



## **Ridgeway Primary School**

### **Managing Attendance at Work Policy**

*(This policy applies to all staff employed by Ridgeway Primary School and its Extended Services)*

This Policy strives to ensure the wellbeing of employees at work, through support, advice and help where underlying health issue are contributing to their absence in order to encourage consistent high levels of attendance.

It recognises that whilst a certain level of sickness may be inevitable, a reasonable balance must be maintained between the needs of the business and those of employees to take time off from work due to sickness.

This policy outlines what is expected from managers and employees when such situations occur (both short and long term sickness absence) in order to ensure that support and treatment is consistent, lawful, fair and equitable.

#### **What happens if you are off sick?**

##### **First Day of Absence**

If a member of staff is unable to attend work due to sickness, they **must** notify the headteacher at home between 7am – 7.30am on the first day of absence giving the reason for the absence, when they first became ill and where possible some idea of how long they are likely to be off work. **The call must be made by the member of staff themselves and not a third party. There may be exceptions to this e.g. hospitalisation, no access to telephone but these must be reasonable and justified. It is not appropriate for the member of staff to leave or send a message with another person.**

If the headteacher is not available then a member of staff should contact one of the Deputy Headteachers.

**Contact Details for Mrs Jelves (Headteacher)**

**07590 025977 (Mobile)**

**Contact Details for Miss Gray (Deputy Headteacher)**

**07912 974145 (Mobile)**

**Contact Details for Mrs Middleton (Deputy Headteacher)**

**07817 365054 (Mobile)**

If no indication of length of absence is given when the absence is reported, the staff member should make a phone call to the school office **01543 227170** before 3pm to let the school know whether they will be back the next day or not. This enables the school to make the necessary arrangements for the next day. If the member of staff is not able to give a definite return date at this stage then this process should be followed at the end of each day of absence.

### **Self-Certification**

On return to work the member of staff must complete and sign a self-certification of sickness form which will be issued to you from the School Office.

### **More Than Seven Calendar Days**

If a member of staff is sick for more than seven calendar days (including weekends), they must submit a doctor's note and continue to telephone at regular intervals to keep school updated.

### **Continuing Sickness**

A member of staff must ensure that the dates on the certificates run consecutively, including where appropriate weekends and holidays. If a member of staff is absent for 20 days with no sign of returning to work then a referral will be made to Occupational Health to ascertain whether the employee is capable of providing regular and effective service and whether the setting can do anything to achieve this outcome.

### **Returning to Work**

On return to work the School Office will make the member of staff aware of their current Bradford Score. Where absence is becoming more frequent and the Bradford Score could exceed a trigger point if a further absence is taken, discussions will take place with the Headteacher in order to provide the member of staff and the Headteacher with an opportunity to explore the reason for the absence and to discuss any steps which could be taken to prevent further absences occurring.

### **Formal Attendance Standards**

The **Bradford Factor** scoring system will be used to monitor all sickness absence, and employees not meeting the expected standards of attendance will be managed under the terms of this policy.

**Sickness absences arising from and related to maternity, pregnancy, disability (Equality Act 2010), critical illness, or where the employer accepts that there has been an accident on duty in considering whether formal action is appropriate will normally be discounted from the Bradford Score.**

**An exception to this may be where reasonable adjustments have been agreed and put in place, but sickness absences continue to occur.**

**A disability or discountable absences does not make an employee exempt from this policy if absence continues.**

### **How the Bradford Factor works**

The Bradford score is calculated by multiplying the periods of absence by itself, multiplied by the total number of sickness days, in a rolling 12 month period.

**No. of periods of absences x No. of periods of absences x total days taken sick =**

### **For example:**

**A member of staff with 3 separate occasions of sickness absence, taking two days off sick each time (6 days in total) the score would be calculated as 3 x 3 x 6 giving a Bradford Score of 54.**

**A further absence of 1 day making 4 periods of absence and a total of 7 days would be calculated as 4 x 4 x 7 giving a Bradford Score of 112**

## **Formal Attendance Procedure**

The formal attendance procedure consists of three stages of managing attendance which are progressive and intended to remind and enforce the attendance standards that are expected from all employees, with support mechanisms to encourage this.

