



# St Nicholas

## Catholic Academy

**'Our Catholic school is a diverse, nurturing and dynamic community which is faithful to Jesus, welcoming to all and provides a learning environment where everyone can succeed'.**

# Sickness and Absence

*2024*





Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure applies to you if you are an employee or worker at the Academy. Regular attendance at work is a term of every employee's contract of employment. However, it is recognised that employees will, on occasion, have an acceptable health reason to be absent from work.

An employee is entitled to have access to their personnel file and attendance record.

The Academy Trust Company is committed to providing a supportive working environment for all employees. It is committed to ensuring respect, objectivity, belief in the dignity of the individual, consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of this policy, eliminating unlawful discrimination.

Reasonable adjustments to this procedure depending on the specific circumstances, for example, where an employee is diagnosed with a terminal illness. Examples of such adjustments could include, amongst others: phased return to work (generally for a period of 4 weeks during which time an employee will be paid their full salary for working reduced hours whilst building up to full hours over the agreed period

Employees experiencing mental health challenges will have access to appropriate reasonable adjustments, phased returns and Occupational Health referrals as set out in this Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure.

Consideration will be given to any difficulties which an employee may be facing and provide reasonable support and assistance to help the employee to overcome them. 1.1 Such support and assistance may include, where appropriate, the Academy Trust Company seeking medical or other advice regarding the effective management of any sickness absence.

## 2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Academy Trust Company will:

- 2.1 Never ignore sickness absence
- 2.2 Always monitor sickness absence
- 2.3 Ensure that short term absences do not go unnoticed
- 2.4 Take swift, supportive action if the absence is work related
- 2.5 Keep accurate, up to date, employee attendance records
- 2.6 Handle attendance problems promptly and sensitively, in a supportive manner
- 2.7 Develop and maintain an atmosphere that encourages people to come to work
- 2.8 Ensure that employee wellbeing is monitored and that an atmosphere is developed in which employee wellbeing is given due importance





- 2.9 Deal with each person as an individual
- 2.10 Treat all staff fairly and consistently
- 2.11 Keep the Academy's sickness absence rate under review
- 2.12 Seek support and advice from its HR provider, Occupational Health and the Diocesan Schools Commission, as appropriate.

## 4. EMPLOYEE'S OBLIGATIONS

It is your responsibility to follow the appropriate procedure with regard to informing the Academy Trust Company of the reason for your absence and to fulfil your obligations

Employees are expected to:

- 4.1 Attend work when fit to do so
- 4.2 Comply with the Academy Trust Company's sickness notification procedure
- 4.3 Seek medical advice and treatment and, where appropriate, ensure that it is received as quickly as possible in order to facilitate a return to work
- 4.4 Take and follow the medical advice and treatment offered
- 4.5 Keep in regular touch (consistent with your medical condition) and inform the Headteacher, or line manager (or where the absence relates to the Headteacher, the Chair), of any significant developments affecting the period of absence
- 4.6 Attend all medical appointments, (including Occupational Health appointments as required)
- 4.7 Inform the Headteacher (or where the absence relates to the Headteacher, the Chair) immediately of any side effects associated with your health condition and/or medication that could have an impact on your suitability to work with children.

## SICKNESS NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

If you do not report for work and you have not explained the reason for your absence then you should expect to be contacted by either telephone, email, letter or text by your line manager or line manager who will want to enquire after your health

You should contact your Academy personally by telephone by 07:30am on the day of absence and not ask third parties (such as members of your family or friends) to inform the Academy/Academy Trust Company on your behalf.

In exceptional circumstances where you are physically incapable of communicating with the Academy/Academy Trust Company yourself, and in such circumstances it may be necessary for the Academy/Academy Trust Company to rely on a third-party's explanation for your





absence, but even then contact is required to be made verbally – communication by text or by voicemail is not acceptable.

Brief details of the reason for your absence and, if possible, some indication of a likely return to work date should be given during this contact.

Staff will self-certify as part of the Academy's Return to Work meeting if they do not present a doctor's Statement for Work (a "doctor's statement"). In any event a doctor's Statement must be provided by all staff and sent to the Headteacher or line manager from the 8<sup>th</sup> calendar day of sickness (when counting days for this purpose Saturdays and Sundays are included).

