

Featherstone High School



Monitoring and Managing Absence

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The
Monitoring and Managing Absence
Procedure has been adopted in line
with the guidance from the Local
Authority and has been ratified by
the Governing Body

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1. Introduction

The School relies upon staff to ensure that pupils are receiving a high quality and effective education. Good staff attendance is a key factor in ensuring that the school delivers the Curriculum effectively and efficiently. It is also a key factor in ensuring that Staff Cover, and the extra burden this entails, is kept to a minimum and at a manageable level.

Senior Management, in conjunction with the Personnel Manager, have the leading role in dealing with staff absence and must consider the most appropriate ways of controlling and monitoring absence.

The school would not expect staff to work when they are unable to do so and/or when they have a legitimate reason for being absent. The School does expect staff to account for their absence/s and meet their contractual obligation to carry out their duties. The cost and disruption caused by staff absence can be reduced if effective measures are taken and consistently applied to help control absence.

It is imperative that the measures taken to control absence prove to be fair and consistent and ensure equitable treatment for all staff. At the same time, it is also recognised that each individual case must be treated on its own merits, and consideration given to all the specific circumstances of the case.

Teaching staff absence, as well as Support staff absence is recorded in the SIMS cover software package. Monitoring of absence is the responsibility of the Personnel Manager as he/she is in charge of cover.

2. Scope of the Guidelines

These Guidelines are written with all School-based staff in mind and accordingly where the term staff or employee/s is used, this encompasses Teaching and Non-Teaching staff. The guidance has been formulated specifically to monitor sickness absence. However, should any other continuing absence occur then the same system of monitoring will apply.

3. Role of Personnel Manager

The School's Personnel Manager provides advisory support on all aspects of Human Resources including employee relations, performance, discipline, recruitment, training, workforce planning and management of absence.

4. Role of Occupational Health Service

The school can refer staff to the Occupational Health Unit at any stage of the process for professional advice. A form is available from the Personnel Manager containing all the information which needs to be provided.

5. Counselling

Care First provides a confidential counselling service for all Teaching and Non-Teaching staff, and can be contacted by calling 0800 174 319.

6. Monitoring and Reviewing Absence

A major step towards managing absence is to ensure that it is properly monitored and that individual and overall absence figures are regularly reviewed.

Monitoring and reviewing absence allows Managers to assess whether the Policies and Procedures for Managing Absence and their application have been successful. Collection of information will also alert staff that the issues of absence management is being taken seriously.

Although these Guidelines deal primarily with managing sickness absence, all absences are recorded and monitored. This includes absence resulting from medical appointments, especially if several appointments need to be taken in succession. Head Teachers/ Senior Managers can ask to see appointment cards.

7. Notification and Reporting of Absence

All staff are **required** under their Contract of Employment to comply with Absence Notification Procedures. Failure to adhere to the Procedure could constitute a disciplinary offence. It would be reasonable for the Personnel Manager to try and contact absent employees who are not complying with Notification Procedures, to ascertain the reason for non-compliance and to advise them of the likely consequences of continued non-compliance (e.g. loss of pay, disciplinary action).

All staff should telephone the Personnel Manager (Harjinder Johal) or the Assistant Head Teacher in charge of cover (Kamal Thacker) **DIRECTLY by 07.30 on 0208 571 8787**. *(Employees who do not follow the procedures for sickness absence reporting may lose their right to Contractual Sick Pay and SSP. Please note that members of staff who repeatedly fail to adhere to Notification Procedures will not go unchallenged and staff may face disciplinary action)*

You **MUST** say how long you are likely to be absent and when you are due to return to school. You do not need to call each and every day if you have previously let the Personnel Manager know how long you are going to be absent. Please call your Head of Department to arrange cover.

The above number is a Direct Line to the office and there is an answering service on this line at all times when the phone is unattended.

It is assumed that staff are in school and on time unless information is received to the contrary.

1st Day of Absence

The employee should notify the Personnel Manager or Kamal Thacker on **(020 8571 8787)** before 7.30am, giving the reasons for absence and an indication of the likely date of return to work. The employee should continue to notify the Personnel Manager / Kamal Thacker before 7.30am every morning if they are going to be absent.

