

Managing Sickness Absence Policy

1. Purpose

This School expects excellent levels of attendance at work and is committed to supporting the wellbeing of everyone. The School acknowledges that there may be circumstances when an employee is unable to attend work. If this happens, the employee will be treated fairly and sensitively.

The policy sets out how the School will manage sickness absence. Further guidance is available in the How to Guide and this must also be referred to. Please note that the section numbering in the Managing Sickness Absence policy and the How to Guide – Managing Sickness Absence are not aligned.

2. Scope

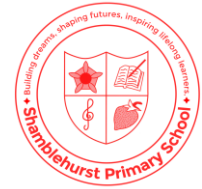
This policy applies to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers including Leadership, Upper Pay Range, Main Pay Range and Unqualified Teachers• Support Staff.
This policy does not apply to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers• Contractors• Agency workers.

This policy is non contractual and does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions.

Employees that have been subject to a TUPE into the School may be excluded from this policy where they have transferred under a contractual policy. In such cases, the employee should refer to their own contractual policies and procedures.

Employees with less than two years service may be subject to a shortened procedure.

Employees are actively encouraged to contact their professional association/ trade union representative at the earliest opportunity to



obtain advice and support at any point during this procedure.

The School expects all parties to maintain confidentiality throughout the application of the policy.

3. Short term sickness absence

Definition **Short term sickness absence** – is a period or periods of sickness absence that are not continuous and are normally short term in duration. The absences may be for related or unrelated reasons. The impact of the absence is that an employee is unable to attend work regularly and consistently.

Policy stages and principles The possible stages are:

- informal stage
- formal stage one
- formal stage two
- formal stage three - may result in dismissal
- appeal after each formal stage.

There is a shortened procedure for employees with less than two years' service as detailed in [Appendix One](#).

As a general principle the manager will seek to use the informal stage prior to progressing to the formal stages.

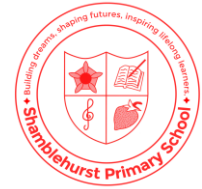
In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to start at the formal stage without using the informal stage. The manager must seek advice from Education Personnel Services in such cases.

The employee must be given a reasonable period of time to achieve the required improvement before moving to the next stage of the policy.

Trigger points A trigger point is a measure set by the School to monitor absence levels, the types of absence and absence trends. The School will set trigger points.

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A short term absence trigger point in Hampshire County Council is considered as follows:



- **6 working days* over two or more occasions in the past 12 months****
- **9 working days* or 4 occasions (totalling 6 or more working days) in the past 12 months**
- **whenever the level, frequency or pattern of absence causes a concern due to operational impact.**

**pro-rata for employees who work part time or in their first two years of service.*

***the previous 12 month period is calculated from the first day of the current absence.*

A long term absence trigger is considered as follows:

- **28 calendar days or more on one occasion.**

The School may choose to apply an alternative trigger point. The Governing Body may wish to operate on different trigger points to those suggested above. In such cases, there will be a requirement to discuss and consult with staff and their representatives to seek their input prior to a governing body determination on trigger points. The School has adopted the HCC trigger point.

The School can exclude an absence for the purposes of the absence triggers and any action being taken under this policy at that time. This is a management decision. Each case will be treated separately and no precedents will be set.

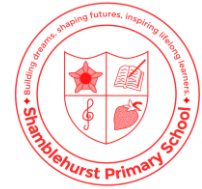
To enable staff to monitor their own absence they will be provided termly with a traffic light letter. This will ensure staff are aware if they are near, or have reached, the HCC & School absence trigger points.

The Headteacher will report absence levels at to the governors at governor meetings.

Return to work interview

The manager must contact the employee and complete a return to work interview following each occasion of sickness absence.

The Headteacher and/or Admin Manager will conduct the return to work interviews each week on a Thursday for all employees who have returned from absence in the proceeding 7 days. This will be done in a short meeting lasting approx. 10 mins and will be done out of class. A copy of the agenda and questionnaire is in Appendix Two. Governors may request to attend a meeting in a monitoring capacity.