If more than one doctor's statement is required for any period of absence, you must keep the Headteacher, or line manager, informed of developments on a weekly basis. The Headteacher, or line manager, is also entitled to make reasonable contact with you during your sickness absence, whether or not you have complied with the requirement to make weekly contact. .

The requirement that you maintain weekly contact during any period of sickness absence may be relaxed by the Academy Trust Company if a doctor's statement indicates that such contact would hamper your return to work or your recovery

## 6. RETURN TO WORK DISCUSSIONS

6.1 After **every** absence your line manager (or other appointed person) will hold a Return to Work meeting with you on the morning of your return to work (where this not feasible the Return to Work meeting will occur within at least one working day of your return), to discuss with you:

- (a) the reasons for your absence;
- (b) whether the appropriate notification was provided;
- (c) your fitness to work; and
- (d) whether there are any issues which require particular support from the Academy Trust Company which may include a phased return to work, risk assessments or reasonable adjustments.

You will be provided with an opportunity to provide written comments on the record of the return to work discussion prior to it being included in your personnel file.

All return to work discussions will be supportive and will seek to address any issues that might lead to future absence.

It should be noted that a return to work discussion will be held following every period of absence regardless of its duration. If a review point has been reached a return to work discussion will still be held and the employee will be told in this discussion to expect an invitation to a Formal Absence Review Meeting.





If you have been absent for a long period it may be appropriate to arrange for a review meeting (at which your companion may be present) to take place before the day of your return. A phased return to work may be planned in this meeting along with any reasonable adjustments.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REFERRAL

7.1 The Academy Trust Company may, at any time it considers appropriate, refer you to Occupational Health for an assessment of your health. An employee must agree to being referred to OH and also give consent on the release of the OH report. The reasons for a referral to OH is to assess:

- (a) Its impact on your attendance at work
- (b) Its impact on your fitness to perform the duties required by your employment
- (c) Its impact on your ability to attend formal meetings or interviews
- (d) What reasonable steps the Academy Trust Company could take to improve your health and/or attendance, particularly where the Occupational Health assessment concludes that the condition is work related.

## 9. PERSISTENT INTERMITTENT ABSENCE

Persistent intermittent sickness absence can be defined as frequent short-term absences from work that are normally sporadic and attributable to minor ailments and unconnected

### Review Points

When the following review points are reached, the Academy Trust Company will consider whether a Formal Absence Review Meeting is required. Decisions will be taken on an individual basis and a Formal Absence Review Meeting will not take place automatically as soon as a review point is reached, it may also be appropriate in some cases to hold a Formal Absence Review Meeting prior to a review point being reached:

- (a) Sickness absence of 8 or more Working Days in any 12-month period.
- (b) Four separate periods of sickness absence of any length in any 12-month period.
- (c) Any levels of absence which show a trend or pattern e.g. Friday – Monday absences, monthly dates (e.g. last Friday every month) and any other notable dates.

## 10. LONG TERM ABSENCE

Long-term absence, (which is usually defined as an absence lasting in excess of 2 calendar weeks) as the result of a serious health problem or planned medical procedure. It can normally be distinguished from persistent intermittent absence in that it tends to be continuous and is usually as a result of an underlying medical condition.





### Review Points

For any long-term absence lasting more than 2 Working Weeks you may be invited to a review meeting to establish what is preventing you from returning to work and how the academy can support you in your return, this will not result in any formal procedures being invoked.

10.3 Absences lasting 4 weeks or more will be looked at individually and where there is no indication of a date for a return to work this may lead to a Formal Absence Review Meeting

## 11. FORMAL ABSENCE REVIEW MEETINGS

11.1 Where a Formal Absence Review Meeting is due to take place in accordance with Paragraphs 9.3 or 10.2 above the Academy Trust Company will appoint an Absence Reviewer in accordance with Paragraph 8. The Absence Reviewer will write to you inviting you to a Formal Absence Review Meeting. You will be given at least 5 Working Days' written notice of such meeting and you can be accompanied by your Companion. At the same time as sending you the letter inviting you to the Formal Absence Review Meeting, the Absence Reviewer will also send you a copy of the Absence Report which they have prepared and which shall:

- (a) Provide details of your absences from work indicating the reasons given for the absence
- (b) Provide details of any suggestions made by you or the Academy Trust Company as to reasonable adjustments that could be made to your working arrangements with a view to reducing your absence or assisting your return to work
- (c) Include copies of doctor's statements and all medical reports including those obtained from Occupational Health.

