

# **EASTHAMPSTEAD PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL**



## **MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

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**EASTHAMPTON PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE**

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## **EASTHAMPTED PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

This policy is recommended to school/academies as a guide to support regular attendance of employees, and to minimise absence.

The aim of this policy is to encourage employees to attend work regularly and to assist head teachers and managers to reduce levels of absence among staff in a fair and consistent way. The policy aims to balance two considerations; the need for high quality education services for pupils, and the interests and rights of individual employees.

### **2 PRINCIPALS**

The school/academy will treat each case on an individual basis. Individual employees have a duty to attend work regularly, and consequently must take all reasonable steps to protect their own welfare, and to assist in the promotion of a healthy workplace.

The impact of absence is significant, e.g. the impact on the education of pupils and the cost of absence to the school/academy. For these reasons maximising attendance for all employees is very important if the school/academy wishes to provide high quality services.

Head teachers may delegate responsibility for managing and supporting attendance to other managers within the school/academy. Responsibility for the management of attendance of a Head teacher must rest with the Governing Board.

Each case will be dealt with sensitively and with due fairness, and with regard to the interests of both the individual and the school/academy.

Every effort will be made to operate within the prescribed time limits; although time limits may be altered by mutual consent. One short postponement, normally up to 5 working days, will be allowed.

### **3 NOTIFYING ABSENCE**

#### **3.1 Notification Procedure**

Employees who are absent from work are required to follow the reporting procedure set out below:

If an employee is off sick they should call in to Cover every day before 7.30 am on 01344 390818 and leave a message to advise your name and the reason for absence. The employee should also phone to advise on return to work. The number does not ring as it is a 24 hour answering machine so messages can be left at any time an absence is known.

Employees should not normally notify absence by text or email. The employee should outline the reason for the absence and give an estimate of the duration of their illness. Where the headteacher/nominated officer is not available the employee should contact another senior manager or named officer in the school.

If the employee is the headteacher he/she should notify the deputy headteacher or other suitable person to assume responsibility for the discharge of duties during their absence.

If an employee is absent from work due to sickness for a period of between 1 and 7 consecutive days he/she must complete a self certificate and return it to the headteacher/manager for signature.

### **3.2 Fit Note**

If the employee is absent for more than seven calendar days (including non working days), they must obtain a medical certificate from their doctor ("fit note") and forward to the headteacher/manager. The employee should retain the original of the "fit note". Failure to submit a medical certificate (or failure to notify sickness absence) may result in sickness payments being stopped or suspended. It is important for the employee to keep the headteacher/manager up to date on the likely return to work date. Repeated failures to notify absence correctly or failure to produce sickness certificates may lead to disciplinary action.

The medical certificate (fit note) may indicate the employee would be able to return to some sort of work with certain restrictions. If the manager is unsure about whether they can comply with the recommendation then Occupational Health can provide additional advice. If the recommendations cannot be accommodated the employee is treated as unfit to return to work.

On expiry of the first medical certificate (fit note), if the employee does not return to work, further certificates are required to cover the period of absence. As in the paragraph above, a self-certification form must be completed on the employee's return.

If an employee wants to return before the "Fit note" expires the manager must interview the employee and be satisfied that they are fit to return to work. A full and thorough Return to Work interview must be undertaken and if necessary a Health and Safety Risk Assessment. The manager must get the employee to sign the notes of the interview before they can return.

### **3.3 Accidents at Work**

All injuries, accidents, illnesses or diseases arising from work activity must be reported, regardless of the severity, to the headteacher/manager as soon as possible after the incident. The school must then follow the Health and Safety procedures to report the incident. See the School/Academy Health & Safety policy.

## **4 RECORDING AND REPORTING ABSENCES**

All absences must be recorded by the school and forwarded to the school's HR/Payroll provider for monitoring and sick pay purposes.

