
- (15) Sickness whilst at work
- (16) Working remotely and sickness
- (17) Maintaining contact with an employee during a time of sickness absence
- (18) Returning to work
- (19) Return to work meetings
- (20) Return to work
- (21) Temporary medical redeployment
- (22) Permanent medical redeployment
- (23) Maternity, paternity, parental, shared-parental and adoption leave
- (24) Adoption leave
- (25) Parental bereavement leave
- (26) Statutory carers leave
- (27) Entitlement to take time off for trade union activities
- (28) Review points
- (29) Absence management review meetings
- (30) Formal action and right to appeal
- (31) Meeting and right to be accompanied
- (32) Monitoring and review

(1) Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will be responsible for:

- Reviewing this policy and ensuring it is adhered to across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy is implemented fairly, consistently and in line with the board's equality duties.
- Signing off any special leave requested by the headteacher, e.g. bereavement leave.
- Implementing this policy in respect of headteacher absence.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Implementing this policy in line with their statutory duties.
- Promoting a health and safe workplace, encouraging regular attendance, considering any requests by employees for adjustments, equipment or other support.
- Working in partnership with the school business manager to review staff attendance.
- Deciding if a stage one absence hearing with an employee is appropriate when their sickness absence level has reached a trigger point.
- Maintaining reasonable contact with employees during a period of absence.
- Meeting with employees on their return to work, regardless of the duration of the absence.
- Implementing a special leave reporting structure for staff and reporting any requests to the governing board.

The School Business Manager will be responsible for:

- Recording all sickness absence upon notification.
- Informing all employees of attendance management procedures, including the conditions of the sick pay scheme.
- Monitoring and reviewing sickness absence across the school, and providing a termly report to the head teacher.
- Ensuring all documentation related to staff attendance and absence is in line with relevant legislation and school policies on confidentiality, data protection and information security.

Staff will be responsible for:

- Attending work when fit to do so.
- Complying with the school's notification of sickness absence procedures.

- Maintaining reasonable contact with the school and meeting with the school when required during periods of absence of four weeks or longer (“long-term sickness absence”).
- If requested to do so by the school, attending occupational health (and potentially other medical) appointments.
- Arranging annual leave during school holiday periods.
- Requesting special leave as soon as possible.
- Submitting annual leave requests to the school business manager.
- Arranging leave for a convenient time, i.e. not in conflict with other relevant staff leave.
- Adhering to this policy at all times.

(2) Sickness absence

There are four main types of sickness absence and leadership’s actions taken during an employee’s absence will vary depending on the reason for the absence:

- **Short term** - Absence due to short-term illness
- **Long term** – This is an absence from work which lasts 4 consecutive weeks or more. The school appreciates that some long-term underlying conditions may result in frequent absences of shorter duration. Consideration will be given to the circumstances of each individual case.
- **Pregnancy or maternity related** - Pregnancy or maternity-related sickness absence is recorded separately from other sick leave, so that it is ignored as absence and not used to the employee’s disadvantage for example in any disciplinary action, dismissal or redundancy. If the employee is absent from work for a pregnancy or maternity-related illness in the 4 weeks before the baby is due (date information confirmed in the employee’s Mat B1 form), the employee will automatically start their Maternity Leave and Statutory Maternity pay.
- **Suspension from work on medical or health and safety grounds** - The school has a duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure its employees’ health and safety and medical welfare. In a situation where hazards have been identified, the school will undertake a risk assessment and, where appropriate, will consider making adjustments to the duties of any affected employees, or a decision to suspend them from work on medical grounds. As an alternative to medical suspension, the school may ask an employee to undertake suitable alternative work for a period of time. Employees should fully co-operate with such requests and participate in relevant

discussions and associated processes. Any temporary modification to an employee's duties for medical reasons or assignment to a different role as an alternative to medical suspension will not impact their remuneration or other terms of employment. Similarly, employees who are suspended on medical grounds will continue receiving full pay and accruing annual leave during the period of their suspension. Where a decision is made for an employee to be suspended on medical grounds, the School will endeavour to work towards identifying ways of managing the relevant risks in order to keep the length of the suspension period to a minimum. A regular 7-day rolling review of the suspension will normally be put in place in order to manage and support the employee back to work as quickly as practicably possible.

