



Schools for Every Child

Managing Staff Attendance

We are an education Trust that is committed to running dynamic, ever-improving schools. We work to make sure that every child feels they belong in their school where they feel safe and inspired by learning. For us, learning is an adventure. It is a privilege and a responsibility for all who work with us to ensure that the journey through school is exciting, challenging, caring and enriching, and that every child experiences joy, wonder, calm and success.

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Author	Lee Faris
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“The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance”. (DfE)

Approval History

Committee Approval	Status	Next Review Date
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Contents

1. POLICY STATEMENT.....	2
2. KEY PRINCIPLES.....	2
3. TYPES OF ABSENCE.....	3
4. NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE.....	4
5. RETURNING TO WORK.....	5
6. TRIGGERS FOR ACTION.....	5
7. SHORT TERM ABSENCE.....	6
8. LONG TERM ABSENCE.....	8
9. ATTENDANCE REVIEW HEARING.....	9
10. RIGHT OF APPEAL.....	10
11. MEDICAL INFORMATION.....	10
12. OTHER / SUPPLEMENTARY.....	10
APPENDIX A: SICK PAY SCHEMES & ENTITLEMENT.....	12
Appendix B: SELF-CERTIFICATION FORM.....	14

1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all employees of the Trust, regardless of position or length of service.

Trust is committed to improving the health, wellbeing and attendance of all our employees and to reduce levels of absence. We value the contribution our employees make to our success, and therefore, when any employee is unable to attend work for any reason, that contribution is missed.

Trust is committed to providing a working environment in which all employees are supported to achieve and maintain regular and punctual attendance at work.

We aim to be a human organisation that supports all its people. However, first and foremost our pupils and their learning comes first - the *Learner First* principle is our guiding light and all decisions and strategies hold this at the heart. Disrupted staff attendance can have a detrimental impact on the education of our children and we aim to do all we can to ensure there is high quality, continuity of education for all.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

The policy provides guidelines on procedures for managing attendance. While Trust recognises that a certain level of sickness absence is inevitable, it must also have regard to its business needs. The aim of the Managing Attendance Policy is to strike a balance between the pursuit of its business needs and the genuine needs of employees to take periods of time off work because of sickness.

The cost of absence and poor timekeeping adversely affects our ability to deliver an efficient and effective service in many ways, including:

- The direct cost of occupational sick pay and supply cover;
- Time spent organising cover;
- Pressure on remaining work colleagues to cover for absent colleagues, often at short notice; and
- Disruption to the school, which can result in reduced levels of service.

For these reasons, Trust seeks to follow a fair and consistent approach towards all employees who are unable to attend work regularly. Through effective monitoring and management of absenteeism and time keeping, we will encourage full attendance of all our employees.

As a responsible employer, Trust will:

1. Undertake to provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness in accordance with relevant contractual occupational sickness payment schemes (Appendix A).
2. Manage attendance and improve performance in order that the costs of absence are minimised.
3. Support employees who have genuine grounds for absence. this support includes but is not limited to:
 - a) A flexible approach to the use of annual leave and/or other types of leave.
 - b) Access to support services (occupational, health counselling, physiotherapy) as appropriate.
4. Consider advice given by an employee's GP on the 'Statement of Fitness for Work' and, where appropriate, discuss with the employee how we can help get them back to work, for example, on altered hours or duties.
5. Respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with all data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.
6. Ensure all procedures, correspondence and meetings will be clear, fair, appropriate, consistent and within the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
7. Allow an employee to be accompanied at any formal meeting by a work colleague or a certified representative of a trade union / professional association recognised by the Trust.

Managers are required to:

- communicate effectively to all employees and ensure all employees are aware of the Managing Attendance Policy;
- provide a safe working environment. This will include both the physical environment and broader work-based issues affecting health and wellbeing;
- improve attendance levels, prevent absences from work and effectively manage instances of absence from work in line with the Managing Attendance Policy, taking appropriate and timely action as necessary;
- maintain accurate attendance records for each employee and monitor and review absence levels taking action as appropriate;
- maintain regular contact with employees during periods of absence;
- hold a Return to Work discussion with the employee on their return to work following every period of sickness or unauthorised absence and to ensure the employee is fit to carry out his or her duties.