**The Headteacher must take formal action where the Bradford score reaches or exceeds 150, after taking account of absences that are normally discountable.** The policy applies from the first day of employment. An employee must never unknowingly find him or herself under consideration of the formal attendance procedure and return to work discussions should ensure that an employee understands the implications of further absences prior to them reaching the 150 point trigger.

### **Stage 1**

**A Bradford Score of 150 will trigger the formal stages of Managing Attendance**

**The Headteacher will speak with the employee within 14 days of their return to work to review their attendance record and consider the actions appropriate at this stage and it will be determined if some absences may be discounted (i.e. those relating to disability, pregnancy or critical illness)**

**If absences are not discountable then a Stage One warning will be issued.**

### **Stage 2**

**If during the 'life' of a Stage One warning (6 months) an employee has two further absences or one absence of 10 days or more, an employee's attendance will be considered at Stage 2**

**A meeting will be convened where the employee will be advised that their attendance is unsatisfactory and if illnesses are not discountable a Stage 2 warning will be issued.**

**A HR representative from INSIGHTHR will attend this meeting and the employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative.**

### **Stage 3**

**If during the 'life' of a Stage Two warning (9 months) an employee has two further absences or one absence of 10 days or more, an employee's attendance will be considered at Stage 3**

**A meeting will be convened where the employee will be advised that their attendance is unsatisfactory and if illnesses are not discountable, dismissal will be considered due to the employee not being able to maintain regular and effective service.**

**A HR representative from INSIGHTHR will attend this meeting and the employee has the right to be accompanied.**

**Where the decision is to dismiss, the employee will be advised accordingly in writing and informed of the last day of service, setting out their appeal rights.**

**Where a decision is taken not to dismiss at Stage 3 (due to discountable illness or other mitigating factors) the employee will return to Stage 2 of the procedure, the attendance standards appropriate to that stage will apply, and any other measures and/or reasonable adjustments will be considered.**

**Any decision concerning future employment can only be made based on the information currently available.**

**Right of Appeal**

**Where the Headteacher chooses to issue a formal warning, the employee will have a right of appeal at all stages to the Governing Body within 14 calendar days of the warning being issued.**

**Discountable Absences**

**Even in the case of discountable absences, where sickness absence continues to be excessive, even after special consideration has been made, and where the employee has been advised accordingly, a formal warning may still be issued (in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010) if the absences are becoming unsustainable by the setting.**

Formal Process

	Review of Bradford Score	Manager Accountabilities	Employee Responsibilities	HR/OHU Support Available
Stage One Warning	<p>Score of at least 150</p>	<p>Consider <a href="#">normally discountable absences</a> due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ industrial injury</li> <li>▶ maternity</li> <li>▶ <a href="#">critical illness</a> or disability.</li> </ul> <p>Also <a href="#">part day and linked absence</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Arrange <a href="#">formal meeting</a></li> <li>▶ Adhere to timescales</li> <li>▶ Fully document any decisions</li> <li>▶ Notify employee in writing</li> <li>▶ <b>Inform HR</b> where a stage 1 is issued</li> <li>▶ Arrange appeals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Fully engage with the process.</li> <li>▶ Provide a <a href="#">fit-note</a> where not able to attend scheduled meetings.</li> <li>▶ Arrange to be accompanied if required.</li> <li>▶ Ensure up-to-date absence information is provided to manager.</li> <li>▶ Submit appeal within 14 days.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To provide policy and procedural guidance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Occupational Health Unit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Undertake <a href="#">OHU referrals</a></li> <li>▶ Provide management advice on medical conditions and reasonable adjustments.</li> <li>▶ Obtain medical reports.</li> </ul>
Stage Two Warning	<p>Stage 1 still <a href="#">live</a>. Score is at least 150 plus 2 more absences or 1 absence of at least 10 days.</p> <p>2 Stage One's issued within last 2 years.</p>	<p><a href="#">Stage Two</a> is considered by a more senior manager.</p> <p><b>Same as at Stage One, plus.....</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <a href="#">Refer to OHU</a> for medical advice as appropriate.</li> <li>▶ Refer to HR for procedural advice.</li> <li>▶ Make clear that dismissal will be considered at next stage.</li> </ul>	<p>Same as at Stage One, plus.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Expand on any medical circumstances that need to be considered.</li> <li>▶ Make known any absences that may be related to disability.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Check that all reasonable adjustments have been implemented.</li> <li>▶ Support manager through process and at meetings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Occupational Health Unit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide/obtain up to date medical information as required.</li> </ul>
Stage Three Dismissal Consideration	<p>Stage 2 still <a href="#">live</a>. Score is at least 150 plus 2 more absences or 1 absence of at least 10 days.</p> <p>Two Stage 2's issued within last 2 years.</p>	<p><a href="#">Stage Three</a> is considered by a more senior manager.</p> <p><b>Same as at Stages One and Two, plus .....</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <a href="#">Must obtain up to date medical advice</a> on which to base decision</li> <li>▶ Confirm to the employee that dismissal is being considered.</li> </ul>	<p>Same as at Stages One and Two, plus...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide consent to enable access to your most recent medical information. This will ensure that appropriate decisions are made.</li> <li>▶ Arrange representation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support and advise manager on options and risks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Occupational Health Unit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide/obtain up to date medical information as required.</li> </ul>