(3) Reporting absence due to sickness

The school expects staff to report absence using the following procedure:

- On the first day of sickness absence, staff will text the school business manager by 7.30am. This should then be followed up by a phone call to the school office by 9.30am with further information regarding absence and (where feasible) an early indication as to your likely return to work. You need to give a clear indication of the nature of the illness and a likely return date. If no phone call is received, you may be telephoned at home.
- Unless and until staff are certified by a fit note from a healthcare professional, they will text the school business manager by no later than 7.30am for each day of absence and follow up with a phone call to the school office by 9.30am unless instructed otherwise.
- If a staff member is absent for longer than seven consecutive days (including weekends), then they will submit a fit note from a healthcare professional to the school. See section 12 'Fit Notes' for further details.

Should an employee not report for work, the school business manager or headteacher will attempt to make contact with them as part of the school's duty of care to the welfare of its staff. If it is not possible to make contact with the employee, then the school business manager or headteacher will contact the emergency contacts for the staff member as recorded on Arbor. Employees are responsible for ensuring they give the school business manager the names of two emergency contacts who they would be happy for the school to contact in the event that they cannot make contact with the employee. If there are no

emergency contact details given, or if the school business manager or headteacher have concerns for the member of staff's immediate welfare, then they will seek further advice. This may include calling the police, or making a home visit, if it is deemed appropriate and proportionate to do so.

(4) Sickness pay

Employees are contractually entitled to paid leave due to an absence because they are too ill to attend work as set out in the sick pay entitlement contained within their Terms and Conditions of Employment.

If an employee does not comply with the school's sickness reporting procedures, including maintaining appropriate contact and providing medical sickness certificates (or self-certificates for absences up to 7 days), the school business manager will remind them that unreasonable delays or a failure to share the relevant information/documentation may result in the school suspending their entitlement to sick pay and/or investigating the issue under its Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

(5) Annual Leave

Specific annual leave arrangements are outlined in each staff member's contract of employment. This section of this policy outlines the guidelines the school will follow in relation to annual leave; however, the school will refer to staff members' individual contracts of employment when looking at their annual leave entitlement.

Teacher annual leave

Teachers will be required to be available for work for 195 days each of which 190 shall be days they may be required to teach pupils and 5 will be for other duties. Teachers will not be permitted to request annual leave to take a holiday within term-time. Term-time leave will only be permissible in exceptional circumstances, e.g. to take care of a dependant.

Where, as a result of long-term sickness absence, annual leave cannot be offset against school closure periods within the school leave year, any outstanding leave will be calculated and paid to the employee.

Support staff leave

The provision for support staff employed on a term-time only basis is the same as for teaching staff above. The annual leave year for support staff runs from 1 April to 31 March. For all-year-round staff, the school expects annual leave to be taken during the school holidays.

Where, as a result of long-term sickness absence, annual leave cannot be offset against school closure periods within the school leave year, any outstanding leave will be calculated and paid to the employee.

Staff who are employed on a 52-week basis

Annual leave outside of the school holidays are available to staff on a non-term time contract. The amount of annual leave is outlined in their individual staff contract. The member of staff should give 4 weeks' notice in writing to the Headteacher, or in the case of administrative or premises staff, to the school business manager. The school will make every effort to grant annual leave requests but they may be declined if they interfere significantly with the smooth running of the school, and alternative cover is not feasible or cannot be arranged.

Holiday during sick leave – 52 week employees

While the principal purpose of annual leave is to give employees time for leisure and relaxation, employees are permitted to submit annual leave requests during a period of absence.

When an employee reports sick shortly before a period of pre-booked annual leave, they will be entitled to cancel the pre-booked leave. Should they choose to do so, the relevant period of leave will be returned to their leave allowance and can be subsequently utilised in line with the School's regular annual leave procedures.

When an employee falls ill during a period of annual leave, they should report this to their line manager who will arrange for their absence to be classed as sickness from the day on which they fell ill, arranging for the return of the relevant allowance as described in 25.2.

An employee wishing to 'claw back' [part of] their annual leave allowance in the circumstances described in 25.3 will need to furnish the School with medical certification covering the entire period of their sickness, even in respect of periods of up to 7 days. The School will reimburse employees for reasonable expenses incurred in obtaining such

certification in respect of periods of up to 7 days (reimbursement can be claimed under the normal procedures for expenses claims).

Employees who are entitled to time off with pay during bank holidays but are ill on one or more bank holidays can request for the relevant amount of time to be added to their annual leave allowance, as long as the absence is medically certified. The school will reimburse employees for reasonable expenses incurred in obtaining such certification in respect of periods of up to 7 days (reimbursement can be claimed under the normal procedures for expenses claims).

Employees who have been prevented from taking the whole of their leave allowance before the end of the leave year due to long-term sickness absence will be entitled to carry over leave to the following two leave years.

