Lincoln Christ's Hospital School

Sickness & Absent Management Policy

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1. Introduction

The school is committed to maintaining and promoting the health and well-being of all its employees. This policy provides a fair and consistent framework for supporting staff that are absent due to sickness.

The aim of the sickness and absence policy and procedure is to ensure that:

- all employees are treated fairly, consistently and sensitively during times of illness and are made aware of any support mechanisms that may be available to them;
- all employees understand their responsibilities and follow sickness reporting arrangements;
- The Headteacher and Governing Body have a structured framework to assist them in managing sickness absence within the school;
- 'reasonable adjustments' are considered for employees where applicable;
- absence records are monitored, and action taken at the specific trigger points;
- there is an agreed procedure for managing sickness absence that must be followed;
- the highest levels of quality and service can be maintained to allow the school to fulfil its obligations to all staff, parents and children.

Where procedures are followed, it is legitimate to dismiss on the grounds of "some other substantial reason" (where no underlying medical condition is identified) or "capability" where an underlying medical condition is identified.

The Sickness and Absence Management Policy is designed to provide guidance on management of both long-term and short-term sickness absence. The school will take a supportive approach, whilst aiming to achieve a balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of the school.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher is responsible for managing day-to-day absence management issues and ensuring the school manages their employees' attendance in accordance with the procedure contained in this policy and associated documents.

NB. The following list of Headteacher's duties and responsibilities may be delegated to another employee other than the Headteacher such as a Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher/ another senior member of staff. In terms of this policy, the Headteacher may refer to this employee where he/she has been given the authority to act on behalf of the Headteacher. However, any decision relating to the termination of employment should be made by the Headteacher or Governing Body only.

The Headteacher's duties and responsibilities are:

- Informing the school's designated payroll provider when an employee reports in sick. The Headteacher should not record absences for dental and medical appointments, maternity leave or parental leave using the sickness absence procedure. Where the absence has resulted from a work-related accident or disease, the absence should be recorded as such. The Headteacher should notify HR provider;
- Coordinating and monitoring return to work discussions with employees after every episode of absence that are held by line managers in all instances. The return to work discussion

should be recorded on the Return to Work Form which is passed from line manager to the Headteacher to HR provider;
- Monitoring absence levels and whether an employee's absence reaches the trigger points for either short-term or long-term sickness as defined within this policy;
- Maintaining contact with the employee during their sickness absence. If an employee is absent long-term, it is expected that contact will be at least twice every half term, and on each occasion when contact is made, the two parties will agree on the date and next form of contact and contacts recorded;
- Considering reasonable adjustments for employees (where applicable), including discussing with the employee advice given on a fit note or by the School's Occupational Health Advisor. This will ensure that the school meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. See further advice on reasonable adjustments at page 12 below;
- ensuring that employees are aware of other supporting policies such as leave of absence;
- Reporting to Governors.

3. Employees

Employees have a duty, under their terms and conditions of employment, to be at work and must ensure they adhere to their responsibilities. These include:

- On the first day of absence, you must report sickness absence as early as possible to your line manager. The cover supervisor should be informed between 7.00 am and 7.25 am on each day of absence. Unless other arrangements have been agreed, this should be personally by telephone and provide the following information:
    - when you became ill;
    - the broad nature of your illness (e.g. migraine, chest infection);
    - whether the illness is due to an accident or injury at work;
    - whether you will be seeking medical attention;
    - the likely date of return (if known).
- Where an absence lasts 4 days or more, or your absence is going to be longer than you originally envisaged, you must make contact with your cover administrator or Assistant Headteacher responsible for implementing the policy to update them and thereafter maintain contact on at least a fortnightly basis, even when you are subject to regular reviews by Occupational Health;
- When an absence is less than 7 calendar days, you must self-certificate using form SC2 which will be provided to you with your Return to Work form (this is on the back page of the RTW form).
- A doctor's Statement of Fitness for Work (a "doctor's statement") must be provided by all staff where sickness absence lasts beyond 7 calendar days. The doctor's statement must be forwarded to the Headteacher, or nominated person, to reach them on or before the eighth day of absence. If the absence is long term, you must send in regular fit notes and keep your Headteacher advised of your health and progress towards returning;
- You must ensure that medical advice and treatment is received as quickly as possible and that you follow all recommended medical advice or treatment in order to facilitate a prompt return to work;
- You must attend any appointments made for you with Occupational Health;
- You must respond in a timely manner to any communications from the school and attend management meetings as required;
- You must raise with your Headteacher or representative any concerns with your job which you feel are making you ill or contributing to your illness/absence;

