



# Staff Absence and Special Leave Policy

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Agreed by governing body: Spring 2019

Review date: Spring 2024

Signed

Chair of Governors:

Headteacher:

## Staff Absence and Special Leave Policy – Spring 2019

### **Introduction, aims, purpose of policy**

This policy applies to all staff employed at Chase Bridge. Except in cases of serious urgency, no member of staff may be absent from work for any reason other than their own illness without previous permission and agreement.

Headteachers have discretion to grant special leave which may be paid or unpaid. This is not an entitlement and there is no automatic right to term time leave. Special leave provisions operate with a high level of trust and abuse of this trust will be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

On occasion some staff absence might be personally sensitive. In all cases this policy endeavours to ensure that personal privacy is protected and that only staff that need to know for operational or administrative purposes will be informed of any relevant details linked to the reason for absence.

### **Policy Summary**

The policy recognises that a work life balance benefits both the organisation and employees and recognises that employees will occasionally experience difficult circumstances and unforeseen events which may require their absence from work. The school will seek to facilitate this absence where possible. This policy defines the circumstances where paid leave may be granted in addition to the option of requesting unpaid leave.

The policy outlines the circumstances for which an employee may request time away from work in one academic year and the maximum period of time that may be allowed with pay. For part-time staff this will be pro rata to the hours worked.

**The school may grant a combined total of no more than 5 days paid special leave over the course of one rolling year.** Any request for time beyond this period will be entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher. The maximum that may be requested for individual specific reasons is indicated below.

Where an employee (for example someone that works in the premises team) has an entitlement to take annual leave there will be an expectation that this entitlement is used except in special circumstances and by agreement.

### **Definition of Close Relative/Dependent**

For the purposes of this policy, a close relative is defined as spouse/partner, children (including stepchildren, adopted and current foster children), parents, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren or a person to whom the employee is the next of kin.

Except in the case of bereavement, the employee must demonstrate that they are the principal carer and the most appropriate person available to provide support.

### **Requesting Special Leave**

All requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher or Line manager using the Special Leave Request Form. If necessary, the employee should discuss exceptional, personal reasons for a request prior to completion of the form.

Applications should be made well in advance so that the school is able to make arrangements for cover. In circumstances where this is not possible the employee should contact the school and follow the daily absence procedure. The necessary form must be completed and granting of paid/unpaid leave confirmed on the employee's return to work.

All absences will be recorded on the employee's personnel file and on HR/Payroll's reporting system, ITrent.

### **Instances where Special Leave may be requested:**

- **Bereavement** - To facilitate the employee making funeral arrangements and/or attending the funeral in the event of the death of a close relative. (Maximum 5 days)
- **Emergency/Domestic** – To facilitate the employee dealing with a sudden domestic emergency. (Maximum 2 days)

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- **Dependents** – To facilitate the employee dealing with a child or dependent's sudden illness or emergency appointment where other arrangements cannot be made. (Maximum 3 days)
- **Religious Festivals** – To facilitate the employee to observe a known national/international religious festival linked to their own faith. (Maximum 1 day)
- **Moving House** – To facilitate the employee moving to a new home where documentary evidence is provided stating why the move could not take place during a school holiday period. (Maximum 1 day)
- **Wedding of a Close Relative** – To enable the employee to attend the wedding of a close family member. (Maximum 1 day)
- **Job Interviews** – To facilitate the employee attending interviews. (Maximum 3 days)

### Decision making with regard to granting leave and pay

At all times staff responsible for making decisions about leave will approach this in a fair and equitable manner, however, there may be differences between staff in the leave granted and whether this will be paid or unpaid. This will depend on some of the following factors which will be taken into consideration:

- The overall cost of leave and disruption to the effective and efficient running of the school is a key factor in deciding on the leave that may be granted and whether this should be paid or unpaid;
- Patterns of absence and leave over the duration of employment at Chase Bridge;
- Special circumstances in the school that mean the absence of the individual would have a significant detrimental impact on the running of the school.

Staff responsible for making decisions about granting leave are the leadership team, and the Finance Manager. If there is some uncertainty about the decision to be made requests will be forward to the SBM or in their absence the headteacher.