4. Informal stage for short term sickness absence

Reference must be made to the How to Guide - Managing Sickness Absence for the full procedural information.

Informal stage The manager should speak to the employee by having an informal discussion known as a managerial support discussion. Depending on the circumstances, this could become a series of informal discussions.

Right of representation The employee is not usually accompanied at any discussions within the informal stage of the policy. There may be circumstances when the employee asks to be accompanied and consideration should be given to any requests. This should be accommodated where it does not cause a delay to the process.

Outcome of the informal stage The manager undertaking the managerial support discussion(s) must decide on the outcome.

A record must be made of each discussion. The manager must share the record with the employee. A copy must be kept on the employee's personnel file.

5. Formal stage for short term sickness absence

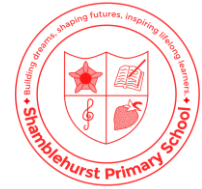
Reference must be made to the How to Guide - Managing Sickness Absence for the full procedural information.

Formal stage At each formal stage of the policy, the employee must be invited to attend a meeting/ hearing.

Meetings/ hearing arrangements The employee must receive in writing the invitation to the meeting/ hearing.

The letter must give the employee **7 working days'** notice of the meeting/ hearing.

Formal record A formal record must be taken during the meeting/ hearing. This may



**of the meeting/
hearing** be made by audio recording the meeting/ hearing or by a note taker. It is the School's responsibility to make the appropriate arrangements.

If an audio recording takes place, a copy of the recording must be retained by the School. The School must comply with all relevant retention and storage requirements.

For governor hearings in maintained schools, there remains a legal requirement to have a written record of the meeting of the Governor Committee.

**Alternative
date** The School expects that the employee and their representative will make all reasonable efforts to attend the first scheduled meeting/ hearing date and time.

If it is not possible, the employee may propose an alternative date and/ or time. This should be within **5 working days** of the original meeting/ hearing.

The meeting/ hearing will be rescheduled.

**Sharing of
information** The manager and employee are required to exchange all relevant papers and supporting evidence in advance of the meeting/ hearing. Management documents will be supplied with the invitation letter.

The employee or their representative must submit all relevant papers and supporting evidence to arrive with the chair at least **3 working days** before a meeting/ hearing.

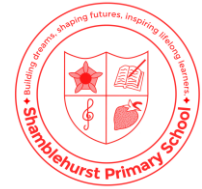
**Right of
representation** The employee has the right to be represented/ accompanied at a formal stage meeting/ hearing or appeal meeting. This can be by a professional association/ trade union representative or a work colleague.

It is the employee's responsibility to:

- arrange their own representative
- liaise with their representative to agree the formal meeting/ hearing or appeal meeting date and time
- advise management of the representative's details.

There is no right to legal representation at any stage of this policy.

Attending If the employee is not well enough to attend the meeting/ hearing, it



formal meetings/ hearings may be deferred until they are able to attend. A meeting/ hearing will not be deferred indefinitely because the employee is unable to attend.

Outcome of a formal meeting/ hearing The chair of the formal stage meeting/ hearing must fully consider all evidence presented and decide on an outcome.

A written warning may be issued and this can be:

- a first written warning of 12 months OR
- a final written warning of between 12 – 24 months
- **For employees with less than two years service** - a final written warning of between 12 – 24 months.

At a stage three hearing the employee may be dismissed on the grounds of medical capability.

The chair must confirm the outcome in writing within **5 working days** of the meeting/ hearing. A copy of the outcome letter and any warning must be placed on the employee's personnel file.

If the outcome is dismissal, any sums owing to the School from the employee will normally be deducted from their final pay.

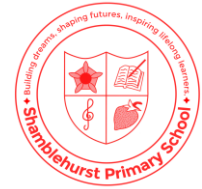
Review meetings Following the formal stage meeting/ hearing the manager must hold scheduled review meetings with the employee.

