




Ulverston Victoria High School

Staff Absence and Attendance Policy

Author/Owner:	Approved	Chair of Governors Signature:
M Hardwick	Yes	

Last updated: July 2025

Absence Procedure

Guiding Principles

Management of absence should be **person centred**. This means **prioritising wellbeing** and accounting for an employees' individual needs and circumstances, which will be different from person to person. Managers will not be limited to a prescriptive list of support options, instead all stakeholders are encouraged to apply **creativity** and **flexibility** to find bespoke solutions that best support individual employees' wellbeing. Stakeholders are also expected to be **proactive**, taking action to support wellbeing at the earliest appropriate opportunity given the circumstances of the specific case.

Individuals may require different support at different times to best support their wellbeing. By applying the above principles **consistently** and equally valuing the health and wellbeing of all employees this difference in treatment by managers is appropriate.

Managers should seek support from their HR / HR Provider.

Reporting Absence

Employees or designated person must phone in as soon as possible,

- for teachers this needs to be before 8.00am. This gives the cover manager time to arrange appropriate cover. If for any reason a call is not answered the teacher must leave a message on the absence line **and** contact their Line Manager to ensure the operational needs of the school are met.
- for other school staff normally within 1 hour of expected start time. Following the same process of reporting as above.
- The employee must provide daily updates, unless they know the expected length of their absence or are covered by a fit note.

Fit Notes

Managers and employees need to ensure every day in a period of absence is covered either by a self-certification form or a doctor's fit note.

An employee who is off sick for 7 days or less (including weekends) must complete a self certification form to cover every day of the absence including half days, this will be completed via the Return to Work Form which will be issued to you once you are back in the workplace.

For sickness absence of 8 days or more (including weekends) a medical certificate (fit note) is needed, employees should send this to the HR straightaway following issue by the medical practitioner.

Industrial Injury/Infection Control

If during the notification the employee states that their absence is due to an accident that happened at work, the head teacher must follow the Health and Safety procedure, ensuring an accident form is completed, and if necessary, an investigation is carried out. The absence reason should also be recorded as an accident at work.

Keep in Touch

It is expected that an employee will keep the school informed about their absence, especially if a significant change occurs. Normally, an employee (or nominated representative) should keep in touch with and update their manager, or nominated person, on a weekly basis. Alternatively, the employee may prefer the manager/nominated person to contact them for updates at pre-arranged times. The operational guidance gives further details in cases where it wouldn't be appropriate for the manager/head teacher to be the nominated contact.

Sick-Pay Entitlements

Sick Pay entitlements are calculated differently depending on whether an employee comes under 'Green Book' terms and conditions (for core council and schools support staff employed by the council) or 'Burgundy Book' terms and conditions (for teachers).

The Council's Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) provisions (for 'Green Book' staff) are as follows:

- During 1st year of service 1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 month's service) 2 month's half pay
- During 2nd year of service 2 month's full pay and 2 month's half pay
- During 3rd year of service 4 month's full pay and 4 month's half pay
- During 4th and 5th years of service 5 month's full pay and 5 month's half pay
- After 5 years' service 6 month's full pay and 6 month's half pay

Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) provisions under the 'Burgundy Book' (for teaching staff) are as follows:

- During 1st year of service full pay for 25 working days and (after completing 4 calendar month's service) half pay for 50 working days
- During 2nd year of service full pay for 50 working days and half pay for 50 working days
- During 3rd year of service full pay for 75 working days and half pay for 75 working days
- During 4th and subsequent years of service full pay for 100 working days and half pay for 100 working days

For green book employees, the rate of sick pay is calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day, the total number of days absence during the twelve months immediately before the first day of absence.

For Teachers (Burgundy Book terms and Conditions) entitlement renews on 1st April each year and count back is only considered if an absence is continuous on the 1st of April.

Details of exceptions and exclusions can be found in the attached operational guidance.

Other time off

Ulverston Victoria High School recognise the importance of consistency, openness and equality in responding to requests from staff for special leave of absence for family and personal reasons. This policy recognises:

- the statutory entitlement to unpaid time off to attend to urgent matters related to dependants
- national and local agreements
- best practice which seeks to maintain good working relationships between staff and management

It is intended that this policy will provide a clear and workable framework to enable requests for leave of absence for staff working in schools to be reasonably and fairly handled.

