



FOUNDATIONS

DAY NURSERY

Est. 2010

Absence Management

At Fun Foundations Day Nursery we encourage all our employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work due to sickness. By implementing this policy, we aim to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of our business needs and the genuine needs of employees to take occasional periods of time off work because of sickness. This policy and procedure establishes a framework to support individuals and the organisation in times of sickness absence. It ensures that appropriate and consistent advice is provided and that assistance and support is offered to employees and, where necessary, action is taken.

Principles

We aim to provide a healthy working environment and demonstrate commitment to health, safety and the welfare of staff in order to maximise attendance.

Management is responsible for regularly monitoring and taking appropriate action in connection with sickness and other unplanned absence.

Exclusion periods for contagious illnesses

Working with children means that you are in contact with illnesses which can be highly contagious. We take the health of children and staff very seriously therefore if you have any contagious illness you must adhere to the same exclusion periods as children. This will ensure that you are able to recover appropriately and that this illness is not passed on to other staff, children or parents. The manager will advise you of any exclusion times required (see the sickness and illness and infection control policies).

Sickness absence reporting procedure

Reporting sickness absence should be done using the following guidelines. Failure to follow these guidelines could delay any sick pay due to you and could possibly result in disciplinary action.

1. On your first day of absence, you must:

- Telephone the nursery and speak to the duty manager
- Give brief details of your illness and your expected length of absence.
- Telephone and speak to someone yourself unless you are hospitalised or incapacitated. Text message and emails are not an acceptable form of communication for this purpose
- Contact someone within one hour of your normal start time. If you are due to start at 7:30 then please contact the duty manager at least half an hour before your shift is due to start.

2. If you have been unable to determine how long the absence will last, and it exceeds the third day, you must contact your manager again on the fourth day.



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3. On returning to work you must complete a copy of the 'Employee's statement of sickness self-certification form'. This should be signed by nursery management.

4. For absences of more than seven consecutive days, including the weekend/non-working days you must provide a 'fit note' completed by a qualified medical practitioner for the period of absence.

5. After returning to work from any sickness absence leave, a 'return to work' interview may be undertaken by the employee and line manager. This will not happen in all circumstances, and we may hold such meetings at our discretion. However, such meetings will normally be held in the following circumstances:

- Where the absence has exceeded 14 days
- Where the nature of the illness means that duties on return to work may need to be altered and clarification and/or consultation is required
- Where a member of staff has had two or more absences in 12 weeks.

During the return to work interview the following will be discussed:

- The reason for absence
- Whether adjustments to the role (on a temporary or more permanent basis) are required and what they are. These might include adjusted work patterns, start and finish times and changes of duties
- Future requirements and expectations, e.g. improved attendance
- The return to work interview should be recorded and signed by both the duty manager and employee and a copy attached to the employee's file.

Where an employee's attendance record gives cause for concern because of the duration or frequency of absence, this should be brought to the attention of the employee through a discussion with the manager.

Throughout any stage of discussions on sickness absence, employees may be accompanied by a work colleague.

The abuse of sick leave and pay regulations may be classified as misconduct and will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Frequent and/or persistent short-term sickness absence

Short-term absence may be short periods of one or two days occurring frequently.

Absence of this nature can be identified by one of the following indicators and should be classed as a trigger:

Four self-certified spells of absence in one calendar year

A total of 10 working days or more of self-certified absence in one calendar year

Patterns of absence over a period, e.g. an individual regularly taking Mondays or Fridays off



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Where an employee's attendance record is significantly worse than those of comparable employees, or absence problems have gone on for a considerable length of time.

Bradford Factor Scoring

To ensure the consistent and timely management of sickness absence across the workforce, the Company uses an absence management tool called the Bradford Factor.

This allows managers to monitor absenteeism during any set period. The Company uses a rolling 12 month period. It provides a useful benchmark tool enabling managers to have an individual 'score' for each member of staff's absence record. The Company has set specific score 'trigger points' which then alerts the manager that an individual's absence levels have reached a level which is of concern and requires further investigation.

The Bradford Factor scoring process uses a simple formula that attaches more significance to an individual's number of occasions of absence than to the number of days' absence taken in the 12-month rolling period. The Bradford Factor supports the principal that persistent, short term absences have a greater operational impact than periods of occasional long term sickness absence.

The Bradford factor is calculated using the Bradford Formula $S \times S \times D = B$

S is the total number of separate absences by an individual

D is the total number of days of absence of that individual

B is the Bradford Factor score

For example:

5 periods of absence totalling 15 days in the last 12 months = $(5 \times 5) \times 15 = 375$ points

If two or more periods of absence are due to the same episode of illness then they are treated as just one period. For example, if you get a nasty cold, and take Monday off work, return on Tuesday but then take both Wednesday and Thursday off sick, this will be treated as one period of three days' absence.

