



Policies

STAFF ABSENCE POLICY

1. Scope

1.1 This Absence Policy and Procedure (the “**Absence Policy**”) applies to employees of Hatch Warren under Fives and Kempshott Under Fives Preschool, hereafter referred to as the “Preschool”.

1.2 The Absence Policy establishes guidelines for managers and staff in relation to both short term and long term sickness absence (usually considered long term if period of absence exceeds 4 weeks) and assists with monitoring and control of absence.

1.3 Specific procedures apply in cases where the employee’s level of sickness absence reaches unacceptable levels as detailed in section 7.

1.4 The application of the Sickness Absence Policy is discretionary and does not form part of the employee’s contract of employment. The Preschool reserves the right not to apply the Absence Policy in particular circumstances.

1.5 The Preschool reserves the right to amend the Absence Policy at any time.

1.6 The Preschool has the right to exclude employees from work where their health gives rise for concern.

2. Purpose

2.1 The Preschool recognises that there will be occasions when sickness absence may be unavoidable and would not wish an unfit person to attend work. Equally the Preschool cannot ignore the effects of poor attendance, leading to increased workload for other staff and costs of bank staff to keep within legal ratios.

2.2 The Preschool expects all employees to:

- Attend work regularly and be punctual
- Not let minor ailments affect attendance and timekeeping
- Take reasonable steps to maintain good health
- Not to conduct themselves in a manner that is inconsistent with the stated illness or injury
- Not to take part in any activities that may delay recovery or exacerbate their medical condition
- Not to undertake any other employment, whether paid or unpaid whilst absent due to sickness
- Give advanced notice of any issues that could affect attendance

- Attend to personal affairs outside work hours where possible. This includes appointments of a non-urgent nature such as Doctor's and Dentist Appointments.
- Conform with this Absence Policy and Procedure

2.3 Any employees who are concerned about a health issue and / or their attendance levels should speak with the Preschool Manager.

2.4 Employees with poor attendance (see section 7) will be given an opportunity to improve their attendance record, but continued failure to meet the Preschool's attendance standards may result in termination of employment.

3.0 Absence Reporting Procedure

3.1 On the first day of absence an employee must telephone the Preschool Manager, or if appropriate the relevant nominated person, prior to the start of their working day and before 8.00am. Employees must explain the reason for their absence (N.B. in a public health Crisis situation, all symptoms must be clearly described), when they expect to return and advise of any work that is likely to need attention during their absence.

3.2 If an employee is not able to speak to the Preschool Manager, Preschool Operations Manager or the nominated person, directly they should leave a voicemail message clearly detailing the reason for their absence and a telephone number that they can be contacted on. Employees must make every effort to speak to the Preschool Manager, Preschool Operations Manager or nominated person by calling back later.

3.3 It is not acceptable for an employee to use any other method to inform their manager or nominated person of their absence. For example messages passed through friends or colleagues, text messages, e-mails and faxes will not be accepted.

3.4 It is the responsibility of the employee to keep in regular contact with the Preschool Manager during any period of absence

3.5 The Preschool Manager may also maintain regular contact with the absent employee.

3.6 If the absence is not covered by a Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note), then an employee should follow 3.1 for each day of the absence, unless otherwise agreed with their line manager.

3.7 Failure to follow the absence reporting procedure may result in disciplinary action.

3.8 If we doubt the reason given by you for your absence we may investigate the matter further. If we conclude that there is no acceptable reason for your absence, it will be treated as gross misconduct under our disciplinary policy. If gross misconduct is proven this would normally result in summary dismissal (i.e. dismissal without notice and without payment in lieu of notice) from the Preschool.

4.0 Certification

4.1 For any absences longer than 7 consecutive calendar days, a Fit Note will be required. The Fit Note should be forwarded to the Preschool Manager as soon as possible.

4.2 Failure to produce a Fit Note for absences longer than 7 consecutive calendar days will result in the absence being classified as unauthorised and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken.

4.3 If you wish to return to work prior to the date on your Fit Note, you must obtain a note from your GP prior to attending work. If your GP advises that you are not fit to return, you will not be permitted to do so until your GP confirms that you are fit to return to work.

4.4 The Preschool reserves the right to require an employee to produce a medical certificate for absences of less than 7 days in certain circumstances. A Fit Note will be at the employee's own cost.

4.5 If an employee falls ill whilst on holiday overseas and cannot return to the UK when originally scheduled they should inform the Preschool Manager as soon as reasonably practicable. The employee should send a Fit Note to the Preschool Manager upon their return to the UK.

4.6 A medical certificate will be required (at the employees own expense) if the employee wishes to reclaim any annual leave as a result of illness during a period of annual leave.

4.7 If an employee is absent from work as a result of sickness the Preschool would normally expect them not to go on holiday unless specifically recommended by a medical practitioner and/or agreed by the Preschool Manager.

5.0 Returning to Work

5.1 It is the employee's responsibility to inform the Preschool Manager if there are any health issues that may affect them following their return to work.