This policy recognises that the operational needs of the school are a priority and there may be times when the Headteacher has to refuse a request for leave. Although there is no statutory obligation to offer paid leave in the following circumstances; at the discretion of the Headteacher, staff may be authorised up to **3 days of paid leave encompassing points (i) to (iii) within the academic year.**

It should be noted that there might be occasions when circumstances arise not identified in this policy. In such situations the decision regarding leave of absence remains within the discretion of the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

(i) Time off for dependants

The Employment Relations Act 1999 provides all employees with the right to take reasonable unpaid time off to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies relating to dependants. Staff taking time off under this right are requested to notify the Headteacher of their absence on the day they take time off and if possible, to give notification in advance. Circumstances when an employee may take time off are:

- If a dependant falls ill, or has been injured or assaulted
- When a dependant is having a baby
- To make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
- To deal with a death of a dependant
- To deal with unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant
- To deal with an incident involving the employee's child during school hours

(ii) Sick children

It is recognised that it can be difficult for working parents to respond to the need to care for sick children. Staff have a statutory right to unpaid time off to make arrangements for the care of a dependant child. If it is impossible to make appropriate arrangements for the care of sick children, the staff in this school may, after discussion with the Headteacher take reasonable unpaid leave to care for sick children. This arrangement applies to all staff with dependant children.

(iii) Leave to attend significant events

The Governors recognise that occasionally staff may have the opportunity to attend a significant social event during term time. For example, the graduation ceremony for a son or daughter or the wedding of a close family member. Teachers and term time only staff do not have a leave allowance, which can be taken during term time. This policy enables staff to take one day of unpaid leave in order to attend a significant social event. Staff must seek the express permission of the Headteacher for unpaid leave in advance of the event. The operational needs of the school will be considered before granting leave and there may be times when the Headteacher will need to refuse a request for leave. Staff who wish to attend significant religious festivals which fall during school term time may take unpaid leave to attend the festival. Requests for such unpaid leave must be made to the Headteacher in advance of the event.

6. Interviews

All staff may take reasonable paid leave to attend selection interviews for jobs. Requests to take leave to attend an interview must be made to the Headteacher in advance of the event.

7. Other leave

a) Examination duties

Teaching staff undertaking professional duties in connection with external examinations may take paid leave under the arrangements contained in Appendix 2 of the Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales.

b) Jury service

Employees may take leave to undertake jury service. They are required to claim the allowance for loss of earnings from the Court and an equivalent amount will be deducted from the employee's salary.

c) Moving house

Staff are encouraged if at all possible to make arrangements to move house during school closures. However, if this proves impossible, staff are granted one day of paid leave in order to move house. The Headteacher is permitted to ask for documentary evidence relating to why the move could not take place during school closures.

d) Medical and dental appointments

Employees are encouraged to make appointments outside normal working hours wherever possible. However, if necessary, paid time off to attend appointments will be granted. Staff attending such appointments must seek the permission of their line manager and Headteacher before attending. The Headteacher and Line Manager have the right to request to see appointment letter/cards.

e) Time off to attend ante-natal appointments

The Maternity Regulations provide the right for all women to take paid time off to attend antenatal care. Staff must produce evidence of appointments if requested to do so by their line manager or Headteacher.

f) Candidates in Parliamentary and local elections - Employees are granted time off in accordance with local conditions of service.

g) Trade union and professional association duties

Staff undertaking recognised Trade Union or Professional Association duties are provided paid time off as defined in the LEA facilities agreement.

h) To attend training camp as a member of the non regular forces

In the interests of the effective operation of the school staff are encouraged, as far as is possible, to attend training camps during school closures. The maximum entitlement to leave for such purposes is 10 days paid leave.

i) Holidays

No teaching staff will be expected to take holidays during school term time. Only in very exceptional circumstances would leave of absence be granted and this would be unpaid at the discretion of the Headteacher.

8. Compassionate leave

Paid compassionate leave is granted in the following circumstances:

- Sudden, serious illness of near relative, spouse, partner or child - up to 5 days paid leave.
- Death of a near relative, spouse, partner or child - up to 3 days paid leave
- Funeral of a near relative, spouse, partner or child 1 day of paid leave

- Employees wishing to attend the funeral of other relatives, friends or colleagues may take unpaid leave. NB Exceptional circumstances will be referred to the Governing Body on an individual basis.

9. Return to Work

The return-to-work process is intended to support employees back into the workplace following periods of sickness absence. Following short-term, one-off absences the HR team will arrange an initial meeting/conversation between the returning employee and your line manager. If you feel unable to discuss your absence with your line manager, you can make an appointment with a member of the HR Team. For periods of longer term absence or in the case of frequent short term absences, procedures will be followed in line with this policy. The meetings are an opportunity to discuss and make any supportive arrangements that may be necessary to ensure wellbeing as the employee returns to work.