There are some reasons for absence that will not be included when calculating your Bradford Factor score as these either relate to a statutory right to be absent from work and do not count as sickness absence or, in the case of pregnancy related illness, relates to a unique condition not comparable to being off sick with other conditions. These include, but are not limited to:

- pregnancy-related illness
- emergency time off for dependent care
- maternity leave
- paternity leave
- parental leave
- ante-natal appointments
- jury service and public service.

To ensure fairness, certain types of sickness absence will not be included when calculating your final Bradford Factor score. Individual scores will be adjusted to discount any disability related absences, however this will be discussed with you initially at an attendance review meeting and dealt with on a case by case basis, taking account of all the circumstances in order to first determine whether the sickness is related to a medical condition which would constitute a disability. Where the level of disability or pregnancy related sickness absence is identified as



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causing concern, your manager will undertake a welfare meeting approach, as opposed to invoking the formal absence management procedure.

The Company reserves the right to invoke a formal absence management procedure once you reach certain Bradford Factor scores:

- 40 points: This may trigger an informal discussion with you regarding your absence record, which may form part of your return to work meeting and will not necessarily be a separate attendance review meeting. The reasons for your absence will be discussed and you will be given the opportunity to discuss any problems or concerns you may have that could be affecting your absence levels. Where appropriate you will be advised of the improvement required within a specific timescale and will be warned that if this is not achieved or sustained then formal action may be taken. This will constitute an oral or informal warning. A note of the attendance review meeting will be retained on file and you will receive a copy of your attendance action plan within an informal warning letter. Should there be any underlying medical condition which may be impacting on your attendance at work, prior to, or instead of issuing you with an informal warning, you may be requested to give your consent for the Company to obtain a confidential report from your GP or specialist to understand more about the reasons for absences.
- 100 points: The formal absence management procedure may be invoked, commencing with a formal verbal warning. The duration of the warning will be confirmed to you and will ordinarily be for a minimum period of 6 months. You will be informed of the improvement required and the timescale. If your attendance does not improve to a satisfactory standard or this is not maintained you will be invited to attend a further review meeting.
- 201 points: A formal written warning may be issued. The duration of the warning will be confirmed to you and will ordinarily be for a minimum period of 6 or 12 months. You will be informed of the improvement required and the timescale. If your attendance does not improve to a satisfactory standard or this is not maintained you will be invited to attend a further review meeting.
- 401 points: A final written warning may be issued. The duration of the warning will be confirmed to you and will ordinarily be for a minimum period of 12 months. You will be informed of the improvement required. If your attendance does not improve to a satisfactory standard or this is not maintained you will be invited to attend a further review meeting.
- 601 points: you may be dismissed.

Long-term sickness absence

For the purposes of the policy, long-term sickness absence is defined by the nursery as absences lasting over one month.

Where absences have lasted over 10 working days or more the duty manager should contact the member of staff concerned to obtain an initial assessment of the problem and to offer any further help or assistance.

At this point and where felt appropriate after further assessment of the problem, the manager will arrange a face-to-face meeting or telephone conference between themselves and the member of staff. The meeting should:

- Seek to confirm the reasons and nature of the absence and its likely duration



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- Ensure that the member of staff is aware of the nursery's concern regarding their health and necessary absence from work
- Consider offering alternative duties or a shorter working week if this would enable a quicker return to work subject to medical advice
- Give consideration to any personal problems being encountered and discuss possible ways of helping the individual resolve these
- Advise the member of staff that in their best interests they may be asked to see a registered medical practitioner or occupational health provider appointed by the nursery to enable a medical report to be prepared
- Alternatively, and if appropriate, gain agreement from the member of staff to contact their doctor or specialist in order to establish the likely length of absence and the long-term effect on capability in relation to job performance and attendance at work.

If all other avenues have been investigated, the absence continues or, following return to work, the attendance record does not improve, a subsequent meeting should be arranged. At this point, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe there will be an improvement in the foreseeable future, the manager should inform the member of staff that long-term sickness absence due to ill health may put their employment at risk and the possibility of termination by reason of capability or suitability to work with children might have to be considered, taking into account any medical information available.

The position will be reviewed periodically and ultimately it may become necessary from a business perspective to consider termination of employment. In these circumstances, the nursery will:

- Review the employee's absence record to assess whether or not it is sufficient to justify dismissal
- Consult the employee
- Obtain up-to-date medical advice through occupational health
- Advise the employee in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility
- Meet with the employee to discuss the options and consider the employee's views on continuing employment
- Review if there are any other jobs that the employee could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss
- Allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss the employee on grounds of long-term ill health
- Arrange a further meeting with the employee to determine any appeal
- Following this meeting, inform the employee of its final decision
- Act reasonably towards the employee at all times.

Any decision to terminate employment will be taken by the Registered Person, making sure the capability procedure has been exhausted.



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Occupational health

The nursery reserves the right to request employees to attend an appointment with an Occupational Health Advisor (e.g. consultant, GP) during their employment, if it is reasonably deemed necessary due to sickness absence, changes in health or the role, or where it is necessary to seek an expert medical opinion as to whether or not the employee can fulfil their job role or whether any reasonable adjustments should be made to the employee's role.

The nursery will seek to engage the services of an independent Occupational Health Advisor in situations where expert medical opinion is required and work with them to identify the best course of action in circumstances of sickness absence.

Access to medical records

The Access to Medical Records Act 1988 gives individuals the right of access to medical records relating to themselves which have been prepared by a medical practitioner for employment purposes. The Act provides that:

- Employers must gain the consent of employees before requesting reports from medical practitioners
- Employers must inform employees of their rights in respect of medical reports
- The employee has the right of access to the report before the employer sees it, provided appropriate notification is given
- The employer is responsible for notifying the medical practitioner that the employee wishes to have access
- The employee may ask for a report to be amended or may attach a statement to the report
- Having seen the report, the employee may wish to withhold consent to it being supplied.

Where the nursery requests further medical information about the health of staff from an individual's General Practitioner or Specialist, or its own occupational health provider, the provisions of the Act will be followed.

Throughout any interviews regarding sickness absence, staff are entitled to the support of and/or representation by a colleague or union representative.

Sick Pay

There is no entitlement to company sick pay. Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid in accordance with Department for Work and Pensions requirements and no payment will be made for the first three working days in a period of incapacity for work.

Annual leave and sick pay

Where an employee falls sick or is injured while on holiday, the nursery will allow the employee to transfer to sick leave and take replacement holiday at a later time. This policy is subject to the following strict conditions:

- The total period of incapacity must be fully certificated by a qualified medical practitioner



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- The employee must contact the duty manager as soon as he/she knows that there will be a period of incapacity during a holiday
- The employee must submit a written request no later than five days after returning to work setting out how much of the holiday period was affected by sickness and the amount of leave that the employee wishes to take at another time
- Where the employee is overseas when he/she falls ill or is injured, evidence must be produced that the employee was ill by way of either a medical certificate or proof of a claim on an insurance policy for medical treatment received at the overseas location.

Where the employee fulfils all of the above conditions, we will allow the employee the same number of days' replacement holiday leave as the number of holiday days lost due to sickness or injury.

Sickness or injury shortly before a period of planned holiday

If an employee is ill or is injured before the start of a period of planned annual leave, we will agree to the employee postponing the annual leave dates to another mutually agreed time. Any period of sickness absence will then be treated in accordance with the employer's normal policy on sickness absence.

The employee must submit a written request to postpone the planned annual leave and this must be accompanied by a letter from his/her doctor confirming that he/she is unfit to take the annual leave.

Replacement holiday dates

Where it is agreed that an employee can take replacement holiday leave at a later time, the employee should nominate replacement holiday dates as soon as possible, with the dates being subject to the agreement of the employee's line manager in the usual way.

Employees should endeavour to take any replacement holiday within the same holiday year as the days lost as a result of sickness or injury. In the event that part or all of the holiday is lost due to incapacity towards the end of the nursery's holiday year, and there is insufficient time left during that year for the replacement holiday leave to be taken, the employee will be permitted to carry over the replacement holiday to the next holiday year. However, this leave must be taken as early in the new holiday year as possible.

Serious illness/injury of an employee's immediate family

This will be looked at on an individual basis and your manager will agree with you a reasonable period of paid leave time initially, with additional unpaid leave if a significant amount of time off is required. You need to also consider taking holiday/TOIL and working flexibly i.e. making adjustments to the length of the working day, changes in hours/days worked etc.



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Death of a member of an employee's immediate family

This leave applies on the death of an employee's spouse, life partner, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, dependant or other relative for whom the employee has special responsibility or has had special ties. See bereavement policy.

Death of a Child

If an employee has a death of a child under the age of 18 or suffers a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy all employees will be entitled to 2 weeks paid leave, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria having been employed for at least 26 weeks (The Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Act 2018).

Signature	Date for review
	June 2024