

Approved at Full Governors' Meeting - 25th March 2010

Attendance Management Policy Belle Vue Girls' School

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SECTION 1

The Principles of the Managing Staff Attendance Policy

Belle Vue Girls' School is committed to maintaining the health, safety and welfare of its staff and seeks to provide a positive and healthy working environment. Regular attendance at work is part of every employees contract of employment however it is recognised that employees will on occasion have genuine and acceptable reasons to be absent from work; on these occasions the school will aim to do everything possible to support a member of staff during a period of absence with the aim of assisting their return to work at the earliest opportunity.

The overall aim of the policy is minimise absence levels across the school and provide information on how the school may support those members of staff who are unable to attend work due to illness. The policy also aims to provide a fair and consistent framework for managing attendance and should inform all staff of their responsibilities regarding attendance at work.

Management Responsibilities

- To inform all employees of attendance management procedures including the conditions of the sick pay scheme.
- To record all sickness absence upon notification.
- To monitor and review all sickness absence across the school.
- Arrange attendance review meetings with employees whose attendance levels begin to cause concern in order to identify support available and a strategy for improving attendance.
- To maintain reasonable contact with employees during a period of absence, while maintaining sensitivity and confidentiality throughout.
- To identify an intermediary who will forward relevant information regarding school life to the employee while they are absent.

Employee Responsibilities

- To attend work when fit to do so.
- To comply with the schools notification of absence procedures.
- To communicate/meet with management during extended periods of absence or in the circumstances that an employee is medically unable to do so, make arrangements for an intermediary e.g. Trade Union Representative or family member to communicate on their behalf.
- To consider accessing support from the Employee Health & Well-Being Unit.
- To attend medical appointments with the Local Authority's Employee Health Physician when required.
- To acknowledge a joint responsibility for their level of attendance.

SECTION 2

How to Reporting Your Sickness Absence

The purpose of having a clear reporting process is to ensure that the school can make the necessary arrangements to cover your absence. This may involve arranging for supply cover or longer term arrangements in the event that you will be absent for a longer period of time. As such the school has set the following reporting procedure which should be followed in the event that you are unable to attend work due to illness.

1st day sickness

Teaching Staff

Please telephone the Cover Manager on 01274 362024 by 7.30am if you are unable to attend work due to illness.

Associate Staff

Please telephone your Line Manager as early as possible but before 8.30 am.

Thereafter see appendix 1.

Returning to work

Before returning, if the absence has been for fourteen days or longer, please obtain a note from your General Practitioner (GP) stating your fitness to resume duties. If you are a teacher and have been absent for three months or over, and are suffering from a depressive/psychological illness, the note from your GP should also state your fitness to resume teaching duties.

On your return, please contact Jill Logan and complete the Sickness Notification Form as directed.

On returning to school you should contact Cover Manager and complete the Sickness Notification Form as directed.

SECTION 3

Pay Entitlement Under the Sickness Scheme

If you are absent from work due to sickness you may be entitled to receive sick pay.

The amount of sick pay is based upon your length of continuous service. For Teachers this is teaching service within any Local Education Authority and for all other staff it is continuous service within any public authority. The entitlement is outlined below.

Teachers

During 1st years service *	= 25 working days full pay, 50 working days half pay
During 2nd years service	= 50 working days full pay, 50 working days half pay
During 3rd years service	= 75 working days full pay, 75 working days half pay
During 4th year & above	= 100 working days full pay, 100 working days half pay

This is the entitlement within any period of one financial year,

All other staff

During 1st years service*	= 1 month full pay, 2 months half pay
During 2nd years service	= 2 month full pay, 2 months half pay
During 3rd years service	= 4 month full pay, 4 months half pay
During 4th & 5th years service	= 5 month full pay, 5 months half pay
5 years service and above	= 6 month full pay, 6 months half pay

Entitlement for the period takes into account any paid sickness absence in the year prior to the first day of absence. Pay given during this period will be deducted from the current entitlement.

* Applicable after 4 months service. There may be some entitlement prior to 4 months – information available from HR Service.

Statutory Sick Pay

SSP is paid to employees who are unable to work because of sickness. SSP is paid by your employer for up to a maximum of 28 weeks. SSP is not paid for specific illness or treatment but to all employees, who are incapable for work and who satisfy the conditions for payment.