## **5 RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW**

The supportive Return to Work Interview should take place for every occasion of absence. The purpose of the interview is:

- to welcome the employee back, check they are well enough to resume duties, focus on their value to the school/academy and update them on any changes
- To show the employee that the absence has been noted.
- To complete the self certification form.
- To give the Manager opportunities to enquire what was wrong and possibly explore any problems (e.g. domestic, work) which may have contributed to the absence. To establish if anything can be done to prevent recurrence.
- To discuss the impact of the absence on children/school/ colleagues.
- To discuss any measures to support the employee on their return to work.
- A copy of the fit note should be taken by the manager and the original returned to the employee

A written record should be made of return to work interviews. See sample return to work interview form, page 13.

## **6 MANAGING ABSENCE**

### **6.1 Informal Action**

It is not necessary for formal action to be taken in relation to sickness absence until the headteacher/manager is satisfied that all necessary informal measures have been explored. Part of the accepted responsibilities of good management is to ensure that supervisory processes which fall short of formal action are observed before entering into formal review meetings. This can be done through the return to work interviews or during other informal meetings. It is recommended that file notes are made of informal actions.

### **6.2 Managing Short Term Absence**

Short term absence will usually be defined as follows, and should trigger review meetings:

- Three occasions of absence due to mainly minor illness in any four month period or term
- Total absence exceeding 5 working days in a four month period or term
- Patterns emerging (e.g. regular Mondays/Fridays or sickness after a holiday)
- Combination of odd days, longer periods and patterns of absence emerging which cause concern.

These are guidelines only; for example, the particular circumstances surrounding the absence pattern may cause concern before a threshold number of days is met, in which case the headteacher/manager should still hold a review meeting.

Once the level of absence has been identified as a problem and informal action has been taken, the headteacher/manager should consider taking formal action.

The headteacher should decide whether he/she or another manager should conduct the meetings at each stage. It is advisable where possible for a manager to deal with the first stages of the process to enable the headteacher to deal with the later stages.

### **6.2.1 First Sickness Absence Review Meeting**

If an employee's sickness absence levels have not improved despite being addressed informally, and the employee has reached the trigger points, the headteacher / manager will invite the employee to a First Sickness Absence Review meeting.

The headteacher / manager will agree a date with the employee and will confirm the invitation in writing giving the employee at least 5 working days' notice. The employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. See sample letter 1, page 14.

The headteacher / manager should prepare for the meeting by ensuring that they have clearly identified the employee's sickness absence levels and the support that has been provided.

In the first sickness absence review meeting the headteacher / manager will:

- Explain the concern about the absence level and reasons for that concern, such as the operational difficulties caused
- Listen to the reasons for absence and respond appropriately
- Consider whether to refer the case to Occupational Health, if not already done
- State that sustained improvement in attendance is required
- Identify any support required
- Adjourn the meeting to consider whether to issue a warning or, if attendance has improved, to finish the procedure
- Where a first written warning is given, confirm it will remain on file for a period of one calendar year
- State that sustained improvement in attendance is expected and set an appropriate monitoring period, targets for improvement and agree a date and time for the next meeting
- Confirm the support available
- Explain that continued failure to improve attendance to the specified level may lead to a final sickness absence review meeting which could lead to his/her employment being put at risk
- Confirm the outcome of the meeting in writing. See sample letter 2, page 15.
- The employee will have a right of appeal against any formal warning issued. Any appeal should be made in writing to the headteacher/manager within 5 working days of the receipt of the decision. See section 6.5.
- A full record of the meeting should be made

If the employee reaches an acceptable level of improvement during the monitoring period, monitoring should revert back to informal arrangements. The employee should be told that no further formal action will take place as long as the improvement is maintained, but that failure to maintain a satisfactory level of attendance will result in a further review meeting or further action.

If the employee has made insufficient or no improvement by the end of the monitoring period set at the first sickness absence review meeting or they have breached any targets before the end of the monitoring period the headteacher / manager will ask the employee to attend a final sickness absence review meeting, at which the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

### **6.2.2 Final Sickness Absence Review Meeting**

The headteacher / manager will agree a date with the employee and confirm the invitation to the final sickness absence review meeting in writing giving the employee at least 5 working days' notice. See sample letter 3, page 16.