Where an employee has a substantial amount of leave carried forward as a result of long-term sickness absence, their line manager should endeavour to discuss the issue with them as part of their return to work conversation and consider devising a plan for the leave to be used in a way that would allow the employee to make good use of it while minimising disruption to service delivery. Wherever possible, managers should encourage employees who have been unable to take annual leave due to long-term sickness within a leave year to use it in the following leave year.

(6) Special leave of absence

The school will comply with any statutory regulations regarding allowance of time off for employees. The school recognises that there may be times when employees will need to take additional time away from work and will comply with this in line with their statutory duties.

Staff seeking to take leave of absence will be required to gain approval from the headteacher in advance, where possible. Unforeseen emergencies are exceptions to this. A 'leave of absence' form should be filled in. These can be obtained from the school office. It is at the discretion of the headteacher to grant leave – any refusal will be reasonable and justified. Staff are able to appeal to the governing board if their request for leave has been rejected. The procedures outlined in this policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board to ensure they remain unbiased and fair for all staff. Please see [Appendix 1](#) for a summary of how requests for special leave will ordinarily be responded to.

(7) Medical and health-related appointments.

Employees are normally expected to make every effort to arrange all medical, dental and other health-related appointments outside of normal working hours and, where that is not possible, at times that will minimise disruption to their work.

Where an employee needs to attend one or more medical appointments during their working hours, they will need to complete a leave of absence form (unless in the case of an emergency). Senior leadership will endeavour to accommodate employee requests in a supportive manner while being mindful of the needs of the school.

Any applicable adjustments relating to disability or long-term health conditions, should be considered where appropriate. Employees may sometimes be required to work substitute hours, particularly in relation to appointments likely to take up a substantial portion of a day (whether because of the nature of the health issue/s or travel time requirements). Senior leadership should consider contacting HR for detailed advice.

In an emergency, or for non-routine emergency medical treatment or appointments related to a disability or long-term conditions, the school will normally grant time off with pay for the employee to attend appointments on a case-by-case basis. Where a medical emergency renders an employee too unwell to work, normal sickness absence provisions will apply.

(8) Fertility treatment

Employees requesting time off for fertility treatment will in general be supported. The specific needs of the employee for time off will need to be addressed, and the various provisions for leave set out in this policy will be used to enable this to happen where reasonable. This may mean taking time off for medical appointments and making full use of compassionate leave. The compassionate leave may be paid or unpaid depending on the specific circumstances. In any event the situation should be treated with sensitivity. Sickness absence resulting from the treatment should be counted against the employee's sick leave entitlement in the usual way. The nature of the treatment may mean that absences cannot always be planned in advance but it is reasonable to expect staff to give as much notice of the need for time off as is possible.

(9) Medical Records

An employee's medical information should be kept confidential and stored securely in compliance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Leadership must obtain an employee's consent when seeking a medical report from the employee's own doctor or the employee's occupational health report. (Occupational Health may undertake to obtain relevant consent depending on the Occupational Health provider used).

Employees have the right to refuse to disclose [or refuse to allow to be disclosed] personal medical information. Where an employee declines a request for medical disclosure, the employee should be informed that any decisions about their sickness absence will have to be made based on the information available to managers.

The school is keen to support staff in returning to work and improving their attendance wherever possible and will consider all medical report recommendations carefully before any decision is reached, taking full account of any considerations under the Equality Act (2010) and/or any applicable school policies as appropriate.

(10) Occupational Health Service

Advice may be sought from the school's Occupational Health provider, but not all cases will require an OH referral. Information provided by OH is advisory and to assist management decision making only.

Leadership should seek an employee's consent prior to a management referral to occupational health.

A referral to the School's OH may be appropriate when an employee:

- a) has been absent for 28 calendar days
- b) is projected to be absent for at least 28 days, for example a GP fit note has signed the employee off for at least 28 days
- c) in certain circumstances of multiple short-term absences

d) has been absent for sickness that may be related to their work, e.g. work-related stress

There is no requirement for any sickness absence to have occurred for an Occupational Health referral to be made. Employees should consider informing the school business manager or head teacher of any health concerns, and they may make OH referrals [subject to employee consent as detailed above] if they believe that an OH assessment may be of assistance in supporting the health needs of an employee.

Employees are expected to make every effort to attend occupational health appointments, as failure to attend an appointment can result in considerable cost to the school. Employees must contact the school's OH provider if they have difficulty in making an appointment date/time/location.

Attendance at Occupational Health appointments is considered working time. Therefore appointments should normally be made during an employee's working time. It is recognised that this may not always be possible. For these occasions this should be discussed with the employee and with a view to making relevant arrangements around time off in lieu, payment for the time or similar

Before arranging a formal meeting or hearing, the school should have received the employee's up to date OH report. The OH report can be then reviewed and discussed with the employee and / or their representative at the meeting or hearing.

