



Sickness Absence Policy

Date Reviewed:	September 2025
Next Review Date:	September 2026
Policy Owner:	Mrs Gemma Mitchell
Ratified @ FGB/Committee Name & Date:	Full Governing Board 14.10.2024

Mission Statement

We are committed to providing a supportive, enjoyable and family style environment in which every child is nurtured and encouraged to achieve their potential through a broad-based curriculum and opportunities for developing sporting, dramatic, artistic and musical talents.

Statement of Aims & Objectives

- To enable each child to fulfil their own academic and personal potential.
- To instil in every child the importance of developing personal initiative and to foster in them a belief that they can fulfil their potential in any area of school life.
- To provide a broad based academic and extra-curricular education that is delivered in such a way as to satisfy the learning needs of each and every pupil.
- To help each pupil to develop both a set of Christian values and an understanding and appreciation of other religious beliefs.
- To learn the difference between right and wrong and to appreciate that rights and responsibilities are equally balanced.
- To develop and promote a sense of caring and community between the pupils within the school and the wider community as a whole.
- To instil in each pupil a high degree of self-respect and respect for their fellow pupils, teachers and other adults.
- To prepare each child for the transition to the next stage of their education and to be able to take advantage of any opportunities as they present themselves.



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Safeguarding

Oakhyrst Grange School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. At this school we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe that every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Oakhyrst Grange School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all of our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. This should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

All staff will be asked to complete training annually following KCSIE updates. Further safeguard training will take place throughout the year. All staff must wear their lanyards at all times.

The Safeguarding governor is: Pauline Clark Pauline.clark@oakhyrstgrangeschool.co.uk

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DDSL: Gemma Mitchell (Headteacher) 07786 393228

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1. About this policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this Sickness Absence Policy is to set out our procedures for reporting sickness absence and managing sickness absence fairly.
- 1.2 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.
- 1.3 Any information you provide to us about your health will be processed lawfully and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. We recognise that such data is sensitive and will handle it in a confidential manner.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees. If you have any concerns about any element of this policy, please speak to the Headteacher. All staff are required to comply with these policies and procedures and consistent or deliberate failure to do so, may result in disciplinary action.

3. Who is responsible for this policy?

- 3.1 The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Headteacher.
- 3.2 The Senior Leadership Team has day-to-day responsibility for this policy and you should refer any questions about this policy to them in the first instance.

4. Disabilities

- 4.1 We are aware that sickness absence may result from a disability. At each stage of the sickness absence meetings procedure, particular consideration will be given to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of a job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist a return to work.
- 4.2 If you consider that you are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects your ability to undertake your work, you should inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Any information you provide will be handled in a confidential manner and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

5. Sickness absence reporting procedure

- 5.1 If you are taken ill or injured while at work you should report or be taken to the office to be given permission to leave work if appropriate. The Headteacher must be informed immediately. The Senior Leadership Team should contact the office to make arrangements for anyone who is unwell to be accompanied home or to receive medical treatment where necessary.



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If you cannot attend work because you are ill or injured, you should telephone the Deputy Head as early as possible and no later than 7.30am. The following details should be provided:

- (a) The nature of your illness or injury.
- (b) The expected length of your absence from work.
- (c) Contact details.
- (d) Any outstanding or urgent work that requires attention and if well enough and able to do so, teachers will need to email in cover work.

5.2 This ensures that we are not worrying about your safety and enables the Deputy Head to arrange cover. If your absence exceeds one day you are required to call the Deputy Head on every subsequent day of sickness to update them on your progress. The exception to this may be for absences due to either unexpected or pre-arranged hospitalisation, where daily updates may not be possible or appropriate.

5.3 If someone calls on your behalf, you are required, unless your absence is due to serious illness or injury preventing you from doing so, to follow this up as soon as possible, by calling the office yourself. If you have left a message, you should ring during normal school hours and make arrangements to speak with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Only in exceptional circumstances should someone else make this call on your behalf.

5.4 The Deputy Head (Cover) should ensure that:

- (a) Any sickness absence that is notified to them is recorded.
- (b) Arrangements are made, where necessary, to cover work and to inform colleagues (while maintaining confidentiality).

5.5 You should expect to be contacted during your absence by a member of the Senior Leadership Team to enquire after your health and be advised, if possible, as to your expected return date. If the absence will be long-term absence, such contact will be agreed between the member of staff and the school.

5.6 In the case of long-term absence, particularly involving work related stress and personal mental health issues, it may be more appropriate for contact to be made through your Trade Union representative or an appropriate third party.

6. Evidence of incapacity

6.1 For sickness absence of up to seven calendar days you must complete a self-certification form. The Headteacher/office will give you a copy of this form when you return to work.

6.2 For absence of more than seven calendar days you must obtain a certificate from an eligible healthcare professional e.g. by doctors, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and occupational



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therapists - (a "Statement of Fitness for Work") stating that you are not fit for work and the reason(s) why. This should be forwarded to the Headteacher as soon as possible. If your absence continues, further medical certificates must be provided to cover the whole period of absence.