In the final sickness absence review meeting the headteacher / manager will:

- Explain the concern about the continued absence level and reasons for that concern, such as the operational difficulties caused
- Listen to reasons and respond appropriately
- State that sustained improvement in attendance is expected
- Identify any support required
- Adjourn the meeting to consider whether to issue a final written warning or, if attendance has improved, to finish the procedure
- Where a final written warning is given, confirm it will remain on file for a period of one calendar year
- State that sustained improvement in attendance is expected and set an appropriate monitoring period, targets for improvement and agree a date and time for the next meeting
- Confirm the support available
- Explain that continued failure to improve attendance to the specified level may lead to an ill-health capability hearing which could result in dismissal
- Confirm the outcome of the meeting in writing. See sample letter 4, page 17.
- The employee will have a right of appeal against any formal warning issued. Any appeal should be made in writing to the headteacher/manager within 5 working days of the receipt of the decision. See paragraph 6.5.
- A full record of the meeting should be made

If the employee reaches an acceptable level of improvement during the monitoring period, monitoring should revert back to informal arrangements. The employee should be told that no further formal action will take place as long as the improvement is maintained, but that failure to maintain a satisfactory level of attendance will result in a further review meeting or further action.

If the employee has made insufficient or no improvement by the end of the monitoring period set at the final sickness absence review meeting or they have breached any targets before the end of the monitoring period the headteacher / manager will normally arrange an Ill-health Capability Hearing which may lead to dismissal. See details of this process at section 7.4.

### **6.3 Dealing with Long Term Absence**

Long term absence cases are those where an employee has been absent continuously for a period of twenty working days or is likely to be absent for this period. If an employee is absent from work long term, the headteacher / manager should keep in regular contact with the employee. Records should be kept of employee contact in long term absence cases.

Where the employee's recovery period is uncertain or the absence is likely to go significantly beyond twenty working days, the case should be referred to the School's Occupational Health Service for a medical opinion of the case. This will include requesting information regarding the present health of the employee and the likely date of return to work. Once Occupational Health's report has been obtained, the headteacher / manager, in consultation with HR, will consider whether and when the employee is likely to return to work and the operational impact of continuing absence. Further appointments with the Occupational Health Service may be necessary.

It is the responsibility of the school to inform the individual that a referral to Occupational Health is being made and to confirm when the appointment will take place.

#### **6.3.1 Long Term Sickness Absence Review Meeting**

At an appropriate time (or when the absence has been monitored and lasted for one term), the headteacher/manager will arrange a meeting with the employee formally to discuss the options available, having taken advice from the Occupational Health Service and HR.

The headteacher / manager will agree a date with the employee and will confirm the invitation in writing giving the employee at least 5 working days' notice. The employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. See sample letter 5, page 18.

During the meeting the following discussions will take place:

- When the employee considers they will be fit to return to work/any support needed;
- Any Occupational Health advice received;
- If the employee is unfit to perform his/her current duties but is capable of carrying out other work, suitable alternative work will be considered. However the school will be under no obligation to create a job for the employee

Possible outcomes of the meeting are as follows:

- No further action (where the employee will be fit to work within a determined period)
- Offering assistance or suitable alternative employment if the employee is temporarily unfit to carry out their normal duties but is capable of carrying out other work. Such changes may be on either a temporary or an indefinite basis as appropriate. If a disability has been identified then reasonable adaptations to the work will be considered, and these may include redeployment to more appropriate work. The principles of the



School's Redeployment Policy will apply where there is a transfer to an alternative job on an established basis.

- Consider retirement on grounds of ill health in accordance with the appropriate pension scheme.
- Where the employee is unfit for work and the above options are not applicable, and the job can no longer be held open, this may ultimately result in the dismissal of the employee. The school cannot support indefinite sickness absence as the needs of the school must be considered. The Ill-health Capability and Dismissal Procedure outlined at paragraph 7.4 should be followed. Special arrangements should be considered according to the individual circumstances of the case.