Employees are required to:

- take Positive Action to maintain and improve their own health and wellbeing;
- take responsibility for achieving and maintaining regular and punctual attendance at work, in line with the terms of their contract of employment;
- understand the impact of their absence on colleagues and service delivery;
- discuss any concerns or problems in relation to their work with their line manager;
- co-operate with all aspects of the managing attendance policy;
- communicate all licences in accordance with the notification requirements;
- where any sickness absence occurs, maintain frequent contact with line manager and provide any necessary medical documentation in good time.

3. TYPES OF ABSENCE

3.1 Sickness Absence

Sickness absence is when an employee is off work for a full day/shift, goes home early or arrives late for work due to sickness. Sickness absence can only relate to an employee's personal sickness and not that of a dependent. Sickness absence will be recorded in full or half-day blocks. For the purpose of absence monitoring, an occasion of sickness is a half day or more.

3.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is absence which has not been agreed or authorised by a line manager in advance. Absence that has not been notified according to the notification procedure will be treated as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is subsequently received. Trust reserve the right to withhold pay for unauthorised absences. If an employee fails to notify the school of absence then the employee may be subject to formal disciplinary action.

3.3 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is a planned absence that has been agreed in advance by your line manager. Authorised absence can take many forms for example, annual leave, parental leave, time off for domestic emergencies (See Special Leave Policy.)

4. NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

If an employee is unable to attend for work, or will be late, the notification procedure to be followed at all times is detailed in the table below.

Day of absence	Action	Sickness absence evidence	When required
Day one	Personal contact with the designated contact as per individual school's notification process. The employee should provide details of the reason for absence and give an indication of the anticipated duration of the illness/incapacity where possible.		On the first day of absence
Calendar days 2-7	Daily (or otherwise agreed frequency) contact with the agreed person (usually Office Manager or SLT) to notify of the reasons for the continued absence and inform of recovery progress.	Self-certification	Daily / as agreed
Calendar day 8	Obtain a medical certificate from GP for sickness absence. Contact line manager to notify of medical certificate and continued absence.	Fitness for work certificate from GP	Within 2 days of issue
Subsequent continuous absence	Obtain further medical certificate from GP for sickness absence. Contact line manager to notify of medical certificate and continued absence.	Fitness for work certificate from GP	Within 2 days of issue
Return to work	Employee to complete Self-Certification form (Appendix B) Contact manager as soon as possible with intended date of return. Manager to hold return to work interview with employee (Appendix C). Determine necessary adaptations where appropriate.	Fitness to work note if required	On the day of return

4.1 Designated contact and notification process

Employees must notify the Headteacher or other SLT member, by phone, between 7.00 and 7.30am (or as per school-specific notification processes, detailed in individual schools' Induction/Staff Handbooks). In extreme circumstances, e.g. due to hospitalisation, if an employee is unable to make contact personally, then someone else may do so on their behalf.

If an employee fails to comply with notification procedures, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

The Office Manager, in liaison with the Headteacher, should make a formal record (on Self Certification form) when an employee notifies that s/he is unable to attend.

If an employee is taken ill at work, they should report this to the Headteacher immediately. If an employee is injured at work, they should report this to the line manager immediately. If deemed necessary, and in the event that the

employee's emergency contact cannot be reached, the line manager should make arrangements for the employee to be accompanied to a doctor or hospital or the employee to be taken to hospital or to their GP.

5. RETURNING TO WORK

Upon returning to work following a period of sickness absence or unauthorised absence, regardless of the duration of the absence, staff will be required to attend a Return to Work interview/discussion with a Manager. The Return to Work interview should take place on the employee's first day back to work, and the Return to Work form must be signed by both the employee and attending Manager.

The purpose of the return to work interview is to:

- a) assess whether the employee is fit to work
- b) establish if there are any underlying reasons for the absence
- c) identify possible patterns or trends of absence and investigate these
- d) establish whether the employee's absences are in any way work-related

A Return to Work interview template form is attached at Appendix C.

