



The Queen Katherine School Multi Academy Trust

ATTENDANCE AND WELLBEING POLICY

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it from time to time.

Committee	MAT Board
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Document Control Sheet

The information in the table below details earlier versions of this document with a brief description of each review and how to distinguish amendments made since the previous version date (if any)

Version Number	Amended by	Purpose	Approved by Trustees (date)
1	THO	Original	October 2021
2	THO		

Attendance and Wellbeing Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy has been developed to promote the health and wellbeing of all employees and to improve attendance and minimise absence effectively. The Trust values the contributions of all employees and aims to maximise employee attendance to achieve our objectives as outlined within our School Development Plans.

The following procedure is designed to establish a framework for the effective management of staff attendance in schools. It aims to enhance the delivery of education through improved cost efficiency, while taking into account both the welfare of employees and the requirements of individual educational establishments.

This procedure shall apply to all teaching and support staff who are employed to work within the Trust.

Headteachers may delegate responsibility for dealing with different stages of this procedure to another senior member of staff depending on reporting arrangements within the school and the specific circumstances of individual absences. The Chair of Governors shall act as nominated person in managing any absence of the Headteacher except where, in his / her absence, the Vice Chair may also act.

Where the underlying reason for ill health is pregnancy related, including postnatal complications or delaying return after maternity leave, different procedures may apply. In such circumstances, advice should be sought from the nominated person in school.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Trust has a duty to manage its services in the most cost effective and efficient manner. It is committed to the aim of maintaining health, safety and wellbeing for its employees as far as practicable, while recognising that there may be circumstances where it is necessary to manage absence to secure full attendance at work.

Whilst the Trust appreciates that absence cannot usually be avoided, all staff absence has an impact on the provision of good education in the school and colleagues.

This policy is based on the general principles below and will:

- Maximise employee attendance, engagement and performance at work.
- Promote employee health, safety and welfare, encouraging and supporting employees to manage their own health, safety and wellbeing and to take responsibility for their attendance at work
- Secure effective and efficient utilisation of all staffing resources
- Sustain continuity and stability in the classroom, and by doing so avoid undue disruption to students' education
- Explore reasons for employee absence in order to prevent or minimise the possibility of the absence recurring
- Address any underlying employee welfare problems
- Ensure occupational health advice and other appropriate medical advice is obtained
- Achieve and maintain optimum employee attendance levels
- Sustain harmonious employee relations
- Comply with good employment practice and adhere to the law.
- Never ignore sickness absence.
- Ensure that short-term absences do not go unnoticed.
- Ensure prompt action is taken if the absence is work related.

- Keep accurate, up to date, employee attendance records.
- Develop / maintain an atmosphere that encourages people to come to work.
- Deal with each person as an individual – getting to know them will assist in exercising managerial judgment.
- Handle attendance problems promptly and sensitively, in a supportive manner.
- Treat all staff fairly and consistently.
- Keep governors informed about the school's sickness absence rate.

3. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Role of the Headteacher

The role of the Headteacher and line managers is to manage the attendance of teaching and support staff and the effective operation of the attendance management process. This will be achieved by:

- Acting fairly and consistently in applying the appropriate parts of this procedure.
- Ensuring appropriate contact is maintained with absent staff
- Ensuring that accurate sickness records are maintained.
- Ensuring Attendance Support meetings are held when health review points are met. The degree of formality and length of the meeting will depend on the circumstances.
- Monitoring and regularly reviewing sickness absence in school.
- Ensuring all staff are made aware of this procedure for the management of staff attendance, and that they follow every aspect of the sickness absence notification procedures.
- Ensuring that employees are made aware that advice and support is available outside the school, including from occupational health services, trade unions and professional associations.

Role of the Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body is to ensure that:

- The school effectively implements the Trust's policy and procedure for the management of staff attendance.
- Management responsibilities are properly carried out under the procedure.

Role of Line Managers

The role of each line manager is to:

- Maintain contact with the employee throughout the absence and keep a note of all conversations and actions
- Liaise with the Trust's HR Manager to refer the employee to the Occupational Health Provider as appropriate.
- Support the employee through the absence and make reasonable adjustments if necessary.
- Organise support and absence management meetings
- Provide the employee with the action plan and agree targets for either returning to work or for improving their absence levels with relevant occupational health advice, as appropriate.
- Attend appeals if necessary

Role of Employees

The role of each employee is to:

- Comply with the school's sickness notification procedure. (Section 6 below)
- Ensure medical advice and treatment, where appropriate, is received as quickly as possible in order to facilitate a return to work.
- Maintain regular contact as agreed with their line manager (or the next level of management if the line manager is absent or the absence is due to the manager)
- Attend occupational health appointments as necessary
- Attend support meetings/ absence management reviews as necessary
- Complete actions and targets as outlined in the action plan from the absence management meetings
- Keep in regular touch and inform the Headteacher, or nominated person (or Chair of Governors in the case of a Headteacher), of any significant developments affecting the absence.

4. AVOIDING DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, the Governing Body shall endeavor to accommodate an employee in his/her current post if he / she is absent or may otherwise become absent because of a disability as defined by the Act. The Governing Body shall not discriminate against disabled employees or prospective employees, or persons who have had disabilities in the past.

In seeking to accommodate and / or re-deploy staff under this procedure, the governing body shall obtain such advice and support from external agencies as may be appropriate under all the circumstances.

In seeking such accommodation, consideration shall be given (normally in consultation with the employee) as to whether reasonable adjustment(s) might be made to the job, the working hours and/or the working environment. For example, the duty to make reasonable adjustments arises where a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of the employer, or any physical feature of premises occupied by the employer, places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled. An employer has to take such steps as it is reasonable for it to have to take in all the circumstances to prevent that disadvantage. In other words, the employer has to make a reasonable adjustment. Where a duty arises, an employer cannot justify a failure to make a reasonable adjustment.

To avoid possible discrimination against a disabled person in managing sickness absence it is necessary to 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 will necessitate seeking medical advice and consulting with the employee. Where disability is identified, advice should be sought from the school's Occupational Health provider before exploring options and deciding on the best course of action.

5. PRE-EMPLOYMENT HEALTH SCREENING – MEDICAL CLEARANCE

Following an offer of employment, successful applicants shall complete a pre-employment medical questionnaire which, in the event of conditions being disclosed, shall be sent to the school's Occupational Health provider who will carry out screening appropriate to the job. The outcome of this medical screening shall be reported back to the Trust's HR Manager. No-one who is medically unfit to teach or be employed in a support capacity shall be confirmed in employment at the school.

