



SEVENOAKS DAY NURSERY

Sickness Absence Policy

The Nursery is committed to supporting staff during periods of illness while ensuring the safe and effective operation of the Nursery for their colleagues and the children in their care.

This Sickness Absence Policy sets out our procedures for reporting sickness absence and for the management of sickness absence in a fair and consistent way.

Sickness absence can vary from short intermittent periods of ill-health to a continuous period of long-term absence and have a number of different causes (for example, injuries, recurring conditions, or a serious illness requiring lengthy treatment).

We wish to ensure that the reasons for sickness absence are understood in each case and investigated where necessary. In addition, where needed and reasonably practicable, measures will be taken to assist those who have been absent by reason of sickness to return to work.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure

If you are unable to attend work due to illness or injury, you must inform the Manager or Deputy Manager (whoever is on early shift on the first day of your absence) as soon as you know you are not going to be in. This can be through a text message or WhatsApp when the nursery is closed. This must be followed up by a telephone call to the Nursery no later than 8:00 am on the first day of absence. The reason for your absence must be explained to the Manager or Deputy Manager. You must then telephone the Manager or Deputy Manager by 16:00 on the first day of absence, to tell us if you will be returning to work the following day. If you have to leave a message with another member of staff, you should be available so that the Manager can ring you back later to discuss your absence with you.

Subsequently, you must telephone the Nursery by 8:00 am on each day of absence, by way of an update, unless the Manager or Deputy Manager instructs you otherwise.

If you are medically unable to telephone personally, someone may call on your behalf.

If your absence is for up to seven calendar days (including Saturday and Sunday) you must complete a self-certification form on your return to work and submit it to the Manager or Deputy Manager. If you are absent due to sickness for more than seven calendar days, you must submit a doctor's fit note, in addition to a self-certification form.

The Nursery has the right to check the validity of statements made by asking for documentary evidence of appointments. The Nursery records absences and the reasons given.

Unauthorised Absence

Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under the Nursery's Disciplinary Procedure. Absence that has not been notified according to the Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure (above) will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Sick Pay

The Nursery's Sick Pay Scheme provides one day's full pay as sick pay for each month worked throughout the calendar year. This entitlement will accrue from the first of the month. For example, if you fall sick in March and your employment started prior to the 1st January, you will have earned 3 days' sick pay. You can earn up to 12 days' sick pay in a year. Sick Pay entitlements cannot be carried over to the following year and will accrue pro rata for joiners and leavers. If you do not have any days left with our Sick Pay Scheme, you will be paid Statutory Sick Pay, which at the date of this document was £123.25 a week or 80% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

Keeping in Touch during Sickness Absence

If you are absent on sick leave you should expect to be contacted from time to time by the Manager or HR Manager in order to discuss your wellbeing and expected length of continued absence from work. The frequency of contact will depend on the circumstances of the absence. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a reasonable minimum.

Medical Examinations

The Nursery may, at any time, ask you to agree that the Nursery can contact your doctor to ask for relevant details of your medical condition. If you agree to this, you will be asked to confirm your agreement in writing. If you do not confirm in writing, it will be assumed that you do not agree. The Nursery may also, at any time, ask you to consent in writing to attend an Occupational Health assessment or an examination by a medical practitioner nominated by us. You will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with the relevant practitioner. Any medical information will be handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation.

Return-to-Work Interviews

After any period of sickness absence, the Nursery may conduct a return-to-work interview. This will usually be arranged for your first day back and will be with the Manager, Deputy Manager or HR Manager. A return-to-work interview enables us to confirm the details of your absence. It also gives you the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions you may have, and to bring any relevant matters to our attention. If your doctor's fit note indicates any ways of helping you back to work, these will also be discussed.

Returning to Work from Long Term Sickness Absence

We are committed to helping staff return to work from long-term sickness absence. As part of our sickness absence meetings procedure (see below), we will, where appropriate and possible, support returns to work by:

- obtaining medical advice;
- making reasonable adjustments to the workplace, working practices or working hours;
- considering redeployment; and/or
- agreeing a return-to-work programme.

Disabilities

We are aware that sickness absence may result from a disability. At each stage of the sickness absence meetings procedure (set out below), particular consideration will be given to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of a job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist a return to work. If you consider that you are affected by a disability, you should inform the Manager. The Nursery will comply with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Formal Sickness Absence Meetings Procedure

We may apply this procedure whenever we consider it necessary, including, for example, if you:

- have been absent due to illness on a number of separate occasions;
- have discussed matters at a return-to-work interview that require investigation;

We will give you written notice of the date, time and place of a formal sickness absence meeting. We will put any concerns about your sickness absence and the basis for those concerns in writing or otherwise advise why the meeting is being called. A reasonable opportunity for you to consider this information before a meeting will be provided.

You may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. Your companion may be either a trade union representative or a fellow member of staff. Their identity must be confirmed to the Manager in good time before the meeting takes place. A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up your position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on your behalf.

You must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. Failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If you or your companion are unable to attend at the time specified you should immediately inform the Manager who will seek to agree an alternative time.

Confirmation of any decision made at a meeting, the reasons for it, and of the right of appeal will be given to you in writing within 2 days of a sickness absence meeting (unless this time scale is not practicable, in which case it will be provided as soon as is practicable).

If, at any time, the Manager considers that you have taken or are taking sickness absence when you are not unwell, they may refer matters to be dealt with under the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

STAGE 1: SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting may include:

- Discussing the reasons for your absence.
- Where you are on long-term sick leave, determining how long the absence is likely to last.
- Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences.
- Considering what, if any, measures might improve your health and/or attendance.
- If it has not been obtained, considering whether medical advice is required. If it has been obtained, considering the advice that has been given and whether further advice is required.
- Considering your ability to return to/remain in your job in view both of your capabilities and our business needs and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to your job to enable you to do so.
- Considering possible redeployment opportunities.
- Where you are able to return from long-term sick leave, agreeing a return-to-work programme.
- Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a time-scale for review and/or a further meeting(s). This may, depending on steps we have already taken, include warning you that you are at risk of dismissal.

STAGE 2: FINAL SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, we may invite you to a meeting under this stage of the sickness absence procedure. The purposes of the meeting will be:

To review the meetings that have taken place and matters discussed with you.

Where you remain on long-term sickness absence, to consider whether there have been any changes since the last formal meeting, either as regards your possible return to work or opportunities for return or redeployment.

To consider any further matters that you wish to raise.

To consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood of you returning to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time.

To consider the possible termination of your employment, but the Nursery will only consider dismissal after all reasonable alternatives have been explored.

Appeals

You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure. An appeal should be made in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to the Chair of Trustees within 5 working days of the date on which the decision was sent to you.

You will be given written notice of an appeal meeting. In cases of dismissal the appeal meeting will be held as soon as possible. Where practicable, an appeal meeting will be conducted by at least one Trustee.

Following an appeal the original decision may be confirmed, revoked or replaced with a different decision. The final decision will be confirmed in writing, if possible within 2 working days of the appeal meeting. There will be no further right of appeal.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Trustees of Sevenoaks Day Nursery CIO on 25th April, 2018 and was last reviewed and amended in August 2026.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Jenkinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephanie Jenkinson
Chair

Staff Acknowledgement

I have received a copy of the Sevenoaks Day Nursery CIO Sickness Absence Policy.

I have read and understood the Sickness Absence Policy

Signed:

NAME:

DATE: