



Symphony Learning
TRUST

Attendance Management Policy 2016-2019

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Policy developed by



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This policy applies to all staff employed by The Symphony Learning Trust (SLT). Throughout this policy, unless indicated otherwise, all references to 'Head Teacher' include the Executive Head Teacher

Purpose

The purpose of the Attendance Management Policy and Procedure is to provide a supportive framework where a shortfall in attendance has been identified, in order to assist employees to improve, reach and maintain the standard of attendance expected within their area of work.

Application of the Policy

The attendance of teaching and support staff will be managed by either the Head Teacher, the Head of School or another manager.

- If an Executive Head Teacher's attendance is being managed in line with this policy, then the Chair of the Local Governing Body will be responsible for overseeing this.
- If the attendance of a Head Teacher or Head of School (partner schools) is being managed then the Executive Head Teacher from the assigned Lead School will be responsible for overseeing this in conjunction with the Chair of the Local Governing Body.
- For all other staff it will be either the Head Teacher or another manager.

Monitoring of Employees' Attendance

All absences must be reported, recorded, monitored and analysed on an on-going basis in order to identify problems, review individual cases and decide upon any appropriate action. Examples of absences which may require further attention / investigation can be found in the Attendance Management Guidance.

Return to Work Meetings

The return to work meeting is informal and will be held after every occasion of absence. In many cases the meeting will be as brief as a quick chat to ensure the employee is fit to return to work and welcome them back to work.

Employees with a Disability

Consideration must be given as to whether an employee's level of attendance is due to a disability, and if so, what reasonable adjustments may be needed to assist the employee in being able to reach the required level of attendance. If an underlying disability is suspected, an Occupational Health referral is usually required and advice sought on reasonable adjustments. Further advice should be sought from HR Services.

Informal Action

If there are concerns regarding the employee's attendance, an informal improvement plan and a reasonable period of review will be agreed.

A meeting will be held with the employee at the end of the review period to determine whether the informal improvement plan has been achieved. If the employee has not achieved the level of attendance required at the end of the review period, progression to a **Formal Attendance Meeting** will be considered.

Support Mechanisms

Managers may wish to explore the following non-exhaustive list of options:

- a) Referral to Occupational Health to seek medical advice and opinion;
- b) Fit for Work, a free Government Scheme, to seek medical advice and opinion;
- c) Therapeutic Return to Work to assist the employee to return back to work on a planned and phased basis, usually following a medical recommendation;
- d) Reduction in hours to assist the employee to return back to work on a temporary or permanent basis, which must be mutually accommodated and agreed. The employee's contract of employment will then be changed accordingly;
- e) Ill health retirement may be an option but in the first instance requires an Occupational Health referral.

Managers may refer to the Attendance Management Guidance for further information.

Fast Track to Attendance Hearing – Long Term Absence

There may be occasions in cases of long term absence where the medical reports indicate that a return to work is not possible within a reasonable time period. In these circumstances the Academy will ensure that all avenues of support, including ill health retirement and redeployment, have been exhausted. If this can be demonstrated, the formal procedures will commence at the Attendance Hearing stage.

Formal Attendance Management Meeting

Where there are continuing concerns over an employee's attendance, the manager will arrange for the employee to attend a Formal Attendance Management Meeting. Five working days' notice will be given for this meeting, the purpose of which is to establish the facts, allow the employee to respond to concerns about their attendance and to put any further support mechanisms in place.

The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. Notes will be taken at this meeting and the employee will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting.

The potential outcomes of the meeting are:

- a) There are insufficient grounds for pursuing the attendance issue – the attendance procedure will cease and the informal monitoring will recommence;
- b) There is a need for further investigation or to consider any additional information;
- c) There are attendance issues to be addressed. A formal written improvement plan will be put in place, the level of improvement required will be identified and a reasonable timescale for achievement will be put in place. Failure to improve to the required attendance level, within the agreed timescale, could result in a final warning being issued at the end of the review period.

Formal Review Meeting

Five working days' notice will be given for this meeting and employees have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. Notes will be taken and the employee will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting.

Both the person conducting the meeting and the employee will have an opportunity to present evidence to support their position.

The potential outcomes of the meeting are:

- a) The employee has made sufficient improvement, the attendance procedure may cease and informal monitoring will recommence. However, if the improvement is not sustained within 12 months then the manager will recommence at the Formal Review Meeting stage of this policy;
- b) If some progress has been made and more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the review period. In the majority of cases, it will be appropriate to extend the review period just once;
- c) If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made, the employee will receive a final written warning which will remain on their file for 12 months. The employee will be informed in writing of the specific matters covered, the timing and their right to appeal against the warning. They must also be informed that failure to achieve the required level of attendance may lead to dismissal. A copy of the formal written improvement plan will be included with this letter, detailing the level of improvement required, timescale for improvement and additional support mechanisms identified to assist the employee to return to work.

Final Review Meeting

Five working days' notice will be given for this meeting and the employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative. Notes will be taken at this meeting and the employee will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting.

Both the person conducting the meeting and the employee will have an opportunity to present evidence to support their position.

The potential outcomes of the meeting are:

- a) If the employee has made sufficient improvement, the attendance procedure may cease and informal monitoring will restart. However, if the improvement is not sustained within 12 months then the manager will recommence at the Final Review Meeting stage of this policy;
- b) If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made, the employee will be advised that a hearing will be convened to consider the case and that a potential outcome is dismissal. This will be confirmed in writing to the employee.

Attendance Hearing

A minimum of 5 days' written notice will be given to attend a formal hearing in which the employee will be informed of the reasons for the hearing and their right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. The letter must state that a potential outcome of the hearing is dismissal and copies of relevant documentation to be referred to at the hearing should be enclosed. Employees will be given an opportunity to provide evidence.

During the course of the hearing the employee will have the right to hear and question all the evidence presented. The employee will also have the opportunity to present their case.

Dismissal

Where appropriate, a panel or delegated person (i.e. Head Teacher) will dismiss the employee with notice. The employee will be notified in writing of the outcome of the hearing, including the reason for the dismissal and date of termination of their employment. The letter will also include details of their right to appeal.



Appeal

An appeal must be submitted in writing by the employee and sent to the Head Teacher within 5 working days of receiving notification of the outcome of the review meeting / hearing.

For a final warning the appeal will be heard by either the Head Teacher (only if they have not managed the case) or a Governor / Trustee.

For a dismissal the appeal will be held in line with the Symphony Learning Trust Appeal Policy and procedure.