- If your absence is not due to sickness, you should request annual or special leave or other approved leave;
- You are not expected to go on holiday when absent due to sickness unless this has been recommended by your GP. In such circumstances you will be expected to inform your Headteacher and to take the period of leave from your annual holiday entitlement where this exists;
- It is expected that, when you are absent from work due to sickness, you will be mindful of this in your use of social media and avoid any inference that you are acting in a way which hinders your recovery. This may be treated as a disciplinary matter dependent on the circumstances;
- You should take advantage of school initiatives to promote good health where appropriate.

4. Absence Definitions

Short-term absence is normally identified as absence that has no underlying long-term medical condition and is attributable to minor ailments. Often the employee will be absent for only a few days.

Short-term Trigger Points

Whilst each case of sickness absence should be considered individually and based on your working arrangements, for managing short-term absence the school considers the following absences as a cause for concern, these are referred to as trigger points:

- 4 or more episodes of sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period and/or
- one episode of 12 working days of sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period and/or
- where the number of absences in a short period warrants immediate action, i.e. 3 episodes or 9 days in 6 months and/or
- a pattern of absence which is causing concern, for example regular Friday or Monday absences or absences regularly occurring on a particular day/week, pre or post annual leave, pay day or parents' evenings.

The trigger points for part time employees will be pro rata to the number of days worked, but not the number of occasions. For example, if the employee works 18.5 hours per week over two and a half days (half the 'standard' week) the trigger point would be 6 working days in a 12 month period or 4.5 days in 6 months (this could be within one episode). If, however, the employee works 25 hours per week over 5 days (5 hours per day) the trigger point will remain at 12 working days.

Please be aware that in some cases a short-term absence pattern could be related to a disability, a long-term condition, or become a disability in the long term. However, absences that are medically certified or attributable to a disability or long-term medical condition can still be regarded as short-term absences and managed under this part of the policy.

Absence due to care of family member

Absence due to care of a dependent family member should not be counted as medical absence. The school recognises the need for staff, at times, to care for their children who are unwell or, in extreme cases, spouses and parents. The school will support first day paid absence for staff for a maximum of 5 working days across an academic year. Beyond that, staff may have to take unpaid leave from their work and will not be paid during the time of the absence. Subject to the discretion of the Headteacher (with reference to the Governing Body), in extreme circumstances such as

hospitalisation of a child or spouse, the school may consider an increase in the number of days of paid absence.
Long-term absence is normally identified as an absence from work for one month (or more) with an underlying medical condition and/or where there is no prospect of a return to work in the near future.

Long-term Trigger Points

For long-term absence, the trigger point for action is an absence from work for one month (or more) and/or where there is no prospect of a return to work in the near future.

5. Return to Work Interviews

Return to work interviews must be conducted after every period of absence and are an important part of absence management. They will be conducted with you by the line manager who will then complete the Return to Work Form and return it to our HR manager. These can help identify short- and long-term absence problems at an early stage; they also provide an opportunity to start a dialogue with staff about underlying issues which may be causing the absence and allow them to make changes which will support the employee.

A record of this discussion will be placed on your personnel file. Due to the nature of your medical condition, you may prefer not to discuss the reasons for your absence with your line manager. In that case, you can request to meet with a member of SLT or the HR Manager.

