

Worlingham CEVC Primary School

EMPLOYEE ABSENCE POLICY

*Like a tree firmly planted by streams of living water we will grow
in knowledge, love, faith and wisdom. Based on Psalm 1:3*



1. Scope

This policy statement applies to all employees at Worlingham CEVC Primary School who come under the control of the Governing Body.

2. Aims

The Governing Body seeks to:

- ✚ Maintain high levels of attendance.
- ✚ Minimize disruption of the education of pupils.
- ✚ Treat employees' absence in a consistent, fair and sensitive manner.
- ✚ Provide a safe working environment and appropriate welfare support.

3. Responsibilities

The Governing Body Personnel Committee will monitor and review this policy annually, delegate to the Headteacher the necessary discretion to operate absence management procedures and arrangements, and ensure that fair and consistent standards are applied to the management of absence. The Chair of Governors will authorise any requests for absence from the Headteacher.

The Headteacher (with the assistance of her Deputy) will ensure that absence is recorded and monitored, using reports and information available from the County Council as appropriate. She will ensure that the school has suitable arrangements for enabling employees to notify absence, for communicating information about absence in a timely manner for payroll and other necessary purposes, and for following up absence in appropriate circumstances – in line with the County Council's guidance.

Employees have a duty to attend for work unless they are unable to do so through sickness or injury, or unless their absence has been otherwise approved. They have a responsibility to report their own absence through sickness or other emergency using the school's procedures, and to produce medical evidence as required.

4. Procedures and Arrangements in Cases of Sickness

During periods of sickness the County Council operates both statutory sick pay and occupational sick pay provisions appropriate to employees' conditions of service.

In cases of sickness, employees should:

- 1 Ring the school (01502 712375) after 7.45am and before 8.00am and leave an answer phone message to inform about illness. Keep office staff updated as to

whether you will remain off school for longer than one day, so that cover can be arranged. Where absence arises from an incident at work, details should be reported through the school's incident reporting procedures.

- 2 If the teacher is able to, it would be helpful to email plans for the day to office@wcevcps.org. However, where it is not possible due to illness the Year group colleague (or KS lead in the event of their absence) should ensure plans are made available in sufficient time for the start of the day's teaching.
- 3 Telephone school by 2.30pm to confirm whether you are going to come back the following day or remain off work.

Squirrels Breakfast and After School employees should:

Breakfast employees: Ring Squirrels Manager the previous evening if at all possible or the latest by 6.30am on the day of illness. At 2.30pm telephone school to confirm whether you are going to come back the following day or remain off work.

After School employees: Follow normal procedures for school staff.

In cases of extended periods of sickness the Headteacher will agree with the employee suitable arrangements for keeping in touch either with the employee or in exceptional circumstances an appropriate family representative.

The Headteacher will monitor sickness absence, use return to work meetings as appropriate and arrange for consultation with the County Council's Occupation Health Care Provider in relation to individual sickness absence or any general work related health issues identified at school.

The Governing Body will make available to employees appropriate counselling, welfare and wellbeing arrangements to promote and maintain the health of employees.

Any request for time off for reasons related to an employee's disability (e.g. for therapy or rehabilitation) will be considered sympathetically and in the context of the employee's statutory rights.

5. Arrangements for Absences Other than Sickness

In cases of family or similar emergencies which prevent attendance at work employees should make contact with the school using the sickness report arrangements. The Headteacher is authorised to grant appropriate agreed time off with pay for bereavement*, serious unexpected accident/illness of immediate family members and similar reasons ("compassionate" leave) – leave is not granted with pay for reasons arising from ongoing family commitments, or responsibilities.

In all cases where the absence is known or can be anticipated in advance the employee should make a request at the earliest opportunity, in writing, to the Headteacher, having first discussed with his/her immediate line manager the implications for cover, etc.

In the following circumstances where employees are entitled to time off work, which is governed by statutory and/or contractual entitlement, whether paid or unpaid, the Governing Body will meet the relevant requirements and follow the County Council's guidance:

- ✚ Maternity, adoption, maternity support (paternity) leave and leave for family emergencies.
- ✚ Trade union activities and duties, and specified public duties.

In other circumstances where an employee requests leave during term time for urgent personal reasons, the Headteacher is authorised to agree time off with pay for ongoing family commitments/appointments and will agree time off with pay for a maximum of 3 days per year. Time requested in addition to this will be unpaid. Alternatively staff may make up hours on occasions where the children's education/group work is not disrupted. The Headteacher will authorise any such individual arrangements.

*Leave of absence – Immediate family – up to 10 working days will be paid, based on individual circumstances. Any additional days will be unpaid.

6. Unauthorised absence

If an employee fails to observe the school's procedure for reporting absence, his/her absence is unauthorised. When the employee returns to work, s/he will be interviewed to find out the reason for absence and why it was not reported in the normal way. If the explanation is satisfactory, the absence may be authorised in retrospect. If the reason for absence was sickness, pay will be due. If there is no satisfactory explanation the Headteacher will consult the HR Caseworker to discuss what appropriate action may be considered.

If an employee remains absent without contacting the school, or the reason given for absence is unsatisfactory, s/he will be contacted as soon as possible. If there is no response to enquiries, the HR Caseworker will be contacted for advice. If the employee remains absent without contacting the school for a period of more than 10 days arrangements will be made to suspend pay until contact can be established.

7. Managing the Return to Work

In cases of short term absence the return to work will be managed through an informal "return to work interview".

The school encourages consistently high levels of attendance among all employees and seeks to keep sickness absence to a minimum. Where an employee who is rarely absent has a short and isolated period of absence it is unlikely that any specific action will be necessary, other than to verify that the employee has fully recovered and is fit for work.

At Worlingham CEVC Primary School we operate a system of "return to work" interviews for all absence. This demonstrates to all staff that the school monitors absences consistently and is a positive way to address short term absences, which are particularly disruptive.

Where any employee is frequently absent for periods of a day or a few days, the school will examine the pattern of absence, (e.g. Mondays, Fridays) and discuss with the employee

whether there is any problem of health or personal circumstances which the school could help to alleviate and thus improve attendance. Any personal problems which might be contributory factors, which might emerge as a result of discussion with the employee, will be treated sensitively and in confidence. Advice may be sought on any remedial programmes (e.g. alcohol recovery) which might be appropriate to the situation. If the employee wishes, s/he may seek the advice and support of their trade union representative.

8. Private and Personal Business

The normal expectation is that employees will conduct personal business outside the times they are required to work. There may, **exceptionally**, be times when an employee requires special leave for urgent personal business, e.g. legal or similar appointments or when personal affairs such as moving house cannot be arranged during school closure periods. The Headteacher is delegated to authorise discretionary time off for this purpose. Provided that it appears to the Headteacher that the business is urgent and cannot reasonably be postponed and conducted during school holidays, it is recommended that, as a matter of goodwill, the first day or two days would normally be with pay. The Headteacher will consider each case on its individual merit.

For additional information please refer to the SCC Managing Absence Resource, from which this policy has been written.

www.suffolknut.org.uk/absencepolicySCC.doc

V4 – NOVEMBER 2020