After the meeting a letter will be sent to the employee confirming all the details of the meeting. See sample letter 6, page 19.

#### **6.4 Ill-Health Capability & Dismissal Hearing**

The purpose of the ill health capability hearing is to consider an employee's sickness absence and make a decision regarding their employment situation. When the appropriate steps outlined in the Managing Sickness Absence policy relating to short term absence and long term absence have been exhausted the headteacher / manager may have to consider proposing the dismissal of the employee on the basis that their absence/s can no longer be sustained.

The headteacher / manager must be satisfied the formal processes have been followed and, where appropriate, have considered any possible adaptations to the employees' work and have sought alternative work without success before this stage of the procedure begins.

The headteacher / manager will arrange a suitable date for the hearing to take place and confirm the invitation in writing giving the employee at least 5 working days' notice. The employee may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. See sample letter 7, page 20.

Any documents to be considered at the meeting should be provided to the employee with the invite letter. If the employee has any documents to submit, these should be made available at least 2 working days prior to the hearing, including the names of any witnesses to be called.

##### **6.4.1 Conducting an Ill-health Capability Hearing**

The headteacher will normally conduct the ill-health capability hearing. Alternatively a panel of 3 governors will conduct the hearing if the headteacher is subject of the concern or the headteacher has been heavily involved in previous sickness absence meetings.

##### **6.4.2 Procedure for the Ill-health Capability & Dismissal Hearing**

- a) The headteacher or chair of governors' panel introduces those present and describes their status, reminds those present of the purpose of the hearing; that adjournment is possible; that a written record of the meeting will be made; and that the proceedings of the hearing are confidential

- b) The case for the school is presented by the appropriate manager (presenting manager). The employee or representative may ask questions of the presenting manager at the end of the presentation. The headteacher or panel members may also question the presenting officer at the end of the presentation
- c) The case for the employee is presented. The presenting officer from the school, and then the headteacher or the panel, may question the employee at the end of the presentation
- d) When all the evidence has been heard, the presenting officer sums up, gathering together the point of the case, not introducing new evidence.
- e) The employee or representative sums up
- f) The options available to the headteacher or panel when deciding what action is to be taken include:
  - Take no further action/allow further time to recover
  - Consider redeployment opportunities within school, if available
  - Consider whether ill-health retirement is an option
  - Dismissal on the grounds of ill-health
- g) The headteacher's or panel's decision is conveyed, wherever possible, orally by the headteacher or chair of the panel in the presence of both parties and will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 5 working days of the conclusion of the hearing.

### **6.4.3 Ill-Health Capability Hearing Decision**

If the decision is dismissal, then the employee will be informed and advised of the right of appeal. The decision of the headteacher (or governing body panel), the reasons for it and the appeal arrangements will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 5 working days of the conclusion of the hearing. HR can provide a sample outcome letter.

## **6.5 Appeals**

All employees have the right to appeal against any formal action (i.e. warnings or dismissal) taken against them under the School's Managing Sickness Absence Policy.

At an appeal any sanction or penalty imposed will be reviewed, but it cannot be increased.

Any appeal arising as result of a warning, must be made in writing within five working days of the receipt of the decision. If the warning is given by a line-manager the appeal will be to the Headteacher, if the warning is given by the Headteacher, the appeal is to the Chair of Governors. If the Headteacher is the subject of the formal action the appeal will be to governors not previously involved.

### **6.5.1 Procedure for a Dismissal Appeal Hearing**

The Clerk to the Governing Board, or another suitably impartial person, will arrange all appeal hearings and inform all parties concerned.

Whilst the appeal is not a re-hearing of the original case, new evidence is permissible. If either party wishes to introduce new evidence, they should give notice to the other party at least 2 working days before the appeal hearing. If either side produces new

evidence at the appeal hearing, it is open to either side to request an adjournment for further investigation.

