



SCHOLARS ACADEMY TRUST

Fulfilling every child's potential

Attendance Management Policy

Written / reviewed: March 21
Next review: September 2023

Signed:.....
Chair of Trustees

Date:
23/3/21

Attendance Management Policy

This procedure applies to support staff, Teachers and Headteachers who work for Scholars Academy Trust

Purpose

The purpose of the Attendance Policy and Procedure is to provide a supportive framework where a shortfall in attendance has been identified, in order to assist employees to improve, each and maintain the standard of attendance expected within their area of work.

Application of the Policy

The attendance of teaching and support staff will be managed by either the Headteacher or another manager. If the Headteacher's attendance is being managed in line with this policy, then the Chair of Governors / Trust will be responsible for overseeing this policy.

Monitoring of Employees Attendance

All absences must be reported, recorded, monitored and analysed on an ongoing basis in order to identify problems, review individual cases and decide upon any appropriate action. Examples of absences which may require further attention/investigation can be found in the Attendance Management Guidance.

Return to Work Meetings

The return to work meeting is informal and will be held after every occasion of absence. In many cases the meeting will be as brief as a quick chat to ensure the employee is fit to return to work and welcome them back to work, this meeting will be recorded.

Employees with a Disability

Consideration must be given as to whether an employee's level of attendance is due to a disability, and if so, what reasonable adjustments may be needed to assist the employee in being able to reach the required level of attendance. If an underlying disability is suspected, an Occupational Health referral is usually required and advice sought on reasonable adjustments. Further advice may be sought from HR Services.

Day to day Management

If there are concerns regarding the employee's attendance, it may lead to a course of action and a reasonable period of review will be agreed.

A meeting will be held with the employee at the end of the review period to determine whether the informal improvement plan has been achieved. If the employee has not achieved the level of attendance required at the end of the review period, progression to a **Formal Attendance Meeting** will be considered.

Support Mechanisms

Managers may explore the following non-exhaustive list of options:

- a) Referral to Occupational Health to seek medical advice and opinion.
- b) Fit for Work, a free Government Scheme, to obtain information on a variety of health and work topics, and to seek medical advice and opinion.
- c) Therapeutic return to work to assist the employee to return back to work on a planned and phased basis, usually following a medical recommendation.
- d) Reduction in hours to assist the employee to return back to work on a temporary or permanent basis, which must be mutually accommodated and agreed. The employee's contract of employment will then be changed accordingly.
- e) Ill Health Retirement may be an option but in the first instance requires an Occupational Health referral.

- f) Staff to be encouraged to talk to their unions for support and guidance.

Fast Track to Attendance hearing – Long term Absence

There may be occasions in cases of long term absence where the medical reports indicate that a return to work is not possible within a reasonable time period. In these circumstances the school will ensure that all avenues of support including ill health retirement and redeployment, have been exhausted. If this can be demonstrated, the formal procedures will commence at the Attendance Hearing stage.

Formal Attendance Management Meeting

Where there are continuing concerns over an employee's attendance, the manager will arrange for the employee to attend a Formal Attendance Management Meeting. Five working days' notice will be given for this meeting, the purpose of which is to establish the facts, allow the employee to respond to concerns about their attendance and to put any further support mechanisms in place.

The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. Notes will be taken at this meeting and a copy will be sent to the employee together with any relevant documents, including any formal improvement plan.

The potential outcomes of the meeting are:

- a) There are insufficient grounds for pursuing the attendance issue; the attendance procedure will cease and the informal monitoring will recommence.
- b) There is a need for further investigation or to consider any additional information.
- c) There are attendance issues to be addressed. A formal written improvement plan will be put in place, the level of improvement required will be identified and a reasonable timescale for achievement will be put in place. Failure to improve the required attendance level, within the agreed timescale, could result in a final warning being issued at the end of the review period.

Formal Review Meeting

Five working days' notice will be given for this meeting and employees have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. Notes will be taken at this meeting and a copy will be sent to the employee together with any relevant documents and written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting.

Both the person conducting the meeting and the employee will have an opportunity to present evidence to support their position.

The potential outcomes of the meeting are:

- a) The employee has made sufficient improvement; the attendance procedure may cease and informal monitoring will recommence. However, if the improvement is not sustained within 12 months then the manager will recommence at the Formal Review Meeting stage of this policy.
- b) If some progress has been made and more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the review period. In the majority of cases, it will be appropriate to extend the review period just once.
- c) If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made, the employee will receive a final written warning which will remain on their file for 12 months. The employee will be informed in writing of the specific matters covered, the timing and their right to appeal against the warning. They must also be informed that failure to achieve the required level of attendance may lead to dismissal.