(11) Fit notes

GP fit notes or medical certificates are issued by the employee's G.P. as evidence for their manager that the employee is ill or injured and unable to attend work as normal.

The GP may advise that the employee is either:

- Unfit for work - this confirms that the employee is too ill to work at all for the stated period.
- May be fit for work taking account of the following advice (e.g., amended duties or other workplace adaptations, a phased return to work or altered hours). This information confirms that the employee's health condition may allow them to work or undertake some duties with suitable support if available. In this situation, a decision

will need to be reached between the employee and their manager on whether it is possible to accommodate the recommended medical advice to enable the employee to return to work. Further advice may also be sought from Occupational Health.

Employees must give the school business manager a doctor's 'fit note' (sometimes called a 'sick note') if they've been ill for more than 7 days in a row. This includes non-working days, such as weekends and bank holidays.

(12) Sickness absence caused by industrial disease, a work-related accident or assault at work

Employees will normally receive their full contractual remuneration (i.e. not sick pay) in respect of a period of absence attributable to injuries sustained or disease contracted in the actual carrying out of an employee's job, which must be specifically related to the job role and which a health-and-safety, occupational health and/or insurance assessment must confirm as work-related and not caused by the injured employee's own negligence or misconduct. The headteacher is responsible for reviewing the relevant assessments and approving payments in respect of absence related to industrial injury.

If the injury is caused by an incident at work, it must be recorded as an accident at work in line with the School's Health and Safety guidelines and reported to the employee's line manager. The school business manager should report accidents and near misses at work to Barnet Local Authority's Health, Safety and Wellbeing team where appropriate.

Although absence relating to industrial injury should be dealt with sensitively by the head teacher, action under this Policy and Procedure may be deemed necessary in the case of prolonged absence caused by industrial injury or disease. The headteacher should obtain HR advice prior to making any decision to undertake a formal review of absence caused by industrial injury.

(13) Terminal Illness

When an employee is diagnosed with a terminal illness, special consideration should be given including the head teacher seeking guidance regarding the employee's pension options and the possibility of medical retirement.

In the case of an employee with a terminal illness, whilst there is no obligation to break confidentiality to inform the school or any of their colleagues about their illness, if an employee is in agreement, in certain circumstances, it is normally better to do so to allow support to be provided to team colleagues who may be impacted by the situation.

(14) Ill health retirement

In certain circumstances retirement on the ground of ill health could be considered where it appears unlikely from the medical advice that the employee will be able to return to their role.

For employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) or Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS), advice will be sought from Occupational Health who will assess the employee's eligibility for Ill Health Retirement in accordance with the guidelines specified by the Local Government Pension Scheme or Teachers Pension Scheme.

Where ill-health retirement is raised as an option, the employee's line manager should clarify whether the employee is a member of the LGPS or TPS and refer them to the appropriate resources for further guidance around potential entitlements.

(15) Illness whilst at work

Staff who are taken ill whilst at work should be sent home or taken home and this day will not count against their entitlement to contractual sick pay if they have completed at least 50% of their normal contracted hours for that day.

If the employee has attempted to work but been unable to continue and has not done 50% of their hours, consideration will be given to treating this as a half day's sickness absence only.

(16) Working remotely and sickness

Some school employees are able to perform some or most or all of their work duties without needing to be physically present on school premises or other specified locations.

There may be occasions where an employee may feel unwell and simultaneously believes that they are able to undertake work remotely to a reasonable standard and without causing additional risks to their well-being.

It is important to remember that only the affected employee can assess whether they are feeling well enough to work. Leadership should discuss the issue and consider accommodating any requests for short-term changes to duties where the nature of the role is such that a reasonable standard of work could be undertaken remotely. It is acknowledged that such arrangements will not be suitable for many school roles, as being class based and pupil focussed.

The school trusts, and indeed expects, employees where it is agreed they may work while feeling unwell to monitor the evolution of their symptoms and notify the school business manager if they believe that they are too unwell to continue working.

(17) Maintaining contact with an employee during a time of sickness absence

It is good practice and a shared responsibility for leadership and the employee on sick leave to keep in touch. This is both to ensure that there is communication around the progress of the employee's health and to support the employee so they do not feel isolated or 'out of the loop' with developments within their team or the wider school.

When an employee reports in sick, they should explain to the member of the leadership team the best time and way to be contacted, for example, home phone or mobile, email or any other method and discuss any issues around frequency of contact as appropriate.