6. TRIGGERS FOR ACTION

6.1 Sickness Absence

Where an employee has met one, or more, of the following triggers, managers are expected to take immediate and appropriate action:

- Any 3 separate periods of absence within two consecutive half terms
- After one period of three calendar weeks continuous absence
- Trends or an acceptable patterns of absence e.g. regular Friday or Monday
- Where an employee is absent with a mental health or stress related condition
- Where the employee falls outside of these trigger points but their level of absence is a cause for concern. For example, if a period or pattern of absence continues beyond any review period, such previous absence may be considered as part of the ongoing absence review.

6.2 Other

Other events which may trigger action under this procedure, or an alternative procedure, include:

- Following an accident/incident at work
- Any period of unauthorised absence
- Allegations that the employee has been carrying out other work whilst certifying him/herself incapable of work with the Trust
- Where an employee has failed to follow the notification/certification process.

7. SHORT TERM ABSENCE

When a trigger for action has been met, the formal process will commence and the manager will invite the employee to an attendance meeting.

7.1 Attendance Meeting

The meeting will normally be held with the Headteacher. The employee will be given at least 5 days written notice of the meeting and informed of their rights of representation.

Headteachers should review all information available to them and take account of any relevant information highlighted within the meeting.

The Headteacher (with HR support where required) will determine if the absence is related to a disability or not.

7.2 Absence unrelated to a disability

At the Attendance Meeting, where absences are unrelated to a disability (e.g. broken bones, cuts, colds, stomach bugs etc) the manager will have the flexibility to:

- Issue an appropriate warning
- Not issue a warning
- Extend a current warning, or
- Consider some other appropriate action (e.g. support, flexible working etc).

During the meeting, an attendance plan may be discussed with the employee, if appropriate, to improve and maintain their attendance at work. A timeline for review of the attendance plan will be agreed at the meeting and an Attendance Review Meeting will be scheduled.

If an employee already has a 'live' written warning on record (issued under the Managing Attendance Policy or Disciplinary Procedure Policy), the manager may issue a final written warning at the Attendance Meeting.

If the employee already has a 'live' final written warning on file (issued under the Managing Attendance Policy or Disciplinary Procedure Policy), the manager will inform the employee that they will be invited to an Attendance Review Hearing (held as a separate meeting), with one possible outcome being that their employment is terminated.

Headteachers will ensure that any outcome of the meeting is followed up in writing and shared with the employee, confirming the outcome and actions to be taken, including an attendance plan, if appropriate. This will include details of their right to appeal any warning issued, including who to appeal to and by when.

7.3 Absence related to a disability

If absences are related to a disability, the manager will continue to monitor the employee's attendance under the Managing Attendance Policy.

At the Attendance Meeting, the manager will:

- Establish what medical intervention has occurred or is planned, by whom, and expected timelines
- Establish if any adjustments to the working arrangements have been identified/considered/ implemented, and if further adjustments or arrangements need to be made
- If appropriate, discuss an attendance plan with the employee, to improve and maintain their attendance at work. A timeline for review of the attendance plan will be agreed at the meeting and an Attendance Review Meeting will be scheduled.

7.4 Attendance Review Meeting

The meeting will normally be held with the Headteacher and at least one other member of SLT . The employee will be given at least 5 days written notice of the meeting and be informed of their right of representation.

The purpose of the Attendance Review Meeting is to:

- Establish the employee's attendance levels;
- Review the employee's current health situation and any available medical information and expected timelines;
- Establish what positive action the employee has taken to maintain their health and improve their attendance;
- Review any reasonable adjustments put in place, the impact these adjustments have had, and the extent to which these have improved attendance.

