

Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title	CET Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	
Version Number	002	
Status	Approved	
Publication Date	June 2025	
Policy Owner/Author	Head of HR	
Related Policies/Procedures	Time Off Work Policy	
Review Date	June 2028 or sooner in light of any legislative requirements	
Approved/Ratified by	Organisation Development Committee	Date: 17 June 2025

Please note that a record of the changes made to the original issue of this document can be found at Schedule 1 after any Appendices to the Policy/Procedure.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 2 of 17

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The key aim of this policy is to encourage a positive attendance culture and ensure processes for managers/headteachers to manage sickness absence optimise employees' effectiveness and wellbeing. Cumbria Education Trust (referred to as 'the Trust') values the contributions of all employees and aims to maximise employee attendance to achieve the Trust's objectives and as a result, enhance the delivery of education to students.
- 1.2. A positive attendance culture ensures staff are supported both at work as well as when their health prevents them from work. Absence due to sickness has a direct impact upon the school community including cover/replacement costs; loss of continuity of teaching and learning for students; increased workload and additional demands for colleagues, which can lead to reductions in wellbeing. As an employer committed to the wellbeing of its employees, the Trust will take all reasonable steps to ensure that employee health issues and any associated factors in the work environment are identified at an early stage and that appropriate action is taken to address these. This Sickness Absence Management Policy forms part of the Trust's general approach to promoting health and wellbeing at work.
- 1.3. Sickness absence issues are often complex and unique and therefore must be managed compassionately. Whilst it is important that issues are dealt with fairly and consistently, specific interventions used, and the timing of those interventions may differ from case to case.
- 1.4. This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term Trust employees covered by the Green and Burgundy books, casual workers and volunteers.
- 1.5. Line managers are responsible for following this procedure for their direct reports. Headteachers may delegate responsibility for dealing with different stages of this procedure to another senior member of staff depending on reporting arrangements within the school and the specific circumstances of individual absences.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES AND DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. The objectives of the Sickness Absence Procedures are to:
 - 2.1.1 Promote a proactive and positive approach to managing positive attendance, sickness absence and wellbeing.
 - 2.1.2 Promote a culture that facilitates the health and wellbeing of employees and where individuals feel that their contribution at work is valued.
 - 2.1.3 Encourage and support employees with managing their own health, safety and wellbeing and to take responsibility for their attendance at work.
 - 2.1.4 Ensure employees who are experiencing ill-health are supported with understanding and sensitivity while minimising absence levels and their impact.
 - 2.1.5 Ensure that sickness absence is managed consistently and fairly, giving employees confidence in the school's approach.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 3 of 17

- 2.1.6 Eliminate organisational factors that may lead to sickness absence, such as inappropriate management, lack of training and support, inappropriate patterns of work, adverse environmental factors.
- 2.1.7 Encourage early indication of all health issues to proactively support employees manage long term health.
- 2.1.8 Provide guidance on how to seek appropriate information and support when further advice is needed e.g. wellbeing advice, counselling, Occupational Health (OH), etc.
- 2.1.9 Provide clarity to support employees and their line managers to implement the policy.

2.2. Definitions

Frequent sickness absence- This is defined as absence through illness which is of a short-term duration (e.g. a day or a few days) but happens at regular intervals. It is normally self-certified (for periods of up to 7 calendar days). It is important to monitor and manage such absences, with the aims of minimising absence and addressing any underlying issues using the procedure set out in Appendix 1.

Long-term sickness absence- This is defined as a protracted period of absence (more than 28 calendar days) which is usually due to a single health problem (e.g. caused by an operation) or by a combination of health issues. It is important to have regular agreed contact with employees who are absent long term due to illness in order to maintain support for the individual and facilitate their return to work. It is also important that managers minimise the effects of absence in the area of work concerned. Advice should be sought via a referral to OH, including a medical prognosis, and the central HR team.

