



## **Illness and Sick Pay Policy**

**Reviewed by:**

**Name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

## **Purpose**

The UTC aims to encourage its employees to maximise their attendance at work whilst recognising that they may, from time to time, be unable to come to work for short periods due to sickness. This policy sets out how we will manage both short and long-term sickness absences from work.

Whilst we understand that there will inevitably be some short-term sickness absence amongst employees, we must also pay due regard to the needs of the organisation. If an employee is frequently and persistently absent from work, this can damage efficiency and productivity, and place an additional burden of work on colleagues. By implementing this policy, we aim to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of our organisational needs and the genuine needs of employees to take occasional short periods of time off work because of sickness.

## **Application of the Policy**

This policy applies to both teaching and support staff that are employed on a contract of at least one year.

## **Procedures for notification of absence if you are ill, unfit or unable to work - Guidelines for employees**

If you need to be absent from work due to illness you must comply with the following procedures. If due to the nature of your illness you are unable to do this in person, it would normally be expected that someone else contacts the school on your behalf.

Notify the Vice Principal with responsibility by telephone if you are ill [or unable to attend work for any other reason]. Notification should be as early as possible as and in any event no later than 7.30am after your normal start time. You should state the reason why you cannot attend work, and how long you think the absence will last. You must also phone the Vice Principal by 7.30am on each day that you are absent until either you return to work, or are issued a sick note by a doctor. When you have been issued with a doctor's certificate you must phone the Vice Principal to notify them of the duration of the note and then send the sick note into work. In the case of long terms absence (extending beyond one week) ensure that you provide regular medical certificates covering the your absence (without gaps). If your absence extends beyond the duration of any doctor's certificates you must again phone in daily to work, as above.

Complete and submit a self-certification form on return to work for all periods of sickness absence of up to five working days. Where your absences total more than 10 days in any consecutive 12 months you must meet with the Vice Principal to discuss your reason for absence. One of the purposes of this discussion will be to consider whether your line manager can provide you with any support which could facilitate attendance at work in the future (for example if your absence was in any way work related).

Where your absences total more than 15 days in any consecutive 12 months you must agree on request to be interviewed and/or examined by UTC's occupational health adviser and to authorise the release of any medical report from the adviser to the Company. The UTC will meet all costs associated with any such examination and/or medical report.

In all cases of absence teaching staff are asked to consider whether they feel able to set work for the classes that they miss. This would be appropriate in some cases (e.g. broken leg) but it is at the discretion of the teacher.

Depending on the circumstances and duration of your absence you are encouraged to keep in touch with your line manager on a regular basis, as appropriate.

## **Procedures for recording absences**

The Vice Principal is responsible for staff absence is expected to monitor and manage their employees' attendance and absence. As a matter of routine the following actions must be taken each time an employee has an unplanned absence from work.

Record when an employee phones in to notify that he/she is unable to come to work due to sickness. This includes recording when the call was made, the stated reason for the absence and how long the employee expects to be absent. If the absence is not notified in accordance with the guideline for employees, then a record of available information should be made. The Vice Principal should follow this up with the member of staff and also notify the Principal.

Conduct routine 'return to work interviews'. Each time an employee returns to work following a short-term absence, his/her line manager should speak to the employee about the absence and the reason for it in a fair and factual way. This approach will alert the employee to the fact that the situation is being monitored and will potentially deter casual absences. The manager should be supportive towards the employee and, where appropriate, seek to identify ways in which to assist the employee to improve his/her attendance in the future.

Be alert to patterns, for example the persistent Monday or Friday absentee. If a pattern is identified, or the absences total more than 10 days the line manager should put his/her observations to the Vice Principal.

The Vice Principal will meet with the employee so that the employee has the opportunity to provide an explanation. The line manager should, however, remain open-minded and not jump to any hasty conclusions about the employee's absences.