6. SICKNESS NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

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

- Employees must ring in **no later than 7:30am** on their first day of sickness and notify the Cover/Officer Manager of their absence. Employees must also contact their line manager before their start time to notify of their absence. Brief details of the reason for absence and, if possible, some indication of a return to work date should be given. The position in relation to current workload should be discussed in order to help with cover arrangements.
- In exceptional cases where an employee is incapacitated, a representative may telephone on their behalf.
- Text or email communication is not acceptable. Please note, all absences must be reported, directly to the nominated person. In cases where it has been necessary to leave a recorded message, employees should call back the same day to check if any further information is required to ensure cover in their absence.
- **Teaching staff should phone again by 2.00pm on the day of absence to advise if they are likely to return to work the following day.**
- Managers or appointed nominee should maintain contact with the employee throughout the absence and keep a note of conversations and actions.
- If the absence is the result of an accident or an injury sustained at work, then this information must be made known. The employee should indicate if the incident has been reported, when it was reported and to whom.
- All staff are required to complete a self-certificate to cover every day of absence for the first seven calendar days, including half days. Doctor's Certification must be provided by all staff where sickness absence lasts beyond 7 calendar days. The Doctor's certificate must be forwarded to the HR department or line manager, to reach them 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 nominated person informed of developments on a weekly basis. Certificates should be submitted sequentially and without undue delay. Certificates must cover the whole period of absence. In cases where it is not possible to submit a certificate in time for the expiration of the previous one, employees must inform their line manager or Human Resources of the content of the new certificate.
- If an employee is absent with a mental health condition (including work related stress) or if the absence is likely to last longer than 4 weeks then the employee may be referred to occupational health. Once an occupational health report has been received managers should discuss any recommendations with the employee and put in place any reasonable adjustments.
- The Trust is keen to identify opportunities to support improved attendance. Employees are encouraged to speak their line manager or Human Resources if issues either in or out of work are negatively impacting on attendance,
- Support is available via Human Resources, Trade Union representatives and Professional Associations for employees experiencing health related difficulties. Please see information on sources of support (Appendix F). The Stress Management Policy may be helpful (Appendix B).

7. HEALTH-RELATED APPOINTMENTS

There is an expectation that routine medical appointments should be made in the employee's own time. However, we accept that sometimes appointments are prescribed. The maximum number of paid appointments in an academic year is *normally two of no more than two hours in duration.

For staff who are registered as disabled, the maximum number is *normally four of no more than two hours in duration. Any additional appointments or those lasting longer than two hours may be taken as unpaid.

For medical conditions that may require urgent or ongoing investigations/treatment, agreement for time off should be sought in school as soon as possible. A **Request for Absence form** (available from Human Resources) should be completed by the employee, signed by the line manager and passed to the Cover/Office Manager to be processed.

* For more serious conditions or disabilities, discretion will be applied by the Headteacher.

8. WORK RELATED ABSENCE

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

- an additional reporting system should be triggered under the school's Health and Safety procedures.
- appropriate steps shall be taken by the Health and Safety lead to investigate the circumstances and action taken, where reasonably practical, to prevent recurrence.

9. HEALTH REVIEW POINTS/ INFORMAL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT MEETINGS

Once a health review point is reached, an **Informal Attendance Support meeting** shall be conducted by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or a nominated person. The degree of formality and length of the meeting will depend on the circumstances.

Health review points will be measured over a ROLLING year not an academic year.

Health review Points

- Sporadic sickness absence in excess of 10 working days (including uncertified or self-certified absence) in any 12-month period, accrued over 3 periods of absence or more.
- Periods of uncertified or self-certified sickness absence of 3 periods or more in 4 months.
- Any levels of absence which show a trend or pattern.

10. MEDICAL SUSPENSION (DIRECTED MEDICAL ABSENCE)

Managing absence will be handled promptly and sensitively under this Procedure 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 students, or to both, an immediate referral to the school's Occupational Health Provider, with suspension on full pay pending the outcome of the referral, is likely to be necessary.

The following principles should be followed:

- Undertake an immediate Risk Assessment of the dangers.
- Discuss the situation with the employee (in person if possible / appropriate) to obtain as much information as possible, and to seek their views / opinions.
- If appropriate / possible involve a Trade Union Representative at an early stage.
- Explain to the employee the proposal to refer to the Trust's Occupational Health Provider and the purpose of the referral
- Discuss the immediate options with the employee (pending receipt of medical advice) and determine the appropriate immediate action. This might include:
 - interim adjustment of duties
 - temporary alternative duties
 - sickness absence
 - 'Directed Medical Absence' i.e. suspension from duty
- Complete the referral to the Occupational Health Provider as soon as possible. Occupational Health will then contact the employee to arrange a meeting and explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Review action / decision and undertake a further Risk Assessment with the employee concerned in light of the medical information / advice. Possible outcomes might include:
 - immediate return to work
 - reasonable adjustment in the job / workplace
 - alteration of duties (temporary or permanent)
 - redeployment / transfer to other duties (temporary or permanent)
 - sickness absence (for medical treatment, etc.)
 - continued Directed Medical Absence for medical treatment / further reports etc.
 - ill health retirement
 - dismissal under the Capability Procedure (as a last resort)
- Undertake further Reviews / Risk Assessments as necessary, ensuring that there is adequate consultation with the employee.

Note:

(i) In most circumstances the employee should be signed unfit for work by their GP and normal sickness absence provisions apply. Directed Medical Absence should only apply in urgent circumstances, and for a short period only until the proper medical position can be ascertained. It is not intended that this procedure will provide for long term absence on full pay and entitlements to sick pay will not be exceeded by virtue of this procedure.

(ii) One of the aims of this procedure is to ensure adequate consultation with the employee BUT there may be circumstances where it will not be appropriate to accept or agree with the employee's views/wishes. The final decision rests with the Headteacher/Chair of Governors.

11. MANAGING PERSISTENT INTERMITTENT SICKNESS ABSENCE

Where an employee has regular occasional days off due to sickness – often reported to be the result of a series of unrelated minor ailments – the procedure set out in Appendix One shall be followed.

12. MANAGING LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

Where an employee is absent from work for a considerable number of weeks or months – often as the result of a serious health problem – the procedure set out in Appendix Two shall be followed.

13. MANAGING ABSENCES OF MIXED DURATION

In cases where an employee has had occurrences of both short and long-term absences, all available information will be considered before deciding which procedure is most appropriate to follow.

Appendix One (short term absences)

The Trust acknowledges that there is a difference between short-term absence (normally single day or up to several days at a time e.g. for colds, upset stomach, headaches) and long term sickness absence where an employee is absent continuously for a number of weeks.

This section sets out how the Trust will manage employees who have a number of short periods of absence.

1. Informal Attendance Support Meeting

If an employee reaches one of the health review points (detailed above), an Informal Attendance Support meeting will be scheduled by HR and will be with the Headteacher or an appropriate nominated person.

The aim of the Informal Attendance Support meeting is to support the employee to attain the required levels of attendance. It will include a discussion of the underlying reasons for sickness absence and agreement on the way forward. This may include a referral to Occupational Health, supportive action to address any work related issues identified, or the removal of the option to self-certify absences.

NB: To avoid discriminating against a disabled person, it is important to distinguish between general sickness and disability related sickness. Employees are encouraged to advise their manager of disability or potential disability related matters as soon as possible so that disability related absence can be taken into account when determining whether a support meeting is required at this stage.

Each Attendance Support Meeting will be different depending upon the individual circumstances of each case. It is important however, in relevant cases, that the employee appreciates that further absence could lead to formal action. The general structure for Attendance Support Meetings is summarised in Appendix E.

2. FORMAL PROCESS - STAGE ONE - Absence Management Meeting

If an employee's short term absence does not improve, the employee will be invited to a formal Absence Management Meeting **unless** there is good reason not to do so.

The employee will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the Absence Management Meeting. The notice will be in writing and will give details of the purpose of the meeting which will normally be to improve attendance to a more acceptable level. The letter will also detail the employee's right to representation (by a Trade Union representative or a work-based companion) and the possible outcomes of the meeting. Any relevant documentation should be enclosed.

The employee can submit medical evidence from his/her own GP or other medical practitioner. NB GP or other medical practitioners' reports should only be obtained by Occupational Health.

It is recognised that there may be individual circumstances surrounding each absence and these will be taken into account.