### **Long Term Sickness Absence**

Where an absence has or is expected to continue in excess of 20 days, consideration should be given as to how this will be managed.

The Headteacher should have an indication that an employee's absence is likely to be long term before it reaches 20 days, and they will have agreed contact arrangements with the employee. The Headteacher will arrange to meet with the employee, to discuss ways in which they may be able to assist with the employee's recovery and return to work. A written summary must keep of what was discussed, including any issues raised or agreements made. Particularly around adaptations or adjustments to the working environment that may be needed as part of the return.

Where the meeting is part of a formal stage within the managing attendance procedure the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a companion, and at stages 2 and 3 of the formal process the Headteacher may be supported by a HR Representative.

The Headteacher must refer the employee to the Occupational Health Unit if they have not already done so, to ensure that they have up to date medical information to support the employee in their return to work.

### **Managing Long Term Absence**

Where an employee's long term sickness absence is on-going, the Headteacher may (having regard to all circumstances of the case) contemplate terminating their contract on the grounds of continuing sickness absence. They will consider the following:

- up to date medical evidence or report, not more than 3 months old
- the nature of the illness and any medical information available
- the length of absence to date and what is known about the likelihood and timing of any return to work
- the need to cover the work for which the employee is engaged to do
- the feasibility of continuing with any temporary arrangement
- the employee's length of service
- the disruption of the service caused by the absentee and how long this is sustainable
- any other relevant circumstances, including adjustments under the terms of the Equality Act.

Any action determined by the Headteacher must be well considered and justifiable. The employee must be advised that dismissal may be an outcome of their continued long term absence.

Not later than 8 months into the absence, dismissal should be considered although dismissal can be made at any stage during the absence. Termination of contract should be considered only where the employee: is not able to return to work in the near future. In such cases, the employee concerned will be fully consulted and a formal meeting on the basis of medical capability will be arranged to discuss consideration of dismissal.

Following this meeting, if a decision is made that it is not operationally reasonable to wait any longer for the employee to return to work, and a decision is taken to dismiss, the employee will be advised of the "minded to dismiss process". This decision must take into account all recent medical evidence/reports (i.e. no more than 3 months old).

At least 10 days after the employee has been issued with the minded to dismiss letter then notice of dismissal may be served in writing to the employee. The employee will have a right of appeal (within 10 working days of the notice being issued) to the appropriate senior manager. The appeal letter must state the grounds under which the employee is appealing.

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

The Headteacher is accountable for making reasonable adjustments to accommodate the disability related needs of employees in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The Headteacher **must** do this in such circumstances where the employee is left at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with employees who are not similarly affected.