The Vice Principal will try to establish, through investigation and discussion with the employee, the underlying reasons for frequent absences. Until the underlying cause is identified, an appropriate and effective remedy will be impossible to identify.

The Vice Principal will check whether absences are in part because of personal or family problems. If this is the case, a reasonable degree of tolerance and sympathy should be shown towards the employee, as the problems may be unavoidable. The line manager should be supportive, whilst at the same time explaining clearly to the employee that continuing frequent absences from work are a cause for concern.

The Vice Principal will check whether the employee's absences are in any way work related, for example as a result of workplace stress. If the problem is work related, the line manager should take prompt steps to remove or reduce the factor that is causing the employee's problem where this is appropriate.

If absences total more than 15 days the matter must be referred to the Principal. He/she may seek medical advice, if appropriate, to determine whether there is any underlying medical cause for the employee's frequent absences. This may include requiring the employee to be examined by an occupational health advisor.

The Principal may then set reasonable targets and time-limits for improvement in attendance and ensure that the employee is committed to achieving them.

Before taking any formal action in respect of an employee who has had frequent absences from work, the Principal should check the employee's absence record to gain an accurate assessment of the number of days' absence he/she has had, the number of separate occasions he/she has been absent and whether his/her record is tangibly worse than that of other employees in the UTC.

Where appropriate, the Principal will refer the matter to the Governing Body. Subject to the agreement of the Governing Body, a warning may be given to the employee of the consequences of continuing unsatisfactory attendance, i.e. that he/she may eventually be dismissed.

Confidential records of all absences, discussions and medical certificates will be kept to make sure that the records clearly identify the reasons for an employee's various absences.

### **Sick Pay entitlement**

You will be entitled to sick pay on the following basis:

**In the first year (after six months\*):** one month's full pay and one month's half pay

**In the second year:** two months full pay and two months half pay

**In the third and subsequent years:** three months full pay and three months half pay

*\*during your probation period, you will be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay only*

The Principal in conjunction with the Governing Body may decide to extend the terms of sick pay, depending on the nature of the illness.

Payment is, however, conditional upon compliance with the UTC's procedure for notifying the Vice Principal of your absence, completing a self-certification form on return to work and, if required to do so, participating in a 'return to work' discussion with your line manager. Where the nature and/or frequency of absence are such as to give cause for concern, you may also be asked to attend an interview/examination with the UTC's occupational health adviser.

Absences will be monitored and, in cases where the level of absence gives cause for concern, there will be a formal review. Every effort will be made to support employees who may be suffering ill health; however, persistent poor attendance may result in formal action which may result in dismissal.

### **Absence for medical appointments**

Employees should try to arrange medical appointments so as to minimise the impact on their work commitments. Requests for time off for such appointments should be made in accordance with the staff leave of absence policy.

## **Long Term Sickness**

Whilst the foregoing relates to both short and long-term absences from work, the UTC recognises that there will be circumstances when an employee may need to be absent for an extended period of time. In such circumstances, the UTC will keep each case under review and provide support to assist the employee's return to work as soon as possible consistent with medical advice. If, however, the absence continues beyond three months, the position will be reviewed more formally and where the prospects of a return to work within an acceptable timeframe are limited, it may become necessary to consider termination of employment in the interests of the operation of the organisation. In these circumstances, the UTC will:

- review the employee's absence record to assess whether or not it is appropriate to consider dismissal;
- consult the employee;
- obtain up-to-date medical advice;
- advise the employee in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility;
- meet with the employee to discuss options and consider the employee's views on continuing employment;
- review if there are any reasonable adjustments that might be made or other jobs that the employee could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss;
- allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss the employee on grounds of long-term ill health; and
- arrange a further meeting with the employee to determine any appeal;
- following this meeting, inform the employee of its final decision;
- act reasonably towards the employee at all times.

Absences from work will be regarded as frequent if, during any period of 12 consecutive months, an employee is absent from work for 2 or more working days, or on three separate occasions.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed biennially.