During the meeting the following will be discussed:

- the employee's absence history
- the causes of the persistent absences
- why the absence has had an impact on the department/School
- the improvements that will be expected
- what support can be provided
- what action will now be taken

The meeting will be minuted and a first formal notice of concern will be issued to the employee where appropriate. This will remain current on the personnel file for the **next 6 months**.

The target will ordinarily be to establish an improvement over previous attendance. The specific circumstances will be considered in the absence management Meeting, with a definition of what will constitute an acceptable level of improvement in that particular case being clarified.

If the target is not met and there is a further period of absence immediate action will be taken. The Trust will not be required to wait until the end of the review period. Instead the employee will immediately move to a Stage Two Meeting.

The following additional measures will be considered:-

- Occupational Health Referral/assessment. Employees will be expected to assist the Trust's HR Manager in completing the referral but will not have to disclose any confidential medical information.
- Provision of support where appropriate, as determined by Occupational Health
- Removal of the option to self-certify absences

3. FORMAL PROCESS – STAGE TWO – Absence Management Meeting

The employee will be invited to a meeting if:

- the employee fails to meet the targets set at Stage One; or
- has 2 'lapsed' (after 6 months) formal notices of concern within the last 3 years.

The meeting should take place as soon as possible and this will normally be within 14 calendar days of the employee's return to work.

The employee will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the Absence Management Meeting. The notice will be in writing and will give details of the purpose of the meeting which will normally be to improve attendance to a more acceptable level. The letter will also detail the employee's right to representation (by a Trade Union representative or a work based companion) and the possible outcomes of the meeting. Any relevant documentation should be enclosed.

The employee can submit medical evidence from his/her own GP or other medical practitioner. NB GP or other medical practitioners' reports should only be obtained by Occupational Health.

It is recognised that there may be individual circumstances surrounding each absence and these will be taken into account.

During the meeting the following will be discussed:

- the employee's absence history
- the causes of the persistent absences
- why the absence has had an impact on the department/School
- the improvements that will be expected
- what support can be provided
- what action will now be taken

If appropriate, a second formal notice of concern will be issued. That warning will remain current on the personnel file for no more than 12 months. The employee's attendance will be reviewed regularly during that period.

A new attendance target will be set. The target will ordinarily be to establish an improvement over previous attendance. The specific circumstances will be considered at the meeting with a definition of what will constitute an acceptable level of improvement in that particular case being clarified.

If not already implemented, the option to self-certify absence may be removed. If it is removed, the employee will need to have a medical certificate for each absence during the period of the warning otherwise the absence will be considered to be unauthorised and will lead to disciplinary action.

If not already completed, the employee will also be referred to occupational health so that an assessment can be made as to whether there is any underlying cause to the repetitive absence.

If attendance does not improve, the manager should take immediate action, rather than waiting for the end of the review period.

4. FORMAL PROCESS – STAGE THREE– Absence Management Meeting

The employee will be invited to a meeting if:

- the employee fails to meet the targets set at Stage Two; or
- has 3 'lapsed' (after 6 months) formal notices of concern within the last 3 years.

The employee will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the Absence Management Meeting. The notice will be in writing and will give details of the purpose of the meeting which will normally be to improve attendance to a more acceptable level. The letter will also detail the employee's right to representation (by a Trade Union representative or a work based companion) and the possible outcomes of the meeting. Any relevant documentation should be enclosed.

The employee can submit medical evidence from his/her own GP or other medical practitioner. NB GP or other medical practitioners' reports should only be obtained by Occupational Health.

It is recognised that there may be individual circumstances surrounding each absence and these will be taken into account.

During the meeting the following will be discussed:

- the employee's absence history
- the causes of the persistent absences
- why the absence has had an impact on the department/School
- the improvements that will be expected
- what support can be provided
- what action will now be taken

If appropriate, a Final Notice of Concern will be issued to the employee where a target of no more than two further short term absences in each of the next 2 years will be set.

The employee should be warned at this stage that failure to maintain improved attendance may result in a formal fourth stage meeting at which one of the outcomes could be dismissal.

If not already implemented, the option to self-certify absence will be removed. The employee will need to have a medical certificate for each absence during the period of the warning otherwise the absence will be considered to be unauthorised and will lead to disciplinary action.

If not already completed, the employee will also be referred to occupational health so that an assessment can be made as to whether there is any underlying cause to the repetitive absence.

If attendance does not improve, the manager should take immediate action, rather than waiting for the end of the review period.

5. FORMAL PROCESS – STAGE FOUR Consideration of Dismissal

If an employee fails to achieve the targets agreed following the issue of a Final Written Warning, the matter will be passed immediately to the Trust's HR Manager who will organise for a disciplinary meeting to be chaired by the Headteacher.

The employee will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the Stage Four Absence Management Meeting. The notice will be in writing and will give details of the purpose of the meeting. The letter will also detail the employee's right to representation (by a Trade Union representative or a work based companion) and the possible outcomes of the meeting. Any relevant documentation should be enclosed.

The employee should be made aware that one possible outcome of the meeting is that they may be dismissed.

The employee can submit medical evidence from his/her own GP or other medical practitioner. NB GP or other medical practitioners' reports should only be obtained by Occupational Health.

It is recognised that there may be individual circumstances surrounding each absence and these will be taken into account.

During the meeting the following will be discussed:

- the employee's absence history
- the causes of the persistent absences
- why the absence has had an impact on the department/School
- why the employee did not meet any previous targets set
- any advice received from Occupational Health
- what actions have been taken to support the employee in trying to reach an acceptable level of attendance
- the implications of such a decision in light of the Disability provisions in the Equality Act 2010 and other employment legislation
- any representation made by the employee

If the decision is taken to dismiss an employee, (s)he will be informed verbally and receive written confirmation of the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment will terminate – allowing for the appropriate period of notice – and given information on their right of appeal.

6. APPEALS PROCESS

Employees have the right of appeal at each formal stage, if they consider the sanction is too harsh, or consider that the Policy has not been properly applied. The employee has the right to be accompanied by either a Trade Union Representative or work based companion.

Appeals will be heard by a MAT Headteacher, or, where this is not possible, an appropriate alternative MAT representative. The person hearing the appeal must not have been involved earlier in the Attendance Management process in relation to the employee making the appeal.

A letter registering an appeal must be sent by the employee to the HR or Business Manager within 10 working days of the date of notification of the decision, stating the grounds of the appeal and any new information. A date set for the Appeal Meeting will be set as soon as possible thereafter.

If the decision to dismiss is upheld, the employee will be informed verbally and receive written confirmation of the decision. The letter will include the date on which the employment will terminate and arrangements for the payment of notice. There will be no further right of appeal.

7. FAILURE TO ATTEND

If the employee or his/her companion cannot attend any meeting arranged under this procedure, the employee should inform the Trust's HR Manager immediately and an alternative time for the meeting will be arranged.

Employees are expected to make every effort to attend any meeting arranged under this procedure, and failure to attend without good reason may be treated as misconduct in itself.

If an employee fails to attend without good reason, or are persistently unable to do so (for example for health reasons), a decision may be taken in the employee's absence based on the available evidence. Before this course of action is taken, the employee will be given a final opportunity to attend a meeting and will be offered the opportunity to make written submissions and/or to submit medical evidence for consideration instead.

Appendix Two (long term absence)

Long term absence is defined as absence lasting 4 weeks or more. In many long term absence situations, the employee will recover and return to work. However this may not always be the case. There are a number of possible outcomes when managing long term absence.