Progression through the formal stages The manager can progress to the next formal stage and re-enter at the appropriate point if:

- the employee does not achieve the required improvement
- there is further absence which may be for a different reason
- if an improvement is not sustained for a 12 month period following a formal stage one meeting
- if an improvement is not sustained for a 12 - 24 month period following a formal stage two meeting
- the employee has not been successfully redeployed and/ or has refused a reasonable offer of alternative employment.

6. Appeal stage

Reference must be made to the **How to Guide - Managing Sickness Absence for**



the full procedural information.

Appeal stage The employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of a formal meeting/ hearing.

Right of appeal The employee must submit their appeal in writing within **10 working days** following receipt of the written outcome of the formal meeting/ hearing. This must include the full reasons for the appeal.

Following an appeal of a formal stage three hearing, there is no further right of internal appeal.

Appeal meeting The employee must be invited to attend a meeting. The letter must give the employee **7 working days'** notice of the meeting.

Meeting arrangements The principles of the [formal stage meeting/ hearing arrangements](#) will apply.

Formal record of the meeting The principles of a [formal record of the meeting/ hearing](#) will apply.

Alternative date The principles of [alternative date](#) will apply.

Sharing of information The principles of [sharing of information](#) will apply.

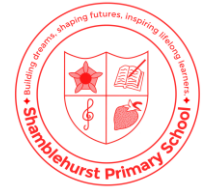
Right of representation The principles of the [formal stage right of representation](#) will apply.

Outcome of the appeal meeting The chair must fully consider all evidence presented and decide on an outcome.

The outcome cannot impose a higher sanction than issued at the formal meeting/ hearing.

The chair must advise the employee of the outcome at the appeal meeting unless otherwise agreed. The outcome must be confirmed in writing within **5 working days** of the meeting.

A copy of the outcome letter must be placed on the employee's personnel file.



7. Long term sickness absence

Reference must be made to the **How to Guide – Managing Sickness Absence for the full procedural information.**

Definitions **Long term sickness absence** - occurs when an employee is unable to return to work over an extended period due to an underlying medical condition or conditions.

Health conditions without sickness absence - occur when an employee's underlying medical condition has an impact on their ability to fulfil the full duties of their role but does not affect their attendance at work. Such cases can be managed under this **long term sickness absence** section. These concerns may originate as a performance concern but further review might indicate they are more appropriately managed using the Managing Sickness Absence policy.

Policy stages and principles The possible stages are:

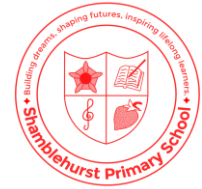
- absence review stage
- formal stage three meeting - may include a mutual agreement discussion and may result in dismissal
- appeal - only following a formal stage three meeting.

A formal decision about the employee's future employment must not be taken at the absence review stage. Such decisions must be made at a formal stage three meeting.

Absence review stage The School should speak to the employee by having an absence review discussion. Depending on the circumstances, this could become a series of discussions. A record must be made of each discussion.

Right of representation The principles of the [informal stage right of representation](#) will apply.

Formal stage 3 meeting The principles of the [formal stage](#) will apply.

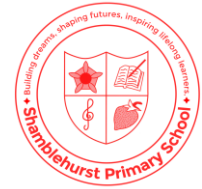


Formal record of the stage 3 meeting	The principles of a formal record of the meeting/ hearing will apply.
Alternative date	The principles of alternative date will apply.
Sharing of information	The principles of sharing of information will apply.
Right of representation	The principles of the formal stage right of representation will apply.
Attending a formal meeting	The principles of attending a formal meeting/ hearing will apply.
Outcome of the formal meeting	The principles of outcome of the formal meeting/ hearing will apply.
Appeal	<p>The employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of a formal stage three meeting only of the long term sickness absence section of this policy.</p> <p>The principles of the appeal stage will apply.</p>

8. Other Policy Requirements

Reference must be made to the How to Guide – Managing Sickness Absence for further information relating to this section.