10. Representation

Throughout this procedure the employee has the right to be accompanied by a TU representative or a colleague.

11. Procedure for Short-term absence

Short-term absence is normally considered to be less than 28 calendar days. The short-term procedure is intended to deal with cases where multiple instances of short-term absence are a cause for concern for the head teacher/manager.

The purpose of the formal process is to support health and wellbeing improvements that enable employees to maintain and sustain attendance levels and reduce impact on the service/school. Persistent short-term absence may cause concern to a head teacher/manager due to the impact on the rest of the school/team. However, it should be noted that persistent short-term absence is often linked to an underlying medical reason or disability.

When an employee's absence level causes concern, the manager/head teacher should arrange a formal 'Wellbeing Support Meeting' at the earliest opportunity. This meeting will discuss any underlying health or wellbeing issues that may be contributing to absence and any appropriate measures to support improvements to the employee's health and wellbeing. An occupational health referral should be considered in cases where medical advice could benefit this discussion.

If the absence level continues to cause concern, further meetings should be arranged to consider alternative support options. Managers/Head Teachers will need to hold as many meetings as reasonably required to fully consider all underlying health and wellbeing issues and appropriate support required.

Only once all reasonable avenues for support have been exhausted and absence levels remain unacceptable, the council/school may need to consider dismissal. Then the manager/head teacher will convene a 'Case Conference' meeting to be chaired by a senior manager/panel of governors.

12. Procedure for long-term absence

Long term absence normally lasts for 28 calendar days or more. Long term absences are often linked to an underlying medical reason and may be due to a disability. The purpose of the formal process is

to support health and wellbeing improvements that enable employees to return to work and maintain a sustainable attendance thereafter.

When it becomes clear an absence may develop into a long-term absence, the manager/head teacher should consider an Occupational Health referral and arrange a formal 'Wellbeing Support Meeting' at the earliest opportunity. The meeting should be used to discuss any available medical advice and measures that may support improvements to the employee's health and wellbeing. If the employee is well enough to consider a return to work, there should also be discussion of any measures that may be appropriate to best support the employee's health and wellbeing on their return.

Managers/Head Teachers should use the medical advice in conjunction with other information about the employee's circumstances to determine the timings and number of meetings required, which will vary depending on the case.

The Council/School will only consider dismissing an employee on the grounds of capability due to ill health when it has considered all the available facts and medical reports, when all appropriate supportive options have been exhausted, and where the employee is still unable to sustain a successful return to work. Then the manager/head teacher will convene a 'Case Conference' meeting to be chaired by a senior manager/panel of governors.

13. Occupational Health and Sources of Support

The school's occupational health provider is available to advise managers at any time about how best to support an employee who is off sick. Occupational Health advice may also be appropriate to support staff who have underlying health or wellbeing issues but remain in work.

There are also Occupational Health fact sheets available to managers/head teachers covering several common health and wellbeing issues and workplace adjustments that may be beneficial. These may assist with early intervention to support health and wellbeing for all employees.

Note: Schools should contact their own occupational health Service and follow their process.

Managers and employees should proactively engage with all resources available to prevent sickness, absence and disability, full details of which are available in the operational guidance, or by contacting your own providers (Schools)

The council's employee information site also provides details of external organisations providing support regarding a wide range of health and wellbeing issues:

13. Time off for Disability

Employees may require time off related to a disability which is not appropriately classified as sickness absence. There is a disability leave procedure which provides for up to 10 days of disability leave each year (pro rata for part time employees), either planned or unplanned. Where employees have

disclosed a disability, managers should refer to the disability leave procedure to consider whether disability leave may be appropriate.

Timescales

Task / Action	Timescale
Report sickness absence	As soon as possible, generally within an hour of normal start time Teachers – before 8.00am Update daily if still unfit for work
Provide Fit Notes (Absence less than 7 days, self certification)	Staff member issued a form on return to work
Provide Fit Notes (Absence 8 days or more, medical certificate)	Sent to cover manager /head teacher Immediately after receiving from Medical Practitioner
Keep in Touch	Unplanned absence - On a daily basis to advise on attendance Planned absence – On a weekly basis if covered by a fit note
Return to Work Interview (May be face to face, virtual, or telephone as appropriate)	On or before first day back after absence – before commencing other duties
Formal meetings under short term procedure	Employees given at least 5 working days’ notice of meeting Number and timings of meetings depend on the circumstances in specific cases
Formal meetings under longer term procedure	Employees given at least 5 working days’ notice of meeting Number and timings of meetings depend on the circumstances in specific cases
Case Conference meetings	Employees given at least 10 working days’ notice of meeting