(18) Returning to work

When the employee is fit enough to return to work after a period of sickness, they must endeavour to contact the school business manager prior to the commencement of their next day of work in order to confirm their plans to return to work.

Leadership will then be better prepared to support an employee back into work and plan a return to work meeting.

(19) Return to work meetings

Following any period of short-term or long-term absence the head teacher or school business manager should arrange a return to work (RTW) meeting on the employee's first day back to work or as soon as reasonably practicable.

All RTW discussions between the employee and the school business manager or head teacher should be private and confidential.

Any outstanding self-certificates and / or medical certification covering the whole period of the employee's absence should be produced at this RTW meeting. Any gaps in medical certification may result in the employee not being paid for that period of absence.

A note of the RTW meeting should be produced by the school business manager or head teacher and placed on the employee's school file and a copy given to the employee.

Where an employee's absence levels are identified as a potential cause for concern, the school business manager or headteacher will carry out a more structured RTW to gain an understanding of the circumstances. Potential events that could warrant a conversation may include any of the following:

- a. Absences reaching 7 or more working days (pro-rata for part time staff)
- b. Absences are all self-certificated short-term periods of sickness absence
- c. There is an underlying health condition or disability (an adjustment to the review point defined in 5.1 may be considered)
- d. A pattern appears to be present e.g., regular non-attendance on a Monday or Fridays

The main purpose of holding RTW meetings is for the school to ensure the employee is supported in returning to work. If the manager has any concerns that the absence may not be due to genuine sickness, they may consider seeking some clarification during the RTW discussion and raising the issue in a more structured manner within a subsequent supervision meeting.

In some cases, further action may be appropriate such as setting:

- a. A review period to monitor attendance/sickness absence
- b. A referral to Occupational Health Services for an impartial medical opinion or receive guidance
- c. Implementation of reasonable adjustments
- d. Progress to a formal procedure

(20) Phased return to work

Where an employee has been on long-term sickness absence, a phased return, recommended by the employee's doctor or occupational health, will often be the most successful way for an employee to move from long-term ill-health absence back to full (or sometimes permanently amended) work.

A phased return to work may involve an initial return to work on agreed reduced hours which will gradually increase to the employee's full contractual hours

During a phased return to work, employees will receive regular remuneration for the hours they work.

The School will 'top up' remuneration within a phased return period as follows:

- a. In respect of weeks during which an employee works less than 60% of their contracted hours, they will be entitled to receive sick pay in respect of the remainder of their contractual hours, in line with their contractual sick pay entitlement [within a rolling 12-month period].
- b. In respect of weeks [within a phased return period] during which an employee works 60% or more of their contractual hours, they will receive their full contractual pay. Their sick pay entitlement will not be affected.

(21) Temporary medical redeployment

In some circumstances the employee and the head teacher may arrange for the employee returning from long-term sick to consider a different role, should one be available within the same school, for a specific time limit on a 'temporary' medical redeployment.

The employee's existing rate of pay should be protected during the temporary medical redeployment.

(22) Permanent medical redeployment

Where it appears unlikely from medical advice that an employee will be able to return to their existing role, the head teacher and the employee should consider permanent medical redeployment where appropriate and as available. Occupational health advice should be sought before any permanent redeployment decision is finalised.

Where the employee accepts permanent redeployment, they will agree to a variation of contract to the contractual terms of the new role, including any relevant adjustment in remuneration.

(23) Maternity, paternity, parental, shared-parental and adoption leave

We follow the London Borough of Barnet policies.

(24) Antenatal appointments

The Maternity Regulations provide the right for all women to take paid time off to attend antenatal care. Antenatal care includes appointments with the Midwife, GP, hospital clinics, relaxation classes and parent craft classes. Except for the first appointment, employees should show an appointment card or other documents showing that an appointment has been made. The partner of a pregnant woman is entitled to take unpaid time off work for up to two antenatal appointments, capped at 6.5 hours per appointment.

<https://www.gov.uk/working-when-pregnant-your-rights>

(25) Parental bereavement leave

We follow the London Borough of Barnet policies.

(26) Statutory carers leave

Employees are entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
- a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- care needs because of their old age

The dependant does not have to be a family member. It can be anyone who relies on them for care.

Employees are entitled to carer's leave from their first day of work for their employer. Their employment rights (like holidays and returning to their job) are protected during carer's leave.

Staff members will be permitted up to one week of unpaid carer's leave every 12 months. A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over 7 days. For example, if someone usually works 3 days a week, they can take 3 days of carer's leave.