4th Day of Absence

If the employee is still not able to return to work by the 4th day (including non-working days) of absence, he / she will have to submit a completed "Notification of Sickness Absence Form" upon their return.

8th Day of Absence

Employees are required to submit a GP's Fit Note if absence continues beyond the seventh day (including non-working days). 'Fit Note', is a new Medical Statement that GPs now issue. It replaces the old 'Sick Note' and aims to focus on what an employee may be able to do at work rather than what they cannot do. Failure to provide a 'Fit Note' in time may result in the suspension of pay and/or disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

8. Cover (Teaching Staff)

A draft copy of the Cover for the day is posted by 8.30am, or earlier, each day and a copy is also posted on infofhs. If changes are necessary during the day, those staff concerned will be notified individually.

If the absence is known in advance (courses, meetings etc) then the teacher **must** set work. It is a condition of granting Leave of Absence that work is set. Cover work should be saved in the Staff Shared Drive /Fronter. It is the duty of the Lead Teacher to ensure that work is set for any Teachers absent due to sickness and to make sure the work is appropriate. It is also the duty of the Head of Department to ensure that the Cover Teacher knows what the work is.

Please do not take it upon yourself to change the room in which you have been assigned to teach, as this causes difficulty in locating Teachers/pupils in emergencies. Temporary room changes can be facilitated through the room bookings procedure outlined in infofhs. However for any long term room bookings or changes please consult Assistant Head Teacher (Kamal Thacker) or Tim Dawson and inform Student Services.

The Head of Department should ensure that the class continues purposefully and does not mark time with repetitive written work. This may mean that from time to time, the Head of Department takes the classes and uses the Cover Teacher to cover his/her own class to enable the class to move on.

Absences due to meetings and INSET require the approval of the Personnel Manager who may cancel these at short notice when the demand for Cover is high.

9. Return to Work (RTW) Procedure

An essential part of managing absence is ensuring that the Personnel Manager meets with staff on their return to work. The reasons for the meeting are as follows:

- To enquire generally about the reason for absence, whether the individual is feeling better and fit for work and whether the reason for absence is likely to reoccur.
- To consider any recommendation made on a 'Fit Note' that would assist your return to work.
- For the employee to self-certify their absence under Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) rules or provide a 'Fit Note' for absences over 7 days.
- To update the employee about work issues and discuss any arrangements to help them with their return to work (particularly long-term absence cases)
- To raise any concerns regarding the validity of their absence
- To raise any concerns generally about the level of absences. If these concerns need to be raised formally, this should be done at the "First Absence Review Meeting".

- To alert the employee that the school is taking the issue of sickness very seriously.

The meeting must take place on the **first** day back from absence. The meeting must be conducted in private and in an informal and sensitive manner. The intention at this stage is that any discussion is informal.

10. Trigger Point System

FHS has adopted a Trigger Point System, which has been agreed by Local Union representatives within the School, to monitor staff absences. This system is based upon a rolling year period. The rolling year is 12 months back from the month in question.

For **each consecutive day** of the **first period** of absence, **1 point** will be accumulated per day.

For **each consecutive day** of the **second period** of absence, **2 points** will be accumulated per day.

For **each consecutive day** of the **third period** of absence, **3 points** will be accumulated per day.

For **each consecutive day** of the **fourth period** of absence, **4 points** will be accumulated per day..... and so on

Therefore, 5 single non-consecutive days will accumulate 15 points whereas 15 consecutive days will have activated the Trigger. Staff are provided with a report of any sickness absences for the rolling year taken from SIMS each month which give staff the opportunity to query any discrepancies.

11. Informal Absence Monitoring

Once the number of points reach/exceed **15 points** a First Absence Review Meeting with the Personnel Manager will be triggered. The employee will be advised that this is a **informal** meeting to discuss their sickness absences. The Personnel Manager will provide information on the period/s of absence, the reason for the absence and address any discrepancies.

In the case of repeated absences the Personnel Manager will discuss with the employee whether there are underlying factors causing the absences and whether or not there is anything that either the employee or School can do to minimise the chance of repeated absences. At this stage referral to Occupational Health unit (OHU) could be considered. This should also be considered if the absence period exceeds 10 working days and is likely to continue for a lengthy or indeterminate time or in circumstances where the Personnel Manager has particular concerns that they wish the OHU to address. The employee will also be given the details of Care First which is a counselling service available to all staff at FHS.