6. Occupational Health Referral

6.1 The school may, at any time it considers appropriate, refer you to Occupational Health for an assessment of:

a. Your health
b. Its impact on your attendance at the school
c. Its impact on your fitness to perform the duties required by your employment
d. Its impact on your ability to attend formal meetings or interviews under any other procedure particularly in the light of the guidance at page 20 of the Health and Work Handbook produced by the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, Royal College of General Practitioners, Society of Occupational Medicine
e. What steps the school could take to improve your health and/or attendance
f. A referral to Occupational Health is a supportive measure and you are expected to cooperate fully where such a referral is made. Occupational Health appointments will be scheduled during working time, where possible.

6.2 Before making any decision to dismiss you on notice under this Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure the school will have referred you for at least one Occupational Health assessment.

6.3 Notwithstanding Paragraph 6.2 above, if you decide not to engage in an Occupational Health referral the school will have no option but to proceed to make decisions without the benefit of medical advice.

7. Absence Stage Meetings

When an employee's absence reaches the trigger points for either short-term or long- term sickness as defined above, the Headteacher will review the attendance record with the employee using an Absence Stage Meeting, where review periods and targets for improvement will be set.

The purpose of the Absence Stage Meetings is to provide assistance and support to the employee to improve his/her attendance to a satisfactory level. Absence Stage Meetings are not disciplinary meetings. Absence Stage Meeting have the following aims:

- Establish the reasons for the absence; is it medical or non-medical?
- Explain to the employee the impact the absence is having on the school;
- Discuss possible ways of reducing absence in the future;
- Investigate any reasonable adjustments;
- Discuss the possibility of requiring additional information from Occupational Health and what this entails;
- Inform the employee of possible actions if the level of absence is not improved;
- Set a review period and targets for improvement to reduce absences.

The Headteacher will treat individuals in a sensitive manner. Discussions between an employee and the Headteacher will be kept confidential so far as reasonably possible. The meetings will generally take place at the school. In some circumstances (depending on the employee's health and well-being), however, they may be held at the employee's home with their consent or a neutral meeting point.

At all formal stages of the absence management procedure, employees may, if they wish, be accompanied by a trade union representative, trade union official or fellow employee of their choice. If the chosen colleague/trade union official cannot attend on the date proposed for any meetings, the employee can offer an alternative time and date. This must be reasonable, and no later than five working days after the date originally proposed. In proposing an alternative date, the employee will need to take into consideration the availability of the Headteacher. Only one such re-arrangement will be made.

Further details of the stage absence meetings are in the absence management procedures, Appendix 1 (short-term) and Appendix 2 (long-term) attached to this policy.

8. Stage Calculation

Routinely, when a member of staff is absent, we consider that person's number of absences within the rolling year. So, at each absence, days and episodes will be calculated from that date in the previous year in order to ascertain whether a Stage Absence Meeting is required, and which Stage Absence Meeting is required. To clarify, within the twelve-month period, the following trigger points apply:

Stage Calculation Table

	Short Term			Long Term
Stage	Episodes	Days	**Instances** of a pattern of absence	
Stage 1	4	12	1	1 month
Stage 2	8	24	2	2 months
Stage 3	12	36	3	3 months

Further Trigger Setting

Triggers may also be set as an outcome of the Stage Absence Meeting. The purpose of the target is to set a clear expectation of the level of attendance and improvement required from the employee. The target set will need to be at least in line with the school's trigger points for short-term absence. For example, if the review period set is two months, it may be legitimate to issue a target of "no absences". Generally, however, targets will be determined by the rolling year (in terms of short-term illness):

- 1 episode or 3 days within two months
- 2 episodes or 6 days within four months
- 3 episodes or 9 days within six months

9. Exceptional Circumstances

It may be necessary for the Headteacher to use discretion as to the nature of an individual's trigger points. These should only be applied in exceptional circumstances after discussion with our HR provider.

