



[Tickton Pre-school and Play Pals, Attendance Management Policy.](#)

Working in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS).

Quality and Consistency.

A Secure Foundation.

Partnership Working.

Equality of Opportunity.

Unique Child

Positive Partnerships

Enabling Environment

Learning and Developing

Policy statement

We are committed to improving the health, wellbeing and attendance of all employees. We value the contribution our employees make to our success. So, when any employee is unable to be at work for any reason, we miss that contribution. This absence policy explains:

- what we expect from managers and employees when handling absence
 - how we will work to reduce levels of absence to no more than 5 days per employee per year.

This policy has been written after consultation with the Pre- School and Play Pals Committee. We welcome the continued involvement of employees in implementing this policy.

Key principles

The organisation's absence policy is based on the following principles:

Tickton Pre-school and Play Pals Attendance Management Policy.

1. As a responsible employer we undertake to provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness – this is statutory sick pay that staff must apply for online and through their doctor.
2. Regular, punctual attendance is an implied term of every employee's contract of employment – we ask each employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.
3. We will support employees who have genuine grounds for absence for whatever reason. This support includes:
 - a. 'special leave' for necessary absences not caused by sickness
 - b. a flexible approach to the taking of annual leave
 - c. access to counsellors where necessary
 - d. rehabilitation programmes in cases of long-term sickness absence.
4. We will consider any advice given by the employee's GP on the 'Statement of Fitness for Work'. If the GP advises that an employee 'may be fit for work' we will discuss with the employee how we can help them get back to work – for example, on flexible hours, or altered duties.
5. We will use an occupational health adviser, where appropriate, to:
 - a. help identify the nature of an employee's illness
 - b. advise the employee and their manager on the best way to improve the employee's health and wellbeing.
6. The company's disciplinary procedures will be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is not thought to be satisfactory.
7. We respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with all data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988. Notification of absence If an employee is going to be absent from work they should speak to their manager or deputy within an hour of their normal start time. They should also:
 - give a clear indication of the nature of the illness and
 - a likely return date.

The manager will check with employees if there is any information they need about their current work. If the employee does not contact their manager by the required time the manager will attempt to contact the employee at home.

An employee may not always feel able to discuss their medical problems with their line manager. Managers will be sensitive to individual concerns and make alternative arrangements, where appropriate. For example, an employee may prefer to discuss health problems with a person of the same sex.

Evidence of incapacity

Employees can use the company self-certification arrangements for the first seven days absence. Thereafter a 'Statement of Fitness for Work' is required to cover every subsequent day.

If absence is likely to be protracted, i.e. more than four weeks continuously, there is a shared responsibility for the Company and the employee to maintain contact at agreed intervals.

'May be fit for some work'

If the GP advises on the Statement of Fitness for Work that an employee 'may be fit for work' we will discuss with the employee ways of helping them get back to work. This might mean talking about a phased return to work or amended duties.

If it is not possible to provide the support an employee needs to return to work – for example, by making the necessary workplace adjustments – or an employee feels unable to return then the Statement will be used in the same way as if the GP advised that the employee was 'not fit for work'.

Return to work discussions Managers will discuss absences with employees when they return to work to establish:

- the reason for, and cause of absence
- anything the manager or the company can do to help
- that the employee is fit to return to work.

If an employee's GP has advised that they 'may be fit for work' the return to work discussion can also be used to agree in detail how their return to work might work best in practice.

A more formal review will be triggered by:

- frequent short-term absences
- long-term absence.

This review will look at any further action required to improve the employee's attendance and wellbeing. Review Trigger Points

Absence due to disability/maternity

Absences relating to the disability of an employee or to pregnancy will be kept separate from sickness absence records. We refer employees to our Equality Policy covering family policies and disability discrimination policies.

B. Attendance at Work Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to provide a framework within which employee and manager can work together in a supportive and co-operative manner to pro-actively manage periods of sickness absence.