Final Review Meeting

Five working days' notice will be given for this meeting and the employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative. Notes will be taken at this meeting and a copy will be sent to the employee together with any relevant documents.

Both the person conducting the meeting and the employee will have an opportunity to present evidence to support their position.

The potential outcomes of the meeting are:

- a) If the employee has made sufficient improvement, the attendance procedure may cease and the informal monitoring will restart. However, if the improvement is not sustained within 12 months then the manager will recommence at the final Review Meeting stage of this policy.
- b) If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made, the employee will be advised that a hearing will be convened to consider the case and that a potential outcome is dismissal. This will be confirmed in writing to the employee.

Attendance Hearing

A minimum of 5 days' written notice will be given to attend a formal hearing in which the employee will be informed of the reasons for the hearing and their right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. The letter must state that a potential outcome of the hearing is dismissal and enclose copies of relevant documentation intended to be referred to at the hearing. The employee will also be given an opportunity to provide evidence.

During the course of the hearing the employee will have the right to hear and question all the evidence presented and the opportunity to present their case.

Dismissal

Where appropriate, a panel or delegated person i.e. Headteacher will dismiss the employee with notice. The employee will be notified in writing of the outcome of the hearing, including the reason for the dismissal and date of termination of their employment. The letter will also include details of their right of appeal.

Appeal

An appeal must be submitted in writing by the employee and send to the Executive Headteacher within 5 working days of receiving notification of the outcome review meeting/hearing.

- Final Warning – the appeal will be heard by either the Headteacher (only if they have not managed the case) or a Governor/Trustee.
- Dismissal – the appeal will be held in line with the Appeal Policy.

Appendix

Reporting Absence

First Day

Employees must contact the nominated person, to report the absence. Please see the school handbook book for procedures to do this. Brief details of the reason for absence, the date the absence began and if possible some indication of a return to work date should be given so that the self-certification form can be completed by the nominated person who will meet with the employee on their return to work so that the form can be completed. The actual date that the employee becomes unfit is required. This could be a non-working day.

If the absence is the result of an accident, injury or an assault sustained at work, then this information must be made known to the employee's line manager as soon as is reasonably possible. In this context the employee should indicate if the incident has been reported and to whom. This information will need to be requested in accordance with the agreed procedure on the reporting of accidents of employees.

Managers should agree with employees how often they are to make contact if the absence is likely to continue beyond one day. This will usually be on a daily basis so that cover arrangements can be made.

Eighth Day and beyond

If the sickness absence extends beyond seven calendar days, the employee must obtain a Fit Note, to cover the remainder of the period of illness and unless indicated in the interim certification, a "signing off" note indicating fitness to resume work. The first Fit Note must be dated no later than the eighth calendar day of absence (including Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays) and submitted to the manager as soon as possible. Any further certificates issued by the GP must also be submitted as they become due.

Return to Work Plans produced by Fit for Work can also be accepted as evidence of sickness absence in the same way as a Fit Note. If an employee has been issued with a plan, their GP will not provide them with a Fit Note unless they remain off work when they are discharged from the Fit for Work service.

Industrial Injury

Injuries which occur in the course of work should be reported and recorded as appropriate on the Accident/Incident Report Form, as required by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). Some injuries may only become obvious a day or so later, but must still be reported, recorded and the appropriate form completed. This will also apply to injuries that become obvious at a later date.

Recording absences

All absence will be reported, recorded, monitored and analysed. Employee attendance records will include absences for both whole and part days due to:

- Sickness (whether medically certified or self-certified);
- Industrial injury (recorded separately);
- Medical and other appointments;
- Disability-related absence;
- Any other self-certificated absence which can generally be described as "sickness".
- Other leave of absence (e.g. compassionate leave)

Record keeping is used to monitor employee absence as the information assists with the following:

- Manage sickness absence effectively and increase attendance levels by supporting staff to remain at or return to work;
- Identify problems so that they can be managed at an early stage;
- Make informed decisions so that there is no risk to the health, education and welfare of pupils;
- Identify trends and any underlying issues which may need to be addressed on an individual and/or group level.

Absences that may trigger further attention or investigation

- a. Short term / frequent absence: regular periods of absence from work usually on health grounds. This is normally 3 or more absences, but will depend on the circumstances.
- b. Long term absence: a continuous absence from work for 4 weeks or more which is medically certified and attributable to an underlying medical condition or specific reason.