Rudston Primary School and

Bright Stars Nursery

Staff Absence and Sickness Policy

Date: September 2018

This policy and all school policies are produced in accordance to guidance set out in our school legislation and guidance policy.

Approved By Governors: September 2018

Review Autumn Term 2019

Our Mission Statement:

To develop a love of learning, enabling all children

to reach their full potential.

* Respect * Resilience *
* Responsibility * Enjoyment *
* Challenge *

Safeguarding Statement:

“Rudston Primary school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.”

Reviewed : September 2018

Presented to Staff: September 2018

Presented and approved by Governors: September 2018

To be reviewed: September 2019

Introduction

This document outlines the procedure and policy for the operational management of staff sickness and absence in Rudston Primary School.

Aims

The staff sickness and absence policy is designed to:

- Provide a clear and transparent framework for the management of staff sickness and absence.
- Promote the highest possible levels of staff attendance.
- Support staff who are encountering medical or other difficulties that are affecting their attendance.

Legal Framework

The health and safety at work act 1974 is relevant to parts of this policy.

Statement of Policy

1. Rationale

1.1 The levels of absence among staff are of vital importance to the success of any organisation and none more than in a school such as Rudston Primary School.

1.2 Health and Safety legislation requires that employers are responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for the health, safety and welfare of their employees. The management of the school are convinced of the need to properly manage the levels of sickness absence which may occur, not least for the reasons of staff welfare and to try and ensure that where staff are experiencing problems relating to sickness absence, we are able to provide the appropriate support.

1.3 There are a number of benefits to be gained from the proper management of sickness absence. Not only can staff welfare and support be provided but the highest level of continuity can be achieved both for the school and the pupils where absence is properly managed.

1.4 The financial implications of sickness absence are inescapable and whilst this is certainly not a paramount issue it would not be right for us to ignore such implications.

1.5 The principals of this policy are to be applied to all staff employed at Rudston Primary School, teaching and support staff.

2. Note

2.1 Rudston Primary School is placing great emphasis on the management of absence. The main aims are to try and achieve full attendance and to properly manage cases of absence.

2.2These aims will be underpinned by the following principles:-

• staff will be treated fairly and compassionately with all the appropriate support being given

• management will be consistent in their approach to the procedure for dealing with individual cases

• high standards in health, safety and welfare will be a constant objective for all

• any information received during the application of the procedures involved in absence management will be treated confidentially and sensitively

3. Procedure

3.1 A member of staff shoud report his/her absence to the Headteacher by telephone (text message is NOT acceptable) by 7.30am on the first day and indicate his/her anticipated length of absence. It is expected that staff will maintain contact with the school wherever possible and must notify school at the earliest instance before they return to work (no later than 7.30 on the day they return to work). Failure to do so may result in unnecessary costs to the school in the form of unwanted supply cover.

3.2 Staff will be required to complete a self-certificate on return from any absence. This should be passed to Finance Personnel Officer. Staff will be required to produce a doctor's certificate from the eighth calendar day of sickness, where the absence lasts more than seven days. This should be passed to School Business Manager. Where the absence continues, staff are required to submit a doctor's statement to SBM, before the previous statement runs out.

3.3 On return to work, where appropriate staff need to submit a doctor's statement to confirm that they are fit to return to work.

3.4 There will be no requirement for staff during absence to undertake any duties normally expected, for example planning and marking of work. It is not unreasonable however, for the school to request copies of medium term planning and records held at home to enable supply cover to function effectively, and provide continuity for the class. In such circumstances arrangements will be made for their collection.

3.5 On the day a member of staff returns to work from sickness absence the SBM will conduct a return to work interview. Such interviews may only last for a few minutes and will provide SBM and staff member with the opportunity to discuss any matters that have arisen during the period of absence. At this time the staff member will have an opportunity to update the head on any relevant issues pertaining to their absence and any possible future concerns.

3.6 In the case of long term or repeated absences the interviews will provide an opportunity to reaffirm the school's interest in the member of staff, and provide an opportunity for discussion of the general attendance record. It will allow the member of staff to inform the school if there is an underlying medical problem and enable a dialogue pertaining to any support the staff member may require to enable them to return to work.

3.7 In all instances the cause of absence will need to be recorded on the self-certification form, signed by both the member of staff and the head teacher or SBM.

3.8 Long term absences will require a referral to occupation health under Liverpool County Council guidelines.

4. Review of Absence Records and Further Action

4.1 It is intended that sickness absence records for each member of staff will be maintained and that the Headteacher will review these records on a termly basis. Each record will provide details of the

number of occasions the member of staff has been absent, the total number of days for each absence, and a running total of that member of staff's level of absence. Reasons for absence will also be maintained on these records.

4.2 The review of each absence record will be carried out with a view to deciding, where appropriate, that measures need to be taken, regarding individual cases and what those measures should be.