Stress-related illness- Immediate and sensitive contact will be made with the employee to discuss any support the Trust can provide which could include undertaking a confidential Stress Risk Assessment, Wellbeing Action Plan or referral to OH. Stress Risk Assessment is a proactive way of preventing absence through prompting interventions that may reduce the causes of stress at work.

Triggers for management intervention- A judgement of what constitutes levels of absence that require management intervention is largely dependent on the individual circumstances of each case. The following triggers (over a rolling 12-month period) will be applied to indicate if intervention is required:

- 3 separate occasions.
- Absences that equate to a total of 10 days or more.
- There is a pattern or trend emerging which is giving cause for concern.
- The employee is expected to be absent for 28 days or more.
- Where there is a known disability, this will be taken into account when applying this policy.

The employee will be subject to sickness absence reviews in accordance with the procedure outlined at Appendix 1 and overall statistics showing overall staff numbers at stages under the procedure will be reported to the Trustees.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 4 of 17

Fit Note/Statement of Fitness for Work- Healthcare professionals' issue fit notes to people to provide evidence of the advice they have given about their fitness for work, this may include recommendations. They record details of the functional effects of their patient's condition so the patient and their employer can consider ways to help them return to work.

Occupational Sick Pay (OSP)- Payments made to employees for sickness absence by employers to enhance statutory payments. Please see the 'CET Sick Pay Entitlements and Information' for further guidance relating to the Trust's rates and eligibility criteria.

3. NOTIFICATION AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

3.1. This procedure is for all instances of sickness absence.

3.2. **PART-DAY ABSENCES:** Requests to leave during the working day due to illness (or other reasons) must be made to and approved by the Headteacher/appropriate manager. Where applicable, the Cover Coordinator/Supervisor must be informed in order to ensure any necessary cover is arranged. The employee must sign out as normal.

3.3. **DAY 1:** On or before the first working day of sickness absence, you must immediately phone the Cover Supervisor/appropriate manager by 8:00am (or no later than an hour before your shift pattern starts if earlier). You should phone in person (or arrange for someone else to ring if you are unable to do so personally) text messages and email are not acceptable forms of notification. Voicemail facilities are in place to ensure notifications can be captured outside of working hours or at times when calls cannot be answered. Please also contact your line manager to inform them of your absence.

At the time of notification, you should state the following:

- Nature of the illness and when it began.
- The date on which you expect to be fit for work. If you are still unfit for work beyond the expected date of return or you do not know when you expect to be fit to return to work, you must contact the school by 2pm each day that you are absent, to provide an update and to let us know if you will be fit for work or not the following day.
- Any relevant information about current workload/diary appointments.
- If the absence is attributable to any disability or work issue (to assess if additional support could be provided and to ensure the correct procedure can be followed e.g. if related to an accident at work).
- Any assistance required.
- A contact telephone number in case a call back is required. You must make every effort to be available for the call back so long as this does not prevent you from seeking medical attention if required.

3.4. **For Teaching Staff only:** You should set cover in the appropriate format and location if possible. If this is not possible, please advise when reporting the absence.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 5 of 17

- 3.5. **DAY 8:** If you are absent for more than seven calendar days you must produce a Fit Note. You are advised to see your Health Professional as soon as possible so that a note can be produced on time. Fit Notes which are not received by the eighth day may result in delayed or unpaid occupational sick pay.
- 3.6. For absences of seven calendar days or less, you should complete a self-certificate.
- 3.7. All days of absence must be covered by either a self-certification form or a Fit Note. Any gaps will need to be accounted for in order for eligibility for sick pay (both statutory sick pay (SSP) and occupational sick pay (OSP)) to continue.
- 3.8. The procedures for formal monitoring of sickness absence and returning to work are set out in Appendix 1.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Responsibilities of Headteacher/Line Managers