I. SUPPORT WHILE THE EMPLOYEE IS ABSENT

If absence is longer than a week

It is expected that an employee will keep the Trust informed about their absence, especially if a significant change occurs.

Normally, an employee should keep in touch with and update their manager, or deputy, on a weekly basis by telephone. Alternatively the employee may prefer the manager to make contact with them at pre-arranged times for these updates.

There may be circumstances when it would be medically detrimental for the manager to contact the employee, or where the individual employee may wish to be contacted by an alternative manager. In such cases, the employee should contact the Trust's HR Manager to discuss this as soon as possible. Similarly, where appropriate the Trust may wish to contact a third party, such as a family member, where the employee cannot make personal contact.

Employees who continually fail to keep in touch may lose their entitlement to sick pay and may be considered under the Disciplinary Procedure.

In normal circumstances, the manager will make contact at their earliest opportunity, to offer support in cases of absence. The level and type of contact thereafter will be considered carefully by the manager, taking into account the employee's condition.

Contact with an employee can include:

- Writing to the employee offering their support.
- Providing updates on school news.
- Arranging a workplace or home visit, usually within the first 4 weeks of the absence
- Inviting employees to social and other non-work related events.

NB An individual may also welcome contact from colleagues to support them through their absence.

2. MEETING WITH MANAGER / HOME VISIT

If the employee has been signed off for more than 4 weeks, the Trust's HR Manager or nominated person may make contact either by telephone or by letter to arrange a meeting to see what can be done to help.

Ideally this meeting should take place in the workplace, as this helps the employee to keep in touch with the workplace and prevents isolation. Where it is not possible for the meeting to occur in the workplace (e.g. where the medical condition prevents this), a home visit, or meeting at another appropriate venue should be arranged. Employees are responsible for ensuring that arrangements for travelling to/from meetings are not detrimental to their health.

If an employee wishes to be represented or accompanied (e.g. by a trade union representative, or a family member) at a meeting they should request this when the manager, or the person with whom the absent employee has been dealing, makes contact. Representation by anyone other than a trade union representative will be at the complete discretion of the Trust.

At these meetings, the manager will:

- Keep it informal and friendly
- Be sensitive to the employee's feelings
- Discuss the employee's absence
- Explain the process for referral to Occupational Health
- Discuss alternative support that might be available
- Agree further review dates with the employee. Depending on the nature of the incapacity the manager may wish to meet the employee monthly for an update and to assess how best to proceed.
- If and when appropriate, discuss the possibility of part time/reduced hours for a phased return based on medical need (for periods of longer than 4 weeks Occupational Health advice is needed to ensure an effective process).
- Provide copies of any relevant documents

3. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL ASSESSMENTS

Occupational Health Advice may be sought at any time but a referral will usually be made after an absence which has lasted 4 weeks or if the absence is due to any mental health condition. The only exception is when having sought advice, the manager is told that a referral is not needed (e.g. if an employee has a broken leg without complications).

The manager will complete a Referral Form and must provide as much information as possible, and ask the questions which they want answering so that Occupational Health can then provide a detailed response. Occupational Health will contact the employee to arrange an appointment and explain the purpose of the meeting.

Employees may be asked to attend a variety of medical assessments in addition to seeing Occupational Health (e.g. Independent Medical Examination).

Failure to co-operate with referral to Occupational Health, completion of the Access to Medical Records declaration form, or to attend medical assessments would mean that the Trust would have to make decisions based on the information available. This could have a detrimental effect on the level of support that could be given. Failure to attend appointments without good reason may result in employees losing their entitlement to Sick Pay and may result in disciplinary action. The employee may also be invoiced for the cost of the Occupational Health appointment if the school is charged for non-attendance.

4. CASE CONFERENCES

In some cases, the longer that an employee is absent, the more difficult it is for them to return, even when they have resumed fitness. Therefore, it is important that managers do not allow a situation to drift along indefinitely but actively manage it in a supportive and constructive way.

If an employee has been **absent for between six and eight weeks** and due to the reason for absence, it is not clear that they will be back at work soon, the manager must consider all possible ways forward.

If the date for a return to work is not clear, a case conference will be held with those who are involved in managing and advising on the employee's absence. This may not apply to conditions such as a broken leg or hysterectomy when Occupational Health will already have advised on the normal duration of absence.

The case conference will normally take place in the workplace but a neutral venue may be considered if appropriate. The absent employee will be invited to attend, and will be entitled to bring a Trade

Union Representative or work based companion, to identify the best way to progress from both employer and employee perspectives, based on the medical prognosis.

Resolving the absence could be achieved by one or more of the following:

- Consideration given to resolving the health issue.
- Consideration given to amending, adapting and changing aspects of the current job.
- Consideration given to redeployment.
- Consideration given to retraining.
- Any other workable options.

Employees should welcome a 'case conference' as it will give all interested parties the opportunity to fully understand the current situation, the various perspectives on the absence and to attempt to gain a mutually beneficial resolution.

It is recognised that it will not always be possible to achieve a resolution at this stage and further conferences and support may be appropriate throughout a more extensive period of absence.

Regular contact between the employee and manager must be maintained throughout the duration of the absence, to avoid the individual feeling isolated, and to ensure that all possible options are explored on an ongoing basis to try and enable the individual to return to work. The manager and employee must also keep in contact with Occupational Health, so that advice and support can be obtained on any significant changes to the employee's medical condition which may affect their options for redeployment/return to their job.

5. WORK REINTEGRATION AND RECOVERY

Managers will do all they can to help an employee return successfully to work.

If an employee becomes disabled, or an existing disability becomes worse, every effort will be made to keep an employee in service.

The following options are available to help achieve work re-integration whether an employee is disabled or not:

- Return to existing post, possibly with temporary or permanent adaptations/adjustments.
- Phased return to work either on reduced hours or on light duties, for a 2-week period (extendable on the specific advice of Occupational Health). The phased return will be recorded as a phased return. Where the employee is on nil or half pay, their pay will be made according to the hours worked on the phased return.
- Re-deployment to an alternative post (which is currently vacant, it would not be possible to create a new post) potentially with retraining and adjustments to the post.

In addition, managers will:

- Consider paying for retraining.
- Support an eligible employee in accessing any benefits to which (s)he may be entitled.
- Undertake a job specific induction if required. This may include a risk assessment and medical examination.
- Ensure that they provide the appropriate support to facilitate an early return to full duties e.g. regular one to one meetings and Occupational Health.
- Support the employee with any adaptations and other reasonable adjustments for those employees who are classed as disabled under the Equality Act 2010.

6. CASE REVIEW MEETING

If despite the best efforts of those involved with the absence, redeployment/return to the current job is not possible, the manager will have to consider whether the individual can continue in employment.

The manager will ask the employee to attend a Case Review Meeting to consider whether there are any further actions which the Trust can take to assist the employee in continuing in employment or whether employment should be terminated due to the employee's incapability to undertake their duties effectively because of ill health.

As part of the preparation for the Case Review Meeting, the manager must obtain up to date advice from Occupational Health.

Consideration of eligibility for payment of pension benefits is separate from making a decision about terminating employment. However, if an employee who is a pension scheme member wishes the Trust to explore ill health retirement, it is helpful for all parties to know whether the individual meets the criteria to qualify for an ill health early retirement pension before the Case Review Meeting is held, and that exhaustive attempts at redeployment have been made.

The Case Review Meeting will be heard by the Headteacher. The employee will be given at least 5 working days' notice in writing of the date, time and place of the Meeting. Employees will be advised of their right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a work colleague.

The employee and/or their representative will be given the opportunity to state their case. Others who have been involved in trying to facilitate a return to work (either into the employee's own job or via redeployment) for example, the employee's line manager, or the Trust's HR Manager will provide information on what actions have been taken.

When reaching a decision about whether or not to dismiss an employee on capability grounds, the Headteacher will:

- Consider latest advice received from Occupational Health
- Be mindful of the likelihood of an eventual return to work e.g. after an operation.
- Consider the length of the absences and any periods of good health in between
- Consider the impact of the employee's absence the School.
- Consider the implications of such a decision in light of the Equality Act 2010 and other such employment legislation
- Review what actions have been taken by the Trust to try to enable the employee to continue in employment
- Consider representations made by the employee and/or their representative

This list is not exhaustive and the weight attached to each will depend on the particular circumstances of each case, whilst balancing the needs of the employee and of the Trust.

Where the Headteacher decides that capability dismissal is the appropriate outcome, the employee should be given their notice, and informed of their right of appeal.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICY

1. SCOPE OF POLICY

This document sets out the Trust's policy on encouraging and enabling all staff to maintain a healthy balance between their work and other interests and responsibilities in their life.

The Trust aims to foster a working environment that protects the physical and mental well-being of its staff and is committed to creating workplaces that give staff the best opportunities to manage their time and commitments.

2. RATIONALE

- A good work-life balance is central to staff satisfaction, effectiveness and ultimately to student learning. It is recognised that it will be reflected in standards and achievements across the school.
- Work-life balance has a mutual benefit to all (individual, school, students, society)
- Job satisfaction is derived from a work-life balance
- Satisfactory work-life balance can reduce absenteeism, labour turnover and stress

3. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is about helping staff combine work with their personal life and commitments.

The Trust and governing body have responsibility for the well-being of all staff. However, everyone must take responsibility for their own work-life balance and be aware of the role model they are setting for others. The governing body has a statutory responsibility to ensure, so-far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees. Work life balance has to be seen in the context of managing the school/costs, whilst achieving the job to the best of one's ability. Work-life balance is a dual responsibility.

4. MANAGING A WORK LIFE BALANCE

By taking steps to improve the working environment, the Trust hopes to enable individuals to cope with the demands and pressures of work.

The Trust recognises that employees have different expectations or needs at different times in their life and as such individuals will have different needs at different times. It is also recognised that changes in legislation, changes in the labour market and technology require a flexible approach to work-life balance.

All staff within the school will be supported in attaining a balanced lifestyle where they can achieve their best at work and manage other areas of their life effectively.

The strategies to support a balanced lifestyle will include:

- Clear identification of duties and responsibilities relating to individual staff roles, reviewed annually through performance management Meetings, to aid them in the delivery of their work and managing the expectations of the job

- Continually looking at existing and new practices to make systems as efficient and time saving as possible
- Working with staff to agree and provide appropriate training to enable them to do their jobs competently and effectively and within normal hours
- Involving staff in agreeing and setting realistic targets for the staff and the school
- Providing a system for and encouraging efficient and effective working practices, and discouraging staff from working excessively long hours
- Involving, encouraging and enabling staff to actively manage their own careers and personal development
- Consulting with staff on decisions relating to their employment, encouraging them to seek third party advice, e.g. to confer with their Union representatives, where appropriate
- Recognising commitments outside the workplace
- Granting special leave, as appropriate, when staff are faced with an emergency outside work
- Providing opportunities, where possible, for flexible working practices
- Providing suitable workplace facilities for breaks and relaxation (as far as is reasonable and practicable)
- Providing suitable equipment to enable them to work as effectively as far as budgetary constraints allow

The Trust is open to suggestions, new initiatives or ideas from staff, however staff must appreciate the constraints the Trust / school may be working with and a refusal of an idea or request may be for business reasons for example:

- Burden of additional costs
- Inability to reorganise work load amongst existing staff
- Detrimental impact on quality of performance
- Detrimental impact on the school

Work Related Stress Management Policy

I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 The Queen Katherine School Multi Academy Trust places a high value on maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees and it recognises that its duty of care extends to mental health as well as physical health at work.
- 1.2 It is committed to providing a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and well-being of all its employees.
- 1.3 The Trust is committed to implementing a stress management policy for all employees throughout the organisation. This includes improving the organisational environment through effective and sensitive management, enabling individuals to cope successfully with the demands and pressures of work, and providing support for employees whose health and well-being are affected by stress.

2. POLICY AIMS

- 2.1 To develop and implement procedures to manage problems that occur within the workplace and to support individuals who are suffering from stress.
- 2.2 To increase awareness of stress and methods to combat it.
- 2.3 To offer practical support to staff in managing stress in themselves and others.
- 2.4 To monitor procedures and outcomes, and to annually assess the effectiveness of the policy.

3. DEFINITION OF STRESS

- 3.1 There is no universal definition of stress. However, the Health and Safety Executive has defined stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work” (2016). In its positive manifestation, stress can act as a motivational and enabling force, in its negative format, however, stress becomes harmful and disabling and therefore a potential cause of physical and mental illness.
- 3.2 Pressures can arise from an individual’s personal life as well as from work and people vary in their capacity and ability to cope with different types of pressure. Some individuals will recognise that their health is affected and will seek help; others will not recognise or acknowledge that they are stressed although it may be apparent to their manager and work colleagues. Although in itself, stress is not an illness, there is evidence that stress can lead to mental and physical ill-health.
- 3.3 All work has its pressures. We all vary in our capacity to cope with different types of pressure. Some pressure, even when high, can be motivating and challenging. Pressures that we can respond to effectively are likely to lead to job satisfaction. However, pressures at a level we cannot cope with, even in some cases too little pressure or challenge.

4. STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH STRESS

4.1 *Preventative Measures at an Organisational Level*

The Trust will:

- (a) establish, promote and maintain a culture of consultation, participation and open communication throughout the organisation, particularly during times of change
- (b) raise the awareness of staff about stress and its causes;
- (c) provide opportunities for employees to maintain and promote their health and well-being.

4.2 *Identification and Management*

The Trust will:

- (a) make information available for all staff on stress awareness to help them to handle pressures they may encounter, and to recognise stress when it occurs in themselves and others;
- (b) manage workplace pressures, which may affect employees by undertaking regular risk assessments on the hazards that are seen to be causing stress and taking appropriate action to reduce stress. Participation in risk assessments by employees is to be encouraged;
- (c) consider the use of a recognised whole school stress/well being audit tool
- (d) undertake annual Performance Management reviews with each member of staff to ensure that the work role and tasks match the relevant job descriptions, and to ensure that job descriptions are up to date.

It is in the interests of all to recognise the possible signs of stress. These may be:

- (a) persistent or recurrent moods – anger, irritability, detachment, worry, depression, guilt and sadness;
- (b) physical sensations/effects – aches and pains, raised heart rate, increased sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, skin or sleep disorders;
- (c) changed behaviours – difficulty concentrating or remembering things, unable to switch off, loss of creativity, making more errors, double-checking everything, loss of interest in sex, eating disorders, increasing use of tobacco, alcohol, coffee, drugs;
- (d) for example, when stress is experienced over long periods, high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, anxiety, long-term depression.
- (e) poor work performance – less output, lower quality, poor decision-making;
- (f) worsened relationships at work, such as conflict between colleagues, poor relationships with students/parents.
- (g) related to staff attitude and behaviour, such as loss of motivation or commitment, poor time-keeping, working longer hours but with diminishing effectiveness.

5. SUPPORTIVE MEASURES FOR EMPLOYEES

5.1 The Trust will:

- (a) identify internal and external sources of assistance for employees with stress. This will include a confidential counselling scheme for all staff who requests it;

- (b) provide access to stress management courses;
- (c) consider a 'Healthy Workforce' strategy designed to equip staff who are suffering from stress to access a range of activities, which will encourage a healthy lifestyle;

6. SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

6.1 *Employee Responsibilities*

- (a) All individuals should recognise the importance of training and development as a means of developing competence and well-being in the job. Individuals should take an active part in determining their own training needs in conjunction with the person responsible for his/her performance management.
- (b) If individuals believe that they are suffering from stress in their personal life, it is advisable to contact the Headteacher or their line manager. If they are struggling with work-based duties then they should contact the line-manager to discuss the issues. If this is not possible then they may wish to contact the HR Manager or the Business Manager for further advice or assistance.

Employees are reminded that support is also available from the relevant Trade Unions and professional associations.

Depending on the specific circumstances, employees may wish to access support through some of the organisations noted at the end of this policy document:

- (c) The use of a formal system of performance appraisal offers an opportunity to have a one-to-one discussion about work and to explore whether people in your team are experiencing excessive pressure at work.

6.2 *Managerial/Supervisor Responsibilities*

The Headteacher and line managers have a particular responsibility to be aware of the legal duty as an employer and also to be aware of how to recognise the early warning signs of stress in their employees. It is important for the success of this policy that those with management responsibilities play an active role in its implementation. The responsibilities include:

- ❖ regular workplace risk assessments which must include consideration of stress related factors and action taken to minimise the effects of risk upon the individual and the organisation;
- ❖ ensuring that newly appointed employees receive appropriate health and safety induction training which includes the process for reporting concerns which may ultimately lead to stress related illness;
- ❖ observing and evaluating work performance;
- ❖ providing information on the policy and where possible helping individuals to overcome their problems before job performance is affected;
- ❖ becoming familiar with this policy and attending stress management training;
- ❖ ensuring that all absences are appropriately and consistently recorded
- ❖ ensuring that all absences which may have been caused by stress are acted upon sympathetically and with understanding;
- ❖ act with sensitivity and tact when dealing with individuals that they suspect may be suffering from stress, or who have been diagnosed as such;
- ❖ ensuring that staff have access to the Occupational Health Provider at an early stage in the development of a stress related illness;
- ❖ contacting the Human Resources Manager promptly when a GP medical certificate is received which indicates that absence is possibly stress related.

- ❖ ensuring that staff within the management team have received training covering all aspects of their work, including health and safety.

7. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER POLICIES

7.1 Recruitment and Selection

- (a) The full range of tasks and demands of the job should be set out clearly in the job description and should be fully discussed in the Meeting process. Areas of potential pressure should be identified.
- (b) The Trust reserves the right to seek information about a candidates' sickness and absence record for the previous two years. This must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- (c) Pre-employment health screening procedures must be followed.
- (d) For posts where it is recognised that a higher than normal level of pressure and stress exists, candidates' tolerance to stress should become a more important factor in the selection process.

7.2 Induction

- (a) All employees must receive full and appropriate induction into their jobs. Starting a new job can be a stressful time and a planned induction will help eliminate any concerns.
- (b) Within the induction programme, the stress policy, and the procedure for reporting concerns must be discussed.

7.3 Attendance Management

- (a) As part of performance review meetings with staff, all absences should be discussed with the staff member and underlying reasons identified. Although not an absolute requirement, Managers may wish to consider illnesses that manifest during the early part of a break away from work. These can be an indicator of stress release during these times.
- (b) The line manager will arrange appropriate communication mechanisms with an absent employee, upon receipt of a GP certificate which identifies a stress related illness, to discuss any underlying causes and to arrange support and assistance if the absence is likely to continue. This is a very sensitive area and further advice can be obtained from the Human Resources Manager or the Health and Safety Team.

7.4 Return to Work

Before the employee returns to work, the Headteacher or nominated person will agree a planned return to work with the member of staff. This planned return should include identifying any changes to the working conditions and must identify the underlying causes and the measures to be put in place to reduce the risk of a reoccurrence. Any such measures should be recorded and fully implemented by those involved.

7.5 Training and Development

Many employees experience stress through feeling that they are not adequately trained for their existing job and especially when they move into a new or a changed role. The identification of appropriate training and support activities should be agreed at the beginning of a new post and reviewed not less than annually in line with the Performance Management process.

7.6 Performance Management policy

All staff participate in performance management reviews, sometimes referred to as appraisals. The aim of the performance management review is to provide support to staff to enable them to perform their role effectively and to identify and address any relevant training or development needs.

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

I. PURPOSE

This policy is a positive strategy to address alcohol and substance related problems/abuse at work. It sets out the approach to the identification, support arrangements and management action which the Trust will take.

It aims to help protect the employees from the dangers of substances and alcohol abuse and to encourage those with an abuse problem to seek help.

This policy is not intended to intrude upon the privacy of individuals. However, the Trust is concerned where health of behaviour impairs the conduct, safety or work performance of employees and recognises that the misuse of alcohol or substance abuse may be a cause of such impairment.

The abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances respects no boundaries of sex, status and occupations and this policy applies to all employees.

2. DEFINITIONS

A drug is any substance (not food) which, introduced into the body, creates a change in perception and/or in mood and/or how the body functions.

Substance abuse means the possession and/or use of prohibited and illegal drugs, e.g. heroin, or cocaine or the misuse of legally prescribed substances e.g. tranquillisers or sleeping pills.

This policy applies to all drugs listed under The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Alcohol abuse means that the consumption of alcohol by an employee is adversely affecting their work performance and relationships at work. There are two categories:

- i. **Dependent Drinkers:** are those are physically and/or psychologically dependent on alcohol and this continually or repeatedly interferes /impacts on their work.
- ii. **Non Dependent Drinkers:** are those whose over-indulgence in alcohol results in socially unacceptable or dangerous behaviour and impacts upon their ability to carry out their duties at work.

3. LEGAL POSITION

- **The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** – The Trust has a duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees.

If a school knowingly allows an employee under the influence of alcohol or other substance to continue working, and therefore placing themselves and others at risk, the Trust could be prosecuted.

- **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** – The Trust has a duty to assess the risks associated with the work and its possible effect on the employee.
- **The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971** – It is an offence to possess, supply, offer to supply or produce controlled drugs without authorisation. If the Trust knowingly permits the production or supply of any controlled drugs or certain other activities to take place on Trust premises it could be committing an offence.

- **The Road Traffic Act 1988** – A person who is unfit to drive through alcohol/drugs is guilty of an offence. The same applies to someone in charge of a vehicle who is unfit through alcohol/drugs.

If a manager or colleague is aware of an employee who possesses or is dealing in drugs inside or outside of work, he/she must report the matter to the Headteacher who will then report the matter immediately to the police.

4. THE TRUST APPROACH

The Trust recognises that it may be very difficult for employees to admit to themselves or others that they have an alcohol or substance abuse problem. They may feel that there is a stigma attached and be fearful of what will happen if they admit to any problem.

The Trust is committed to offering support and rehabilitation to employees who recognise that have an alcohol or substance abuse problem.

The general approach will be supportive and to treat alcohol and substance abuse as a health issue where an individual admits to having a problem and co-operates with a treatment programme to help themselves. If an employee does not co-operate with a treatment programme, the school may address the issue through the disciplinary/capability route.

However, being unfit for work through alcohol or substance abuse may be addressed through the disciplinary and dismissal or capability procedures.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers have health and safety responsibilities for their team, service users and the public. They are required to take appropriate action when assessing if an employee poses a potential risk at work e.g. sending an employee home if they judge that they are unfit to work due to alcohol or other substances. Further information on what a manager needs to do is set out later in this procedure.

Managers need to be mindful of lunchtime drinking by members of their team and also need to be satisfied that employees who have been drinking the night before work are fit for work the following morning.

Employees who know or believe that they may have an alcohol or substance abuse problem are encouraged to take responsibility and seek help voluntarily. Their first contact maybe their GP, or one of the local voluntary services. Within the school, help is available from their line manager, the Trust's HR Manager or Business Manager. The Occupational Health Provider can provide medical advice and information in support of treatments and/or rehabilitation to both the manager and the employee.

Colleagues should not knowingly condone or ignore alcohol or substance abuse as it may adversely affect their colleague or others. If an individual believes that a colleague may have an alcohol or substance problem they are encouraged to address the issue directly and not to cover up for the person who may have a problem as this will, in the longer term damage the person.

If a colleague feels uncomfortable about speaking with the person themselves, they should alert the appropriate manager to the situation, or seek the support of their trade union in bringing the concerns to the attention of the manager. It is in the interest of that employee to be offered help as soon as possible, as prompt action carries the best hope of effective and successful treatment.

6. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROVIDER

The Occupational Health Provider (OHP) provided medical advice and guidance to help sustain people in employment or support their return to work and can be accessed by a management referral. If a manager has any suspicion that a member of their team has a problem and would like advice on how to proceed, they should contact the Trust's HR Manager in the first instance.

The OHP also provided a Counselling Service to which the employee may be referred if appropriate.

Where an employee acknowledges that they may have a problem, a management referral to Occupational Health must be made and the employee should also be encouraged to seek help from their GP or a specialist agency.

7. SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Pre-Employment Medical Screening

All employment with the Trust is subject to pre-employment medical screening. The type of screening depends on the type of job. Existing employees who are moving to a different job are also screened. The Trust does not routinely screen applicants for signs of alcohol or substance abuse.

Alcohol in the Workplace

Consumption of alcohol in the workplace is strictly prohibited when there is a requirement to supervise students. A Headteacher may agree in advance that it is acceptable for a specific occasion, e.g. Christmas/Retirement celebrations etc. where students will not then be supervised. However employees are responsible for ensuring that they remain fit to return home safely afterwards.

Employees who undertake transport duties during and outside of the working day must avoid any consumption of alcohol and illegal drugs. Failure to comply would result in the disciplinary procedure being invoked and this may result in dismissal.

Prescribed Medication

If an employee has been prescribed medication by their GP, which has side effects, that may affect their work, they must inform their line manager. Otherwise, this could lead to an accident or injury to themselves or someone else. The manager should find out about any potential side effects and carry a risk assessment to identify any changes in working practices or responsibilities that may be necessary. Advice is available from the Occupational Health Provider.

Illegal Drugs

The possession, supply or use of illegal drugs in the workplace is strictly prohibited. Any employee who is found to possess, supply or use them at work will be subject to the disciplinary Procedure which may result in dismissal.

Confidentiality / Data Protection

Employees with an alcohol or substance abuse problem have the same rights to confidentiality and support as they would if they had any other medical or psychological condition.

Signs of Substance and Alcohol Abuse

Signs of substance and alcohol abuse are not always obvious and may be confused with other conditions or problems. Bear in mind the possibility of substance or alcohol abuse when the following signs are noticed:

- **Attendance Records** unexplained or frequently taken absences patterns of absence, e.g. frequent Monday or Friday absences leaving early lateness (especially after lunch) increased short-term sickness absence

- **Behavioural Changes** irritability, depression, confusion etc.
abnormal fluctuations in mood, concentration and energy
deterioration in relationships with colleagues, customers or
management deterioration in personal appearance / personal
hygiene
- **Performance** unexpected changes in work performance
difficulty in concentrating work requiring increased effort
taking more time to complete tasks problems with
remembering instructions increased mistakes
- **Accident Levels** number of accidents or near misses increased
- **Conduct / Capability** any particular conduct / issues

Remember - all these signs may be caused by other factors, e.g. stress and should be regarded only as indicators that an employee **may** be abusing substances or alcohol. See the Work related stress section of the Attendance and Wellbeing policy for further guidance on stress issues.

Symptoms of excessive alcohol can be similar to the effects of a range of medical conditions e.g. diabetes and epilepsy. If a manager suspects an employee has been drinking/taking a substance and may pose a risk, even if consumption is denied, appropriate action should be taken.

8. WHAT SHOULD A MANAGER DO?

A manager should, in consultation with the Headteacher, send an employee home if they judge the person to be unfit for work due to a suspected intake of drugs/alcohol. Do not allow the individual to drive, but arrange a taxi/lift from a colleague/other appropriate means and if necessary, ensure that there will be someone at home to make sure they do not cause themselves an injury. An employee who has been sent home should be contacted to find out why they were unfit for work.

If a manager believes that an employee has an alcohol or substance abuse problem, they should concentrate on unsatisfactory work performance and proceed with caution **unless** they have clear evidence of a problem. Accurate records of instances of poor performance or other problems should be kept, and advice taken from the Trust's HR Manager and Occupational Health.

If the manager has **clear evidence of problems listed in the section above which they consider may result from an alcohol or substance abuse problem** they should initially discuss this with the employee in private. (Whilst there would not normally be any rights of representation at this informal stage the employee may feel more comfortable if they can bring along a colleague to support them.)

The Manager should:-

- Discuss the employee's unsatisfactory performance, conduct or behaviour; focus on clear examples
- Make clear the Trust's required standards of performance, conduct and behaviour
- Ensure that the employee understands these standards
- Ask for the employee's reasons for the poor performance/conduct/behaviour, and ask whether it could be due to a "health problem", without specifically mentioning alcohol/drugs in the first instance.
- Try to identify if there are any work-related causes e.g. are they struggling with the job?
- If appropriate, discuss the alcohol and substance abuse policy with them, and the support that is available, encourage the employee to seek help from their GP or OHP

- Tell the employee that the Trust requires his performance, conduct or behaviour to be improved to an acceptable standard and that failure to do so may lead to formal disciplinary/capability action
- Agree with the employee what follow-up action is to be taken, including offering support, carrying out risk assessments
- Arrange regular meetings to monitor progress and review actions.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

The manager must carry out a risk assessment of the employee's work place, duties and responsibilities and if necessary, decide what action to take to remove the risk or protect individuals.

If this involves adjusting or removing the employee from certain duties, this should be done in consultation with that employee, so that they fully understand the reasons for the action, the likely duration of any action and the consequences of the action. Advice should also be sought from OHP.

The Risk Assessment should be regularly reviewed in light of changing circumstances and action/adjustments made accordingly.

10. TREATMENT

Where an employee acknowledges that they have a problem, the manager should refer them to OHP, so that the manager can receive information to help them manage the situation.

If an employee who is receiving treatment needs to be absent from work, it will be regarded as normal sickness, and will be paid in accordance with the Sick Pay Scheme. Consideration will be given to the individual circumstances in applying the Attendance and Wellbeing policy in respect of triggers for follow up action.

If rehabilitation or treatment requires an extended period of absence, the employee will normally return to their existing job or equivalent work. However, in exceptional circumstances, it may be in both the schools and the individual's interests for the person to redeploy to suitable alternative employment where available.

11. RELAPSE

There may have to be a limit on the level and duration of the support provided, e.g. where progress is not being made or if a relapse occurs. Managers are advised to seek advice from the Trust's HR Manager and OHP in these cases. There may be more instances where supportive measures and agreements have to cease and more formal action is taken. This will not occur without first notifying the individual that the lack of demonstrable progress/relapse means that the more formal action is needed.

12. DISCIPLINARY/ CAPABILITY ACTION

If an employee is offered help (e.g. counselling, treatment) and refuses the help or the help is unsuccessful, he/she should be treated as for any other disciplinary/capability problem, whichever is judged appropriate.

It may also be necessary, where either the alcohol or substance abuse directly impacts upon the nature of the job, or, the employee refuses to co-operate with any action taken as a result of the Risk Assessment to proceed to formal disciplinary or capability procedures.

If a disciplinary or capability investigation is already underway this process should be continued.

Where alcohol or substance abuse has a direct impact on the nature of the employment such as working with children or vulnerable adults or with machinery, it may also be necessary to proceed straight to formal disciplinary or capability procedures.

Dismissal for **off duty misuse of drugs or other substances** may not be fair unless employment was adversely affected, the school's reputation was brought into disrepute or the conduct was considered to render the employee unsuitable to continue in their employment. This may include childcare or working with vulnerable adults or, where there is potential for / or unsupervised access to these groups, or, where the conduct is prejudicial to the Trust's interests, reputation or integrity. These are illustrative examples only and not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Smoke Free Policy

1. AIM

To create a Smoke free environment.

2. OBJECTIVES

- * To provide a Smoke free school environment for everyone.
- * To provide young people with a consistent message regarding tobacco.

3. RATIONALE

- * Smoking is the single most preventable cause of premature death and ill health in the UK.
- * Second Hand smoke – ‘breathing other people’s tobacco smoke’ causes at least 1,000 people to die a year. It has been shown to cause lung cancer, heart disease and cause the onset of asthma, chest and ear infections and cot death in children. It also leads to over 50 children being admitted to hospital per day. 80% of smokers take up the habit as teenagers with 450 children starting smoking every day. (ASH)
- * The Government’s ‘Choosing health – making healthy choices,’ places restrictions on smoking within the workplace.
- * The school, under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), has a duty of care to provide a healthy working environment.
- * Everyone has the right to a smoke-free environment.
- * Schools have a major role to play in health education and prevention.
- * Young people need to receive consistent messages and require non-smoking role models within the school. It has been shown that the biggest factor affecting youth smoking is prevalence of adult smoking and young people’s exposure to seeing smoking. (ASH, 2004)

4. RESTRICTIONS ON SMOKING WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

- * Smoking, including E-Cigarettes is NOT permitted in any part of the schools premises, including kitchens, within the entrance area to the school or on land adjacent to the school building (car park, garden areas, walkway etc.) where this forms part of the school premises.
- * The enforcement of this total smoking ban will be the responsibility of all designated responsible persons within the school. The school’s disciplinary procedure will apply for dealing with employees who breach the smoking ban at work.

Employees who raise genuine concerns about breaches of this policy will be protected from victimisation.

INFORMAL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT MEETINGS

Informal Attendance Support Meetings will usually cover the following:

- Details (dates, number of occurrences and reasons) of the absence/s will be summarised.
- The employee will be given the opportunity to provide any additional information.
- Where the sickness notification procedure was not followed, the employee will be reminded of the required process.
- The employee will be encouraged to raise any issues in or out of work, which may have contributed to the absence/s.
- Opportunities to support the employee in their initial return to work, or to maintain improved attendance will be discussed, with the employee being asked for suggestions.
- Any adjustments or follow up support agreed at the meeting will be recorded in a file note.
- Where applicable, the employee will be updated on any work related developments.
- Where appropriate, the employee may be reminded that failure to maintain acceptable levels of attendance may result in formal procedures being invoked.

SOURCES OF HELP AND SUPPORT

General GP

General practitioners will usually be the first port of call for someone who is experiencing mental ill health. Your GP can provide guidance and signpost you to the right kind of support.

Mind

Guidance for employees on taking care of yourself; how to manage stress; Wellness Action Plans to help support your own mental health; A-Z information on mental health topics. Helpline giving private and confidential mental health advice: 0300 123 3393

Text: 86463

E-mail: info@mind.org.uk Web: www.mind.org.uk

Samaritans

Charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide. Free helpline available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year: 116 123 (best to call if you need a response immediately). You don't have to be suicidal to call.

E-mail: jo@samaritans.org Web: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Local branches also available.

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

Movement against male suicide.

Helpline (nationwide): 0800 58 58 58 / Helpline (London): 0808 802 58 58. Webchat also available.

All open 5pm to midnight every day. Web: <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

Sane

Offers information, crisis care and emotional support. Helpline: 0845 767 8000

Email: info@sane.org.uk

Web: www.sane.org.uk

The Silver Line

The only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day: 0800 4 70 80 90. Web: <https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/>

NHS 111

Free number to call when you have an urgent healthcare need. Available across the whole of England 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

CRUSE

Bereavement support. www.cruse.org.uk / 0808 808 1677

Mental Health Foundation

Various booklets including how to look after your mental health; how to manage and reduce stress; and how to overcome fear and anxiety. Guidance on mindfulness also available.

Web: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health>

Mindful Employer

Guidance for employees, including keeping well at work and talking to your manager (a document entitled Making Work Work aids communication, understanding and support).

<http://www.mindfulemployer.net/employees>

International Stress Management Association (ISMA)

Resources to reduce stress and enhance wellbeing and performance at work, including a worksheet to help learn how to stop excessive worry; how to identify stress; top ten stress busting tips; and a stress questionnaire.

Web: <https://isma.org.uk/nsad-free-downloads>

Rethink Mental Illness

Guide to help employees talk to their employer about reasonable adjustments.

Web: <https://www.rethink.org/>

Headspace

Guided meditation and mindfulness. App also available.

Web: www.headspace.com

Free to school staff in 2019 – please ask HR.

Calm

Meditation techniques for sleep and stress reduction. App also available.

Web: <https://www.calm.com/>

moodgym

An interactive self-help book which helps you to learn and practice skills to prevent and manage symptoms of depression and anxiety. Web: <https://moodgym.com.au/>

Talk to Frank

For information on drugs and getting help.

Confidential advice via phone: 0300 123 6600 open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Text: 82111

Live chat also available 2pm - 6pm daily. Web: <https://www.talktofrank.com/>

Addiction

AUK-wide treatment agency that helps individuals, families and communities manage the effects of drug and alcohol misuse. Web: <https://www.addiction.org.uk/>

Alcoholics Anonymous

A free self-help group. Its "12-step" programme involves getting sober with the help of regular support groups.

Free Helpline: 0800 9177 650- open 24 hours a day. Webchat also available.

E-mail: help@aamail.org

Web: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

Drinkline

National alcohol helpline (free): 0300 123 1110 open weekdays 9pm to 8pm, weekends 11pm to 4pm.

Beat Eating Disorders

Free helpline (over 18): 0808 801 0677 / Helpline (under 18): 0808 801 0711. Both open daily 12pm - 8pm weekdays, 4pm - 8pm on weekends and bank holidays.

Web: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

Online message boards also available.

Moodzone (NHS)

Practical advice, interactive tools, videos and audio guides to help you feel mentally and emotionally better. Web: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>