1.1.2 The Pre School and Play Pals value the contribution of its employees in the delivery and maintenance of high quality services, and accept that there will be occasions when employees will be unable to attend work due to illness.

1.1.3 Employees must be aware that all sickness absence has an impact on the services the Pre School provide. The Pre School will ensure that sickness absence records are kept and attendance levels monitored to ensure that employees are supported whenever they are absent, or upon return to work following an absence.

1.1.4 Where the procedure outlined below has been followed and the level of attendance has not improved despite all the support provided, the employee will be informed that their employment could ultimately be at risk.

1.1.5 A warning under this procedure is completely separate to warnings given under the Disciplinary Procedure.

1.2 Supporting Framework

1.2.1 In managing attendance before, during and after any period of absence due to sickness, the Pre School will consider:

Tickton Pre-school and Play Pals Attendance Management Policy.

- Reasonable Adjustments, Aids and Adaptations
- Phased return to work
- Changes to workloads, working practices, duties and working patterns, providing training and modifying or supplying assistive equipment to aid carrying out an employee's role can be considered if they are 'reasonable' and will assist an employee in maintaining attendance at work.
- Flexible working options to assist an employee in undertaking their role
This could be temporary or permanent changes to working patterns or methods of working and could be considered as part of a short or long term strategy for either the prevention of an absence or to support a sustained return to work following a longer period of absence.

1.3 Exclusions

1.3.1 The following types of absence are not classed as sickness for the purposes of this policy and procedure:

- (a) GP appointments
- (b) Dental appointments
- (c) Hospital appointments including ante natal and cancer screening clinics
- (d) Blood Donor sessions

1.3.2 NB Reasonable time off is allowed to attend these appointments. It is expected that these will be arranged to minimise disruption to the Pre School e.g., where possible in the employee's own time or at the start or end of their working day/shift.

2. Preventative Measures

2.1 A key element of maintaining attendance levels and reducing sickness/absence is to focus on preventative measures.

2.2 Preventative measures can take many forms as shown below:

- a) Communication needs to be open and two way, between the line manager, and their employees. Regular communication will foster good relationships and trust between the manager and employee enabling frank discussions regarding work and personal issues that may affect performance including attendance levels. Positive action should be taken to prevent/reduce absence.
- b) Management Awareness of Employee Issues - These will take the form of informal discussions, regular reviews, performance monitoring and effective management, wellbeing assessments, to promotes two way communication and highlight any issues that need proactive intervention.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Manager is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the operation of this policy in managing staff attendance within the Pre School, and seek to ensure that adequate resources are available to minimise any workload implications arising out of its operation. Any concerns must be passed onto the setting chair person.

3.2 **Role of the Employee**

3.3.1 Within the workplace attendance management is a shared responsibility and employees are required to play an active role in managing their own attendance such as by being aware of and complying with the policy and procedure, maintaining contact with their manager when absent, updating them on any change of circumstances and anticipated date for a return to work, particularly following GP or Consultant/hospital appointments.

3.3.2 Within the context of the reasons for their current ill-health, the employee has a responsibility to take part in any discussions with their manager concerning their level of attendance and reasons for any absence, attending any review meetings as required to assist with managing their absence.

3.3.3 Under the requirements of Health and Safety legislation, all employees have a duty to act responsibly at work and to provide and maintain a safe working environment for themselves and their colleagues.

4. **Managing Absence**

4.1 **Reporting Requirements and Maintaining Contact**

4.1.1 When employees are unable to attend work, they are required to follow the reporting procedure set out below. Failure to do so without reasonable cause could result in loss of pay.

4.1.2 Employees' responsibilities include: -

- For unplanned absences, notifying the nominated member of staff as soon as possible of the absence but normally no later than one hour before the time they are expected to start work (earlier where possible).
- For any planned absences (e.g. where confirmation of a hospital appointment has already been received) the employee must notify their manager as early as possible so that appropriate discussions can take place concerning workloads, anticipated length of absence and return to work issues.