The employee will be advised that subsequent absences (following the First Absence Review Meeting) will trigger a Second Absence Review Meeting with the Personnel Manager.

In the case of continuous absences following the Informal Review Meetings the employee will be informed that the following Formal Absence Review Procedure will apply, which may lead to disciplinary measures.

1. First Formal Absence Review meeting with the Head Teacher
2. Second Formal Absence Review meeting with the Head Teacher
3. Final Absence Review meeting with the Governors

12. Formal Absence Monitoring

This stage applies where the situation continues beyond the provisions of the informal stage above. The employee must be told that this is the First **Formal** stage of the 'Monitoring and Managing Absence' Procedure.

The employee must be advised that there will be a meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss their absence record and that they are welcome to bring a Trade Union Representative or workplace colleague. Arrangements regarding the meeting must be confirmed in writing with 5 days working notice.

For **repeated** absences

The Head Teacher should provide information on the period/s of absence, the reasons for the absence and the impact of the absence on the work of the school (this includes costs (e.g. Supply Cover) and establishing whether there are any mitigating factors that should be considered. These may be of a domestic nature or work-related issues. The Head Teacher should consider whether an improvement in attendance is likely and what steps they can take to aid this improvement e.g. a temporary change to normal working practices. The Head Teacher may also consider a referral to OHU to obtain a second opinion in addition to any 'Fit Note' or previous referral.

For **continuing** (or long-term) absences

The Head Teacher will explore the possibilities of a return to work and how workloads can be handled; reference should be made to any 'Fit Note' where appropriate. The Head Teacher will consider and put into action reasonable adaptations that may be made to assist return to work. The Head Teacher may also consider a referral to OHU to obtain a second opinion in addition to any 'Fit Note' or previous referral.

The employee must be advised at this stage that the Head Teacher requires their attendance to improve and they should be informed of the likely consequences if it does not (e.g. further formal action under the Medical Capability Procedure which could ultimately lead to dismissal). The employee should also be made aware of the impact of their absences on the work of their colleagues.

In both cases a date for a **Second Formal Absence Review meeting** should be set (allowing a reasonable time for monitoring). The employee must be advised in writing so that there is no misunderstanding about what has been agreed.

At the Second Formal Absence Review meeting the Head Teacher will decide:

Either that:

The employee's return to work / level of attendance is satisfactory, and the procedure can be halted at this stage but may be resumed if a similar level of absences reoccurs within one year.

or:

To arrange a further Review Meeting before the employee's sick leave expires where Occupational Health Unit envisages a return to work.

or:

To give the employee a First Formal Written Warning and written notification that there has been no acceptable improvement in their attendance. The Head Teacher could decide on a further period of monitoring and advise the employee that unless significant improvement in their absence is not achieved within a specified period (1 month or 1 term) the matter will progress to the next stage of the 'Monitoring and Managing Absence' procedure which is the Final Absence Review.

The employee must be advised in writing of any decision.

The employee can appeal this decision, within one week of receiving it, to a nominated Governor who is not a member of the Dismissal or Appeal Committee of the Governing Body.

Where an appeal is upheld a further review meeting will be set and the procedure will be resumed at the **Formal** stage.

Final Absence Review

This stage applies where the employee has either no prospect of return to work within their period of paid sick leave or has an unacceptable continuing pattern of absences calling into question their capability to carry out the requirements of their employment.

The employee must be advised that there will be a meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss their absence record and that they are welcome to bring a Trade Union Representative or workplace colleague. Arrangements regarding the meeting must be confirmed in writing with 5 working days notice.

The Head Teacher will consider the prospects of the employee's return to work/an acceptable level of attendance. Where the Head Teacher is not satisfied that the employee will achieve this within a reasonable time (1 month) the Head Teacher will consider the following:

1. Explore the possibilities of redeployment / reducing responsibility
2. Further consider any adaptations to the job or premises that will help the employee.
3. Ensure that any reasonable adaptations are made
4. Set a review period (1 month) within which time a return to work/acceptable level of attendance is achieved.
5. Set the date for a further Review Meeting.