- 4.1.1 Line Managers should support all employees through being aware of their health and wellbeing overall, alongside considerations for sufficient recovery during periods of absence and reasonably encouraging return to work planning based on the individual circumstances.
- 4.1.2 Managers have specific responsibility as follows:
- Proactively manage absence levels within their department/school whilst complying with and applying the procedure in a supportive, fair and consistent manner.
 - Ensure that staff are aware of the policy and the requirements for notification of sickness absence.
 - Ensure that accurate absence records are maintained.
 - Ensuring that contact is maintained with the absent employee in a sensitive manner, with respect for the employee's right to privacy. The method and frequency of contact should be agreed with the employee.
 - Ensuring that return to work interviews are conducted for all absences.
 - Refer employees to OH and follow advice as appropriate.
 - If an accident has occurred at work, ensuring that an accident form has been completed (liaising with the school's health and safety lead). This may require contact to be made with the employee concerned during their absence.

4.2 Responsibilities of Employees

- 4.2.1 Employees are responsible for ensuring that they meet their contractual obligation to attend work unless prevented from doing so by illness, a diagnosable medical condition or reasonable public health advice in force at the time. Employees are also

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 6 of 17

expected to take personal responsibility for their own health and attendance, and not to unreasonably expose themselves or others to risks that may adversely affect their health and ability to undertake their work safely; for example, following good manual handling procedures and effective Display Screen Equipment (DSE) use whilst at work in line with our health and safety procedures.

4.2.2 Employees should:

- Acknowledge and respond to issues that are within their control (e.g. taking prescribed medication, following medical advice received (through their own healthcare professional or OH, being sufficiently organised, etc.) in order to optimise their health/wellbeing/recovery.
- Follow the notification procedures to keep the school informed about their absence including notifying by 2:00pm the day before they intend to return to work.
- Submit the appropriate Fit Note without delay (see 4.6 to 4.8 for further information).
- Co-operate with any referral to OH, including attending relevant appointments (unless not reasonably practicable), where this is requested in line with this policy.
- Engage with the application of this policy as applicable e.g. with attendance at meetings, complete actions and targets as outlined in any implemented improvement plan, etc.
- Inform their line manager where absence is a result of an accident unconnected with work, and involving a third party where damages may be recoverable from the third party.

4.2.3 Employees are encouraged to advise their line manager/the Trust of any health condition, disability or potential disability to enable appropriate support at work to be considered.

4.2.4 Employees should maintain contact with their department during periods of sickness and keep their line manager informed of their situation. This will enable the Trust to offer appropriate support and assistance.

4.3 Role of the Trust & Central HR Team

4.3.1 Produce, review and monitor the application of this procedure to ensure fair and consistent application across the Trust.

4.3.2 Provide training to headteachers/line managers on absence management.

4.3.3 Provide advice on the entitlement to and expiry of sick pay, and how sick pay is calculated. The HR team ensure schools record absences for statutory purposes and that payroll is correctly calculated.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 7 of 17

- 4.3.4 Provide advice and guidance on how to deal in a consistent, sensitive and confidential way with issues arising from employee absence due to sickness. The central HR team should be contacted as soon as a potential issue is identified and prior to any action being taken at stage 2 of the sickness monitoring procedure (see Appendix 1) and beyond.
- 4.3.5 The central HR team can advise line managers to facilitate support to employees including Stress Risk Assessments, Wellbeing Action Plans, referral to OH, etc. They are also available to offer advice to individual employees about the employment implications of their ill-health situation.