- a) The Chair of the governors' appeal panel introduces those present and describes their status, reminds those present of the purpose of the hearing; that adjournment is possible; that a written record of the meeting will be made; and that the proceedings of the hearing are confidential
- b) The case for the school is presented by the decision maker from the original hearing (presenting manager). The employee or representative may ask questions of the presenting manager at the end of the presentation. The panel members may also question the presenting manager at the end of the presentation
- c) The case for the employee is presented. The presenting manager from the school, and then the panel, may question the employee at the end of the presentation
- d) When all the evidence has been heard, the presenting manager sums up, gathering together the point of the case, not introducing new evidence.
- e) The employee or representative sums up
- f) The panel will need to reach a conclusion on whether to:
  - Allow the appeal
  - Dismiss the appeal
  - Reduce the severity of the sanction received
- g) The panel's decision is conveyed, wherever possible, orally by the chair of the panel in the presence of both parties and will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 5 working days of the conclusion of the hearing. HR can provide a sample outcome letter.

## **7 THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE**

Advice on sickness absence from Occupational Health is intended to help headteachers / managers reduce sickness absence.

The requirements of the Equalities Act in relation to disability will have an impact on decisions regarding sickness absence management. The Occupational Health Service can advise and, with the HR Section, provide guidance on how the issue should be dealt with (see following section entitled Equalities Act - disability).

Attendance at Occupational Health appointments is required, whether the employee is signed off sick or at work. Refusal to attend without good cause may be regarded as a disciplinary matter as it is a refusal to follow a reasonable management request.

If the employee refuses to co-operate in providing medical evidence or undergoing an independent medical examination, the employee will be told in writing that decisions will be made on the basis of any information available.

## **8 RETURN TO WORK PROGRAMMES**

Where appropriate, Occupational Health may recommend a gradual return to work programme after a period of long term sickness. Such a programme would not normally last more than 6-8 weeks before normal working are resumed, and where possible the employee will receive normal pay during such a period. Should the employee be unable to return to normal work at the end of such an arrangement, further consideration should be given to the situation: light duties or reduced hours cannot be sustained indefinitely.

## **9 EQUALITIES ACT - DISABILITY**

The Equalities Act 2010 requires managers to consider whether an illness is either caused by a long term disability or has created one.

A disability is defined as “a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on an individual’s ability to do normal daily activities”.

In either case, as well as treating the employee fairly they need to consider whether there is a need to put in place a “Reasonable Adjustment” to the post or working conditions. The application of the Equality Act in respect of redeployment and/or job adjustment for employees is complex and it is essential for the school to seek advice from HR on individual cases.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

The school processes any personal data collected during the sickness absence process in accordance with its data protection policy. Further details can be found in the Privacy Notice on the school’s website. Any data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purpose of completing the sickness absence procedure.

## **11 SICKNESS PAY**

Employees are entitled to sickness payment as stated in their contract of employment. The payment entitlement is in place to assist employees who are absent due to sickness but does not imply a right to take the equivalent amount of sick leave.

## **12 GENERAL ADVICE AND GUIDANCE**

The management of sickness absence is often sensitive and complex. Where any uncertainty exists on how to approach the issue or what action to take in any individual case, advice and guidance must be sought from HR.

**Sample Return to Work Interview Form**

(To be marked restricted)

Date of interview: ..... Employee Name: .....

Did the period of sickness precede or follow school holiday? **Yes/No**

How was the Headteacher/Manager informed? .....

No of Days sickness on this occasion: .....

Reason for sickness/nature of illness: .....

.....

Is the illness likely to be recurring? .....

Did employee visit a doctor? **Yes/No**

Issues discussed:\* .....

.....

.....

Employee's Comments:

.....

.....

Headteacher/Manager's Comments:

.....

.....

Interview carried out by:.....

**Signed** (Employee): ..... **Signed** (Manager): .....

Print Name:..... Print Name: .....

Date: ..... Date: .....

**\*Guidance on issues to discuss**

- 1 Welcome back to work  
Update on work situation  
Discuss the impact of the absence on school/children/colleagues  
Implication of future absence etc.
- 2 Are there any areas of concern with your work that may have contributed to the illness?  
Is there anything that the school can do to help?
- 3 Consider OH referral, counselling, training, advice from HR, change to work patterns,  
phased return etc.