Confidentiality	<p>It is expected that all parties involved in the managing sickness absence process will maintain confidentiality as appropriate. This is both within and outside of the School (including social media).</p> <p>If any party does not maintain confidentiality action may be taken under the Disciplinary policy.</p>
Right of Representation	Employees are actively encouraged to contact their professional association/ trade union representative at the earliest opportunity to obtain advice and support at any point during this procedure.



The employee is not usually accompanied at any discussions within the informal stage of the policy. There may be circumstances when the employee asks to be accompanied and consideration should be given to any requests. This should be accommodated where it does not cause a delay to the process.

The employee has the right to be represented/ accompanied at a formal stage meeting/ hearing or appeal meeting. This can be by a professional association/ trade union representative or a work colleague.

It is the employee's responsibility to:

- arrange their own representative
- liaise with their representative to agree the formal meeting/ hearing or appeal meeting date and time
- advise management of the representative's details.

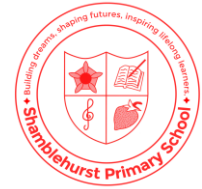
There is no right to legal representation at any stage of this policy.

Sick Pay

Details of sick pay entitlements are found within the Burgundy and Green Books.

Reporting sickness absence

- If illness occurs whilst at work the employee must report this to their Headteacher/Senior Manager immediately and agree a course of action.
- An employee, if sick and unable to attend work, must telephone the Deputy Headteacher (07787504765) as soon as possible, but no later than one hour prior to the start of the working day, so that cover can be arranged. Calls should be kept within the hours of 7am – 7pm, except for emergencies and staff should telephone the school before 3.00pm to advise whether or not they will be returning the following day.
- Employees must telephone the Senior Manager personally to report their absence unless the severity of the illness prevents this, in which case arrangements must be made for someone to contact the workplace on the employee's behalf.



- Mobile phone text will not normally be accepted as a correct form of absence notification. If you cannot reach the Deputy by phone you should call the school office and ask to speak to someone direct.
- Employees must explain the nature of their illness and their estimated return to work date. If the absence continues beyond 3 calendar days and/or exceeds the estimated return to work date, the employee must provide to the Senior Manager further notification as to the nature and probable duration of illness.

Recording sickness absence

The School is responsible for recording the start and end dates of the absence to ensure that the payroll provider or payroll system is updated. This is essential to ensure that the employee is paid correctly.

Keeping in touch during sickness absence

The School and the employee are required to engage in and maintain appropriate contact during periods of sickness absence.

Statement of fitness for work certificate

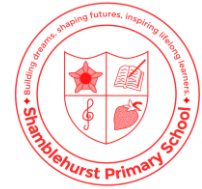
A Statement of Fitness for Work certificate is required for sickness absences of more than 7 calendar days. A medical practitioner will provide the employee with a Statement of Fitness for Work certificate. The employee must retain the original and provide a **copy** of the Statement of Fitness for Work certificate to the School in a timely manner. The manager must ensure that the copy certificate is received and kept on file.

If the employee does not provide a Statement of Fitness for Work certificate when requested, they may lose their occupational sick pay entitlement. Action may also be taken under the Disciplinary policy.

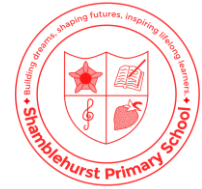
Medical Appointments

An employee must obtain consent from the School if they are required to attend a medical appointment during work time.

The employee is not entitled to paid time off to attend planned dentist, doctor or hospital appointments. Where possible, such appointments should be taken in the employee's own time unless it is covered by another leave provision.