Examples where this might apply:

- Where absences can be linked, e.g. when an employee returns to work too soon from a period of illness and has to immediately go off sick again with the same illness or where the employee has surgery following time off for a biopsy;

In some circumstances, an individual target may be appropriate. For instance, if it is established that the employee has a potentially short-term condition which might be fully resolved after say, 3 months (with a strong possibility of frequent intermittent absences/hospital treatments which are likely to exceed the normal target figure during the recovery period), it might be more reasonable to set a further date for review rather than set a target which is unlikely to be achieved in the particular circumstances.

10. **Abuse of Sickness Scheme**

In cases where abuse of the sickness policy is suspected, which may include failure to report sickness absence at the appropriate time; non-attendance at an Occupational Health appointment without reasonable cause; failure to submit a doctor's fit note at the appropriate time; submission of forged or false fit notes; deliberate conduct prejudicial to the employee's own recovery; or due to the employee's misconduct or neglect, sick pay may be suspended and consideration may be given to disciplinary action. Advice from our HR provider will be sought in these cases.

11. **Sickness during the Working Day**

In all instances, the member of staff should contact his/her line manager after which the member of staff should leave the building. Where possible, the member of staff should set cover, contact the line manager and contact the cover co-ordinator. The cover co-ordinator should then record the absence and the information sent to our HR provider. Employees who leave work during the working day due to illness (with their Headteacher's permission) will be classed as absent on that day for sick pay and recording purposes and should self-certify and attend a return to work interview if required. Such absences of a day or more will count towards trigger points.

12. **Accident or Injury at Work**

If an employee considers their absence arises from an accident at work, they must notify the Headteacher immediately so that the Accident Reporting Form can be completed. An employee who is absent from work due to an accident or injury at work will be treated in the same way as if the absence was due to sickness and, therefore, the absence management procedure will be followed. In accordance with the Local Scheme of Conditions of Service, an employee who is absent from work as a result of an accident is not entitled to sick pay if damages may be recoverable from a third party. The school may, at its discretion, provide sick pay subject to the employee agreeing to refund the amount or part thereof from any damages awarded.

13. Medical/Hospital Appointments

Hospital appointments are considered authorised absence and time off will be paid. However, where possible, employees should try and make appointments outside core hours or where minimal disruption to the working day is caused. The Headteacher will use their discretion to decide how much time is allowed and, if unsure, seek advice from our HR provider. The Headteacher will request proof of the appointment (e.g. an appointment card or copy of the appointment letter) when requesting time off to attend hospital appointments.

Time off to accompany dependents is not sickness absence and should normally be taken as a part of the 5 family days. Beyond the 5 days, unless there are exceptional circumstances, these will be unpaid.

Time off for cosmetic surgery should be taken from employee's own leave entitlement (school holidays) unless the GP states that an employee is unfit and should refrain from work.

Leave to undertake IVF treatment should be taken as Special Leave for Family or Personal Reasons.

14. Occupational Health Appointments – when employee is absent

It is expected that employees who are absent from work due to sickness are available to attend any Occupational Health appointments made for them as required. Where the employee declines to attend an Occupational Health appointment, the Headteacher or delegate needs to explain that, without such a report, management decisions will be made using the information available to them.

Medical Suspension

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to medically suspend an employee, for example:

- where the employee and their GP consider they are fit to return to work, without any adjustments/modifications and the Headteacher, in conjunction with the HR provider, believe they are not and therefore would like further clarification from Occupational Health, before allowing the employee to return to work;
- where the Headteacher believes the employee is not fit to attend work but the employee refuses to go on sick leave, and therefore the Headteacher may medically suspend the employee until Occupational Health advice is received.

Wherever possible, prior to medical suspension, alternatives such as temporarily adjusting the employee's substantive duties or temporary redeployment to another role should be carefully considered using any advice from the GP contained on the fit note where appropriate. In such circumstances, it would be appropriate to undertake a Risk Assessment, Workplace Assessment and/or Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment.