Where an employee does not have a disability related need then the Headteacher **should** still consider making a reasonable adjustment to facilitate a return to work. What is "reasonable" will depend on the circumstances, including resources, the practicality of an adjustment and the effectiveness of the adjustment in removing the disadvantage. The reason for the adjustments is to enable the employee to continue working or to come back to work.

### **Coming Back to Work After Long Term Absence**

Regular contact with an absent employee due to sickness will ensure a successful return to work once the employee has recovered. An employee who has had a lengthy period of absence is likely to experience some anxiety over the prospect of returning to work. They may be worried about their ability to cope with the work, whether things will have changed or how colleagues will react. It will therefore be very important for the Headteacher to take positive steps to welcome the employee back, make them feel at home and facilitate re-integration into the workplace. A phased return may follow a prolonged period of absence where the employee is not fully fit to resume normal duties. The Headteacher and employee will together agree a plan of action and any reasonable adjustments that might be required to enable them to return to work.

The Headteacher is responsible for agreeing a phased return for up to 4 weeks and monitoring the return period and documenting the meetings to ensure progress is made.

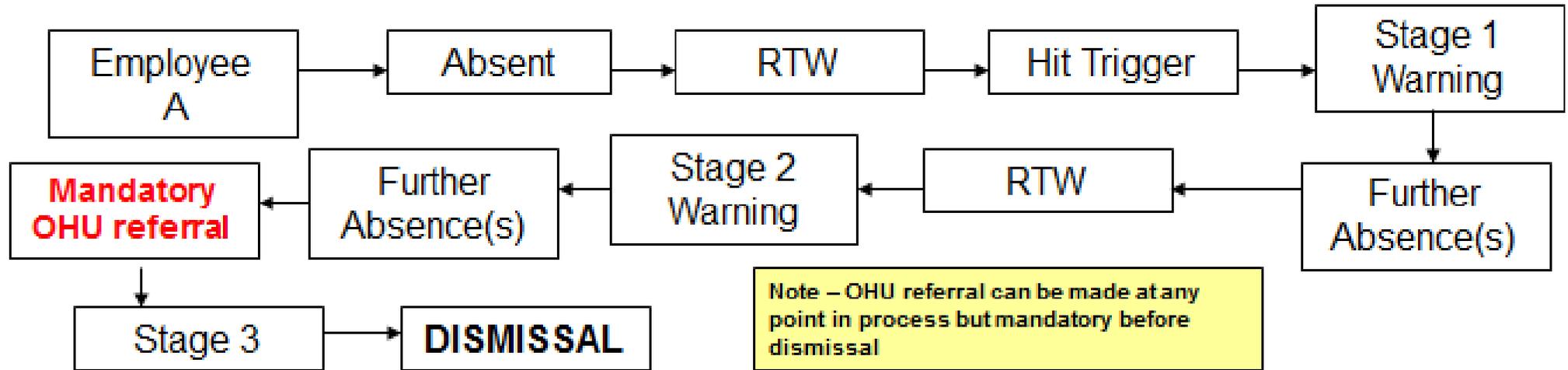
If the employee is not able to take on the full extent of their duties by the end of the 4 week phased return the manager must agree with the employee how to take it forward.