The meeting will have a number of possible outcomes:

- a) Attendance has improved to an acceptable level; or
- b) Attendance has not yet reached an acceptable level but evidence indicates that this is very likely in the near future; or
- c) Attendance has shown no improvement and / or has declined.

a) Attendance has improved to an acceptable level

If the employee's attendance has improved to an acceptable level, with or without reasonable adjustments, the manager will confirm that the formal process will now end.

b) Attendance has not yet reached an acceptable level but evidence indicates that this is very likely in the near future

If the employee's attendance has not improved to an acceptable level, but there is evidence to indicate that attendance will improve in the very near future, or if additional reasonable adjustments are identified and agreed, the review period can be extended and the employee will be invited back to a reconvened Attendance Review Meeting at an appropriate date.

c) Attendance has not improved to an acceptable level

If the employee's attendance has not improved to an acceptable level, and there is no indication that attendance will improve in the near future, the employee will be invited to attend an Attendance Review Hearing to be held with the LSB Chair of Governors.

The aim of this meeting will be to enable a holistic review of the attendance case by a senior manager, the support offered and/or implemented, available medical information, the level of absence, the impact on service delivery, and to ultimately determine whether the employee's level of absence can be sustained.

The LSB Chair of Governors has the flexibility to:

- Determine that the levels of absence in relation to a disability are sustainable (employee removed from the formal process);
- Agree additional adjustments or medical interventions;
- Extend the review period and refer the case back to an Attendance Review Meeting;
- Reconvene the Attendance Review Hearing pending further information;
- Terminate employment.

8. LONG TERM ABSENCE

Long term absence is defined as any absence that continues for a period of 3 calendar weeks or more, or absence in excess of more than 15 days/shifts in any twelve month rolling period.

When an employee is absent for long periods, it is important that frequent communication occurs to provide continued support to the employee and to manage service delivery.

As part of the long term sickness absence procedure, detailed below, the Headteacher will, where appropriate and possible, support an employee's return to work by:

- Referring employee to Occupational Health service
- Maintaining frequent contact
- Making reasonable adjustments to the workplace, working practices and working hours
- Considering redeployment
- Agreeing a return to work programme

8.1 Interim Review Meetings

The Headteacher will be expected to undertake an Interim Review Meeting with the employee at least every 4 weeks following commencement of the long term absence, or as such timescales as the circumstances dictate.

The purpose of the review meeting is to help managers understand:

- The wellbeing of the employee and any support that can be offered by the workplace
- The ongoing nature of the illness and the employee's general state of health
- A likely return to work date
- If any adjustments to the workplace or working practices could help the employee to return to work.

Following the meeting/s there will be one of three outcomes:

1. A return date is given (with or without necessary reasonable adjustments/short term rehabilitation plan); or
2. A return date is not given, however reasonable adjustments/short term rehabilitation plan was discussed to help the employee return to work;
3. A return date is not given and no reasonable adjustments were identified at that time.

Following the meeting, the discussion will be confirmed in writing to the employee and a copy placed on their file.

If a return date is not given at the week 12 Interim Review Meeting, the matter may be referred to an Attendance Review Meeting.

8.2 Return to work following a Long Term Absence

A Return to Work interview will be held with the employee.

As the long term absence will have met a trigger for action, they will be invited to an Attendance Meeting, at which the Headteacher will determine whether the long term absence was related to a disability, or not.

8.3 Long Term Absence unrelated to a disability

At the Attendance Meeting, if the absence was unrelated to a disability, the manager will have the option and flexibility to:

- Issue an appropriate warning
- Not issue a warning
- Extend a current warning, or
- Consider some other appropriate action (e.g. support, flexible working etc).

If a warning is issued or extended, amended triggers of 3 days or 2 instances across 2 consecutive half term periods will apply for the duration of the warning period.

8.4 Long Term Absence related to a disability

If the absence was related to a disability, the discussion with the employee will centre around maintaining regular communication and reviewing support during the early stages of their return to work.

An Attendance Review Meeting will be arranged (between 1 and 6 months following the employee's return to work) and, where appropriate, Interim Review Meetings with the Headteacher may also be arranged to ensure the employee receives continued, appropriate support.

9. ATTENDANCE REVIEW HEARING

An Attendance Review Hearing would usually be arranged in the following circumstances:

- If an employee's attendance remains/becomes unsatisfactory; or
- If medical information indicates that a return to work is unlikely within the foreseeable future; or
- If an employee's absence is expected to continue beyond 12 weeks.