Time off for dependents	If an employee requires time off for a dependent, they will be granted 1 paid day per academic year. Time taken after this will be unpaid unless the Governors agree paid leave.
Requests for absence that are not medical	All requests for absence must be made in writing to the Chair of Governors and will go to the governing body for approval. Leave requested and granted will be unpaid except in exceptional circumstances.
Planned operations	An employee is responsible for notifying the School in advance of a planned operation.
Emergency operations	If an employee has an emergency operation, they or a relative/friend must notify the School at the earliest opportunity.
Health advice and referral to Occupational Health/ medical practitioner	<p>The manager must contact Occupational Health/a medical practitioner at the earliest opportunity for advice on an employee's health situation and to determine whether a referral to Occupational Health/a medical practitioner is required.</p> <p>If an employee does not co-operate with the referral, any assessment or decision taken will be based on the information available.</p>
Phased return to work	A phased return involves a temporary adjustment or adjustments to an employee's role. There is no automatic right to a phased return. A phased return may not be necessary, depending on the nature of the sickness absence and the employee's needs.
Reasonable adjustments	The School and the employee will work together to identify and consider any reasonable adjustments.
Adjustments to support an employee to remain at work	Adjustments can be considered to support an employee to remain at work to avoid sickness absence. Adjustments may be of a temporary or permanent nature. Any adjustments must be discussed with the employee before implementing.
Permanent adjustments	Where Occupational Health/ medical practitioner recommends a permanent adjustment, the School must consider whether it is a reasonable adjustment which can be made.



If the adjustment cannot be made, this will be managed under a formal stage three hearing.

Redeployment

Redeployment can be considered at any stage in this policy and:

- must not be used as a sanction
- should result in satisfactory attendance in the new role
- is subject to a suitable opportunity being available.

Working whilst off sick

An employee may have more than one role/ or another employer. Due to the difference in the nature of the two roles, the employee may be on sickness absence from one role whilst still being able to work in the other role.

Where an employee is off sick from a role, they must not work in a second role, either for the School or another employer, during the normal working hours of the first role.

Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances must be considered before taking any formal action under this policy.

Once a period of absence has been determined as an extenuating circumstance:

- that period of absence cannot later be redefined unless clear evidence to the contrary emerges at a later date
- the absence cannot be taken into consideration when assessing total days absence over a given period of time.

There are specified exclusions where extenuating circumstances do not apply.

Health & Safety

Any Health and Safety issues must be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Health & Safety procedures.

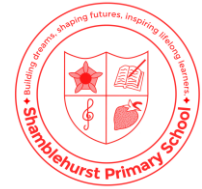
Disability related absence

The School must take a disability into account when considering an employee's absence.

Pregnancy related absence

A pregnancy related absence must be excluded when reviewing the employee's absence record.

An employee may have pregnancy related sickness during the last four weeks before the expected week of childbirth. This will



automatically trigger the start of the employee's maternity leave.

Instructions to leave work on health grounds

In exceptional circumstances, an employee may be instructed to leave work where they:

- present as unwell or
- have a condition which causes concern and poses a risk to them and/ or others.

The employee will remain at home and receive their entitlement to occupational sick pay until it is appropriate for them to return.

Medical suspension

In some circumstances, medical suspension may be necessary. Medical suspension decisions must only be taken by the Headteacher. This will be on the basis of medical advice.

Suspension can only be lifted by the full governing body.

The Headteacher must seek immediate advice from Education Personnel Services before making any decision to suspend the employee.

For Teachers only - a teacher who has been absent from duty for a period of more than three months arising from a psychiatric disorder (including that arising from alcohol, drug or other substance misuse) must not be permitted to resume teaching until there is evidence of their fitness to do so.

Mutual agreement

As an alternative to a formal stage meeting/ hearing, the School and the employee may discuss a mutual agreement. The contract of employment may be ended by mutual agreement between the employee and the School.

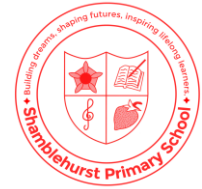
There is no right to appeal a mutual agreement as it is entered into with the consent of both parties.

Ill health retirement (IHR)

Any action under this policy will be temporarily suspended if ill health retirement is being actively considered or a decision about ill health retirement is being appealed. Relevant action under this policy will resume at the point ill health retirement is not approved or when the outcome at an appeal stage is known.