- Regular communication is essential and the manager and employee should aim to agree the frequency and method of keeping in touch. This will vary depending on the reason and length of the absence, and may include home visits which must be by mutual agreement. The purpose of the contact is to enquire of the employee's health, explore what additional support may be provided and, as appropriate, keep the employee up to date with developments at work and consider possible arrangements and timescales for an effective return to work.
- For absences exceeding 7 calendar days submitting medical fit notes (Med3) at appropriate intervals. Fit notes must be submitted to the manager as soon as possible after they have been issued.
- Working with the manager to implement, where appropriate any reasonable adjustments suggested by the doctor on the fit note or the return to work plan from the Fit for Work service to facilitate a prompt return to work.
- Within the context of the reasons for their current ill-health, participating in discussions/meetings with the manager as appropriate to discuss the reason for absence, record details of the sickness absence, establish any underlying reasons for absence and to ascertain if there is anything the Pre School can do to support the employee.
- Not undertaking any activity which might be detrimental to their recovery and return to work.
- Co-operating with the manager in maintaining a good level of attendance.

4.1.4 If an employee's absence is attributed to an industrial disease, accident or assault arising out of or in the course of undertaking the duties of their post, they must report this to their Line Manager as soon as practicable.

4.1.6 Where an employee is absent from work and their manager has not been notified it is acceptable practice for the manager to try and make contact with the employee to ascertain their whereabouts and health status.

4.2 Return to Work Contact and / or Discussion

4.2.1 When an employee returns to work following any period of sickness absence it is good management practice for the manager to make contact with the employee. In the main this will be a brief chat, and held in the spirit of concern for the wellbeing of the employee. Where possible this contact should occur on the day the employee returns to work. The purpose of this contact is to be supportive and aimed at providing assistance to the employee's effective return to work.

4.2.2 The initial contact may be followed by a more structured return to work discussion if necessary at the instigation of either the employee or manager under the following circumstances:

- To ascertain whether any aids, adaptations or modifications to the work or working practices are required or, where aids, adaptations or modifications have been previously agreed, that they continue to be suitable/appropriate.
- There is a need for the manager to be updated on the employee's medical condition, or its causes.
- The employee needs to be brought up to date with developments at work, particularly where the absence has been lengthy and continuous.
- To identify any work related factor which may have caused the sickness absence.
- A clear pattern of absence over a period of time is identified, e.g. either side of a weekend, preschool closure period.
- Any other circumstances where the manager or employee feels that a more detailed discussion is required.

4.3 Review Meetings

4.3.1 The purpose of the Review meeting is for the manager to meet with the employee in order to:

- Agree with the employee that the recorded absence is correct and seek to establish the reasons for the absence/length of absence.
- Discuss and agree what assistance can be given by the manager to support the employee's attendance at work e.g. consideration of workplace adjustments etc.
- Identify if the employee could do anything further to improve their level of attendance.
- Explore any possible underlying cause for the sickness absence.
- Agree what action is to be taken by the employee manager following the meeting.
- Explain the procedure and timescales in respect of further Review meetings / and the possibility of an attendance level warning if the level of attendance does not improve in the case of cumulative absences, or dismissal in the case of continuous absence.

4.3.2 A record of the Review Meeting and outcomes should be made and confirmed in writing to the employee.

- 4.3.3 A review level meeting will be held when the employee has had 3 days absence on 3 separate occasions or is absent from work owing to a period of continuous absence of one month or more.
- 4.3.4 If appropriate, review meetings may be held in addition to those outlined above. Particularly in cases when absences her more than one month or there are cases of persistent short term absence.