An Attendance Review Hearing will normally be held with the LSB Chair of Governors. The employee will be given at least 5 days written notice of the meeting and their rights of representation will be confirmed.

The main purpose of the meeting is to review the facts of the case, to appraise the support, intervention and action taken so far, to determine what further action is required, and to make a decision surrounding the employee's continued employment.

At this hearing, the CoG/CEO will take account of the medical information presented by the manager and employee and its impact on colleagues, budget and service delivery, and will make a decision regarding either the continued management of the employee's absence(s), or the employee's continued employment.

10. RIGHT OF APPEAL

Employees may appeal against the written warning, or a final written warning to the appropriate Trust appeal panel whose decision will be final.

Any appeals against termination of employment will be made to the Board of Trustees.

11. MEDICAL INFORMATION

11.1 Self-certification

Any employee who is absent due to sickness is required to complete a self certification (Appendix B). Failure to submit a self certification could result in both Statutory Sick Pay and Occupational Sick Pay being withheld. Employees can self certificate for a maximum of 7 calendar days.

Knowingly giving false information on a self certification form may amount to gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

11.2 Occupational Health

If deemed necessary, referral to an Occupational Health medical practitioner will be made to assess an employee's health status and specifically how this impacts upon their ability to undertake their role. The Headteacher will request informed written/email consent from the employee before any referral is made.

The Headteacher or Occupational Health medical practitioner may request a medical report from the employee's GP and/or specialist/consultant.

12. OTHER / SUPPLEMENTARY

12.1 Disabilities

The school is aware that sickness absence may be disability-related. Where this is the case, at each stage of the short-term and long-term managing attendance policy, consideration will be given as to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of the job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist in a return to work.

Any employee who considers that they are affected by disability, or any medical condition which affects their ability to undertake their work, should inform their line manager.

12.2 Formal Warnings and Dismissal

Action	Maximum length of time kept on file
Written warning	12 months
Final written warning	18 months
Dismissal	n/a

Existing live warnings will be taken into consideration when determining the appropriate level of further warnings.

If an employee is dismissed as a result of an accumulation of warnings, the dismissal will take place with immediate effect and the employee will be paid in lieu of notice.

12.3 Rehabilitation to work

In the case of any employee returning to work from long-term absence, the school will consider reasonable adjustments to the workplace to assist in this.

APPENDIX A: SICK PAY SCHEMES & ENTITLEMENT

School Support Staff

Entitlement through sickness or injury is in accordance with the NJC Conditions of Service, referred to in paragraph 5 of the agreement, except as amended by local collective agreement. At present the scale of entitlement is as follows:

During first year of continuous service	1 month full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay (inclusive of statutory sick pay)
During second year of continuous service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay (inclusive of statutory sick pay)
After 2 years continuous service	3 months full pay and 3 months half pay (inclusive of statutory sick pay)
During 4th and 5th year of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

Teachers

Entitlement through sickness or injury is in accordance with the Burgundy Book (as amended from time to time). Entitlement to Sick Pay is based on length of continuous teaching service and is set out below.

During 1st year of service:	25 days full pay and (after completing 4 calendar months' service) 50 days half pay (inclusive of statutory sick pay)
During 2nd year of service:	50 days full pay and 50 days half pay (inclusive of statutory sick pay)
During 3rd year of service:	75 days full pay and 75 days half pay (inclusive of statutory sick pay)
During 4th and successive years	100 days full pay and 100 days half pay (inclusive of service: statutory sick pay)

Payment During Periods of Sickness Absence

As an employee of the Trust, your sick pay is made up of two separate elements:

Occupational Sick Pay, which is discretionary and subject to local agreement, and Statutory Sick Pay, which is determined by the Government. Part-time employees receive pro-rata benefits.

Occupational Sick Pay (OSP)

Occupational sick pay will be paid at the discretion of the Trust. In the event of sick pay being sanctioned, employees will receive their basic wage during sickness absence in accordance with their entitlement (pro rata for part-time employees).

