

Cottesbrooke Infant School

Staff Absence Policy

INTRODUCTION

The majority of sickness absence is unpredictable and though it may cause operational problems has to be dealt with on a day to day basis. This policy details the school's approach to this. However, when there is persistent or long term sickness appropriate action will be taken to ensure the effective provision of education at the school. In such cases reference will be made to the Local Authority Managing Attendance Procedure.

The fundamental principle of this policy is that the needs of the school are balanced with the interests and circumstances of each individual employee. Staff will be treated fairly and with dignity and the principle aim is, where possible, to seek an effective return to work.

A SICKNESS ABSENCE

1. Reporting Procedure

- 1.1 A member of staff who is absent sick should report the absence as early as possible but in any case before 7.30 am on the day of the absence directly to the Deputy Head as detailed in the Staff Handbook.
- 1.2 The absence, unless physically impossible, should be reported in person and not through a third party.
- 1.3 Unless it is clear at the outset that the sickness absence will last for a considerable time e.g., Chicken Pox, the reporting procedures should apply on each day of absence. It is useful if staff contact the school before 3.15 the day before if they know that they will not be in the following day, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

2. Certification Procedures

- 2.1 An absence of up to three days does not require any form of certification.
- 2.2 For an absence of between four and seven days a self-certification form should be completed on return to work.
- 2.3 For absences of longer than seven days a medical certificate is required (note: absence over weekends or holiday is included in calculation of continued sickness absence).
- 2.4 The school may, in exceptional circumstances, require a medical certificate for any absence. If this is the case the school would pay any charges incurred.

3. Time off for Medical Appointments

- 3.1 It is expected that non-urgent appointments for doctors, dentist etc., should, where possible, be arranged in an employee's own time or at the beginning or end of the working day.
- 3.2 Time off will normally be granted provided adequate notice has been given. Appointment cards may be requested and all requests should be made using the Local Authority proforma and submitted to the Head Teacher for approval.
- 3.3 Time off for antenatal classes will be given, again, an appointment card may be requested.

4. Return to Work

- 4.1 Staff are expected to keep the school informed as to the progress of any sickness absence and should inform the school, prior to return, of the date of the return.
- 4.2 On return to work, the member of staff will have a Pastoral return to Work meeting with either the Head Teacher or the Deputy Head. This meeting is likely to take place on the day of return but could be arranged for another time.
- 4.3 Any member of staff who has two or more separate episodes of sickness absence within a term (1 day or more) may be asked to meet with their line manager to discuss absences.
- 4.4 The school may ask a member of staff to give their consent to access medical reports. Any such requirement will be subject to the **Access to Medical Reports Act 1988**.

5. Procedures for Managing Excessive or Persistent Absence

- 5.1 Each case will be different but the following points amongst others may be considered when determining any appropriate action:
 - The need for medical opinion
 - The nature of the illness
 - The likelihood of recurring or other similar problems arising
 - The length of sickness absence or the pattern of absence
 - The impact of absence on other staff and effective curriculum delivery
 - Any steps already taken to address the issue
 - Consistency of approach
 - The relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

If there is evidence that the reasons for absence are not genuine then the matter will be fully investigated and depending on the outcome dealt with as misconduct under the school's disciplinary procedure.

Note: Where the member of staff is the Head, meetings should be conducted by the Chair of Governors or another designated Governor. In this instance support will be sought from the LA before any proceedings take place.

5.2 Informal Stage

A member of staff who has been identified as approaching or has met any of the following absence indicators will be invited to an Absence Monitoring Interview with the Head Teacher (or other Senior Manager):

- Two or more episodes of sickness within a term (an episode is any period of sickness absence lasting a working day or more); and/or
- A continuous absence due to sickness lasting four continuous weeks or more; and /or
- Any other sickness absence trend which is giving cause for concern e.g. the persistent Friday and/or Monday absentee or an employee who is repeatedly on sick leave at certain points in the year.

5.3 Formal Stage

A member of staff who has failed to show a reasonable improvement in attendance, or whose attendance has deteriorated following some initial improvement, will be subject to the procedures as set out in the LA Managing attendance procedure. See Appendix

B **TIME KEEPING**

- 1.1 All staff are expected to keep to agreed times of work.
- 1.2 Late arrivals or leaving early may be agreed in exceptional circumstances. Should a pattern of later arrivals etc., without authorisation occur then disciplinary action may be taken.

C **LEAVE OF ABSENCE/SPECIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

- 1.1 Staff may not take annual leave during school term time unless there are exceptional arrangements agreed with the Head/Chair of Governors.
- 1.2 Paid time off will normally be given subject to the exigencies of the school in line with the local authority.

