

This policy applies to all Support Staff, Teachers and the Head Teacher/Principal based at Thurlaston CE (Aided) Primary School and should be read in conjunction with the associated guidance.

For the purposes of this policy Head Teacher will be referred to as Head Teacher.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a supportive framework to assist employees to improve and maintain the required level of attendance expected, where a shortfall in attendance has been identified. Where satisfactory levels of attendance are not achieved this document outlines the process that should be followed to ensure that employees continue to be supported to make the necessary improvements before dismissal is considered.
- 1.2 The school recognises the importance of managing attendance in a fair and consistent manner.
- 1.3 All absences must be consistently reported, recorded, monitored and analysed on an ongoing basis across the school in order to identify problems, review individual cases and decide upon any appropriate action.

2. Application of the Policy

- 2.1 The attendance of teaching and support staff will be managed by either the Head Teacher / Principal or another manager.
- 2.2 If the Head Teacher's / Principal's attendance is being managed in line with this policy, then the Chair of Governors/Governor/Trustee will be responsible for overseeing the application of this policy.

3. Reporting Sickness Absence

- 3.1 It is essential that employees follow the schools own internal arrangements for reporting absences.

*Teachers and Premises Officer must notify the Headteacher by telephone before 7am on the first day of absence. They should ring and speak to him on his home number.
Support staff including Lunchtime support and Office staff should phone school and speak to ideally the headteacher or another member of staff before the start of their working day.*

3.2 Once an employee has notified the school of their absence, arrangements to ensure regular contact is maintained between the employee and Head Teacher/manager should be put in place.

3.3 Employees who are absent for:

- Less than 7 calendar days must complete a self-certification for their absence.
- 7 calendar days or more must provide a valid Fit Note from their GP / Consultant.

4. Employees with a Disability

4.1 Consideration must be given as to whether an employee's level of attendance is due to a disability, and if so, what reasonable adjustments may be needed to assist the employee to reach the required level of attendance. If an underlying disability is suspected, an Occupational Health referral is usually required and advice sought regarding reasonable adjustments. Further advice should be sought from your HR Adviser. You may also refer to the Disability Leave Policy.

4.2 Absences relating to pregnancy will also be kept separate from sickness absence records. For further advice regarding such absences please contact your HR Adviser.

5. Day to Day Management

5.1 An effective absence management strategy requires consistent day to day line management and support of employees who are absent from work or whose attendance levels fall below the expectations of the school.

5.2 Where there are continuing concerns regarding an employee's attendance, it is essential that the Head Teacher attempts to resolve these via day to day management / welfare meeting(s) to:

- Raise their concerns with the employee.
- Agree a course of action and a reasonable period of review with the employee (suggest between 4 to 8 weeks).
- Ensure regular contact is maintained with the employee to address any issues that arise and ensure that any agreed actions remain relevant and up to date.
- Retain a record of all discussions held and support offered.
- Advise the employee that failure to achieve the necessary levels in attendance by the end of the review period may lead to formal processes being adopted.
- Encourage the employee to see advice and guidance from their Union Representative.

5.3 At the end of the review period the Head teacher should discuss with the employee whether the targets for improvement have been achieved. Where progress is made, no further action will be required, however, employees must be informed that failure to maintain the level of attendance may result in the employee being managed under the formal stages of this policy.

5.4 Where an employee does not make sufficient improvement in their attendance, progression to a Formal Attendance Meeting will be considered. (See associated Guidance for template letter: [Invite to Formal Meeting](#))

6. Support Mechanisms

6.1 At any appropriate time when attendance issues have been identified, it may be appropriate to explore some or all of the below (non-exhaustive) support options with the employee:

- a) Referral to Occupational Health to seek medical advice and opinion.
- b) Fit for Work, providing resources and information for employees & employers.
- c) Therapeutic Return to Work to assist the employee to return back to work on a planned and phased basis, usually following a medical recommendation. See Therapeutic Return to Work Policy.
- d) Reduction in Hours to assist the employee to return back to work on a temporary or permanent basis, which must be mutually accommodated and agreed. The employee's contract of employment will then be changed accordingly.
- e) Ill Health Retirement may be an option but in the first instance requires an Occupational Health referral.

[Further information can be found in the Attendance Management Guidance.]