If absent from work due to sickness or injury, eligible employees are entitled to receive Statutory Sick Pay (see below), and may also be entitled to Occupational Sick Pay.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

The Governing Body has a legal obligation to pay Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) to eligible employees. SSP is subject to income tax and national insurance contributions. SSP is paid at the statutory rates, as amended from time to time, via the employee's monthly pay. If an employee is not eligible for the Occupational Sick Pay they may still be eligible for SSP.

SSP is payable in respect of 'periods of incapacity for work' (PIW) of four days or more. No SSP is payable in respect of the first three days of sickness, which are called 'waiting days'. However, where two PIWs are separated by eight weeks or less they are said to be 'linked' and SSP is payable without the need to accumulate more waiting days.

SSP is payable only for 'qualifying days'. Qualifying days are Monday to Friday inclusive regardless of actual work patterns. There are various exclusions from SSP and, if an employee is excluded, they may be able to claim State Sickness Benefit instead.

It shall be at the discretion of the Trust as to whether any further remuneration is paid to the employee after the expiry of any Occupational Sick Pay or SSP.

Appendix B: SELF-CERTIFICATION FORM

Trust Self Certification form

School Name:

SICKNESS SELF-CERTIFICATE FORM

The information you provide on this form will be held and processed in accordance with the school's Data Protection policy and retention schedule. Information about how your data is used and the basis for processing your data is provided in the school's privacy notice for employees.

This certificate must be completed as follows:

- Teachers – to cover the 4th to 7th day of every absence inclusive if not covered by a fit note

Your sickness absence dates	
Your name:	
The date of your first day of illness:	
The date of your last day of illness (this may not always be a working day):	
The date you returned to work:	
The number of consecutive calendar days you were not at work:	
Your sickness absence	
Please give a general outline of what caused your sickness / the symptoms you experienced:	

- Other staff – to cover the 1st to 7th day of every absence inclusive if not covered by a fit note

Is your sickness absence related to (please circle one):				
Sickness	An accident or assault at work	Your work or working environment	A disability or impairment	An accident outside of work that you are seeking compensation for from a third party
	An incident form will need to be completed			

The sickness absence reason			
Sickness absence is reported using these 16 general categories. Please circle the main reason for this sickness absence.			
Back and neck problems	Upper limb problems	Lower limb problems	Cancer*
Chest, respiratory	Eye, ear, nose, mouth/dental, throat	Genito-urinary/ gynaecological	Headache and migraine
Heart, blood pressure, circulation	Neurological (for example, epilepsy)	Operations, post-operative recovery and hospital treatments	Pregnancy related
Skin	Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion	Stress, depression and mental health	Viral infection

**Note that if the reason is cancer, this should always be recorded as a disability/impairment related sickness absence in the type of absence section above.*

Please be aware that if you knowingly supply false information about your sickness absence, it will be dealt with under the Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure and ultimately your employment could be at risk.

	Signature	Date
Employee		

Trust - Return to Work Form

School Name:

Return to Work Form

To be completed by the line manager following a [return to work](#) interview.

Note to Line manager: Employees should be made aware that the information provided on this form will be held and processed in accordance with the school's Data Protection policy and retention schedule.

Confidential

Complete this part of the form before the [return to work](#) discussion

Employee's name:

Do you feel the local arrangements for reporting sickness absence were followed:	Yes	No
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If 'no', why?

How long has the employee been absent on this occasion:

How many calendar days has the employee been absent due to sickness in the last 12 months:

Has the employee reached the trigger point for commencing the procedure for short term absence (i.e. three absences in two consecutive half terms or unacceptable regular patterns of absence):

Was the sickness absence:	Self-certificated	Covered by fit note	Unauthorised
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The details of sickness / injury were:

The issues discussed were:

The support / actions discussed were:

Other details you would like to make a note of:

Does an accident report form need to be completed?	Yes	No
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Are any follow up actions required? (Give details if applicable e.g. arrange date for informal absence review)

	Signature	Date
Manager		
Employee		

Line managers must ensure this form is placed in the restricted access section of the personal file.