## Managing Long Term Absence (including Dismissal)

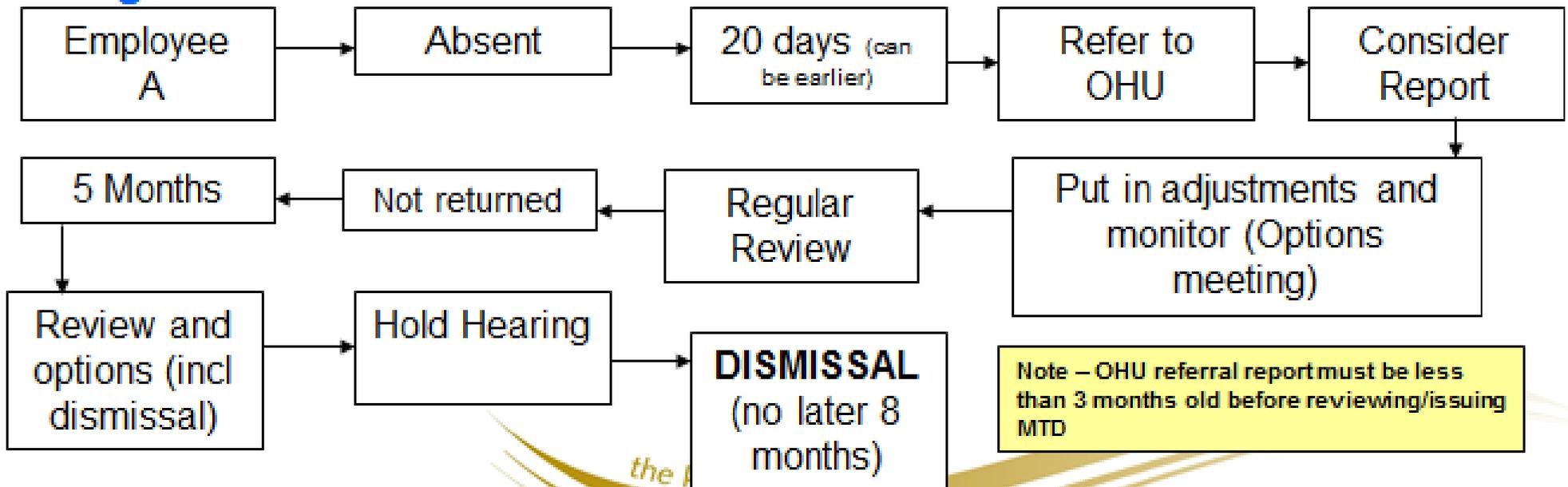
	Manager Accountabilities	Employee Responsibilities	HR/OHU Support Available
Absence has continued for at least 20 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <a href="#">Maintain regular contact</a> with the employee.</li> <li>▶ <a href="#">Refer case to OHU</a> if not already done so at day 20.</li> <li>▶ Consider how a return to work can be facilitated by the business and the employee.</li> <li>▶ Discuss progress and outcome of OHU referrals and recommendations.</li> <li>▶ Maintain contact every two weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <a href="#">Maintain contact with your manager</a></li> <li>▶ Fully engage with the process and be receptive to ideas.</li> <li>▶ Ensure up-to-date absence information is provided to manager, including <a href="#">fit notes</a>.</li> <li>▶ Consider how a return to work can be facilitated and what adjustments may need to be considered.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Occupational Health Unit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Undertake case referrals</li> <li>▶ Provide management advice on medical conditions and reasonable adjustments.</li> <li>▶ Obtain medical reports.</li> </ul> <p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide policy and procedural guidance.</li> </ul>
Absence at <a href="#">5 Months</a> at the latest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Assess case and recent medical information with HR</li> <li>▶ Consult with HR/OHU regarding the future prospects of the employee and likelihood of a return to work in the near future.</li> <li>▶ Decide how the case should be managed.</li> <li>▶ Advise the employee that dismissal may be considered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide fortnightly updates on medical progress.</li> <li>▶ Work with manager to identify practical solutions and a way forward.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Check that redeployment and all reasonable adjustments have been considered.</li> <li>▶ Support manager through process and at meetings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Occupational Health Unit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide/obtain up to date medical information as required.</li> </ul>
Absence at <a href="#">8 Months</a> at the latest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ In consultation with HR, the manager must decide if it is reasonable for the business to continue to wait for the employees' return to work.</li> <li>▶ Must obtain up to date medical advice on which to base decision. No more than 3 months old.</li> <li>▶ Confirm to the employee that dismissal is being considered.</li> <li>▶ In consultation with HR, initiate termination of employment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide consent when requested, to enable access to your most recent medical information. This will ensure that appropriate decisions are made.</li> <li>▶ Arrange representation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Guide manager through process and support at formal meetings.</li> <li>▶ Support and advise manager through termination process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Occupational Health Unit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide/obtain up to date medical information as required.</li> </ul>

# Attendance Management Policy

## Short Term



## Long Term



## **Stress**

In cases where a member of staff is certified by their doctor as suffering from stress, anxiety or depression, then it is recommended that contact with the member of staff to explore the problem is commenced early and that the member of staff's referral to the Occupational Health Unit. At the same time, the Headteacher should try to understand what is making the member of staff feel unable to cope and should consider the question "is there anything that I am doing that may be adding to their stress?"