If the employee has returned to work and an acceptable level of attendance has been achieved, the Procedure can be halted at this stage but may be resumed if a similar level of absence recurs within one year. The employee must have complied with the recommendations of their doctor included on any Fit Note and/or the School's Occupational Health provider.

Where the employee has not returned to work / achieved an acceptable level of attendance by the time of the follow-up meeting, the Head Teacher can give a Final Warning in writing. This should state that the situation is unacceptable and that the case will be passed to the Governors for consideration by their Dismissal Committee, unless the necessary improvement is achieved within a specified period.

Consideration of Dismissal

Any such consideration will be by the Dismissal Committee of the Governing Body and will be in accordance with the Dispute Resolution Regulations 2009.

The grounds for consideration will be that the employee is incapable of fulfilling their duties by reason of continued absence/absences following a Final Warning under the Procedure.

The Procedure for the Dismissal Committee will be under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

The Rights to Appeal for the employee will be as set out for the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

13. Monitoring Lateness

Please note that the Trigger Point System for monitoring lateness is based on a rolling year period. The rolling year period is 12 months back from month in question.

Threshold = 5 Late Entries

1 Late Entry equates to 1 point.

Once the number of entries reach/exceed 5 points a First Lateness Review Meeting with the Personnel Manager is triggered.

Following a First Meeting with the Personnel Manager, if a further 5 late entries are made a Second Lateness Review meeting with the Personnel Manager is triggered.

Further occurrences of lateness, which may lead to disciplinary measures, will result in the next stages – Formal Meetings with the Head Teacher.

1. First Formal Meeting with the Head Teacher.
2. Second Formal Meeting with the Head Teacher.
3. Referral to Governors.

Meetings as a result of reaching the Trigger Point System

Governors have requested the following:

- For all absence/lateness meetings with the Personnel Manager, members of staff must confirm their attendance, or provide an alternative date (possibly due to

Union Representative availability) within 24 hours of the date of the letter. Failure will result in Line Manager conducting the meeting.

- All letter and memos issued to staff following the meeting (both absence and lateness) to be copied to their Personnel file.
- Members of staff who reach the Threshold for Lateness will be excluded from Revision Classes over the holidays – unless authorised by the Head Teacher.

14. Entitlement to Sick Pay

Employees in the school may have different entitlements to sick pay. This will depend on whether they are Teaching or Non-Teaching staff, their length of service and their rate of pay. Sick pay can be made up of two elements, Contractual Sick Pay (which is given as a Condition of Service by the employer) and Statutory Sick Pay (which is a payment administered by employers on behalf of the state).

The Contractual entitlement to sick pay for Non-teaching staff is set out below:

During 1 st year of service	One months full pay and after, completing four months service, two months half pay.
During 2 nd year of service	Two months full pay and two months half pay.
During 3 rd year of service	Four months full pay and four months half pay.
During 4 th and 5 th year of service	Five months full pay and five months half pay.
After 5 years service	Six months full pay and six months half pay.

The Contractual entitlement to sick pay for Teaching staff is set out below

During 1 st year of service	Full pay for 25 working days and, after completing four calendar months service, half pay for 50 working days.
During 2 nd year of service	Full pay for 50 working days and half pay for 50 working days.
During 3 rd year of service	Full pay for 75 working days and half pay for 75 working days.
During 4 th and successive years	Full pay for 100 working days and half pay for 100 working days.

15. Retirement on the Grounds of Ill Health

There are provisions for the retirement of staff on the grounds of ill health contained within the London Borough of Ealing Conditions of Service for Staff.

The provisions for Teaching staff and Non-teaching staff are different.

Teaching Staff

Teachers belong to a pension scheme, which is administered by Teachers Pensions (TP) and there are specific provisions for Ill Health Retirement. The school does not consider applications from Teaching staff for Ill Health Retirement as an alternative to the scheme operated by Teachers Pensions. Teachers must make applications for Ill Health Retirement to TP, who, ultimately, decide on eligibility. The process for applying

includes the Authority providing evidence as to the options considered before the last resort of Ill Health Retirement.

Non-Teaching Staff

Through the Managing Absence Process the employee would have been referred to the Council's OHU, who will, if appropriate, have issued a Certificate to confirm that the employee is permanently unfit to perform the duties of their post.