The school processes any personal data collected on this form in line with its data protection policy. Further details can be found in the school's workforce privacy notice.

Sample Letter 1 - to be marked restricted

**SAMPLE LETTER 1 - INVITE FIRST SICKNESS ABSENCE REVIEW MEETING**

Our Ref:

Date

Dear

**SHORT TERM ABSENCE:  
FIRST SICKNESS ABSENCE REVIEW MEETING**

You will be aware from the various discussions we have had, that I am concerned about your overall absence record. I would like to invite you to attend a first sickness absence meeting on.....at.....in.....

This meeting is to be held as the first part of the School's Managing Sickness Absence Procedure (see section 6.2.1) and will give us the opportunity to formally look at your attendance record, discuss any problems you may be experiencing with your health and explore options which may help you improve your attendance.

You are entitled to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague.

Please confirm to me that you will be attending this meeting, by (date).

Yours sincerely,

cc: HR File

Encl: School's Absence Management Procedure

**Sample Letter 2 – to be marked restricted**

**SAMPLE LETTER 2 - OUTCOME FIRST SICKNESS ABSENCE REVIEW**

Our Ref:

Date\*

Dear

**SHORT TERM ABSENCE  
FIRST SICKNESS ABSENCE REVIEW MEETING OUTCOME**

Thank you for coming to meet with me on (date) to discuss your overall absence record. I have decided to issue you with a first written warning. This warning will remain on your file for a period of one year.

Please find attached the notes from the meeting detailing the discussions that took place.

At the meeting the following improvement in your attendance record was agreed:

(Insert expected improvement)

This improvement will be reviewed (insert how often it will be reviewed) with a final review meeting to be held on (date)

We also discussed what support will be available to you during this period:

(Insert support)

I need to make you aware that if the expected improvement is not made this may lead to a final sickness absence review meeting which may ultimately lead to your employment being put at risk.

You have a right of appeal against this formal warning, if you wish to appeal please put your reasons in writing to me within 5 working days of the receipt of this decision.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

cc: HR File

Encl: School's Absence Management Procedure

**Sample Letter 3 – to be marked restricted**

**SAMPLE LETTER 3 - INVITE FINAL SICKNESS ABSENCE REVIEW**

Our Ref:

Date:\*

Dear

**SHORT TERM ABSENCE: FINAL SICKNESS ABSENCE REVIEW MEETING**

In line with the School's Managing Sickness Absence Procedure (see paragraph 6), you attended a first sickness absence review meeting on (date) to discuss concerns about your absence record. You were subsequently issued with a first written warning and sent a letter stating that your attendance record would be monitored for X months.

This monitoring period has now been completed and unfortunately the expected improvement in your attendance has not been reached. I would therefore like to invite you to attend a Final Sickness Absence Review meeting on.....at..... in.....

At this meeting we will discuss progress made since the first meeting, your current position (including your views on your health in relation to your work) and further options which can be investigated in order to help you improve your attendance. I do need to make you aware one possible outcome of the meeting is that you will be issued with a final written warning to improve your attendance.

You are entitled to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague.

Please confirm to me that you will be attending this meeting, by (date).

Yours sincerely

cc: HR File

Encl: School's Absence Management Procedure



**Sample Letter 4 – to be marked restricted**

**SAMPLE LETTER 4 - OUTCOME FINAL SICKNESS ABSENCE REVIEW**

Our Ref:

Date\*

Dear

**RE: SHORT TERM ABSENCE  
FINAL SICKNESS ABSENCE REVIEW MEETING OUTCOME**

Thank you for coming to meet with me on (date) to discuss your absence record at a final sickness absence review meeting. I have decided to issue you with a final written warning. This warning will remain on your file for a period of one calendar year.

Please find attached the notes from the meeting detailing the discussions that took place.