## **Other Considerations**

If a member of staff is unable to get to work for some other reason e.g. caring responsibilities, then the Headteacher must discuss this with the member of staff in order to identify the problem and what assistance may be offered, such as change to work pattern, dependants leave, compassionate leave, time off for emergencies etc.

## **Occupational Health Unit – (See OHU referral process)**

The Headteacher should discuss any need for referral to the Occupational Health Unit with the member of staff as and when this becomes appropriate, to provide assistance in facilitating a return to work, and emphasise the importance of ensuring OHU appointments are kept by the member of staff.

The Occupational Health Unit may be able to assist both the Headteacher and member of staff who are facing a situation in which a health problem is affecting fitness to work by:

- ◆ Providing independent and impartial specialist assessment and advice to both parties about the effect of any health condition or other relevant problem on current and future fitness for their work or attendance;
- ◆ Providing advice about how job modification, alternative work or workplace rehabilitation may help an member of staff return safely to work and so cut short avoidable continuing sickness absence;
- ◆ Providing some specialist rehabilitation services to facilitate and promote safe recovery, when this is clinically indicated; if consent is given, obtain reports or advice from the member of staff's NHS doctors to help to facilitate safe rehabilitation at work, and ensure that where this is necessary, decisions about returning to work or continued employment take those doctors' opinions into account;
- ◆ Providing specialist medical assessment to facilitate health and safety risk assessments where this becomes necessary in the management of individual cases.

The referral form used to obtain specialist advice from the Occupational Health Unit for the Headteacher and member of staff effectively gives clear guidance as to the nature of questions that can be posed to the Unit and answered by them without breaching any rules of medical confidentiality and will include the following:

- ◆ What is the likely date of the member of staff's return to work?
- ◆ Is there likely to be any residual incapacity that will affect their work after returning?
- ◆ If there will be a residual incapacity after their return, for how long is that likely to last?
- ◆ Is there any specific limitation that should be taken into account in employing or re-deploying this member of staff?
- ◆ Is there any underlying medical reason that may contribute to an unsatisfactory attendance record for this member of staff?

- ◆ Is the member of staff likely to be capable of regular and effective service in the future?
- ◆ Is there evidence that the work environment may be contributing to sickness absence?
- ◆ Is there any additional assistance that the Occupational Health Practitioner believes might help this member of staff return to their work, or that might reduce future absence?

#### **Time off work for reasons other than sickness**

- Please note that no employee has the right to time off work paid or unpaid unless the reason falls within the Compassionate Leave (paid) or Time off for Emergencies (unpaid) Policies.
- **Any other request for time off work would be at the discretion of, in the first instance, the Headteacher and secondly the Governing Body.**
- **All non-urgent medical appointments / Doctor's appointments / Dentist Appointments should be made after school. This includes appointments for staff's own children.**
- **Employees are not entitled to time off work to care for sick children – although this could come under the time off for emergencies in certain circumstances and will be unpaid. Day One of a child illness could be considered an emergency in order to care for the child and make arrangement for further care for the remainder of the illness.**

**Joanne Jelves  
Headteacher  
October 2015**

#### **Document History**

June 2007	Adopted at Governing Body meeting
June 2010	Re-adopted at Full Governors Meeting without change.
June 2012	Updated in line with new regulations and adopted at Full Governors Meeting 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2012
October 2015	Reviewed with additions of Time off for Emergencies and Compassionate Leave. Presented to Personnel Committee 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2015 for re-adoption.
August 2018	Reviewed with minor changes Presented to Personnel Committee 25 <sup>th</sup> October 2018 for re-adoption.

***This policy is due for review in 2021***