



**National
Autistic
Society**



**Vanguard
School**

STAFF ABSENCE POLICY

Version	Date	Distribution
2.0	28 th May 2019	NASAT Vanguard Project Group

1.0 Introduction

This policy applies to all teaching and support staff who are employed to work at the school. The Principal may delegate responsibility for dealing with different stages of this procedure to another senior member of staff. The Chair of Governors shall act as nominated person in managing any absence of the Principal.

2.0 Aims

This Policy is designed to:

- promote staff health, safety and welfare
- secure effective and efficient utilisation of all staffing resources
- sustain continuity and stability in the classroom, and by doing so avoid undue disruption to pupils' education
- explore reasons for staff sickness absence in order to prevent or minimise the possibility of the absence recurring
- address any underlying staff welfare problems
- ensure appropriate medical advice is obtained where applicable
- achieve and maintain optimum staff attendance levels
- sustain harmonious staff relations
- comply with good employment practice
- adhere to the law

3.0 Principles

NAS Vanguard School will:

- never ignore sickness absence
- ensure that short term absences do not go unnoticed
- help to determine if action may be necessary where absence is work-related
- keep accurate and up to date employee attendance records
- develop & maintain an atmosphere that encourages people to come to work
- deal with each person as an individual by getting to know them which will inter alia assist in exercising managerial judgment
- handle attendance problems promptly and sensitively in a supportive manner
- treat all staff fairly, consistently and maintain appropriate confidentiality

- keep Governors informed about the school's sickness absence rate

4.0 Role of the Executive Principal

The role of the Executive Principal (and other members of the management team where appropriate) is to manage the attendance of teaching and support staff and the effective operation of the absence policy. This will be achieved by:

- acting fairly and consistently in applying the appropriate parts of this policy
- ensuring that accurate absence records are maintained
- ensuring return to work interviews are held on the first day back to work following every absence
- monitoring and regularly reviewing absence data
- ensuring all staff are made aware of the school's approach to the management of staff absence, and that they follow every aspect of the absence notification procedures
- ensuring that employees are made aware that advice and support is available outside the school, including occupational health services

5.0 Role of the Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body is to ensure that:

- the school has an effective policy and procedure for the management of staff absence
- management responsibilities are properly carried out under the policy

6.0 Role of Staff

The role of each employee is to:

- comply with the school's policy on staff absence
- ensure medical advice and treatment, where appropriate, is received as quickly as possible in order to facilitate a return to work
- keep in regular touch and inform the Executive Principal, or nominated person (or Chair of Governors in the case of an Executive Principal/Headteacher absence), of any significant developments affecting the period of absence

7.0 Avoiding Disability Discrimination

In accordance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and any subsequent amending or substituting legislation including the Equality Act 2010, the Governing Body must endeavour to accommodate an employee in her or his current post if they are absent or may become absent because of a disability as defined by a relevant Act.

The Governing Body will not discriminate against disabled employees or prospective employees, or persons who have had disabilities in the past. To avoid possible discrimination against a disabled person in managing absence the school will establish whether the employee has a disability as defined by the relevant Act and to identify which, if any, absences are related to the disability. This may involve seeking medical advice and consulting with the employee in confidence. Where disability is identified, advice will be sought from the school's HR provider before exploring options and deciding on the best course of action.

8.0 Appointments

Successful applicants will complete a pre-employment occupational medical questionnaire which will be examined by the school and if necessary shall be sent to a qualified Medical Adviser who will carry out screening appropriate to the job.

The outcome of this medical screening shall be reported back to the Executive Principal. In accordance with legislation nobody who is medically unfit to teach or be employed in a support capacity shall be confirmed in employment at the school.

9.0 Procedure

All staff shall be made aware of the following procedure which must be followed when they fall ill.

- employees must telephone the Firstcare absence line as soon as possible on their first day of absence (or arrange for someone else to ring in if unable to do so personally) and they will then notify the school of their absence
- brief details of the reason for absence and, if possible, some indication of a return to work date should be given. Firstcare have trained medical professionals that will take this information.
- employees must telephone the Firstcare absence line to close the absence before returning to work
- the position in relation to current workload should be discussed in order to help with cover or supply teacher arrangements

- if the absence is the result of an accident or an injury sustained at work, then this information must be made known and the employee should indicate if the incident has been reported, when it was reported, and to whom
- self-certification should be completed for absences lasting between 3 and 7 calendar days and staff are required to complete the process for cover work on every day of absence, including half days, where their medical condition permits
- qualified medical certification must be provided by all staff where sickness absence lasts beyond 7 calendar days and the Doctor's certificate must be forwarded to the school office to arrive on or before the eighth day of absence
- if more than one Doctor's certificate is required for any period of absence, the employee must keep the school informed of developments on a weekly basis

10.0 Work-related Absence

Where absences are due to work related injury or ill-health:

- an additional reporting system e.g. risk assessment should be triggered under the school's Health and Safety policy
- appropriate steps shall be taken to investigate the circumstances and action taken, where reasonably practical, to prevent recurrence

11.0 Return to Work

For both frequent intermittent absence and long-term absence, return to work interviews shall be conducted by the Executive Principal, or nominated person, on each return. The degree of formality and length of the interview will depend on the circumstances. If the staff member is rarely on sick leave the interview is likely to be brief. If, however, the member of staff is returning to work after a succession of frequent intermittent absences, or after a long-term absence, the interview will be more structured and may also involve support from the school's HR provider.

12.0 Medical Suspension (Directed Medical Absence)

Managing absence will be handled promptly and sensitively under this policy and it is recognised that each employee's needs and circumstances will be different. Where there is a genuine concern and belief that the employee's continued presence at work may constitute a hazard, either to the individual concerned, to pupils, or to both, an immediate referral to the school's Occupational Health Adviser, with suspension on full pay pending the outcome of the referral, is likely to be necessary.

Any non-urgent decision to refer an employee to an Occupational Health Adviser shall not be acted upon before the employee has been advised of this decision, been given the reason for it and has given their express consent.

13.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by Governors and Executive Principal.