The Leave of Absence scheme for teachers and support staff is in two parts:

- a) The limited discretionary powers of the Head Teacher

- b) The role of the Governing Body in decisions about leave of absence which are not within the Head Teacher's discretion (see Local Authority Leave of Absence Scheme)

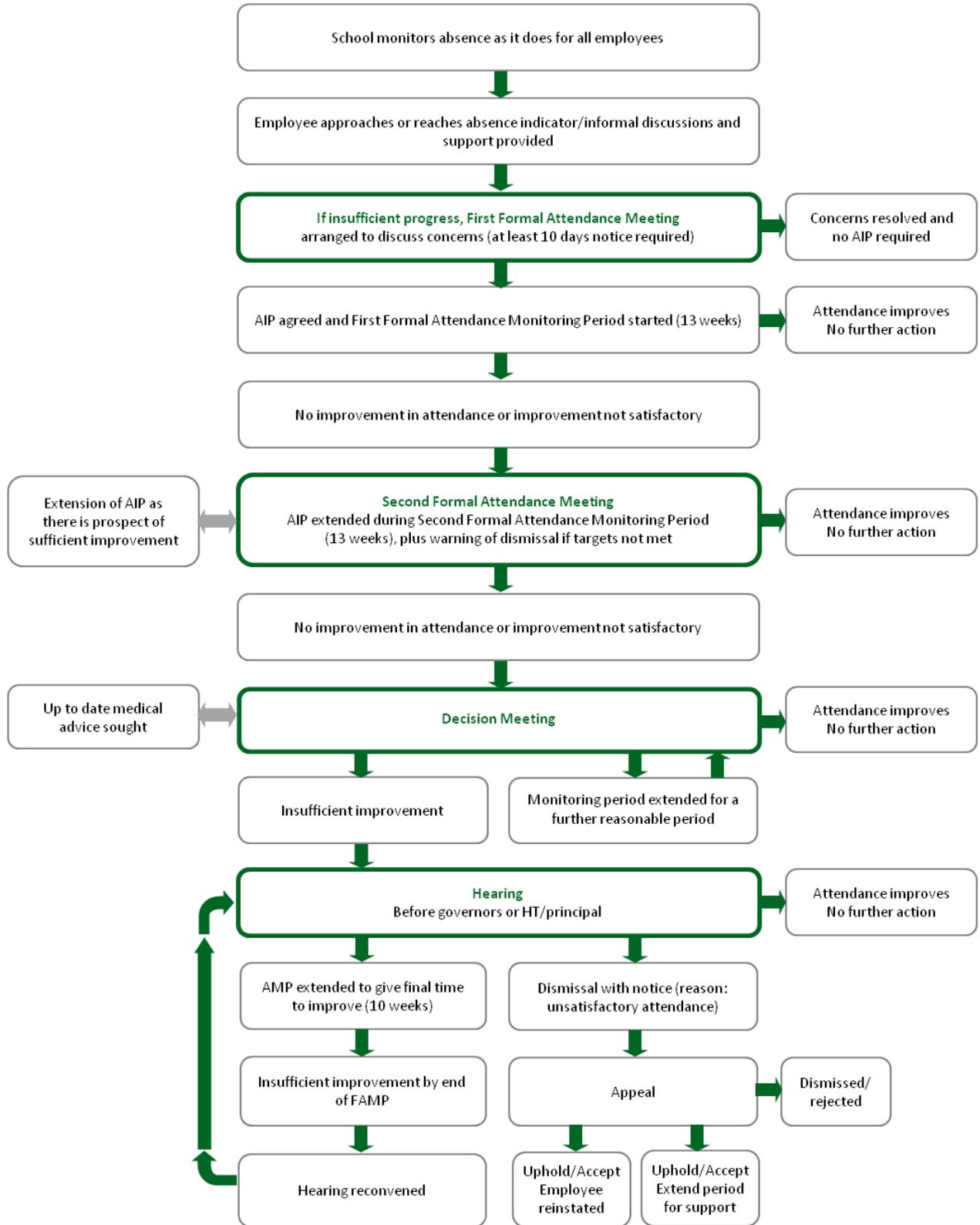
All leave of absence/special leave of absence requests should be made using the leave of absence proforma and submitted to the Head Teacher/Governors for approval including:

- Time off for dependants
- Religious ceremonies/worship
- Death/funeral of a close relative/friend
- Graduation of immediate family
- Removal of house
- Interviews

This policy was approved by the Finance and Staffing Governing Body Committee on 5th November 2013

Appendix i

Flow Chart – Frequent short term sickness absence



Appendix ii

Flow Chart – long term sickness absence