There is provision for employees who contribute to the Local Government Pension Scheme to receive a pension, and enhancement, in cases where ill health retirement is agreed and they have sufficient service to be eligible.

15a. Voluntary Early Retirement

Applications for any voluntary early retirement should be made in writing to the Head Teacher. These will be considered in line with the regulations governed by the respective pension schemes for both teaching and non-teaching staff.

16. Medical Appointments (All Staff)

Notification of planned absences, which include hospital appointments, **emergency** GP or **emergency** dental appointments should be given to the Personnel Manager as soon as possible, with supporting documentation i.e. appointment cards/letters. Failure to submit documentation by the end of the week in which the appointment occurs could disrupt payroll deadlines and thus result in underpayment.

17. Statutory Leave

There are circumstances under which employees are entitled, by law, to time off from work. These include Maternity Leave, Public Service Leave (Jury Service), Trade Union duties and leave to search for alternative employment for potentially redundant employees. The Personnel Manager can provide detailed advice on general and specific queries concerning statutory leave.

18. Leave of Absence and Special Leave

Special Leave and Leave of Absence are general terms to describe absence from work for reasons other than personal illness or Annual Leave. This can be granted with or without pay depending on circumstances. There are different agreements for Teaching and Non-Teaching staff as outlined in this document

One of the most repeated enquiries is in connection with how much Leave Of Absence/Special Leave can be approved and how many days an employee can have in any given time period. Some types of Leave Of Absence/Special Leave do stipulate maximum entitlements within a stated period. In any event Managers should consider:

- The nature of the request;
- How much leave (including Special Leave) has already been granted to that member of staff;
- Overall absence record;
- How other similar applications have been considered;
- The effect on the running and organisation of the school;
- The budget implications of granting Special Leave **with** pay.

If staff are to be away for reasons other than illness, a Leave of Absence Form is required, which must be filled in advance and presented to the Personnel Manager in person. Only the Head Teacher can authorise the Leave and staff will not be entitled to payment for absences without authorisation.

19. Teaching Staff Leave Entitlements

Leave of Absence and Special Leave

In line with Teachers Conditions of Employment please see Appendix A. The table gives reasons for absences and the salary payable for this period of absence.

Child Care

In addition to the above Governors have approved the provision to two paid half days, per **rolling year**, for Emergency Child Care for **all** staff where staff have been unable to make any alternative childcare provisions.

Extreme Events

In cases of extreme weather events etc **all** staff are advised to keep the school informed and to keep in regular contact with the Personnel Manager. The Head Teacher will look at each individual case and consider if payment will be made for these days of absence.

20. Support Staff Leave Entitlements

Annual Leave

The majority of staff in schools have strict contractual provisions detailing that they will only take holiday or Annual Leave during periods of school closure. This includes all Teaching staff and Non-teaching staff on "Term Time Only" contracts.

Staff working in schools who do have an entitlement to book Annual Leave during school sessions are Caretaking staff, Cleaning staff and any other Non-Teaching staff not employed on a term-time only basis. There are different levels of Annual Leave entitlement for these staff according to length of service.

Employees who commence their employment on or after 1st September 2011 have the following entitlement, with part-time employees having a proportionate number of days:

Less than 5 years service with Ealing	24 days
More than 5 but less than 10 years continuous Local Government Service	27 days
More than 10 years continuous Local Government Service	30 days

Employees must have Leave authorised in advance by their designated Line Manager. To meet the business needs of certain services, designated Line Managers may have to restrict the amount of leave that can be taken at certain times of the year.

Governors have requested that Line Managers are given 4 weeks notice for all holidays to enable sufficient planning.

Governors have requested for Annual Leave to be taken during school holidays. Leave during the school term must be authorised by the Line Manager and Head Teacher.

Employees can carry over up to five days leave from one year to the next. Employees must obtain authorisation from their designated Line Manager in advance to do this. A request in writing is required to the Personnel Manager.

TOIL

The control period will be one calendar month. At the end of the control period, no more than 10 surplus hours or 10 deficient hours may be carried over (unless authorised by the Designated Line Manager). Any surplus over 10 hours will be lost.