The staff member will provide notice of their intention to take statutory carer's leave, verbally or in writing giving as much notice as reasonably possible. The staff member will not be subjected to any detriment by the school because they specifically took, sought to take, were perceived as likely to take, or made use of the benefits of statutory carer's leave. Further details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/carers-leave>

(27) Entitlement to take time off for trade union activities

The school will follow the ACAS 'Code of Practice on time off for trade union duties and activities including guidance on time off for union learning representatives'.

A "trade union representative" is an employee who has been elected or appointed in accordance with the rules of the independent union to be a representative of all or some of the union's members in the school(s) where the union is recognised for collective bargaining purposes.

A "union learning representative" is an employee who is a member of an independent trade union recognised by the employer who has been elected or appointed in accordance with the rules of the union to be a learning representative of the union at the school.

The entitlements below only apply to employees of the school.

Members of staff who are trade union representatives will be entitled to reasonable paid time off to perform their union duties and to undertake relevant training. Trade union representatives are also able to ask for unpaid time off work to undertake activities. Together, these arrangements constitute facility time.

Paid time off

For a union representative to be entitled to paid time off, the union must be:

- Independent.
- Officially recognised by the school's employer.

Union representatives have the right to have paid time off to conduct a variety of activities, including the following:

- Negotiating pay, terms and conditions
- Helping union members with disciplinary or grievance procedures, including meetings to hear their cases
- Going with union members to meetings with their line manager to discuss flexible working requests
- Discussing issues that affect union members, such as redundancies

Union learning representatives have the right to paid time off to:

- Analyse the learning or training needs of union members.
- Give information and advice about learning or training.
- Arrange or encourage learning or training.
- Discuss their activities as a learning representative with their employer.
- Train as a learning representative.

Where paid time off is granted, the staff member will be paid the amount they would have earned had they worked during the time off taken or, where the staff member's earnings vary with the work done, an amount calculated by reference to the average hourly earnings for the work they are employed to do.

Unpaid time off

Union members and union representatives may also request reasonable unpaid time off during working hours to take part in union activities, such as:

- Meetings with union officials.
- Meetings of official policy-making bodies.
- Workplace meetings to discuss and vote on the outcome of negotiations with the employer.
- Voting in union elections.

Staff members will not be permitted to request time off for activities relating to lobbying for, planning or carrying out industrial action.

Requests for time off

Union members will give the head teacher as much notice as possible when asking for time off. When requesting time off, union representatives will provide their head teacher with the following information:

- The purpose of the time off
- Details of the date and time being requested
- The location of the activity taking place

Wherever possible, union representatives will be asked to ensure any time off they are requesting does not interfere with the normal functioning of the school.

When a staff member requests time off to conduct union representative activities, their line manager will discuss how much time can be taken off. The following questions will be considered by the staff member's line manager:

- Can the school accommodate the amount of time requested, and ensure adequate cover for safety and the provision of educational services?
- Does the request contain the right information, and has enough advanced notice been given to provide cover arrangements where necessary?
- Does the request attract paid or unpaid time off?
- If the request cannot be accommodated, is there a reasonable alternative?

The staff member's line manager will determine whether a request for time off is appropriate. Staff members will be able to raise any disputes regarding the outcome of requests will be dealt with in line with the school's Grievance Policy. Staff members will also be informed of their right to take a case to an employment tribunal.

Facilities for union representatives

The school will make the following office facilities available on the premises for union representatives when they are taking time off to conduct union activities:

- Meeting room
- Access to communication devices

These office facilities will not be permitted to be used for union activities which are only union-facing and/or which encourage or promote industrial action.

Reporting arrangements

Arrangements will be in place to ensure union representatives can account for the duties and activities they have carried out during facility time.

The school will support the LA to report the required information to the government on facility time, in line with the government guidance 'Report trade union facility time data'.

(28) Review points

The school will use the following absence levels as points of reference for reviewing sickness absence levels: 8 single days of absence (or equivalent for employees working part-time) or 3 periods of absence in a rolling 12-month period.

By their nature, all long-term absences will exceed the school's absence review point. A long-term absence is defined as

- a. 4 consecutive weeks or more
- b. a total of 20 working days (or equivalent for part-time employees) of absence during a 12-month period made up of several periods of absence attributable to the same reason[s] for absence and/or symptoms of an underlying condition.

When an employee's absence levels reach or exceed the review points described above, the head teacher and school business manager should decide whether to hold a Stage 1 informal review meeting. The head teacher and school business manager will need to consider all relevant facts of the case in making this decision and endeavour to offer appropriate support to the employee in order to facilitate their return to the workplace and overall well-being.