Any decisions to medically suspend will be based on sound justification and will involve a Risk Assessment. Having considered the views of the employee, the Headteacher should be able to clearly explain the reasons for their decision.

If it is considered that there are sufficient grounds to suspend, the Headteacher should seek approval from the Governors. The Headteacher should convene a suspension interview as soon as possible after the decision has been made, which should be followed up in writing using the suggested template letter. The employee has a right of representation at the suspension interview.

However, the unavailability of a representative must not delay convening the suspension interview or the suspension itself. If the need to medically suspend the individual is urgent and it is not possible to convene a face-to-face meeting, the Headteacher may telephone the employee to inform them of the medical suspension and follow up the discussion in writing.

Medical suspension will be on contractual pay and does not impact on sick pay.

Review of medical suspension should take place once the required medical information is provided by Occupational Health. If the required information received is that the employee is able to return to work, the medical suspension will be lifted. If the employee is still unable to perform his/her duties, the Headteacher may decide to invoke the capability procedure. HR provider advice should be sought in these cases.

15. Termination of Contract Due to Ill Health

Below is a guide to the Headteacher when terminating an employee's contract on the grounds of 'capability' where an underlying medical condition is identified. Where possible, a Headteacher should be able to answer "yes" to each question, if not, they should seek advice from their HR provider:

- Has advice been sought from Occupational Health about the employee's condition/prognosis?
- Does the advice indicate, at least, that the employee is unlikely to return for a prolonged period?
- Are we satisfied or have we checked that, given the contents of the report, no 'reasonable adjustments' of the employee's post are possible to allow the employee to remain in post?
- Do we genuinely believe that the school can wait no longer for the employee's attendance to improve, bearing in mind the length of absence, interests of the school and the position the employee holds?
- Does the medical report mention suitability for alternative employment? If not, have we considered/offered/discussed the option of alternative employment with the employee?

16. Terminal Illness

There are occasions where an employee with a terminal illness wishes to be dismissed and may be eligible for early release of pension benefits and, therefore, there may be some discretion on application of the procedure. Factors to take into consideration are:

- The medical condition;
- How long the employee is expected to live, as this may be critical in establishing the most beneficial course of action;

- Extreme cases: the employee will be kept on the payroll, even though they have exhausted their entitlement to sick pay. This removes the need to add further distress by formally dismissing someone who is dying where it is to the employee's advantage to remain in service due to their entitlement to benefits such as death in service.

The Headteacher will deal with such situations compassionately taking into account the wishes of the employee and their financial situation as well as the needs of the School. Each case will be considered on its own circumstances and advice will generally be sought from Pensions, Occupational Health and HR provider.

17. **Disabled Employees**

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination because of disability and places a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to working practices and premises in order to accommodate the needs of individual employees and job applicants who have a disability. This means that an employee with a disability must not be treated less favourably than any other employee without justification.

The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristic of disability as applying to a person who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

18. Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Equality Act, employers must consider and make reasonable adjustments or changes where appropriate to ensure that a person with a disability is not at a substantial disadvantage. A number of factors influence whether it is reasonable for an employer to make changes, including:

- How much the alteration will improve the situation for the disabled person;
- How easy it is to make the change;
- The cost of the change, financially and practically;
- Health and Safety implications;
- The impact of the change on the rest of the team;
- The resources of the employer.

Examples of reasonable adjustments may include:

- Allocating alternative duties;
- Altering hours of work;
- Assigning a different place of work;
- Allocating a 'buddy' to support the employee;
- Providing specialist equipment;
- Adjusting the number of days' absence that trigger unsatisfactory attendance procedures (Occupational Health advice must be sought in this instance);
- Allowing a longer period of time for reviewing reasonable adjustment or seeking redeployment;
- Allowing the employee to take Disability Leave, for instance for medical treatment, recuperation or rehabilitation, with a time limit agreed between the
- School and its employee;
- Extending sickness entitlement.