### Unauthorised Absence

Where an employee is absent from work without permission and without an acceptable explanation, pay will be deducted and action may be taken under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

### Absence because of sickness or emergency – notification of absence

If an employee is unable to attend work at short notice because of sickness or other circumstances (e.g dependent illness or emergency), they must advise school via the agreed contact details no later than 7am on the morning of absence. School must be updated on a daily basis (or at agreed intervals for long-term absence).

On return to work, the employee must attend a return to work interview with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or a Team Leader. In the case of longer term or more serious health issues HR and Occupational Health advice will be sought by the school (see section below).

Periodically (typically each week) employees' sickness and absence records are updated on our internal tracking systems (iTrent) and employees receive automatic notification of their absence and reason for absence. Employees can view this information by logging into their account.

[https://lbsutli.webitrent.com/lbsutli\\_ess](https://lbsutli.webitrent.com/lbsutli_ess)

If you have forgotten your user name or password please contact iTrent directly [itrentsupport@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:itrentsupport@sutton.gov.uk)

The school follows the borough's Managing Health and Attendance Policy which can be found by clicking [here](#).

### Short term sickness

Short term sickness absence is defined as intermittent or occasional days of absence. Short term absences (as defined above) totalling 7 working days or more in any rolling year will trigger action by the employee's manager. An informal review meeting will normally be held to discuss the employee's attendance record.

Short term absences totalling 10 days or more in any year will automatically trigger action under Stage 1 of the Managing Health and Attendance Procedure.

Employees may be required to provide a statement of fitness for work from their GP if they are absent for a period of 7 days or more.

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### **Long term sickness absence**

Long term sickness is usually defined as absence that lasts for more than 6 weeks continuously.

In every case of long-term sickness absence, a number of factors need to be considered by the manager. This will usually be done in conjunction with specialist advice and support from HR and Occupational Health (OH), when coming to a decision on how to proceed. These include:

- The impact on the service and other employees of the school caused by the employee's continued absence alongside consideration of reasonable adjustments to the employee's conditions of work.
- The nature and duration of the illness and the prospects for recovery. It is essential that the Headteacher or line manager maintains contact with employees on long term sickness absence.

If an employee has been absent through sickness for six consecutive weeks the Headteacher or line manager should arrange a Stage 1 meeting under the Managing Health and Attendance Procedure.

### **Maternity leave and parental leave**

You and your partner may be able to get Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) if you're having a baby or adopting a child.

You can share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay between you. You need to share the pay and leave in the first year after your child is born or placed with your family. You can use SPL to take leave in blocks separated by periods of work, or take it all in one go. You can also choose to be off work together or to stagger the leave and pay.

Please refer to the Local Authority's relevant policy for more information.