- 6.3 If your healthcare professional provides a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" you should inform the Headteacher immediately. We will discuss with you any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate your return to work, taking account of your healthcare professional's advice. This may take place at a return-to-work interview (see paragraph 11). If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick leave and we will set a date to review the situation.
- 6.4 Where we are concerned about the reason for absence, or frequent short-term absence, we may require a medical certificate for each absence regardless of duration. In such circumstances, we will cover any costs incurred in obtaining such medical certificates, for absences of a week or less, on production of an appropriate invoice.
- 6.5 If you are undergoing an elective or cosmetic surgery or procedure, for which you will be absent from work, any entitlement to occupational sick pay (as set out in paragraph 8) will be subject to receipt of satisfactory medical evidence. This medical evidence will need to be in the form of a report from your doctor or a specialist confirming that you are undergoing the procedure on medical advice. You may be required to take annual leave for any absence related to a purely elective procedure.

7. Unauthorised absence

- 7.1 Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 7.2 Absence that has not been notified according to the sickness absence reporting procedure will be treated as unauthorised absence.
- 7.3 If you do not report for work and have not telephoned to explain the reason for your absence, we will try to contact you, by telephone and in writing if necessary. This should not be treated as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

8. Statutory Sick pay

- 8.1 You may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you satisfy the relevant statutory requirements. Qualifying days for SSP are Monday to Friday, or as set out in your employment contract. The rate of SSP is set by the government in April each year. SSP is not payable for the first 3 qualifying days (waiting days) and is payable from the 4th qualifying day for up to 28 weeks. Linked periods of incapacity within 8 weeks count towards waiting days. Where SSP is not payable or is ending, the School will issue form SSP1. If you are not eligible for SSP or if your SSP entitlement is coming to an end we will give you a form SSP1 telling you the reasons. Qualifying days are your normal working days (or as otherwise agreed in writing).



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9. Occupational Sick Pay

- 9.1 Subject to compliance with the provisions within your contract of employment and the provisions of this policy, you will be entitled to occupational sick pay as set out within your contract of employment.
- 9.2 If a period of sickness absence is or appears to be occasioned by actionable negligence, nuisance or breach of any statutory duty on the part of a third party, in respect of which damages are or may be recoverable, you must immediately notify the Headteacher of that fact and of any claim, compromise, settlement or judgment made or awarded in connection with it and all relevant particulars that we may reasonably require. If we require you to do so, you must co-operate in any related legal proceedings and refund to us that part of any damages or compensation you recover that relates to lost earnings for the period of sickness absence as we may reasonably determine, less any costs you incurred in connection with the recovery of such damages or compensation, provided that the amount to be refunded to us shall not exceed the total amount we paid to you in respect of the period of sickness absence.
- 9.3 Any employer and employee pension contributions will continue subject to the relevant scheme rules during any period of occupational sick pay or SSP.
- 9.4 The School reserves the right to change the provisions of the School sick pay scheme at any time and in particular if there are alterations to the State scheme or to the statutory sick pay scheme.

10. Medical examinations

- 10.1 We may, at any time in operating this policy, require you to attend a medical examination by either or both an Occupational Health Provider or a doctor nominated by us (at our expense).
- 10.2 You will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with our advisers and the relevant doctor. We will seek your written consent before requesting any medical report and will inform you of your rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988, including your right to see the report before it is sent. Any medical information will be processed under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

11. Return-to-work interviews

- 11.1 For any absence relating to sick leave, we may arrange for you to have a return-to-work interview with the Headteacher.
- 11.2 A return-to-work interview enables us to confirm the details of your absence. It also gives you the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions you may have, and to bring any relevant matters to our attention.



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- 11.3 Where your healthcare professional has provided a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" we will usually hold a return-to-work interview to discuss any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate your return to work, taking account of your healthcare professional's advice.

12. Returning to work from long-term sickness absence

- 12.1 We are committed to helping employees return to work from long-term sickness absence. As part of our sickness absence meetings procedure (see paragraph 13), we will, where appropriate and possible, support returns to work by:

- (a) obtaining medical advice;
- (b) making reasonable adjustments to the workplace, working practices and working hours;
- (c) considering redeployment; and/or
- (d) agreeing a return-to-work programme with everyone affected.

- 12.2 If you are unable to return to work in the longer term, we will consider whether you are entitled to any benefits under your contract.

13. Sickness absence meetings procedure

- 13.1 We may apply this procedure whenever we consider it necessary, including, for example, if you:

- (a) have been absent due to illness on a number of occasions;
- (b) have shown an unusual pattern of absence;
- (c) have discussed matters at a return-to-work interview that require investigation; and/or

- 13.2 Unless it is impractical to do so, we will give you 5 days' written notice of the date, time and place of a sickness absence meeting. We will put any concerns about your sickness absence and the basis for those concerns in writing or otherwise advise why the meeting is being called. A reasonable opportunity for you to consider this information before a meeting will be provided.

- 13.3 If you cannot make a meeting in person at school it will be possible to arrange a flexible home visit option where necessary.

- 13.4 The meeting will be conducted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

- 13.5 You must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. Failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If you or your companion are unable to attend at the time specified you should immediately inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will seek to agree an alternative time. Please note 13.3 with the option to arrange a flexible home visit.