In order to qualify for SSP you must have worked for your employer under a contract of service and;

- Be sick for at least 4 or more days in a row (including weekends and bank holidays). This is known as a Period of Incapacity for Work.
- Earn, before tax and National Insurance an average of £87.00 a week. This is called the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance Contributions (NIC). The amount you need to earn is lower than the amount when you have to start paying NIC's or would start paying if you were treated as an employed earner.

SECTION 4

How your Attendance will be Reviewed

In order to manage attendance effectively it is important that sickness absence is consistently reviewed. The school have pre-determined review points which can alert management if an individual's attendance has reached a point where there may be cause for concern. The following review points are in place to monitor employee attendance.

- 4 weeks' continuous absence.
- 5 or more absences in a 6 month period.
- 10 or more days absence in a 6 month period.
- when operational need dictates.

The review points themselves are not an automatic mechanism for taking action. All circumstances will be carefully and sensitively considered in order to treat you fairly, consistently and compassionately. When reviewing your absence, management will consider;

- What effect the absence is having on the operation of the school.
- The need for temporary cover.
- The need to re-organise duties amongst other employees.
- The effect of the absence on other employees.
- The nature of the illness.
- The likely length of continuing absence.
- When you are likely to return to work.
- Ability to return to the same post.
- Can any assistance be given to speed up the return to work eg, redesign of the job, retraining, alternative work, shorter working hours.
- The cost incurred as a result of the absence.

Each period of sickness will be recorded. If, a review point has been reached and management deem it appropriate, the issue should be discussed at a Return to Work Meeting.

SECTION 5

What to Expect on Your Return to Work

When an employee reaches a return point a Return to Work Meeting will be conducted. This will be done no later than five days after your return to work. On immediate return to work an informal welcome back will take place with your Line Manager.

The purpose of a Return to Work Meeting

- Welcome you back to work.
- Ensure that you are fully fit to return to work and that you have been authorised to do so by your General Practitioner if necessary.
- Identify the reason for your absence and confirm the length of the absence.
- Identify and address any problem (work-related or otherwise) that may have caused or contributed to your absence.
- Discuss how your work has been covered during your absence.
- Go through work that you may need to pick up.
- Update you on any news you may have missed while you were off.

How the Return to Work Meeting will be conducted

The nature and the content of the meeting will vary dependant on the length and reason for your absence. Some meetings will be of a general nature with a discussion as to the reason for the absence; others will need to be more detailed.

- Your manager will complete a Return to Work Meeting and take minutes during the meeting.
- The key areas to discuss are:
 - Details of your absence for example the nature and length of the absence.
 - Are there any concerns regarding your attendance levels
 - Is a referral to the Employee Health & Well-Being Unit required?
 - What (if any) action is required to facilitate a healthy return to work.
- The Return to Work Meeting Minutes must be signed by both your manager and yourself, you may request a copy of the form for yourself and a copy will be kept with your attendance record.

Outcomes of a Return to Work Meeting

There are a number of possible outcomes from a return to work meeting which are outlined below;

- There are no underlying reason for your absence and the level of absence is not a concern, therefore no further action is necessary.
- You may request support for an underlying reason for your sickness absence. In this case the school will take all reasonable steps to support you.
- That your sickness absence has reached a concerning level. The school may, in consultation with yourself decide a referral to the Employee Health and Well-Being Unit is appropriate and may advise you that a review meeting will take place in due course.

SECTION 6

How You Will be Monitored if your Attendance is Causing Concern

If, at the end of a Return to Work Meeting management feel there are concerns regarding your level of attendance, management may decide to activate the monitor process in order to address any emerging issues. The process involves a monitoring period followed by a series of review meetings detailed below. You may be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or work colleague if you so wish, management will conduct the meeting and may be accompanied by a HR Adviser.

Initial Review

If following a Return to Work Meeting management have concerns regarding your attendance they may invite you to attend an Initial Review Meeting in writing. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the number, frequency and reasons for your absences. This meeting is also an opportunity for you to discuss any underlying reasons for high levels of absence and to discuss areas where management may be able to support them. Possible outcomes of the review meeting are;

- Agree further support.
- Management referral to the Employee Health & Well-Being Unit (EH&WU).
- You may be advised that your attendance will be monitored closely for an agreed period of time.