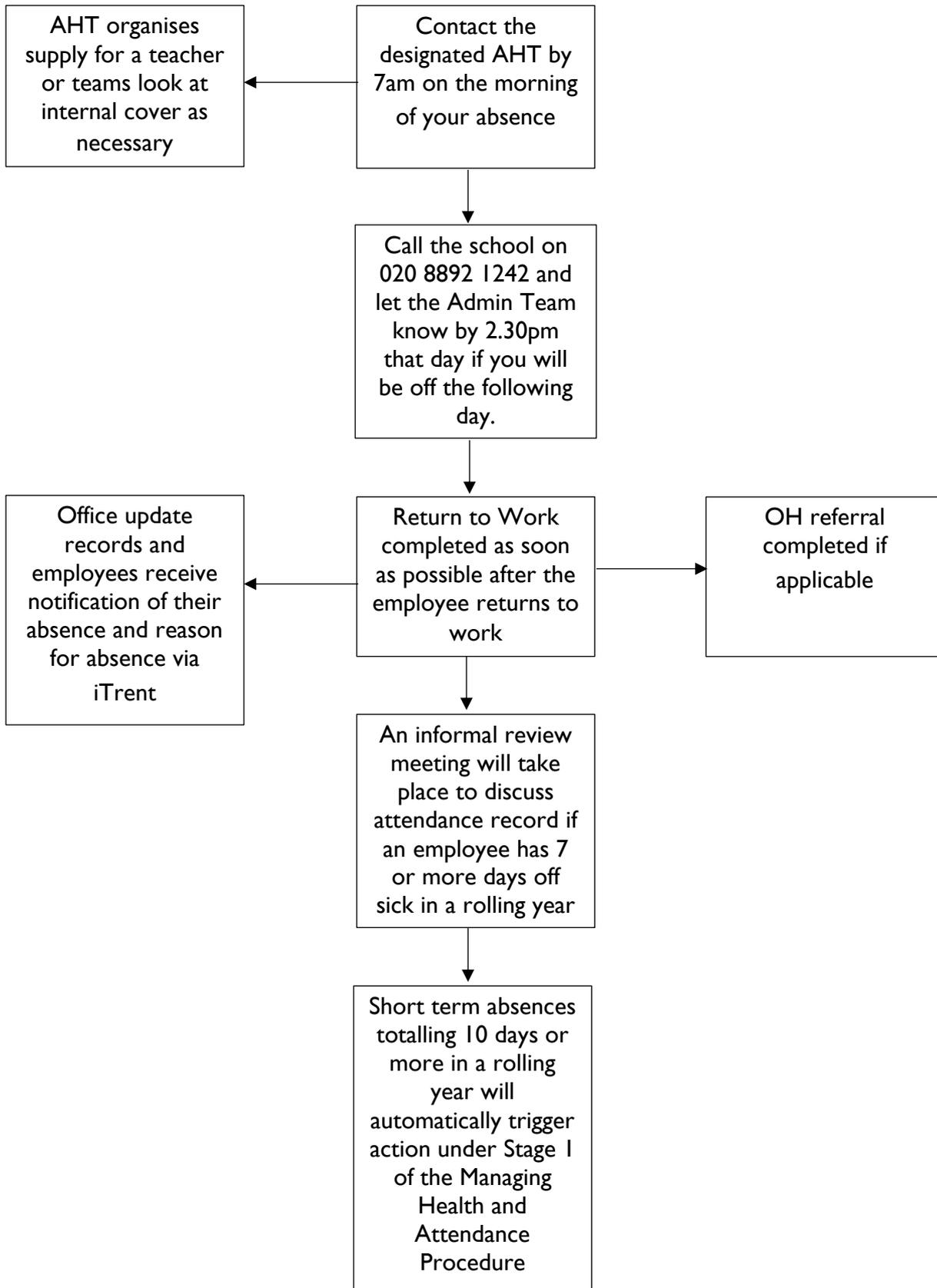
### **Reasonable adjustments for workers with disabilities or health conditions**

Wherever possible we will make reasonable adjustments to make sure employees with disabilities, or physical or mental health conditions, aren't substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs. We will work with Occupational Health, HR and the employee to find positive solutions to ensure that they can fulfil their role and duties successfully.

# Appendices

<b>Special Leave Request Form</b>		<i>Employee to Complete</i>	
Name:			
Job Title:			
Pay Number:			
I wish to apply for: (Select one)			
<b>PAID SPECIAL LEAVE</b>		<b>UNPAID SPECIAL LEAVE</b>	
From (date):		To (date):	
Please give reasons for request (please see guidelines attached)			
Employee Signature:		Date:	
<b>Line Manager to Complete</b>			
(Delete as appropriate)			
Request authorised for:			
Paid Special Leave for: ..... days			
Unpaid Special Leave for: ..... days			
Request not authorised			
Manager's Signature:		Date:	

## Short Term Sickness



## Return to Work Form

Name			
Date			
First date of sickness absence		Return to work date	
Number of working days lost		Current number of days absent this year	
Absence reason			
Is this absence a result of an incident at work?		If yes, has an Accident at Work form been completed	
<p>Discussion</p> <p>(Questions to consider: Is there an underlying medical condition or any personal issues that may be contributing to the absence? Are there any work-related issues that may be contributing to the absence? What impact did your absence have and how have you managed that impact? Are there any steps you can take to prevent future absences? Are there any additional steps the school can take to support you e.g. OH?)</p>			
Signed:			