Where adjustments are made, the employee will be given a reasonable period of time to readjust. However, if, after this period, they are unable to meet the levels of attendance expected and further

adjustments are deemed unreasonable, consideration will be given to a dismissal on medical grounds.

19. Disability Related Absences

The Equality Act does not require disability-related absence to be automatically discounted; nor does it require an employer to retain someone indefinitely if they are frequently absent due to a disability. However, when counting disability-related absences towards trigger points for unacceptable attendance procedures, the Headteacher must be able to demonstrate that all reasonable adjustments have been considered to the number of days absence which trigger a review under the procedure.

Where the combination of both disability-related and general sickness absence exceeds the trigger points, the Headteacher should seek advice from Occupational Health on any reasonable adjustments that should be considered.

Disability Leave

It is recognised that some disabled employees may need time off for a reason relating to their disability to attend appointments or undergo treatment or rehabilitation. The Disability Leave is intended to provide disabled employees with reasonable paid time off work for these reasons.

Disability Related Sick Absence

Disability related sickness absence should be recorded by the Headteacher using the same method they use to record other types of sickness i.e. the electronic absence recording system available and E-Forms using the appropriate Disability Related illness absence fields. Disability related sickness absence arises where the employee's sickness absence is related to their disability.

20. APPENDIX 1 – ABSENCE PROCEDURE

Informal Actions

Return to work discussions after every absence (unless superseded by an Absence Stage Meeting):

- Discuss absences and identify any underlying reasons.
- See if any assistance can be offered.
- Advise employees of consequences of hitting trigger points.
- Maintain records of all discussions.

Stage 1 Absence Management Meeting

Preparation before the meeting:

- The Headteacher invites employee to the meeting to discuss their absences and issues an invite letter (see draft letters).
- The Headteacher (or delegate) gathers any necessary information, including the Sickness and Absence Management Policy, dates and reasons of absences and any other previous return to work interview notes.

NB: Referral to Occupational Health (OH) will not normally take place until after this meeting.

During the meeting:

- The Headteacher (or delegate) will provide the employee with a list of their absences, with reasons and advise that their level of attendance has reached a trigger point within the Absence Management Policy;
- The Headteacher (or delegate) will discuss the level of absences and explore other associated areas e.g. whether the absences are caused by a disability or personal, family- or work-related problems. If the latter, some of these may be better suited to leave of absence which should be requested in advance;
- Once a full discussion has taken place about possible reasons why the employee has reached the trigger points, the Headteacher will decide if a referral to OH is appropriate.
- Outcomes of the meeting:
  The member of staff will be made aware of the sustained improvement required is for the employee to reduce their current level of sickness to below the school's trigger point (i.e. 4 occasions or 12 days pro-rata to the monitoring period). They will be informed of the level of attendance required based on the table above.
- If the Headteacher needs to establish if the employee has an underlying health problem, then referral should be made to OH to advise on possible reasonable adjustments. At the same time as completing the OH referral, a monitoring period should be set for the employee to achieve a sustained improvement in their attendance as detailed above. Once the medical report is received from OH, the Headteacher (or delegate) will meet with the employee to discuss the outcome of the referral. If an underlying medical condition is confirmed, the employee will be supported through the short-term absence procedure with any "reasonable adjustments" put in place to help reduce absences, e.g. change of hours, adjustments to working environment;
- The employee will be advised that, should their level of absence increase as per the Stage Calculation Table, then they will be subject to a Stage 2 Absence Meeting;
- The outcome of the Stage 1 Absence Management meeting will be confirmed in writing to the employee.

Follow Up Action:

- Either a Stage 2 Absence Meeting will be necessary, if the member of staff hits a trigger point;
- Or the member of staff's attendance will improve.

Stage 2 Absence Management Meeting

If the employee fails to improve their attendance and has hit the trigger points for a Stage 2 Meeting, they will be invited, in writing, to attend a Stage 2 Absence Meeting with the Headteacher (or delegate) to discuss the way forward.