Informal Review Meeting

If, at the end of the agreed monitoring period, management still have concerns regarding your attendance, an informal review meeting may be arranged. The purpose of the meeting is to advise you of continued management concerns, and to review the discussions of the initial review meeting. If no further information has come to light during the meeting, management may agree reasonable targets for improvement and agree a timeframe for further monitoring.

Formal Review Meeting

Where serious management concerns remain following the informal review process and you have failed to make a significant improvement in your attendance levels. Management may now convene a formal review meeting. There are three possible outcomes to the formal review process. These are;

- That there is no longer a management concern at which point management should write informing you that the process has ended and no further action will be taken.
- A disciplinary hearing may be considered if absence is unauthorised or unacceptable (the school cannot sustain it and you have shown no sign of sufficient improvement.) In these circumstances disciplinary action may be taken.
- If no long-term improvement is possible, and the school is unable to sustain this level of absence, the matter may have to be referred to a medical capability hearing or ill-health retirement may be appropriate.

SECTION 7

The Role of the Employee Health & Well-Being Unit

In most circumstances it would be appropriate to refer you to the Employee Health & Well-Being Unit (EH&WU) where you have been absent from work continuously for fourteen days. However, if medical certificates or information received indicates that you are experiencing psychological illness i.e. stress/anxiety/depression or musculoskeletal complaints i.e. neck/shoulder/back conditions, it is recommended that an immediate referral is made.

The primary function the EH&WU is to assess fitness to work in relation to any existing medical condition that you may have, be that physiological or psychological. The EH&WU will give advice to management about adjustments and modifications to work that they feel will allow you to remain at work, or return to work and sustain that return without causing or exacerbating health problems. These recommendations are not prescriptive and management can decline to offer adjustments if they can evidence those adjustments are not reasonably practicable.

The EH&WU can disagree with your General Practitioner (GP) with regards to fitness to return to work. The GP when issuing a fit note is stating that you are now capable of work they are not in a position to state if you are fit for your job; the EH&WU can override the GP opinion. Admittedly this happens very rarely however, if the circumstance arises it may be necessary to medically suspend you.

Medical Suspension

There are a number of situations where management may need to consider suspension on medical grounds. These may include;

- Pulmonary tuberculosis (you must be suspended from school).
- Epilepsy (requiring suspension from PE if any attack has taken place or whilst a medical investigation is underway).
- Psychiatric disorder (including alcohol and drug abuse).
- Where there is a difference of medical opinion between your doctor and the EH&WU (to allow an independent 3rd party medical opinion to be sought).

If the decision to medically suspend you is taken, management will do the following;

- Meet with you and a representative if possible, to action the suspension.
- Put into action any agreed processes, such as EH&WU intervention.
- Continue to monitor and review, including EH&WU support if applicable.
- Lift the suspension if appropriate and communicate this to you.

Reasons for such a decision may include consideration for the protection of your health, as well as the health, welfare of other staff and pupils who may be put at risk by your medical condition. The suspension should be reviewed weekly or monthly and may be lifted at any time.

SECTION 8

What to Expect if you are Absent Long Term or have Ongoing Health Problems

In the case of long term or ongoing absence management should maintain contact with you throughout your absence, you also have the responsibility to communicate/meet with management or in the circumstances that you are medically unable to do so, you should make arrangements for an intermediary e.g. Trade Union Representative or family member to communicate on your behalf. You should also ensure that you provide the school with medical certificates as required.

Home Visits

In some circumstances you may be unable to attend a meeting at school. In this situation it may be appropriate for management to arrange an alternative neutral venue or possibly visit you at home with your agreement. Managers should bear in mind the following:

Possible Outcomes of Long Term Absence

It is hoped that you are able to return to work and continue to be fit to undertake your role within school. However, this may not be possible and a number of different outcomes may have to be investigated and supported by management.

Return to work (substantive post) with reasonable adjustments

The school has a responsibility to seek reasonable adjustments to the workplace to enable you to return to work. Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, there is a legal obligation for the school to consider reasonable adjustments. Where you are visiting EH&WU, management may request a report recommending the appropriate course of action, including adjustments. However, at any time, management may feel that it may be appropriate to consider adjustments and will seek support and advice from EH&WU and Human Resources. This may include undertaking an assessment of the workplace and your duties where there is any indication that you may be suffering health problems as a result of their work.