It is important to note the difference between Stage 1 informal review meetings, which the school business manager and head teacher may decide to hold in order to review the absence of an employee who has reached or exceeded the review points described above, and return-to-work meetings which should be held as soon as possible after the return of an employee from a period of absence [and regardless of their overall absence levels].

The school business manager and head teacher should monitor the absence levels for their employees with reference to the review point as defined in 5.1 and assess an employee's attendance levels, likelihood of improvement, and overall facts of each case in order to make

decisions around possible escalation, or de-escalation, between stages. HR will be able to advise managers on potentially appropriate courses of action.

It is important to clarify that the school will always measure absence on a rolling 12-month period basis. This means that absence review meetings can, and often will, include reference to 'spells' of absence that have already been reviewed during previous absence review meetings.

(29) Absence Management Review meetings

Schools are required to monitor the absence levels of employees. Schools should consider scheduling review meetings when employees reach or exceed the school's review point.

Stage 1 Informal Review Meeting

An informal review meeting will be held to discuss how the employee can improve their attendance and what support the school can provide when an employee reaches or exceeds the review point described above.

Stage 1 meetings will ordinarily be chaired by the school business manager who will consider whether an attendance improvement target and/or further review meeting may be required.

Adjustments to work duties or environment are an important way in which the school may be able to offer support to an employee. Stage 1 informal review meetings can include discussions around possible adjustments.

Where occupational health advice or other detailed information is required in order to finalise a relevant proposal/decision, any follow-up discussions can take place either within the context of a further absence review meeting or outside of the structured absence review process.

Where an improvement target has been set and/or a review meeting scheduled, managers will have discretion to consider any absence during the review period [and/or between meetings] in deciding whether further review is undertaken within a Stage 1 informal meeting or proceed to arranging a Stage 2 formal meeting. The school business manager and head teacher should consider obtaining HR advice as appropriate.

Stage 2 Formal Review Meeting (FRM)

This is an opportunity to review the employee's absence, together with relevant documentation, such as GP, medical consultant, and occupational health reports, and put in place any adaptations to support the employee in returning to the workplace.

Stage 2 meetings will ordinarily be chaired by the headteacher.

Following the first Stage 2 FRM, a follow-up Stage 2 FRM will normally be scheduled in order to review progress, consider any further medical, occupational health, and other pertinent information.

Once again, the head teacher chairing these meetings and employees are expected to discuss about the likelihood of the employee's return to work and any applicable timelines, as well as any adjustments to work duties or any other support that could assist in the employee's return to work. Potential outcomes could include considering alteration of duties (temporary or longer-term) and outcomes such as medical redeployment (temporary or longer term), or secondment if possible given the nature and size of the school.

The follow-up Stage 2 FRM will normally take place irrespective of whether the employee returns to work before the scheduled meeting date. If a return to work does occur, the employee's attendance will continue to be monitored. Attendance targets may be set, and further absence will normally result in another Stage 2 FRM being held. Depending on how a case is progressing, a manager may decide to revert to a stage 1 informal review meeting. The head teacher should consider obtaining HR advice as appropriate.

Further review will be required if the employee continues to be absent at the time of the follow-up Stage 2 FRM or has had further absence between the first Stage 2 FRM and the follow-up one. The head teacher chairing the follow-up Stage 2 FRM will consider the information available and determine whether it is appropriate to continue reviewing the absence by holding one or more further Stage 2 FRM (this is likely to happen pending receipt of occupational health reports and/or other pertinent information).

If the head teacher chairing the follow-up Stage 2 FRM, or any subsequent Stage 2 FRM, believes that the employee's attendance is unlikely to show a substantial improvement within

a reasonable timeframe, the case should be progressed to a Stage 3 final formal review meeting. The head teacher should consider obtaining HR advice as appropriate.

Stage 3 - Final formal review meeting

Should an employee reach a Stage 3 meeting, they will be advised that their continued employment with the school may be at risk.

Stage 3 final formal review meetings should be arranged when there is sufficient information available on the likelihood of the employee's return to work (or improvement in attendance), medical condition, impact on the service and potential ways of facilitating an improvement to the employee's attendance and possible outcomes in case a sustained improvement appears to be unlikely (e.g. ill-health retirement or dismissal).

Stage 3 final formal review meetings should not be chaired by the person who has been chairing one or more Stage 2 formal review meetings. Stage 3 final formal review meetings will be chaired by a suitably qualified governor and the headteacher who has been involved in previous stages of the process will ordinarily present the overall management case and provide the Chair with any appropriate clarification.

The governors will manage and lead any absence management review meetings for the head teacher.