At the meeting the following improvement in your attendance record was agreed:

(Insert expected improvement)

This improvement will be reviewed (insert how often it will be reviewed) with a final review meeting to be held on (date)

We also discussed what support will be available to you during this period:

(Insert support)

I need to make you aware that if the expected improvement is not made this may lead to an ill health capability and dismissal hearing being convened and this could ultimately result in your dismissal from you post on the grounds of ill-health.

You have a right of appeal against this formal warning, if you wish to appeal please put your reasons in writing to me within 5 working days of the receipt of this decision.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

cc: HR File

Encl: School's Absence Management Procedure

**Sample Letter 5 – to be marked restricted**

**SAMPLE LETTER 5 - INVITE LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE**

Our Ref:

Date:\*

Dear

**SICKNESS ABSENCE: LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING**

I am sorry to hear you continue to be unwell and due to this have been unable to return to work. You have been absent from work since (date). Your latest Occupational Health appointment was on (date).

As I am sure you understand your absence from work creates some difficulties for the school and the service being provided. Whilst we are as anxious to be as supportive as we can in such circumstances, unfortunately this absence cannot continue indefinitely. Therefore it is now appropriate to invite you to a meeting to discuss the situation with you, in accordance with the School's Managing Sickness Absence Procedure (see section 6.3). I enclose a copy of the policy for your information.

I have arranged a meeting to discuss your absence and seek your views of your health in relation to work. You are therefore requested to attend this meeting at the school on (insert date) at (insert time). You are entitled to bring a trade union representative or work colleague to the meeting.

Please confirm to me that you will be attending this meeting, by (date).

Yours sincerely

cc: HR File

Encl: School's Absence Management Procedure

**SAMPLE LETTER 6 - OUTCOME LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE**

Our Ref:

Date\*

Dear

**RE: SICKNESS ABSENCE  
LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING OUTCOME**

Thank you for coming into school on (date) to meet to talk about your continued absence due to ill-health. Please find attached the notes from the meeting detailing the discussions that took place.

As discussed at the meeting the advice received from Occupational Health states .....

At our meeting we also discussed whether you were fit for any alternative work and if there were any redeployment opportunities within school .....

Ill-health retirement is currently not an option as confirmed by .....

In light of the above information I have decided to invoke the ill-health capability and dismissal procedure. A meeting will be arranged and you will be written to separately regarding this.

You will be entitled to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. The options at this meeting will be to:

- a) Allow you further time to recover
- b) Consider redeployment opportunities within the school
- c) Consider whether ill health retirement is an option
- d) Dismissal on the grounds of ill-health

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries in relation to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

cc: HR File

Encl: School's Absence Management Procedure

**Sample Letter 7 – to be marked restricted**

**SAMPLE LETTER 7 – INVITE ILL-HEALTH CAPABILITY & DISMISSAL HEARING**

Our Ref:

Date\*

Dear

**RE: INVITE LETTER ILL-HEALTH CAPABILITY & DISMISSAL HEARING**

Further to the meeting held on (date) when we discussed your (short term absences / long term absence), I have decided it is now appropriate to invite you to attend a meeting to consider your continued employment as a (job title) at (school). The meeting will be held on (date) at (time), at the school.

I have to inform you that one possible outcome of this hearing is that your employment could be terminated on the grounds that you are unfortunately unable to fulfil the duties required of your role due to your ill-health and continued absence/s.

I will conduct the hearing and an HR Adviser will be in attendance to ensure the correct process is followed. X will also be in attendance to present the management case to me.

You have the right to be represented or accompanied by a representative from your Trade Union or a work colleague of your choice, you may also call witnesses at the hearing if you wish.

The procedure to be followed is in accordance with the ill-health capability and dismissal procedure (see paragraph 6.4.2 of the managing sickness absence policy).

Included are the documents to be considered at the meeting. I would be grateful if you could provide me with any documents you may wish to present at the hearing and let me know of any witnesses you may wish to bring, by x (two working days before the hearing).

I would be grateful if you could to confirm your attendance at this hearing by calling (name) on (telephone number).

Should you have any queries in the meantime please contact me on x.

Yours sincerely,

cc: HR File

Encl: School's Absence Management Procedure