5.2 Upon an employees' return to work the Preschool Manager may wish to conduct a return to work interview to update the employee on any developments at work during their absence. Information ascertaining the reason for the absence and any possible effects on future attendance may be established.

6.0 Absence Recording

6.1 The Preschool Manager will keep a record of an employee's absence (dates and reason).

6.2 Any medical reports provided by Occupational Health will be held on the employees personnel file.

7.0 Sickness Monitoring

7.1 The Preschool will monitor individual employee's attendance on a regular basis to ensure that it remains at an acceptable level.

7.2 A Bradford Factor trigger mechanism will be used to help identify employee's whose level of absence is unacceptable.

7.3 The Bradford Factor calculation places more emphasis on short- term frequent absence than on long-term sickness. Therefore employees with frequent absences are likely to have a higher Bradford Factor score.

7.4 A Bradford factor score of either 150 or above, over a rolling 12 month period or 40 or above over a rolling 3 month period is the benchmark of unacceptable absence.

7.5 An Absence Investigation (see section 8) will be undertaken for any employee whose absence record exceeds the benchmark for unacceptable absence. The Preschool Manager will confirm all periods of absenteeism to the Management Committee and the reasons. The Management Committee and Preschool Manager act in confidence with regards to discussions over staff absenteeism and their reasons.

7.6 The Bradford Factor only acts as a guide to acceptable levels of absence. Therefore the Preschool reserves the right to conduct an Absence Investigation and potentially take disciplinary action with any employee if their level and/or patterns of absence are becoming a cause for concern, regardless of their Bradford factor.

7.7 Following on from 7.3 above, cases of long-term sickness may be dealt with separately with benchmarks for long term sickness being decided according to the particular circumstances of the case, outside the Bradford Factor.

8.0 Absence Investigation

8.1 If an employee's absence level becomes or continues to be unacceptable the line manager will may conduct an Absence Investigation.

8.2 An Absence Investigation is a meeting at which the following will normally be discussed;

Review attendance record

Effect of the employee's absence

Past actions or previous discussions with regard to absence record, if appropriate

Any health issues that may present and any underlying cause of the absence if appropriate

Any personal issues or work related issues that may be affecting an employee's attendance

Improvement targets, if appropriate.

Likely consequences of failing to improve the absence level

8.3 The employee will be made aware that failure to improve their attendance to an acceptable level may result in formal/ further formal disciplinary action being taken and/or dismissal from the Preschool.

8.4 Details of actions that may be taken as a result of an Absence Investigation can be found in section 9.

8.5 Details of the meeting should be recorded on an Absence Investigation form and a copy will be placed on the employee's file.

8.6 The Preschool reserves the right to arrange a home visit(s) during a period of absence with any employee.

9.0 Poor attendance/ Unacceptable Absence – Possible Outcomes

9.1 No Action

This is likely when the employee concerned has a history of good attendance.

9.2 Informal Action

This is likely when attendance levels are becoming a cause for concern. Improvement targets may be set and attendance will be monitored.

9.3 Formal Disciplinary Action

This is likely when attendance standards have not been met and other options are either not appropriate or have failed to resolve the situation. Formal procedures may commence when an employee has reached a Bradford score of 150 in a rolling 12 month period or 40 in a rolling 3 month period, or in other circumstances where there are reasons to be concerned about the employees level and/or patterns of absence. Please refer to the Preschool Disciplinary Procedure for further information.

Formal disciplinary action may be taken in the case of short term and/or long- term absence (even where reasonable adjustments have been made) but attendance levels continue to fail to reach the required standards.

If absence levels continue to be unacceptable and where formal disciplinary action has been taken, resulting in a final written warning, dismissal from the Preschool would normally result.

9.4 Reasonable Adjustments

In cases that fall under the Disability provisions within the Equality Act 2010 reasonable adjustments to the normal job role would be considered, where appropriate, to support the employee in returning back to work and/or sustain acceptable attendance/ performance.

9.5 Medical Redeployment

This may be considered where medical evidence suggests that the employee is not capable of carrying out their current role to expected standards (absence or performance) or their current role is having a detrimental impact on their health and there is a suitable existing vacancy.

In cases that fall under the Disability provisions within the Equality Act 2010 reasonable adjustments (see 9.4) to their current role, where possible, would first be considered.

9.6 Termination (outside of formal disciplinary action)

This is probable in cases where the employee has been informed of the risk to employment but formal disciplinary action has been deemed to be inappropriate.

Case examples may include where: medical reports that indicate that an employee's is unable to return to work in any capacity or within a timeframe that can be supported by the Preschool.

Medical reports indicate that an employee is not capable of sustained performance or attendance in their current role and no suitable alternative role exists or is accepted.

In such cases (or similar) the Preschool's termination procedure will normally be followed and the contract of employment terminated by reason of ill health and/or capability.

This Policy was adopted by the Preschool Committee on:

Signed on behalf of the Preschool _____