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- 13.6 A meeting may be adjourned if the Senior Leadership Team is awaiting receipt of information, needs to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at a previous meeting. You will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the meeting is reconvened.
- 13.7 Confirmation of any decision made at a meeting, the reasons for it, and of the right of appeal will be given to you in writing within 5 days of a sickness absence meeting (unless this time scale is not practicable, in which case it will be provided as soon as is practicable).
- 13.8 If, at any time, the Senior Leadership Team considers that you have taken or are taking sickness absence when you are not unwell, they may refer matters to be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

14. Right to be accompanied at meetings

- 14.1 You may bring a companion to any formal meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. At any formal sickness absence meeting or appeal, you may be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative. We will also consider a family member or other companion as a reasonable adjustment where appropriate.
- 14.2 Your companion may be either a colleague or a family member. Their details must be given to the member of the Senior Leadership Team conducting the meeting, in good time before it takes place. You cannot bring a legal representative to accompany you at meetings.
- 14.3 Employees are allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion. However, they are not obliged to act as a companion and may decline a request if they so wish.
- 14.4 We may at our discretion permit other companions (for example, a family member) where this will help overcome particular difficulties caused by a disability, or difficulty understanding English.
- 14.5 A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up your position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during a meeting.

15. Stage 1: first sickness absence meeting

- 15.1 This will follow the procedure set out in paragraph 13 and paragraph 14 on the arrangements for and right to be accompanied at sickness absence meetings.
- 15.2 The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting may include:
- (a) Discussing the reasons for absence.
 - (b) Where you are on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last.



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- (c) Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences.
- (d) Considering whether medical advice is required.
- (e) Considering what, if any, measures might improve your health and/or attendance.
- (f) Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure.

16. Stage 2: further sickness absence meeting(s)

16.1 Depending on the matters discussed at the first stage of the sickness absence procedure, a further meeting or meetings may be necessary.

16.2 The purposes of further meeting(s) may include:

- (a) Discussing the reasons for and impact of your ongoing absence(s).
- (b) Where you are on long-term sickness absence, discussing how long your absence is likely to last.
- (c) Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, discussing the likelihood of further absences.
- (d) If it has not been obtained, considering whether medical advice is required. If it has been obtained, considering the advice that has been given and whether further advice is required.
- (e) Considering your ability to return to/remain in your job in view both of your capabilities and our business needs and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to your job to enable you to do so.
- (f) Considering possible redeployment opportunities and whether any adjustments can reasonably be made to assist in redeploying you.
- (g) Where you are able to return from long-term sick leave, whether to your job or a redeployed job, agreeing a return-to-work programme.
- (h) If it is considered that you are unlikely to be able to return to work from long-term absence, whether there are any benefits for which you should be considered.
- (i) Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting(s). This may, depending on steps we have already taken, include warning you that you are at risk of dismissal.

17. Stage 3: final sickness absence meeting

17.1 Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, we may invite you to a meeting under the third stage of the sickness absence procedure.



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17.2 The purposes of the meeting will be:

- (a) To review the meetings that have taken place and matters discussed with you.
- (b) Where you remain on long-term sickness absence, to consider whether there have been any changes since the last meeting under stage two of the procedure, either as regards your possible return to work or opportunities for return or redeployment.
- (c) To consider any further matters that you wish to raise.
- (d) To consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood of you returning to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time.
- (e) To consider the possible termination of your employment.

17.3 Termination will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice.

18. Appeals

18.1 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of any stage of this procedure you may appeal in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to the Headteacher or Board of Governors within 5 days of the date on which the decision was sent to you.

18.2 Unless it is not practicable, you will be given written notice of an appeal meeting within 5 days of the meeting. In cases of dismissal the appeal will be held as soon as possible. Any new matters raised in an appeal may delay an appeal meeting if further investigation is required.

18.3 You will be provided with written details of any new information which comes to light before an appeal meeting. You will also be given a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the meeting.

18.4 Where practicable, the appeal meeting will be conducted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team who has not been previously involved in the case and is senior to the individual who conducted the previous meeting. The member(s) of the Senior Leadership Team who conducted earlier sickness absence meeting(s) will also usually be present. You have the right to bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting.

18.5 Depending on the circumstances, an appeal meeting may be a complete rehearing of the matter or a review of the original decision.

18.6 The final decision will be confirmed in writing, if possible, within one week of the appeal meeting. There will be no further right of appeal.

18.7 The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.



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19. Pregnancy, Fertility & Neonatal Care

Pregnancy-related sickness absence will be recorded separately and will not be used to trigger sickness absence warnings. The school will also support time off for ante-natal care in line with statutory rights. From 6 April 2025, eligible employees have a statutory right to Neonatal Care Leave and Pay; please see our Family Leave Policy for details. We will handle fertility treatment and menopause-related health issues sensitively and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

20. Holiday while off sick

Statutory annual leave continues to accrue during sick leave. Employees may take holiday while off sick (by agreement). Long-term sick employees can carry over up to 4 weeks of untaken statutory leave and must use it within 18 months of the end of the leave year in which it accrued.

This Policy is subject to regular review.