4.3 It is recognised that it is of paramount importance to ensure that any decisions regarding action to be taken in individual cases are made on an entirely objective basis. In order to ensure consistency and objectivity, when absence records are reviewed, a comparison of each record will be made against standard, agreed levels of absence. Those levels when reached will 'trigger' an automatic consideration of further action in those particular circumstances

4.4 It is intended that these agreed 'trigger' levels will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher and will be the subject of consultation with staff.

4.5 Initially the following levels of absence will indicate the need to take further measures:-

In any one twelve month period

a) Three or more separate periods of sickness absence,

Or

b) A total of fifteen working days absence (pro rata).

4.6 Where the level of absence in a particular case has reached that where further action is to be taken such action will depend on the circumstances of the case, including:-

• the frequency and duration of absences

• the reasons for absence

• the total amounts of absence

• the nature of duties undertaken and the effects on service provisions

• the outcome of any previous reviews and any previous action taken.

4.7 It will be for the Headteacher, in reviewing an individual case, to try to establish whether the absence record of a member of staff consists of persistent short term absence or whether an underlying medical problem is indicated by their absence record.

4.8 If an underlying medical problem is perceived by employer or employee, then help may be sought through the Occupational Health Adviser.

4.9 Where an absence record does not obviously indicate an underlying medical problem or where it is felt that such a problem may be evident but has not been dealt with appropriately, the Headteacher will conduct an interview with the member of staff concerned.

4.10 At this interview the Headteacher will examine, with the member of staff (who may be accompanied by a friend or Trade Union Representative) the circumstances of the absences, any

medical or welfare assistance which may be of help and the effect of the absences on the duties of the member of staff.

4.11 If the member of staff suggests that an underlying medical problem may be a contributory factor then he/she should be referred to the Occupational Health Adviser and consent to medical review should be obtained.

4.12 In all other cases the member of staff will be informed that their level of absence is considered to be unsatisfactory and they shall be informed that an agreed improvement is required and that further monitoring of their absence level will take place over a set period. The member of staff shall also be informed that failure to improve will result in referral to a panel of the Personnel Committee of the Governing Body.

4.13 Where, upon further monitoring, satisfactory improvement has taken place, the member should be interviewed and informed of this.

4.14 Where satisfactory improvement is not forthcoming the case would then proceed to be dealt by school HR. The case would then proceed to be dealt with by the Personnel governors committee under Paragraph 6 of this policy.

5. Long Term Absence Cases

5.1 For the purposes of this Policy, long term absence cases will be defined as those where an employee has been absent for a period of 28 days (either in one continuous period or in total over a twelve month period) or where it is know that he/she is likely to be absent for such a period.

5.2 Where such cases occur formal contact must be made at the earliest opportunity by the Headteacher who will ascertain the likely length of absence and offer any appropriate advice and assistance to the employee.

5.3 A meeting with the Headteacher can be arranged with the consent of the employee.

5.4 Where an employee is absent on long term sickness it is important that contact with the school is maintained. The Headteacher will therefore continue to make formal contact with the employee at least monthly, following the initial formal contact.

5.5 When it is clear that an employee has been or is likely to be on long term absence the case should be referred to occupational health. This referral will be followed up a formal meeting with the Headteacher and employee to:-

• discuss the nature of the problem

• ascertain the likely prognosis

• explain the medical review procedure to the employee and seek their consent for access to their medical records

• inform them of the dates that their entitlement to full and half pay expire.

5.6 The Occupational Health Adviser will advise on the health of the employee and their fitness for work. Apart from these issues the Occupational Health Adviser may suggest amendments to working

practices or that certain duties should not be carried out by an employee, in order to facilitate their return to work.

5.7 In cases where it becomes clear that an employee is permanently incapable of undertaking their duties on medical grounds the next step will be for the employee to discuss their situation with the Schools HR advisor.

6 Referral of Cases to HR

6.1 Where upon review of an individual absence record the Headteacher considers the record to be unsatisfactory, an interview will be held. If following that interview the Headteacher decides that improvement in the employee's absence record is necessary this will be required with the proviso that should the improvement not be forthcoming the case would be referred to the Personnel Committee for their consideration.

6.2 Where a case is referred to a Panel of personnel governors a formal hearing will take place at which the employee may be represented and at which formal action may be taken against the employee.

6.3 The procedure for such hearings will be as follows:-

• The employee will be informed, in writing, of the date, time, and place of the hearing and be given at least ten days' notice of the hearing. The employee will be provided with a written statement of the case to be presented together with any documents to be presented at the hearing.

• The employee shall be given the right of representation at the hearing, either by a friend or Trade Union representative.

• The Panel conducting the hearing will consist of three Governors (who should not be members of the governors appeals committee), who will be advised by a HR representative.

• The facts of the case will be reported orally to the Panel by the Headteacher, who will refer to the written statement and supporting information.

• The Panel will ask any questions as necessary.