5. Attendance Level Warning Stage

- 5.1 The attendance level warning stage will normally be entered into where cumulative absences 5 working days or more working hours, made up of three or more periods in an 18-month rolling period.
- 5.2 However, before deciding whether or not to enter into the attendance level warning stage, the manager must first give careful consideration to the employees overall record of absence in their current role and their entire absence throughout their employment, the reason for absence and likelihood of a sustained return to work along with any discussions held as part of return to work contact or discussion together with any actions previously recorded.
- 5.3 Absences which are as a direct consequence of pregnancy, or through an industrial disease, accident or assault arising out of or in the course of undertaking the duties of the post, will not be included in calculating absence within the attendance level warning stage.
- 5.4 If the attendance level warning stage is entered into, the manager must have previously explained to the employee that their poor attendance level, if not improved, may lead to the issuing of an attendance level warning and have confirmed this in writing to the employee.
- 5.5 Notification of the meeting to consider the issuing of an attendance level warning, that their employment is at risk should be issued within 15 working days of the employee's return to work. The employee will be given 5 working days written notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting. The letter will also state the reason for the meeting, include copies of any supporting documentation that are to be presented at the meeting, and must also advise the employee of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. The timing of the meeting must take into account preschool closure periods (e.g. it would be insensitive to hold the meeting on the last day of a school half term or term).

- 5.6 At the end of the attendance level warning meeting, manager must give careful consideration to all the circumstances surrounding the situation, including any representations made by the employee, their overall attendance level and the likelihood of a sustained return to work before deciding whether or not to issue an attendance level warning. The manager must fully document the reason for their decision.

6 Dismissal

- 6.1 Consideration will be given to the future employment of the employee where:
- (a) during the 12-month period following the attendance level warning being issued further sickness absence has exceeded 2 working days.
- or**
- (b) during a period of continuous absence and there is no reasonable prospect of the employee returning to work.
- 6.2 However, before deciding whether or not to enter into the dismissal hearing stage, the manager must first give careful consideration to the employees overall record of absence in their current role and their entire absence throughout their employment, the reason for absence and the likelihood of a sustained return to work along with any discussions held as part of a return to work contact or discussion together with any actions previously recorded.
- 6.3 If after considering the above the manager decides to enter the dismissal hearing stage they must give the employee 5 working days written notice of the date, time, and location of the meeting. The letter will also state the reason for the meeting, include copies of any supporting documentation that are to be presented at the meeting, and must also advise the employee of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. The timing of the meeting must take into account preschool closure periods (e.g. it would be insensitive to hold the meeting on the last day of a school half term or term).
- 6.4 The Committee must consider all the circumstances of the case including any representations made by the employee or their representative prior to making a decision to dismiss. Such considerations may include:

- (a) whether or not medical and other evidence indicates that acceptable progress is being made towards a return to work, or a reduction in absence in the case of frequent periods of absence;
- (b) in the case of continuous absences, whether a return to work date is agreed, which may be on a structured, phased or flexible basis and can be maintained, with or without on-going support;
- (c) whether reasonable adjustments have been considered and/or made in relation to a disability related absence;

6.5 In exceptional circumstances a decision may be considered to extend the attendance level warning as an alternative to dismissal, however monitoring will continue and it should be made clear to the employee that any further absence will result in a return to another meeting to consider their future employment

7. Appeals

- 7.1 Any appeal against an attendance_level_warning given under the attendance level warning stage must be on the grounds of misapplication of the procedure e.g. incorrect periods of absence taken into account in reaching the decision. The Manager will hear the appeal where the warning was issued by a nominated senior member of staff unless they were involved in the decision making at an earlier stage. The Appeals Committee will hear the appeal where the warning has been issued by the manager.
- 7.2 Any appeal against **dismissal** must be on grounds of misapplication of the procedure (example as above) or that the person making the decision to dismiss failed to adequately take into account any extenuating circumstances. The Appeals Committee will hear any appeal against dismissal, regardless of whether it was the Manager or another Committee of Governors who took the initial decision to dismiss.
- 7.3 The notice of appeal must be in writing, addressed to the manager, and made within 14 calendar days of the date of the letter confirming the notification the issuing of a formal warning or dismissal. The letter **must** include the grounds on which the appeal is being made.
- 7.4 The employee will have a right to be accompanied at an appeal hearing by a trade union representative or work colleague.