



## **THE FLYING BULL ACADEMY**

### **STAFF ABSENCE POLICY**

**September 2017**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Local Governing Body is committed to the health, safety and welfare of the staff employed at The Flying Bull Academy. The purpose of this policy is to define the approach of the governors to the management of absence and to establish consistency for the fair and equitable treatment of the staff in relation to absence.

The policy covers all aspects of absence although is mainly focused on the management of sickness absence. As governors, we are committed to a proactive and positive approach to absence management which values and supports attendance.

As governors we acknowledge that most absences will be for legitimate and authorised reasons and therefore the local governing body will take a flexible and understanding approach in dealing with the needs of the individual.

The governors are committed to the exploration of alternative solutions to absence issues and only when all alternatives have been explored will the governors exercise its authority to determine whether an employee should cease to work at the academy. This will be done in consultation with the University of Chichester Academy Trust HR Team with reference to professional associations.

#### **2. STATUTORY AND CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS**

Ill health and absence are governed by statutory provisions particularly the:

- Education (Teachers Qualifications and Health Standards) (England) Regulations 1999 (Statutory Instrument 2166/99),
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995,
- Employment Rights Act 1996.

There are also guidelines available for Occupational Health Advisers on 'Fitness to Teach' issued jointly by the DfE and the Department of Health.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that legislative and contractual arrangements are met in dealing with all cases as defined in the Absence Management section of the Manual of Personnel Practice / University of Chichester Academy Trust HR Manual.

The governors are committed to creating a working environment, which encourages and supports the attendance of all staff. To this end the governors will ensure that the following measures are used to provide that framework for supporting attendance.

- Effective use of pre employment health checks.
- Reviewing working practices/environments with a view to identifying measures to support attendance.
- Ensuring effective application of a policy regulating time off.
- Conducting return to work interviews where appropriate by the Headteacher or designated manager to identify causes of absence and define measures to support attendance.
- Encouraging staff to make full and effective use of counselling provision (School Advisory Scheme.)
- Conducting exit interviews by the Headteacher or other designated manager to identify reasons for leaving and support retention policies.

### **3. TYPES OF ABSENCE**

#### **3.1 Sickness absence**

This is regulated by the employees' contractual entitlements under the relevant conditions of service and is not normally authorised in advance. The following are definitions of sickness absence:

- Sporadic self-certificated absence – occasional days (up to and including 7 calendar days in length) which are covered by the self-certification procedure.
- Short-term certification absence – absence that exceeds seven days and is less than one month. This period will require a medical certificate from a registered General Practitioner and there is also the need for a return to work certificate from a GP if the absence is greater than two weeks.
- Long-term certified absence – absence of one month or more. Absence of this nature requires a medical certificate from a registered GP and in certain circumstances on the advice from the University of Chichester Academy Trust HR team may require medical clearance by a third party before a return to work.

A back to work interview with the member of staff's line manager will follow all periods of staff absence to ensure the staff member is fit to perform their duties as laid out in their job description.

Sporadic and short-term absences, which are repetitive in nature and long term health absence will be referred to the University of Chichester Academy Trust HR Team to be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedure.

#### **3.2 Authorised Absence**

This occurs when an employee does not attend for work but has obtained prior management approval for their absence. Authorised absence may include:

- Statutory right (including maternity /paternity leave).
- Time off for public duties.
- Time off for trade union duties/activities
- Contractual entitlement (including annual leave/occupational maternity leave and paternity/family friendly leave).

**A Request for Absence form must be completed at least 7 days before the authorised absence is planned. These can be collected from the office.**

Authorised absence will be granted in accordance with the employees' statutory rights, contractual entitlement and guidance contained in the PCC Manual of Personnel Practice for staff under PCC Terms and Conditions or the University of Chichester Academy Trust HR Policies and Procedures Manual for staff under the University of Chichester Academy Trust Terms and Conditions.

### **3.3 Unauthorised absence:**

This occurs when the employee does not attend for work at the place of employment at the authorised time and does not have prior management approval for their absence. Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Late attendance,
- Prolonged breaks,
- Taking annual leave without approval,
- Sickness absence without proper notification

Absence of this nature will be dealt with in line with the procedure as defined in the Absence Management section of the PCC Manual of Personnel Practice for employees under PCC Terms and Conditions or the University of Chichester Academy Trust HR Policies and Procedures Manual for staff under the University of Chichester Academy Trust Terms and Conditions.

### **3.4 Absence through illness of family members**

The academy does aim to be supportive of working parents, however the needs of the children in school come first. If a parent or carer needs to stay at home if a child is sick, the first day of absence will be paid leave. It is expected that alternative arrangements will be made and the parent / carer can return to work on the second day. If the parent / carer is unable to return to work on the second day or indeed further days, this will be classed as unpaid absence.

## **4. EXPECTATION OF EMPLOYEES WHEN THEY ARE ABSENT FROM WORK**

- Employees should report sickness absence to the Headteacher before 7.30 a.m. on the first day of absence. This should be **done in person** and not by a third party unless the employee is incapacitated.
- Staff should give an indication of the nature of the illness and how long they are likely to be absent.
- If the illness continues on following days, they must again notify the headteacher of their absence.
- Should the absence **continue after seven calendar days** they must obtain a medical certificate, which should be sent immediately to the academy. Should the absence continue then medical certificates should be submitted on a regular basis.
- The academy is expected to maintain regular sensitive contact with employees who are absent from work owing to illness. This contact is intended to be constructive and supportive.
- Employees cannot be required to carry out any work whilst absent due to sickness.
- If the member of staff is absent for more than two weeks they must obtain a return to work certificate from the Doctor stating they are fit to return.
- **After any absence the employee must complete a sickness absence form.**
- Failure to comply with sickness absence reporting may result in sickness pay being withheld and disciplinary action being taken. If there are any extenuating circumstances, the employee must

advise the Headteacher. In respect of the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors should be advised.

## **5. SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES RETURNING TO WORK**

- The governors are committed to assisting all employees who are absent from work for reasons of ill health and particularly those who return from a long period of absence. On return to work support will be provided from the Line Manager/Headteacher or in the case of the Headteacher, a representative of the University of Chichester Academy Trust Academy.
- Where medical advice suggests this is necessary, the governing body will support an employee in making a phased return to work. (Initially on reduced hours/workload) where this will enable them to return to normal working within a reasonable period. The academy will seek advice from the University of Chichester Academy Trust HR Team.
- The Headteacher or Line Manager will conduct a return to work interview after each period of absence if deemed appropriate.
- These interviews will be conducted in a sensitive manner and will be focused on facilitating the employees' return to work and supporting future attendance. The governors are committed to the consistent application of the agreed system of interviews for all staff at all levels.

## **6. MONITORING AND REPORTING**

- The academy will establish an effective system for recording all types of absence.
- To enable the governors to monitor the effectiveness of this policy, anonymised data will be submitted to the governors on an annual basis, unless there has been significant absence when a more frequent report will be presented. These reports will contain information on all types of absence, but not identify individual patterns of absence. Where there is a cause for concern the governors will ask the Headteacher to take appropriate action and contact the University of Chichester Academy Trust HR Team will support governors in investigating an academy where a high level of absence is revealed.

This policy is subject to review September 2018.