When required improvement is not achieved:

Preparation before the meeting:

- The Headteacher invites employee to the meeting to discuss their absence, and issues invite letter;
- Prior to meeting, the employee will be sent a full list of their absences, copies of any return to work discussions since the Stage 1 Meeting, and any advice from OH where this has been requested;
- If a referral to OH has not taken place, then consideration will be given to a management referral in order to seek advice regarding the employee absences.

During the meeting:

- The employee will be asked to give an explanation to the Headteacher as to why their attendance has not improved;
- During this meeting, the Headteacher can suggest other options or reasonable adjustments to try and improve the employee's attendance, including the need for further involvement of OH or, in exceptional circumstances, may consider extending the review period pending a further meeting.

Outcomes of meeting:

- The sustained improvement required is for the employee to reduce their current level of sickness to below the school's trigger point (See Stages Calculation Table);
- Agree on any further reasonable adjustments or forms of support that might be put in place to reduce absences, e.g. change of hours, adjustments to working environment;
- Decide whether to utilise the option of requesting the employee to produce a GP's fit note from the first day of each period of sickness absence, until their absences have reduced below Stage 1 (any cost incurred to be reimbursed in full by the school);
- Advise the employee that if there is no improvement, the employee will be required to attend a Stage 3 Absence Management Hearing with a possible outcome being that they may be dismissed;
- The outcome of the Stage 2 Absence Management meeting will be confirmed in writing to the employee.

Follow Up Action:

At the end of the monitoring period, the Headteacher will review the employee's absence record and decide whether:

- Attendance has reached the level required. In such cases the employee must maintain this level of attendance for a minimum of one year; if, during that period, absence meets the trigger points, then this procedure will resume at the point previously reached;
- The level of attendance has not reached the required level and the employee will proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3 Absence Management Hearing

If following the review of Stage 2, the employee still fails to achieve a sustained improvement in their attendance, they will be invited in writing to attend a Stage 3 Absence Management Hearing with the Headteacher to discuss the way forward, the outcome of which may be dismissal.

Preparation before the meeting:

- The Headteacher invites the employee, in writing, to a meeting to discuss their absence;
- Prior to the hearing, the employee will be provided with a copy of the written outcome of the previous meetings, a full list of absences, records of return to work discussions since the Stage 2 Meeting, and any advice from OH;
- The employee will be advised that a possible outcome of the hearing is dismissal on the grounds of 'Some Other Substantial Reason' or 'Capability' (if there exists an underlying medical condition);
- The school's HR advisor may also be in attendance.

During the meeting:

The employee will be required to give an explanation as to why their attendance has not improved and the Headteacher will outline what action, adjustments and discussions have taken place since the commencement of the formal procedure.

Outcome of meeting:

- If the Headteacher is satisfied that the absences are attributable to short-term sickness only, and that all reasonable support measures have been made available to the employee, they will be able to dismiss the employee with notice on the grounds of 'some other substantial reason' (where no underlying medical condition is identified) or 'capability' where an underlying medical condition exists;
- If the Headteacher is not satisfied that the absences are attributable to short-term sickness and/or that adequate support has not been given, they can consider the options of further involvement of OH, or to extend the review period and agree to meet again with the employee. The employee will be made aware of the ongoing risk of dismissal should there not be any significant improvement;
- If the employee has reached the required level of attendance and no further action is required then they must now sustain this level of attendance. If, during that period, their absence meets the trigger points then this procedure will resume at the point previously reached.

Follow Up Action:

- The outcome of the Absence Management Hearing will be confirmed in writing to the employee.

Stage 4 Appeal

Following dismissal, the employee has the right to appeal against their dismissal under this procedure. If the employee wishes to appeal, they must do so in writing within 10 calendar days of the date on which the decision is confirmed in writing.

Recruitment to the post will not commence until the appeal mechanism has been completed.