Under the Act, reasonable adjustments include:

- Altering premises.
- Allocating some duties to another employee.
- Transferring the person to fill an existing vacancy.
- Altering working hours.
- Changing the person's place of work.
- Supplying additional training.
- Acquiring or making changes to equipment.
- Providing a reader or signer.

Access to Work is available to employees to help overcome the problems resulting from disability. It offers practical advice and help in a flexible way that can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job. The involvement of Access to Work would normally come as a result of advice from the EH&WU. Only you are able to request involvement from Access to Work. As a result, on receiving advice to contact Access to Work the schools HR Adviser will write directly to you advising you that you should make contact and providing you with the necessary contact details. Upon contacting Access to Work an Adviser will normally speak with both you and the school in order to arrive at the most effective solution.

Redeployment either within the school or within Bradford Council

It may be that you are fit to return to work but not necessarily to the role that you were originally employed to undertake. Redeployment is where you are transferred into a suitable alternative post which you are able to undertake with or without reasonable adjustments and/or training. In respect of alternative work, Managers will look at any existing and near future vacancies in the school in the first instance and discuss these with you in terms of your eligibility (including consideration of reasonable adjustments and training, as appropriate).

If there is no suitable alternative post in school it may be possible to look for opportunities across Bradford Metropolitan District Council. If wider redeployment is deemed appropriate you will be asked to attend a meeting with the Redeployment Unit to discuss your individual circumstances. It will be the decision of the Redeployment Unit as to whether you will be accepted onto the redeployment register. In cases of Ill Health redeployment, school based staff can be given access to Council non-teaching vacancies from the date of a Governor decision to dismiss, until the end of the notice period.

Medical Capability Dismissal

If no long-term improvement is possible, and the school is unable to sustain this level of absence it may be necessary to terminate your employment on the grounds that you are medically unable to fulfil your contract of employment.

If considering dismissal on grounds of medical capability management will arrange to meet with you to discuss the necessity for a report from the EH&WU and to make you aware that dismissal is a possibility. You may be accompanied at the meeting by a Trade Union representative or work colleague. Management may be accompanied by a HR Adviser. Following the meeting, management will confirm in writing the details discussed.

The purpose of the meeting is to;

- Ascertain your views on your current health situation, the possibility of a return to work and your fitness to do any other work.
- Discuss if ill health retirement may be appropriate
- Discuss the possibility of the governors meeting to determine medical capability, which may result in dismissal.
- To inform you that you have the right to provide your own evidence.

Once the report from the EH&WU has been received, you will be invited to attend a further meeting to discuss the findings of the report. You will also have an opportunity to respond to the findings of the report.

It is likely that the matter will then be referred to the Discipline, Grievance and Dismissal committee of the Governing Body to consider dismissal on grounds of medical capability where the EH&WU may have stated that;

- That you are permanently unfit to work, or
- they are unable to provide evidence of when you will be able to return to work, or
- they cannot confirm that you will be able to provide a reliable service.

Management may then arrange a meeting to determine medical capability. At this stage you should receive written notification of the meeting along with a proposed running order of the meeting and any evidence that management will present at the meeting. You should receive ten working days notice of the meeting. You will have the right to be represented at the meeting by up to 2 trade union representatives or work colleagues.

Ill Health Retirement.

At some point the Employee Health & Well-Being Unit (EH&WU) may advise that an employee under normal retirement age and contributing to the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) or Teachers Pensions (TP), should be considered for Ill Health Retirement. An Ill Health Retirement is when you are considered permanently unable to do your job or any comparable job with your employer.

Prior to supporting Ill Health Retirement the school and the EH&WU Advisers must look at ways of helping members to remain in or return to work, e.g. re-deployment, part time working or a transfer to a post with less responsibility, or consider other workplace adjustments, before concluding that ill-health retirement may be appropriate.

Officers

If appropriate, the EH&WU adviser will advise the school that they will support Ill Health Retirement and will complete a Medical Certificate of Permanent Incapacity. This certificate is then forwarded to the WYPF alongside the appropriate documentation. In order to give you access to your pension the school will need to dismiss on the grounds of Medical Capability.