Sickness during annual leave

For Support Staff who do not work term time only – if an employee is sick during a period of annual leave, they are



entitled to have their annual leave entitlement reinstated.

The principles of recording sickness absence will apply.

Sickness and accrual of annual leave

For Support Staff who do not work term time only – annual leave will continue to accrue during sickness absence including during periods of half or nil pay.

Formal action – professional association/ trade union representative

Where there are concerns involving a professional association/ trade union representative, must notify and seek advice from Education Personnel Services before taking formal action.

9. Appendix One - Managing sickness absence for employees with less than two years service

Reference must be made to the **How to Guide – Managing Sickness Absence** for further information relating to this section.

Short term absence

Policy stages

The possible stages are:

- informal stage
- formal stage – may result in dismissal
- appeal only against a dismissal.

Informal stage

The principles of the informal stage will apply.

Formal stage

The principles of the formal stage will apply.

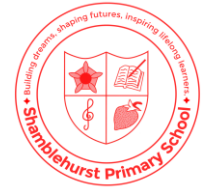
Appeal stage

The principles of the appeal section will apply. An employee only has the right of appeal against a dismissal decision. There is no right of appeal against a warning.

Long term absence

Managing long term absence

The principles of long term sickness absence will apply.



Appendix Two **Return to work Agenda**

Explore how the employee is feeling

Verify that the Sickness Absence Policy has been read and if required signpost them to the Staff Share copy.

Review the sickness absence record for the past twelve months and this could include providing the employee with the Calendar charts showing the absence

If applicable, discuss any previous meetings and targets set

If applicable, discuss any OH report and the phased return plan – how this is progressing.

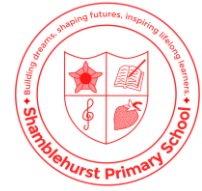
Ensure that the employee is fully recovered and decide whether any further support is required

Update the employee on key issues/matters in school that have arisen during their absence

Complete the return to work form

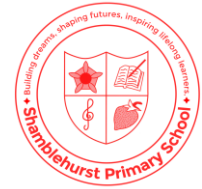
If applicable, provide a copy of the Sickness Absence policy to the employee

If appropriate, discuss that a trigger point has been reached and that an informal or formal stage meeting is required and will be arranged

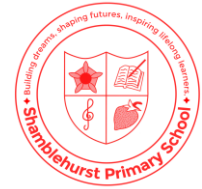


Managing Sickness Absence Return to Work Interview

Name of employee:	Job title:
Name of Manager:	Job title:
Date of Meeting:	
Was the correct procedure for reporting absence followed?	
Date of 1 st day of absence:	Date of last day of absence:
Number of Days Absent:	Reason:
(Sickness longer than 7 consecutive days) Have you provided your medical certificates, have they expired?	
Absence(s) in last 12 months: (or attach SAP screen shot)	Reason(s):



<p>Further action required? (i.e. when you feel an action plan is required (managerial support) or you wish to explore whether you move to formal stages) YES/NO (if YES, please complete overleaf)</p>	
<p>Brief record of discussion:</p>	
<p>Notes of discussion: (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*</p>	
<p>Agreed Outcome/Action Plan:*</p>	



* Please remember to :

- State the purpose and importance of the discussion

Where appropriate:

- Focus on required outcomes (action plan)
- Provide assistance in terms of appropriate changes in working arrangements and support
- Encourage employee to seek medical advice/specialist assistance
- Uncover causes and concerns
- Explore resources required
- Make employee aware that further absence may lead to formal action

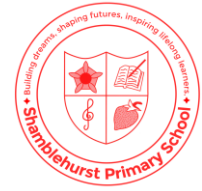
These notes represent an accurate record of the discussion.

Signature of Line Manager:

Date:

Signature of Employee:

Date:



10. Policy Governance

Reference:	HRDOCID-561776108-80146
Version:	V1 – 23 April 2019 V1.0.1 – 6 August 2019 V1.1 – 9 September 2019
Owner:	Education Personnel Services