



Staff Absence Policy

Rationale

This policy covers absence for any reason. This could be due to circumstances such as ill health, agreed leave or bereavement. Most staff will have occasional absences and this is to be expected in any organisation. The majority of sickness absence is unpredictable and, though it may cause operational problems, it has to be dealt with on a day-to-day basis. Our Staff Absence Policy details the school's approach to this and all other absence.

When there is persistent or long term sickness, appropriate action will be taken by school leaders to ensure the effective provision of education at the school.

Purpose

The fundamental principle of this policy is that the needs of the school are balanced with the interests and circumstances of each individual employee. The purpose of this policy is to give guidance to employees of Bright Futures School about staff absence and to ensure that all staff take full responsibility for communicating about and managing their absence in a professional and accountable manner.

Aim

The aim is to ensure that all employees of Bright Futures School have effective guidance about what to do in the event of illness. Staff need to know and understand the guidelines relating to ill-health which might affect their ability to attend and/or carry out their duties in the workplace. The aim is also to ensure that staff are treated fairly and with dignity and the principle aim is, where possible, to seek an effective return to work.

Please be advised that failure to comply with any of the requirements and statutory obligations outlined in the policy could result in action which might include loss of earnings.

Guidelines for absence due to SICKNESS

Reporting Procedure

Any member of staff who is ill should report their absence and give a reason for the absence by phone as follows: to Alex Ludlam –Monday/Tuesday/Wednesdays, to Alison Hughes –Thursdays (all after 7am and no later than 7:45am on the day of the absence). On Fridays, call the school office at 9am. Other than in exceptional circumstances the absence should be reported in person and not through a third party. Text messages or voice mail are NOT acceptable

If, at this time, it is possible to give an expected date for returning to school, please do so. In any event, please phone school during the day prior to return to notify your intention to return to work.

If absence is going to be longer than three days please notify the school by phone as soon as this becomes apparent.

Certification Procedures

An absence of up to five consecutive working days does not require a medical certificate but self-certification should be completed on return with Christina.

For an absence of more than 3 working days, a return to work form should be completed on return to school and emailed to Alison as soon as possible, after which a RTW meeting will be arranged.

For absences due to illness of longer than seven working days, a medical certificate ('Doctor's note') is required. Please note that absence over weekends or holiday is included in calculations of entitlements to benefits such as Statutory Sick Pay. The employee must provide a doctor's certificate to the school not later than the eighth calendar day of absence. Subsequent doctors' certificates must be submitted to cover the entire period of absence if it extends beyond the period covered by the initial statement.

Time off for Medical Appointments

It is expected that non-urgent appointments for doctors, dentist etc., should be arranged outside of an employee's directed time. Where an appointment absence is unavoidable, in the case of an emergency medical appointment with a hospital consultant for example, paid leave will normally be granted.

For other unavoidable working time appointments, paid leave will normally be considered. If there is a large number of appointments over a period of time consideration may need to be given for time to be made up. Please be aware that verification of the appointment might be requested.

Time off for antenatal appointments will be given; again, verification of the appointment might be requested.

Staff are expected to keep the school informed as to the progress of any sickness absence and to comply with the above.

Return to Work

On return to work after any sickness absence for any length of time, and as soon as possible after return, the member of staff will be expected to self-certify with Christina. For absences over 3 days, having completed and emailed a return to work form, a meeting may be held with Alison or Zoe, to discuss the absence and enable support / help to be given if necessary. The purpose of such a meeting is also to

ensure that staff have the opportunity to share information about their absence which is useful for the school to know and so that the school knows what support is needed in order to facilitate a smooth transition back to work and mitigate against circumstances that might result in further absence. If it appears that a pattern of absence is occurring, this will trigger a further discussion in order to support the member of staff to be able to attend regularly and /or allow management to consider alternative arrangements for the benefit of all concerned.

Time Keeping

All staff are expected to keep to contracted times of work. Late arrivals or leaving early may be agreed in exceptional circumstances. Should a pattern of later arrivals etc, without authorisation occur then disciplinary action may be taken.

All staff are expected to communicate professionally and courteously (to Alison or Zoe) regarding any lateness, giving a clear reason for that lateness.

Leave of Absence

Unplanned Absence (not due to illness)

Where a non-medical emergency arises which necessitates lateness to or absence from school the member of staff should alert Alison or Zoe as soon as practically possible, indicating how long the delay or absence may be for and indicating a return time or date. Staff need to be aware that this absence may be unpaid; this will be at the discretion of the school Proprietor.

Protocol for Requesting Leave of Absence

This section does not relate to absence due to sickness or for medical appointments. It is to clarify the process in relation to requests for leave for a variety of personal reasons.

A member of staff requesting leave of absence must make the request on the correct form held by Christina in the office. Each request for absence will be considered by Zoe and /or Alison. As far as possible, sufficient notice should be given in advance of the period of requested leave. In return, a response will be given as soon as possible and if granted the form will be attached to the school diary on the appropriate day. Salary will be adjusted accordingly after the leave of absence.

As a school, we value the contributions of all staff and acknowledge the need for good-will. It is appreciated that there might occasionally be times when a member of staff needs time off during the school day. Response to such requests will be decided in consideration of the needs of the pupils and the impact upon them caused by absence.

Paid Leave

If the Head of Learning and Proprietor consider it appropriate, paid leave may be agreed. Specific occasions when paid leave may usually be agreed are summarised here as:

- Public Duties e.g. Jury Service (subject to deductions of allowances)
- Serious illness or death of a close relative for up to 3 days with a maximum of 3 additional days also at the discretion of the Head of Learning/Proprietor.
- Maternity Leave
- Paternity leave.
- Wedding (own or immediate family member)
- Funeral (immediate family member)
- Graduation of member of staff, partner or his/her child

Unpaid Leave

The decision to grant unpaid leave is at the discretion of the Head of Learning and the Proprietor.

Unauthorised absence

This occurs when the employee does not attend for work at the place of employment at the required times and does not have prior management approval for their absence.

Unauthorised absence includes late attendance, prolonged breaks, taking annual leave outside of school holiday dates without approval and taking sick leave without following the notification procedure.

Individual instances of unauthorised absence will be dealt with in accordance with the schools disciplinary procedures

Proactive and positive measures

Bright Futures School Management are committed to creating a working environment which encourages and supports the fullest possible attendance of staff. Achievement of this aim will require the contribution of all staff. The school will support staff by ensuring effective application of the above policy relating to time off and when appropriate by conducting exit interviews to identify (amongst other things) potential causes of absence and measures which could be utilised to further support improved attendance and job satisfaction.

AJ Hughes. January 2019