Where the business requires this, additional working hours can be worked and time off in lieu (TOIL) granted. This must be agreed in advance by the Designated Manager.

PLEASE NOTE: TOIL cannot be taken as a whole day.

Signed completed timesheets (authorised by the Designated Line Manager) should be submitted monthly to the Personnel Manager. Lunch time must be included within timesheet.

Lieu time (TOIL) cannot be substituted for Childcare/Illness – this will be recorded as Childcare/Illness

Special Leave

Designated Line Managers can grant up to a maximum of **5 days paid** Special Leave (examples are on compassionate grounds, for care of dependents and for study leave before an examination etc). Managers may also grant **any period of Unpaid Leave**.

Bereavement Leave

Employees who have suffered a family bereavement are entitled to take **up to five days paid** leave. Family bereavement includes partners (including same sex relationships), sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, parents in law, brothers, sisters and Grandparents. Employees who have to make funeral arrangements for any member of their family not covered above are also entitled to **up to 5 days paid** leave.

Paid Bereavement Leave is a separate provision from Special Leave. Any further leave needed by the employee to deal with matters arising from bereavement, which affect his/her dependents, will be granted as unpaid leave.

Public Service Leave

Employees appointed to serve as a Magistrate, School Governor, Councillor or on any other Statutory or Public Body are entitled to paid leave of up to 26 days during any twelve month period for carrying out duties that require absence from work, with the permission of the Head Teacher. Employees must declare any money that is paid to them for these duties (except for out of pocket expenses and attendance allowances for Councillors) and this will be deducted from their pay.

Jury Service

Employees will be paid as usual during periods of Jury Service. They must however submit a Loss of Earnings Form provided by the court to the Personnel Manager.

Leave for Election Candidates and Agents

Employees are entitled to leave with pay under certain circumstances. Please contact the Personnel Manager for further information.

Leave for Employees Serving in Non-Regular Forces

Employees are entitled to paid leave under certain circumstances. The number of days is dependant on the annual leave entitlement of the individual. Please contact the Personnel Manager for further information.

Extended leave

With the Governing Body's permission employees may take up to one year's absence from work as a mix of paid and unpaid leave. One year's notice is required. The Procedure is set out in the Local Conditions of Service and advice on the application of the scheme can be obtained from the Personnel Manager.

21. Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave, Paternity & Parental Support Leave

Teaching and non-teaching staff have different schemes with very similar provisions. The Maternity Schemes apply to all pregnant employees regardless of the number of hours worked. Maternity Leave and Payment is dependant on length of service. All pregnant employees, regardless of length of service have the right to paid time off during 29 working hours for Ante-natal care and Relaxation and Parentcraft classes. Details of the schemes can be obtained from the Personnel Manager. The Maternity Policies for both Teaching and Support staff can be found on Infofhs.

Appendix 1
Teachers Conditions of Employment for
Leave of Absence and Special Leave

Reason for Absence	Salary Payable for a Period Not Exceeding
Serious illness of husband, wife or child	5 working days
Death of husband, wife or child	5 working days
Serious illness or death of near relative	3 working days
Serious illness and death of near relative	5 working days
Attendance at funeral in Approved Representative capacity	1 to 3 working days according to distance and circumstances
Wedding of near relative	1 working day
Removal of household effects	1 working day
To attend interview for other appointment	1 to 3 working days according to distance and circumstances
Examination, if it is one that would improve the educational qualifications of the Teacher	Period necessary to sit for examination
Local Authority, Department of Education and Science and other approved short courses	Duration of course
Public duties	In accordance with the General Regulations of the School relating to Officers as in force from time to time
Attendance at conferences	In accordance with the General Regulations of the School relating to Officers as in force from time to time
Religious festivals	3 days in any educational year as required for observance of Religious Festivals. Other days unpaid allowed.
Attendance at meetings of Examiners during school	Period necessary to attend, provided any fee receivable is refunded to the School.
Duties as Examiner for Universities and similar bodies	Period necessary, subject to approval of Head Teacher and provided any fee receivable is refunded to the School
Duties as visiting Examiner for Certificate of Secondary Education	5 days in education year provided any fee receivable is refunded to the School.

Table Displays Teachers Conditions of Employment for Leave of Absence and Special Leave