• The employee and/or their representative will ask any questions as necessary.

• The employee and/or their representative will present their case.

• Questions will be asked, as necessary, by the Panel and the Headteacher.

• The Headteacher will sum up the case against the employee. This will be followed by a summing up from the employee and/or their representative.

• The Panel will consider their decision and inform the employee before the hearing closes, confirming their decision in writing within three days.

6.4 Following consideration of the facts of the case the Panel will convey their decision to the employee.

6.5 A range of actions will be open to the Panel, depending upon the circumstances of the case. Action, if taken, may range from the following:

• Formal written warning.

• Final written warning (this will only follow where a Formal Warning has previously been issued and required improvement is still not forthcoming).

• Dismissal (this will only occur where a Final Written Warning has previously been issued and required improvement is still not forthcoming).

6.6 In some cases the Panel may decide not to take any formal action but to continue to monitor the absence record of the employee.

6.7 In all cases where formal action is taken by the Panel of the Staffing Committee, the employee will have the right of appeal to the Governing Body's Appeals Committee. The appeal is to be made within ten days of the notification to the employee of the original decision. The reasons for the appeal should be set out in writing and sent to the Clerk to the Governors.

6.8 The procedure for the hearing of appeals will be as follows:-

• The Panel shall consist of three Governors advised by a Personnel Adviser. They will not have been involved in any previous hearing involving the case.

• The Headteacher shall report the circumstances of the case orally supported by written statement and the medical report in the presence of the employee and the representative.

• The employee or the representative shall then be given the opportunity to question the Headteacher regarding the case.

• The Governors hearing the appeal shall then have the opportunity to question the Headteacher regarding the case.

• The employee or the representative shall then put his/her case and explanation of the circumstances of the absences.

• The Headteacher shall then have the opportunity to question the employee.

• The Governors hearing the appeal shall then have the opportunity to question the employee.

• The Headteacher shall then sum up, followed by the employee or representative.

• The Panel will consider their decision and inform the employee before the hearing closes, confirming their decision in writing within three days.

7 Leave of Absence

7.1 Requests for leave forms must be completed and submitted to the Headteacher for approval/decision, where possible, 10 days in advance. Any extended period must be referred to the governing body for approval.

Guidelines to support decision-making

• This is a non-exhaustive list. Its purpose is to guide the head teacher and governing body when making decisions about leave.

Reason	Days per annum	Paid or un-paid
Death (including the funeral) of a significant other. 'Significant other' is defined as a person, such as a family member or close friend, who is important or influential in the staff member's life.	Period reasonably necessary	Paid
Illness or injury of a significant other giving rise to serious domestic difficulties	Period reasonably necessary	Paid
Moving house	Period reasonably necessary (not normally more than 1 day)	Paid
Interviews for posts in the education service (This does not apply where the employee is redundant or a fixed term contract is not renewed)	Period reasonably necessary (not normally more than 2 days)	Paid
Representing the school in any capacity with approval	Unlimited	Paid
Attendance as witness either on subpoena or other direction from a court or at the direction of the police, or voluntary attendance at an inquest as witness.	Period of attendance necessary	Paid
Accepted impossible travel because of weather or other public crisis.	Period reasonably necessary (not normally more than 3 days)	Paid
Any personal reason other than those above which, reasonably, could not have been scheduled for a nonworking day or time or within school holidays	period reasonably necessary (not normally more than 3 days)	Paid or unpaid- discretionary

8 Authorised/ Unauthorised absences

8.1 Authorised absences include normal school holidays, authorised unpaid leave, bereavement leave, and certain medical appointments.

8.2 Unauthorised absence is when an employee has not been given permission to be absent from work for one of the authorised absences listed above. Also included are absences **where the employee has failed to follow the correct procedures** e.g. failing to contact the Headteacher/ SBM within the appropriate time limit to notify absences.

Rudston Primary School
Request for Leave Form

1. Name

2. Oracle Number

3. Position

4. Time requested

Date		Time		Total hours
From	To	From	To	

5. Purpose

☐ Medical/ Dental/ Optical examination of requesting employee
☐ Care of family member, including medical/ dental/ optical examination/ bereavement
☐ Care of family member with a serious medical condition
☐ Childcare
☐ Other

Please provide details of reason for request

6. Please provide details of previous requests for leave in past 12 months (measured from time of request)

Dates	Number of days	Reason	Approved/ not approved

7. Certification: I certify that the leave/ absence requested above is for the purpose (S) indicated. I understand that I must comply with the schools procedures for requesting leave/ approved absence (and provide additional documentation, including medical certification, if required) and that falsification of information on this form may be grounds for disciplinary action.

7a. Employee signature

7b. Date signed

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

8. Official action on request (If disapproved, give reason)

Approved with pay ☐ Approved without pay ☐ Disapproved ☐

8b. Reason for disapproval

8c. Signature

8d. Date