(30) Formal Action and Right of Appeal

Employees have a right to appeal any formal decisions which are made at the conclusion of a Stage 3 final formal review meeting. While no formal right of appeal applies to Stages 1 and 2 of this Procedure, employees may raise any concerns informally or in line with the provisions of the School's Grievance Policy.

Appeals must be made in writing (by e-mail or letter) to the Chair of the Stage 3 final formal review meeting within 14 calendar days from the date of issue of the formal notification of the outcome, setting out clearly the relevant grounds of appeal.

The school will endeavour to arrange appeal hearings without undue delay. Appeal hearings will normally be chaired by the Chair of Governors.

Appeal hearings will normally focus on addressing the specific grounds of appeal put forward by the employee as opposed to undertaking a full rehearing of a case.

(32) Meeting and right to be accompanied

Meeting/hearing invitations will indicate whether discussions are to be held physically or virtually. Leadership will consider any employee requests for meetings to be held in a different format (e.g. requesting a physical meeting instead of a virtual one as a result of an unreliable internet connection at home).

Leadership should give employees adequate notice for formal meetings to enable them to review relevant documentation and prepare for the meeting. A minimum of five working days' notice will be appropriate in most circumstances, but meetings can also be held with less notice subject to the availability and consent of participants.

Home visits may be arranged if both the employee and leadership agree, however formal meetings will not be held in residential premises.

Employees have a right to bring a companion into a formal meeting or hearing. Employees are entitled to choose to be accompanied to such a meeting by a work colleague or a representative of a recognised trade union.

Employees may request to bring a companion into an informal review meeting, outlining the reasons for any such request to their line manager. When such a request is granted, the parties involved will need to ensure that the meeting is held in a manner that is as timely and as informal as possible. Leaders should refrain from requesting the presence of a HR representative in an informal review meeting. Similarly, co-ordinating the availability of an employee companion to an informal meeting should not result in its postponement for more than 5 working days from the originally proposed date.

The school appreciates that there may be occasions where an employee may wish to be accompanied by individuals who are not work colleagues and/or union representatives (e.g. an interpreter, carer, member of a professional body related to the employee's duties). While there is no legal or contractual right for employees to be accompanied by such individuals, the school will consider relevant requests on a case-by-case basis.

(33) Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the governing board and headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is November 2025.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff and relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1: Special Leave of Absence

Reason for application for special leave of absence	Paid or unpaid
Funeral of close friend or family member	Paid – 1 day Maximum of 3 days paid per 12 months.
Serious and/or terminal illness of a close friend or relative.	Paid – up to 5 days. At head teacher's discretion. Any further leave to be agreed with the governing body.
Bereavement – close friend of relative	Paid – up to 5 days. At head teacher's discretion. Any further leave to be agreed with the governing body.
Taking own child, spouse or parent to a medical appointment.	At head teacher's discretion. Without- determined on half or whole day.
Child's illness	At head teacher's discretion. One day paid to arrange suitable childcare if required. Then, without pay – determined on half or whole day. Maximum of 3 days paid per 12 months.
Attending an event linked to their own child e.g. graduation, sports day, production	At head teacher's discretion. Paid - up to 3 hours per 12 months
Marriage (own)	At head teacher's discretion. Paid – day before and day of wedding (if working days).
Marriage (friend or relative)	Unpaid at head teacher's discretion. Maximum of two days per 12 months.
Moving house	At head teacher's discretion. Paid – one day.
Exams, training or graduation related to their job.	At head teacher's discretion. Paid
Job interviews	At head teacher's discretion. Paid – up to a maximum of 3 days per academic year. Then, unpaid.
Religious observance	At head teacher's discretion. Paid – up to two days per 12 months.

Jury service	Employers are required by law to allow time off work for jury service. In the public sector employers are strongly recommended to support staff called on for public duties and services. Employees in schools are therefore given paid leave to undertake their jury service so there is no detriment to them. We would ask staff, who have been called for jury service, to discuss with the Headteacher the suitability of timing before accepting the request.
Emergency relating to house e.g. gas leak	At head teacher's discretion Paid – up to a maximum of 1 day per 12 months. Then, unpaid.

Staff will not ordinarily be granted leave of absence for the following:

- Collecting a friend or relative from an airport or other travel terminus
- Transporting a child to university
- Supervising or otherwise dealing with home repairs or maintenance, including car or boiler servicing, except in the case of an emergency (for example, dealing with a water leak)
- Dealing with other personal issues such as the arrangement of house or car insurance
- Leaving school early prior to a school holiday in order to catch a flight or other connection (or arriving back after the start of a new term)
- Appointments for visas, with the bank etc. which could be arranged outside of school hours.