Teachers

If appropriate, the EH&WU adviser will advise the school that they will support Ill Health Retirement however the process is significantly different to that of support staff. EH&WU can only recommend Ill Health Retirement, the final decision is made by TP. Under these circumstances you will be required to apply for ill-health benefits, completing an application form and a medical evidence form.

All applications and supporting medical evidence will be assessed by the Medical Advisers appointed by the DCSF. Where they judge that you are permanently unfit to teach TP will ask you to complete a form to provide service and salary details.

Ill health benefits can be granted by the Secretary of State to the DCSF if they are satisfied that you have become permanently incapable of any teaching until normal retirement age (i.e age 60 or 65). There are two different levels of benefits that can be awarded:

Total Incapacity Benefits (TIB) and Partial Incapacity Benefits (PIB).

TIB is awarded if you are assessed as being unable to undertake any type of gainful employment. PIB is awarded if you are assessed as being permanently unable to teach but can do other work. If your application is accepted it is expected that you resign from your post. If the application is rejected the school may need to review the situation and make a decision as to whether to proceed with Medical Capability dismissal.

Appendix 1

Absence reporting procedure for teachers, including supply.

If you are ill, your car won't start or you are going to be absent unavoidably, it is important that you (or someone on your behalf) ring school by 7.30am. Please try and keep school fully informed about the possible length of absence and your likely return.

The self-certification form is available from the Staffing and Payroll Administrator. The school's absence and cover telephone line is: **(direct dial 01274 362036)**.

Below is a summary of what should be done if you are unable to report for work:

Illness and emergencies

<i>Initially</i>	<p>If you are going to be late or absent from work you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Telephone the school absence and cover line as early as possible.▪ Inform your line manager between 7.30-8.00am of cover work▪ Give an explanation for your absence, including the nature of your sickness and an indication of the number of days you expect to be off work.▪ Regularly update your line manager throughout the period of absence.
On the fourth day of absence	<p>If you are absent for more than three days, please leave a message on the school's absence and cover line.</p>
Sickness absence of eight or more days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ If you are absent for more than seven days, please leave a message on the school absence and cover line.▪ On the eighth day of sickness absence you should obtain a medical certificate from your doctor. You must send this to the Head's PA immediately. <p>You should submit certificates at weekly intervals unless your doctor specifies a longer period of absence on your certificate.</p>
<i>Subsequently</i>	
Return to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Please inform the school when you will return to work by leaving a message on the school's absence and cover line.▪ If you are absent on Friday we will assume that you will be back in school on Monday, unless you inform the school otherwise.▪ On your return to work you should report to your line manager; the completed self-certification form should be returned to the Staffing and Payroll Administrator as soon as possible.

Absence reporting procedure for Associate Staff

If you are ill, your car won't start or you are going to be absent unavoidably, it is important that you (or someone on your behalf) telephone school by 8.00 am.

Please try to keep school fully informed about the possible length of absence and your likely return.

The self-certification form is available from the Staffing and Payroll Administrator.

Below is a summary of what should be done if you are unable to report to work:

Illness and emergencies

Initially	If you are going to be late or absent from work you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• telephone your line manager as early as possible, but before 8.30am• Give an explanation for your absence, including the nature of your sickness and an indication of the number of days you expect to be off work.• Regularly update your line manager throughout the period of absence
On the fourth day of absence	Phone your line manager again on the fourth day of absence.
Sickness absence of eight or more days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you are absent for more than seven days, please update your line manager.• On the eighth day of sickness absence you should obtain a medical certificate from your doctor. You must send this to the Head's PA immediately.• Regularly update your line manager throughout the period of absence. <p>You should submit certificates at weekly intervals unless your doctor specifies a longer period of absence on your certificate.</p>
Subsequently	
Return to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please inform your line manager when you will return to work.• If you are absent on Friday we will assume that you will be back in school on Monday, unless you inform the school otherwise.• On your return to work you should report to your line manager; the completed self-certification form should be returned to the Staffing and Payroll Administrator as soon as possible.

Prolonged absences

If you are absent for ten days or more in a six-month period, a return to work interview will be conducted by your line manager and the School Business Manager.

Other Absences

If you have any other questions or concerns, or if you are experiencing difficulties, then please do not keep them to yourself. Consult your line manager or SBT and we will do our best to alleviate the problem.