7. Fast Track to Attendance Hearing – Long term Absence

7.1 There will be occasions in cases, for example, where medical reports indicate that a return to work is not possible within a reasonable time period or where an employee has a long term health condition or terminal illness. In these circumstances the school will ensure that all avenues of support, including ill health retirement and redeployment, have been exhausted. If this can be demonstrated, the formal procedures will commence at the Attendance Hearing stage.

8. Formal Attendance Management Meeting

8.1 Where there are continuing concerns regarding an employee's attendance, a Formal Attendance Management Meeting will be arranged. At least **10** working days' notice will be given for this meeting.

8.2 The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.

8.3 At this meeting, the Head Teacher, Employee and their representative will:

- a) Discuss the employees on going absence and reasons for this.
- b) Discuss what support has been put in place to date and whether additional support is required.
- c) Agree a formal improvement plan outlining the level of improvement required and a reasonable timescale for achievement (this is the review period).
- d) The Head teacher will advise that failure to improve their level of attendance within the agreed timescale could result in a final warning being issued at the end of the review period.

8.4 The employee will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting.

9. Formal Review Meeting

9.1 At the end of the review period the employee will be invited to a Review Meeting. 10 working days' notice will be given for this meeting. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. Both the person conducting the meeting and the employee will have an opportunity to present evidence to support their position.

9.2 The potential outcomes of the meeting are:

- a) The employee has made sufficient improvement; the attendance procedure may cease and day to day management/monitoring will recommence. Employees should be informed that if the improvement is not sustained within 12 months the process may recommence at the Formal Review Meeting stage of this policy.
- b) If some progress has been made and more is required, it may be appropriate to extend the review period. In the majority of cases, it will be appropriate to extend the review period just once;
- c) If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made, the employee will:
 - Receive a **final written warning** which will remain on their file for 12 months
 - Be informed in writing of the details of the Final Written Warning
 - Be advised of their right to appeal against the warning
 - Be informed that failure to achieve the required level of attendance by the next review may lead to an attendance hearing where the employee may be dismissed
 - Receive the revised formal improvement plan with the outcome letter, detailing the level of improvement required, timescale for improvement and additional support mechanisms identified to assist the employee to return to work

10. Final Review Meeting

10.1 At the end of the review period, the employee will be invited to a Final Review Meeting. 10 working days' notice will be given for this meeting and the employee will be informed of their right to be accompanied. Both the person conducting the meeting and the employee will have an opportunity to present evidence to support their position.

10.2 The potential outcomes of the meeting are:

- a) The employee has made sufficient improvement and the attendance procedure may cease and the day to day management of their attendance will recommence. However, if the improvement is not sustained within 12 months the process may recommence at the Final Review Meeting stage of this policy.
- b) If some progress has been made and more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the review period. In the majority of cases, it will be appropriate to extend the review period just once;

- c) If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made, the employee will be advised that a hearing will be convened to consider the case and that a potential outcome is dismissal. This will be confirmed in writing to the employee.

11. Attendance Hearing

11.1 A minimum of **10** working days' written notice will be given to attend a formal hearing in which the employee will be informed of the reasons for the hearing and their right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. The letter must state that a potential outcome of the hearing is dismissal and enclose copies of relevant documentation intended to be referred to at the hearing. The employee will also be given an opportunity to present their case and provide evidence.

11.2 The potential outcomes of the hearing are:

- a) No further action is required.
- b) There is insufficient information available on which to base a decision or it is considered that all the support available has not been explored fully. Therefore an extension will be agreed to the final formal review stage, with a further improvement plan being implemented.
- c) If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made, the employee will be dismissed.

12. Delegation of Authority

12.1 The person or panel responsible for hearing the case will depend on who has been given delegated authority in line with the Academy's Scheme of Delegation/ Schools Decision Making Planner, to make decisions about potential dismissal. This with either be:

- The Governing Body (i.e. a panel of Governors)
- The Head teacher, who may be supported by another member of the SLT or a Governor.

Note: It would not be appropriate for the Head Teacher to make the decision if they have managed the case.

13. Dismissal

13.1 Dismissal will be with notice. The employee will be notified in writing of the outcome of the hearing, including the reason for the dismissal and date of termination of their employment. The letter will also include details of their right of appeal.

13.2 For Maintained Schools: the Local Authority (LA) has the right to be represented at the hearing, and this will usually be a member of the LTS HR team in an advisory capacity. The school must notify both the employee and the LA of their decision. The LA will then write to the employee to dismiss them within 14 days of the notification.

14. Appeal

14.1 All Appeals will be held in line with the Schools Appeal Policy.

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