

SPARKLE MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



ORCHARDS INFANT SCHOOL AND ORCHARDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

POLICY FOR STAFF ABSENCE



REVIEWED SEPTEMBER 2026

Staff absence due to sickness or any other reason can have a damaging effect on pupils' education and puts pressure on colleagues who have to cover and organise classes during their absence. In order to ensure continuity and stability in the classroom the school aims to employ exemplary management of staff sickness absence and the promotion of good health of employees.

All employees have a responsibility to look after their own health and the school aims to provide a healthy environment in order to promote the well being of staff. The school provides high quality staff facilities and a supportive framework of line management / mentoring.

Teaching Staff should notify the Leadership Team of their absence by phone who will then contact the line managers at the earliest opportunity. Teaching assistants will notify the SENCo and Administrative Staff the Business Manager. A discreet enquiry will be made as to the nature of the illness and its expected duration. It is not appropriate to text or leave a message. It is helpful to be able to indicate where each class on that day's timetable is in the planning which should be available via the server. The Year Leader will ensure all work is accessible.

It is the responsibility of the person receiving the absence call to inform the the School Business Manager, make a note in the staffroom and to arrange cover where necessary.

If a staff member does not report for work and we receive no contact from them or someone on their behalf (in accordance with section 6), their line manager will contact them as soon as possible make sure they are safe and give them an opportunity to explain their absence Staff should not treat this as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

Where staff remain absent without leave and/or there are grounds to believe that they are acting dishonestly or failing to follow the procedures above, we may treat this as an unauthorised absence without pay. We may deal with cases of unauthorized absence under our disciplinary procedures

If staff are absent on sick leave, their line manager may contact them from time to time to discuss their wellbeing and expected length of continued absence from work.

The purpose of such contact is to reassure the staff member, and line managers will keep it to a reasonable minimum. If staff have concerns while absent on sick leave, whether about the reason for their absence or their ability to return to work, they should feel free to contact their line manager at any time.

When a staff member returns to work after sickness absence, their line manager may arrange a return-to-work meeting to:

1. Discuss the staff member's absence, making sure they've recovered and establishing whether there are any continuing underlying issues

2. Talk about any support the staff member needs
3. Allow the staff member to raise concerns
4. Update the staff member on any work matters
5. If relevant, review their sickness absence record for the past year and make them aware if they are approaching a trigger point

Medical professionals or the occupational health service may recommend that a staff member returning to work from sickness absence should work reduced hours or have lighter duties or different duties

This will be followed by a gradual increase of working hours and/or duties over an agreed, depending on individual circumstances, and may be additionally extended where appropriate

We have an obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for staff with a protected characteristic (such as disability, pregnancy and gender reassignment) where the reasonable adjustment would remove or reduce a disadvantage the member of staff faces. In discussion with the staff member, our trust will consider all reasonable adjustments and provide these where possible.

Staff who believe they have a disability or medical condition that affects their ability to do their work should inform their line manager, so that the trust is able to consider appropriate reasonable adjustments and support.

Where staff need time off work to attend medical appointments related to their disability or medical condition that affects their work (e.g. treatment, rehabilitation and/or check-ups), the trust will normally allow paid time off as a reasonable adjustment. This is not guaranteed and, as such, staff should speak to their line manager about their needs.

A series of short term absences can cause as much disruption for the school as a period of long term sick leave. The early and successful management of this issue is essential to good working relations. The school will review absence levels with a colleague where:

- There are three separate absences in one term
- A pattern of absence emerges which causes concern

Each case will be treated individually and sensitively. Before formal management occurs, the Headteacher will discuss the problem with the member of staff and generate a target for consistent attendance. Care will be taken to discover whether there is an underlying medical cause for the intermittent absence.

If the health of a colleague worsens, the trust may need to consider options relating to dismissal on the grounds of lack of health / mental capacity. If there is evidence that absence is unjustified there will be a need to invoke formal disciplinary procedures.

The Headteacher has the right to grant up to 5 days compassionate leave of absence to cover issues such as caring for dependants. Unless there are exceptional circumstances such as significant medical issues then further days that are granted will be unpaid.

Staff Absences and associated pay issues will be managed in line with the Burgundy Book and Green Book.

The school monitors sickness absence rate each term as part of the Total Quality Management process and reports to the trustees of the Sparkle Multi Academy Trust.