

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Sickness Absence Policy

Agreed by Governors: October 2024

To be reviewed: October 2025

*As one family working together
to be the best that we can be,
we live, love and learn with Jesus.*

Introduction

The Director of Learning and Culture recommends to Governing Bodies that schools adopt a number of principles, which should govern the way sickness absence is monitored, and management action considered in certain circumstances.

The Principles

The principles adopted at St Augustine's are designed to ensure that we take proactive measures to effectively manage sickness absence whilst also having regard to the need to support employees who are sick and treat them with sympathy and understanding. These principles are:

- all employees are entitled to expect fair and reasonable treatment including taking account of equal opportunity considerations
- all staff that suffer from serious or chronic ill health problems necessitating long periods of absence from work should be treated sensitively and with sympathy
- staff are entitled to a working environment and to systems of work that do not create health problems and in particular do not impose an undue level of stress
- sickness absence needs to be managed fairly and systematically to ensure the continued provision of high quality education
- all employees should be aware of and adhere to the procedures relating to sickness absence.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role for employees:

- attend work when fit to do so
- comply with the school's sickness absence reporting procedures
- ensure medical advice and treatment, where appropriate, is received as quickly as possible in order to facilitate a return to work
- keep the Headteacher informed of any significant developments
- provide the school with a completed self-certification form after a period of sickness absence from 4 to 7 calendar days and a doctor's note if the absence continues after 7 consecutive days

Role of the Headteacher

The role of the Headteacher is to manage the attendance of teaching and support staff. This will be achieved by:

- ensuring that, where appropriate and justifiable, quick and decisive action is taken with employees who do not comply with the sickness absence notification procedures
- acting fairly and consistently in applying the appropriate procedures
- ensuring that accurate sickness records are maintained and absences returns are quickly and accurately completed, both for monitoring and sick pay purposes
- reviewing each employee's sickness record
- using the school's sickness records to develop and implement policies, which will reduce the health risks to employees
- ensuring that all new staff are made aware of the rules and procedures for sickness absence and follow every aspect of the sickness absence notification procedures
- establishing clear action plans for a member of staff where it is decided that action is justified
- seeking advice from Personnel and Staffing division as appropriate.

The Role of the Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body is to ensure that:

- the school has a policy on this issue
- there is a clear procedure for reporting absence
- the Headteacher carries out his or her responsibilities
- it monitors the absence of the Headteacher and applies the appropriate procedures.

The Role of the Director of Learning and Culture

The role of the Director of Learning and Culture in reducing levels of absence is to assist schools as follows:

- ensuring that sickness absence information is regularly monitored and utilised in developing Health & Safety policies, which will lead to, improved sickness records
- ensuring that the management of sickness is given a high priority and school are made aware of the action they need to take
- ensuring that city council policies/procedures on management of sickness are recommended for implementation by schools
- providing advice and assistance on individual cases as requested, including where appropriate referral to the Occupational Health Service used by the LA so that an employee's medical position can be established.

Procedure for Reporting Sickness Absence

The following procedure must be adhered to for the first seven days of sickness absence:

- On the first day of absence the employees should notify the Headteacher as soon as possible. If the Headteacher is not available, then the Deputy Headteacher should be informed stating the nature and the probable duration of the illness. Notification should be by a telephone call from the employee unless there are clear reasons why this cannot occur. If the Headteacher finds that an employee does not use the agreed method of notification, then s/he is entitled to ask for an explanation. If not satisfied by the explanation, the Headteacher can insist that

the employee contact her/him personally. All information will be treated confidentially.

- if the employee returns to work after one, two or three days' absence, normally no further action is necessary, except to ensure that the return to work is noted
- if the employee is absent for more than three days, the Headteacher must be notified of the reason for the continued absence. Notification should be by telephone but could be by letter. Employees sick for more than three working days must complete a self-certification form. Self-certification forms should be completed to support the first seven calendar days of absence.
- If the employee is away sick for more than seven calendar days, s/he must obtain a medical certificate from her/his doctor on the eighth day of absence and send this to the Headteacher.

Note

If, during the first seven calendar days of the employee's absence, the doctor provides a medical certificate, this should be sent immediately to the Headteacher.

- the employee should ensure that subsequent doctor's statements are submitted to cover her/his absence if it extends beyond the period covered by the initial statement
- where a period of absence straddles a weekend and/or Bank Holiday, then these days count as sickness absence.

Special Leave

Where permission is given for staff to take special leave for private or domestic reasons, eg because of childcare responsibilities, this will not be subsequently linked to sickness absence. Special leave should always be sought in advance and the Headteacher has discretion as to whether to agree to it with or without pay. If special leave requests are excessive, they will be refused where unreasonable.

Time Off for Medical Appointments

Where an employee needs to attend for a routine appointment with a doctor or dentist, then as far as possible it is reasonable to expect these to be arranged at a time outside of school hours. However, urgent appointments may be necessary during school time and most hospital appointments do not offer flexibility. In these cases, the Headteacher should satisfy her/himself of the need for the individual to have time off from school and the absence is not counted as sickness absence.

LA Procedures

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School will follow the recommended procedures set out by the LA for the following:

- absence monitoring interviews
- frequent short term absence
- long term absence
- return to work/pastoral interviews
- phased return to work
- referrals to Occupational Health