4.4 Role of Occupational Health (OH)

- 4.4.1 OH is an out-sourced service, facilitated by medical professionals, that can provide practical advice and support with the aim of facilitating attendance at work. Cases are referred to OH when an employee is absent for four weeks or more and on an "as needed" basis. It is a condition of continuing to receive sick pay that employees co-operate with referral procedures when required to do so. Usually referral is by agreement following discussion with an employee and employees are encouraged to view OH as a supportive service.
- 4.4.2 Normally cases will be referred to OH with relevant supporting information including for example, the duration and reasons for absence, factors in the workplace which may affect the employee and other information as appropriate. A copy of the information included in the referral will be shared with the employee concerned and the referral approved by both parties.
- 4.4.3 Cases referred to the service may involve for example:
- Assessment of fitness to carry out the duties of the post.
 - Assessment for redeployment purposes.
 - Prognosis on the condition of an individual who is on sick leave, and possible fitness to return to work.
 - Medical assessment of reasons for patterns of frequent sickness absences.
 - Assessment for potential ill-health retirement.
 - Assessment for environmental working factors.
 - Assessment of reasonable adjustments necessary to facilitate attendance at work.
- 4.4.4 Consultation with OH is confidential. The outcome of referrals will be made available to the line manager (other managers as appropriate), HR and the individual concerned. Confidential medical information will only be released to third parties with the consent of the individual concerned, except where this is required in law.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 8 of 17

- 4.4.5 Failure to co-operate with an OH referral, or other relevant request for medical information, would mean that the Trust would only be able to make decisions based on the information available which may have a detrimental impact on the level of support that can be provided.

5. SICK PAY ENTITLEMENTS

- 5.1. Details of the Trust's OSP provisions are set out in your contract of employment and further information can be found within the 'CET Sick Pay Entitlements and Information' document.
- 5.2. Abuse of the sickness scheme will be considered under the disciplinary procedure, and the Trust will suspend sick pay immediately. The Trust reserves the right to reclaim the sick pay already paid.

6. RETURN TO WORK

- 6.1. Employees should make sure the Trust knows the date that they intend to return to work, so that the school can organise cover arrangements efficiently.
- 6.2. A return-to-work meeting after every absence is to be undertaken by the line manager. The meeting should be informal, supportive and informative, to allow the line manager to understand the reason for the absence and any underlying reasons for the absence in order to appropriately consider what support can be provided. This should be documented using the Trust's 'return to work' form. See Appendix 1 for guidance.
- 6.3. A phased return to work may be agreed where an employee's sickness absence is due to a condition where a phased return is more likely to be successful than a full return. Phased returns can provide up to 4 weeks for employees to gradually increase to full duties (this can be extended to 6 weeks in exceptional circumstances subject to agreement by the headteacher/appropriate manager). Phasing can be in terms of time at work or duties, or both, as agreed in the return-to-work discussion. The agreement should normally be supported by a Fit Note recommendation or OH recommendation, and during this period the employee may return on reduced hours/duties whilst receiving normal pay, provided they adhere to the agreed arrangements for the phased return.
- 6.4. In the event of an employee not being able to return to their normal hours/responsibilities after four weeks, a fixed term or permanent reduction in the hours or responsibilities worked, with appropriate adjustment of pay, may be agreed in accordance with the relevant Trust policies and subject to agreement by the headteacher/appropriate manager. In such cases, it is recommended that advice is sought from HR.
- 6.5. If the absence has been prolonged or a return to work is not possible, a re-examination of the job role may be necessary which may include seeking advice from OH. Such a review will include reference to the agreed changes to the role (reasonable adjustments) or an agreed move to an alternative role (redeployment) if available. Whilst the intention is to ensure

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 9 of 17

ongoing meaningful employment the Trust cannot guarantee this if an individual's health prevents them undertaking the duties of their original role. Where reasonable adjustments or redeployment are being considered, the headteacher/appropriate manager should seek advice from HR.

7. DIRECTED MEDICAL ABSENCE/MEDICAL SUSPENSION

7.1 Where there is a genuine concern/belief that the employee's continued presence at work may constitute a hazard either to themselves or others, advice should be sought from HR and an immediate referral to OH initiated. Whilst pending the outcome of the referral, medical suspension on full pay may be considered.

7.2 The following principles should be considered in conjunction with advice from HR:

- Undertake an immediate risk assessment of the dangers.
- Discuss the situation with the employee (in person if possible/appropriate) to obtain as much information as possible and seek their views/opinions involving a Trade Union Representative at an early stage if appropriate/possible.
- Explain to the employee the proposal of OH and the purpose of the referral.
- Discuss the immediate options with the employee (pending receipt of medical advice) and determine the appropriate immediate action which may include temporary adjustment or alternative duties, sickness absence or medical suspension.
- Once the OH advice has been received, review the action/decision taken and undertake a further risk assessment with the employee in light of the medical advice. Possible outcomes may include:
 - Immediate return to work.
 - Reasonable adjustment of the job/workplace.
 - Temporary/permanent alteration of duties (reasonable adjustments)/redeployment.
 - Sickness absence.
 - Continued medical suspension allowing for treatment/further reports.
 - Ill health retirement.
 - Dismissal under the capability procedure.

7.3 Directed Medical Absence should only apply in urgent circumstances and for short periods only until the proper medical position can be ascertained. Such directed absence will be confirmed in writing and will be on the basis of normal full pay. It will not be treated as sickness absence for the purposes of leave or pay entitlement.

8. HOLIDAYS AND SICKNESS

8.1. For staff on full-year contracts: an employee who falls sick during a period of booked annual leave (referring to support staff rather than teaching staff) is regarded as being absent on sick leave from the date specified on the self-certificate, or Fit Note, and is normally entitled to take the balance of the leave at a later date. If during a period of annual leave, you fall sick

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 10 of 17

then sick leave will be substituted for annual leave subject to the normal reporting procedures being followed.

- 8.2. Employees should only take annual leave or go on holiday during periods of notified sickness after clarifying with the Trust if sickness leave or annual leave applies.

9. INDUSTRIAL INJURY/INFECTION

- 9.1. If an employee is absent due to an industrial injury, accident or assault in the workplace, headteachers/appropriate managers and employees should ensure that they comply with the Trust's accident reporting procedure.

- 9.2. Absence in respect of normal sickness absence is entirely separate from absence due to industrial injury, accident or assault (which is certified by an approved medical practitioner) arising out of or in the course of employment with the Trust and may not be counted towards review points and sick pay entitlement in some circumstances.

- 9.3. An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease may be paid full for such period of absence as certified by an approved medical practitioner. This absence may not be reckoned against triggers and entitlement to sick leave, but would be reckonable for entitlement to SSP.

- 9.4. Further advice is available from HR with respect to cases where the above apply.

10. HOW TO RAISE CONCERNS

- 10.1. Should an employee have concerns about the way in which the Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedures have been implemented these may be raised with the headteacher/appropriate manager in the first instance. Following this the Trust's Grievance procedure may be followed.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Staff Absence Return to Work and Monitoring Procedure.

1 APPENDIX 1 – Staff Absence Return to Work and Monitoring Procedure

1.1 RETURN TO WORK PROCEDURE

- 1.1.1 The return-to-work discussion is crucial to managing ongoing attendance and reducing future absences. It enables managers, in discussion with employees, to understand and, where possible, address the cause of absences, and support positive attendance within teams.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 11 of 17

- 1.1.2 Should an employee express a wish for personal reasons for the discussion to be held with a manager of their own gender, every effort should be made to accommodate this. In cases of difficulty, contact HR for advice.
- 1.1.3 The main aims of the discussion are:
- To welcome back the employee on their return and help them to feel valued.
 - To check that they feel fit enough to return.
 - To identify the reason for absence (to ensure accurate records are maintained and to allow appropriate support to be offered).
 - To address any issues that may be causing or contributing to absences.
 - To update the employee on work activities, or changes, during their absence and agree ongoing work priorities/practices.
- 1.1.4 The discussion should be conducted in private, in an atmosphere of trust and support, with sufficient time allowed to explore the issues. It is essential that confidentiality is respected. Prior to discussion the manager should have looked at the employee's attendance record and ensured that they have taken account of any relevant background information. The employee should be made aware of their absence record and if they are approaching any triggers for management intervention.
- 1.1.5 In appropriate cases it is important that the employee is made aware of the impact that their absence has had on their area of work and the school. The manager should ensure that agreement is reached as to what actions, if any, the employee and school is to take to ensure positive attendance in future.
- 1.1.6 It is important to be aware that employees who are absent may be experiencing non-work-related issues affecting their health and wellbeing e.g. relationship breakdown, financial hardship or bereavement. The Trust will act to support its employees with understanding, sympathy and support including via OH where appropriate. The Trust will signpost employees to local services where appropriate support can be accessed.

1.2 MONITORING PROCEDURE

- 1.2.1 A four-step approach for dealing with absences that meet the triggers in section 3 of the policy is outlined below. The Trust's central HR team can be contacted at any stage, as appropriate, to advise on and assist with absence-related issues.
- 1.2.2 Where the below procedure is applied and an employee reaches an acceptable level of attendance, but the level of absence becomes unacceptable again within 12 months, the Trust reserves the right to enter the process at the point it ended previously.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 12 of 17

1.2.3 Line managers will be responsible for all stages of the procedure up to dismissal, with dismissal considerations and appeals managed in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

1.2.4 For review meetings, the following arrangements will apply:

- Held in the workplace during the employee's normal working hours (suitable alternative arrangements can be agreed in exceptional circumstances e.g. at another suitable venue where the medical condition causes implications with travel).
- A notetaker and/or HR representative will be present.
- At the informal stage of the procedure (stage 1), the headteacher/line manager should write to the employee to arrange the meeting. The employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague provided this does not unduly delay the meeting.
- At formal stages of the procedure (stages 2, 3 and 4), the employee will be provided with at least 5 working days' written notice to include: the date, time and location of the meeting; their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague; the possible outcomes of the meeting; include any relevant documentation that will be referred to at the meeting.
- At all stages of the procedure, a record of the meeting should be documented and retained on the employee's personnel record.
- At formal stages of the procedure (stages 2, 3 and 4), the manager will write to the employee within 5 working days of the meeting including: a summary of the meeting; any agreed actions e.g. target for improvement, referral to OH, etc; expectations for improvement; the possible consequences where the required improvement is not successful.

1.2.5 During review meetings, the following principles will apply:

- Consideration of the employee's attendance record and reasons for absence (including any issues inside or outside of work that may be contributing factors).
- Where relevant, check Fit Notes are up to date.
- Discuss whether the absences are linked to an underlying condition or where this is known to be the case, understand if there have been any changes the Trust is not aware of or if there are any updates in relation to their condition or treatment/treatment plans.
- Understand if the employee has sought external support e.g. GP, medical professional, etc, or if there are any updates where it is known this has been sought previously.
- Discuss any support or reasonable adjustments that could be put in place to support the employee with improving their attendance at work or review those that are already in place/previously implemented.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 13 of 17

- Discuss the possibility of a referral/rereferral to OH or discuss any OH advice already received.
- Consider if redeployment (where possible) may be appropriate given the circumstances.
- In cases of long-term absences, rather than an improvement plan being implemented, a timeframe for when the next stage of the procedure may be initiated if the employee is still unable to return to work should be decided. Agreements for maintaining contact in the interim should also be agreed if these are not already in place.

1.3 STAGE 1 INFORMAL REVIEW MEETING

- 1.3.1 The headteacher and/or line manager will obtain relevant monitoring information and then meet with the employee on an informal information-seeking basis to ascertain the cause/s for the absence/s. Monitoring information should be shared with the employee indicating any patterns of sickness absences.
- 1.3.2 If there is any suspicion that the employee's absence is not genuine the matter should be referred for investigation under the Disciplinary procedure.
- 1.3.3 As a result of the discussion the manager may decide to set out an attendance improvement plan for the employee. Such decisions will be to encourage appropriate attendance in future and not taken punitively. The improvement plan will be confirmed in writing and will confirm that an improvement in attendance is required, that monitoring will continue, timescales and that a follow-up meeting will take place. Appropriate targets should be set out in the plan for the employee, and they should be informed that failure to improve could lead to further action being taken under Stage 2 of the procedure.

