

Sickness Absence Policy

Introduction

The Nursery is committed to improving the health, wellbeing and attendance of its staff and to reducing sick leave and unauthorised absence.

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 or someone on your behalf must speak to the Manager (or in her absence a deputy supervisor) on the morning of each day of absence and by 7.30 am. Only if you are too ill to do this yourself may someone phone on your behalf. You must let her know the reason for your absence and how long you expect to be absent. If you have to leave a message with another member of staff, you should be available for the Manager to ring you back later in the morning to discuss your absence with you. You should make a voice call and not use a text message.

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 Administration Manager. If you are absent due to sickness for more than seven calendar days, you must submit a doctor's certificate 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

You should refer to your contract of employment for details of the sick pay to which you may be entitled.

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. 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 a medical examination by a doctor 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 doctor.

Return to Work Interviews

If you have been absent on sick leave for more than 4 days in any rolling three-month period, we will arrange for you to have a return-to-work interview with the Manager and the 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 certificate 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.

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; and/or
- have been absent for more than 10 days.

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 10 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 Disciplinary Procedure.

STAGE 1: FIRST 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 whether medical advice is required.
- Considering what, if any, measures might improve your health and/or attendance.
- Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a time-scale for review and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure.

STAGE 2: FURTHER SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

Depending on the matters discussed at the first stage of the sickness absence procedure, a further meeting or meetings may be necessary. The purposes of further meeting may include:

- Discussing the reasons for your ongoing absence and its impact on the Nursery and staff.
- Where you are on long-term sick leave, discussing how long your absence is likely to last.
- Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, discussing the likelihood of further absences.

- 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 3: FINAL SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, we may invite you to a meeting under the third 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 meeting under stage two of the procedure, 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.

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 Management Committee within 5 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 and one member of the Management Committee.

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 10 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Dreksler', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Susan Dreksler, 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: