



SMITHDON HIGH SCHOOL

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON
MANAGEMENT OF STAFF ABSENCE**

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February 2009
Re-adopted October 2012
Re-adopted October 2014**

1. Introduction

This policy arises from the desire of the school to maximise staff attendance and address any issues which may contribute to long term or persistent short term absences.

Over the past few years, many institutions in both the public and private sectors have taken a more pro-active approach to absence management. In the education sector, developments have been principally led by Higher Education institutions, but various techniques are being used increasingly by schools, sometimes as part of a local authority policy but often at individual school level.

2. Policy Aims and Objectives

The procedures contained herein seek to:

- 2.1 Support staff who are absent from school for a significant period of time or who are persistently absent for short periods.
- 2.2 Address the school's duty of care to the majority of staff whose well being is affected by the absence of others.
- 2.3 Reduce the impact of staff absence on pupils.

3. Impact of Staff Absence

Long term or persistent absence has:

- 3.1 A deleterious effect on the staff member's performance.
- 3.2 An adverse effect on the well-being of colleagues through increased cover, setting of work, etc.
- 3.3 A reduction in the availability of cover supervisors and supply staff to support professional development activities due to their deployment in covering illness etc.
- 3.4 A detrimental effect on pupil progress, motivation and examination performance.

4. Procedures

- 4.1 Staff who are experiencing a difficulty which has an impact on their attendance are positively encouraged to seek support. This may be from their Head of Department or a member of SLT. The Headteacher and other senior staff continue to operate an 'open door' policy and staff should feel able to discuss such problems with the member of senior management with whom they feel most comfortable.
- 4.2 Staff attendance records are reviewed on a periodic basis by the Assistant Headteacher responsible for cover arrangements. Where such absence(s) raise cause for concern, these will be discussed, in the first instance, with the Headteacher.

- 4.3 In most cases, absence concerns result in an informal conversation between the Assistant Headteacher responsible for cover and the member of staff concerned, attempting to ascertain any underlying difficulties or identify any support which may help. This is embedded in the day to day personnel management with the school.
- 4.4 In a small number of instances a more standard approach may be appropriate, in which case an Absence Support Meeting may be arranged, as follows:
- 4.4.1 The meeting will normally be conducted by the Headteacher and/or the Assistant Headteacher responsible for cover.
- 4.4.2 The meeting is a supportive measure which is not part of any disciplinary procedure and will seek to establish clearly the reasons for absence and the likelihood of their re-occurrence.
- 4.4.3 At the meeting, it may be agreed that no further action is required, or one or more of the following supportive actions may be put in place:
- a) A commitment from the member of staff to seek medical help or other professional advice (as appropriate).
 - b) A reference to the Occupational Health Advisor at the Local Authority.
 - c) The investigation of any reasonable modifications in the workplace which may support the employee.
 - d) A commitment from both the school and the member of staff to address any underlying personal or professional issues which contribute to the absence.
 - e) A requirement for return to work interviews following each/any future absence.
 - f) The inclusion of a target to increase attendance in the next Performance Management Review.
- 4.5 If the absence levels of the member of staff continue to be of significant concern following the implementation of supportive procedures at school level, consideration will be given to addressing this under the Local Authority Personnel procedures.