1.4 STAGE 2 FORMAL REVIEW MEETING

- 1.4.1 If the employee fails to make the necessary improvement set at Stage 1 and the level or pattern of absence continues to give cause for concern the headteacher/line manager will arrange for a Stage 2 review meeting to take place.
- 1.4.2 After a stage 2 review with the employee of their absence/s and after taking account of any information presented by the employee or their representative, the manager will discuss a further improvement plan and set out the expectations for an improvement and ensure understanding that the consequences of failing to achieve an improvement may be subject to further action under Stage 3 of the procedure.

1.5 STAGE 3 FINAL FORMAL REVIEW MEETING

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 14 of 17

- 1.5.1 If there is insufficient improvement the headteacher/line manager should consult with the central HR team, after which a Formal Stage 3 review meeting should be arranged with the employee.
- 1.5.2 A full review of the employee's absence record will be undertaken, and the employee will have the opportunity to make any representations at the meeting in support of their case. The manager, in conjunction with the headteacher, will consider all relevant information, which may include OH advice, and then decide if a final stage improvement plan should be issued.
- 1.5.3 The final stage improvement plan will contain details of the targets for improvement, any support the Trust will reasonably offer to support the employee to achieve the target and outline the consequences if the improvement is not achieved including potential referral to a Capability Hearing under the final stage of this procedure.

1.6 STAGE 4 CAPABILITY HEARING

- 1.6.1 If there is still no improvement the line manager/headteacher will consider appropriate options. Each case needs to be considered in the light of all the information available which should be considered at a formal Stage 4 Capability Hearing. The hearing will be chaired in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, by a manager who has not been involved in previous stages. The manager previously involved in the process may attend to present the management case.
- 1.6.2 At this hearing the panel will consider:
- The steps taken up to the Capability Hearing.
 - The employee's absence record.
 - The impact on service delivery, colleagues and the department/school.
 - The likely duration of the employee's illness.
 - Any relevant OH advice.
 - Any representation from the employee.
 - Actions taken/offered to support the employee in trying to reach an acceptable level of attendance and whether any further actions can be taken to assist the employee.
 - Any implications in relation to the Equality Act e.g. has the Trust considered making reasonable adjustments if the employee is placed at a **substantial disadvantage** because of their disability compared with non-disabled people or people who don't share their disability.
 - Whether there is a case for ill-health retirement and if this has been pursued.
- 1.6.3 Following full consideration of all of the above factors the panel may decide to take any of the following steps:
- Refer the matter for a further period of review.
 - Offer redeployment if appropriate and if this hasn't already been explored.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 15 of 17

- Dismiss the employee on grounds of incapability (consideration should be given to whether an employee may be eligible for ill health retirement under the rules and requirements of the relevant pension scheme prior to a decision to dismiss being confirmed. To request an assessment for ill health retirement, contact HR for further advice).

1.6.4 In the case of dismissal, the employee should be informed in writing within 5 working days and advised of their right to appeal against the decision within 5 working days of notification of the decision to dismiss them on grounds of capability, stating the grounds of their appeal. The appeal will be considered in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 16 of 17

SCHEDULE 1

DOCUMENT CONTROL – RECORD OF CHANGES

Version Number:	Publication Date:	Nature of, and Reason for, Change(s)
001	March 2020	Original.
002	June 2025	Document renamed from 'Absence and Wellbeing Procedure'. Reviewed with reference to the union approved policy and provides additional clarity in relation to the short term and long term procedures.

Version	Publication Date	Document Title	Document Owner	Page Number
002	June 2025	Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure	Head of HR	Page 17 of 17