

Name of School	The Toynbee School
Date of Policy Issue/Review	October 2020 / October 2022
Name of Responsible Manager/Headteacher	Mr M Longden
Governors' Sub-Committee	Finance & Staffing

1. Introduction

This policy has been discussed and agreed with all school staff representatives and with the school trade unions and professional associations. It is available to all staff in the school and to any prospective applicant. The governing body welcomes any comments or contributions to this policy document.

2. Statement of intent

The governing body is committed to the health, safety and welfare of staff and to the involvement of staff and their representatives in the development and implementation of this policy. The purpose of this policy is to define the governing body's strategic approach to the management of absence and to establish a consistent framework for the fair and equitable treatment of all employees in relation to absence. This policy embraces all forms of absences, although the policy is particularly focused upon the effective management of sickness absence.

The governing body is committed to a proactive and positive approach to absence management which values and supports attendance. The governing body acknowledges, however, that absence will often be for legitimate and authorised reasons and will be supported by the school. In dealing with matters of individual absence the governing body supports a flexible and understanding approach which is sensitive to the particular circumstances.

The governing body is committed to the exploration of alternative solutions to absence issues and only in appropriate cases, where the proper procedure has been applied, will the governing body exercise its authority to determine that an employee should cease to work at the school as a consequence of their absence.

3. Statutory and contractual requirements

The governing body recognised that in certain areas the management of individual matters of ill-health and absence is governed by statutory provisions, particularly the:

- Education (Teachers' Qualification and Health Standards) (England) Regulations 1999 (Statutory Instrument 2166/99)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Safety at Work act 1974

The governing body is committed to ensuring that legislative and contractual requirements are met in the handling of all cases. To this end individual cases will be managed in accordance with the procedures for handling absence defined within the *Manual of Personnel Practice* which has been adopted by the governing body.

4. Proactive and positive measures

The governing body is committed to creating a working environment which encourages and supports the attendance of all staff. The following processes are in place.

- effective use of pre-employment health checks
- encouraging staff to make full and effective use of welfare and counselling services, such as the 'Employee Support Line'.
- undertaking to identify and deal with potential causes of stress in the workplace
- reviewing working practices/environments with a view to identifying measures which could be taken to support attendance
- ensuring effective application of policy regulating time off
- conducting exit interviews to identify (amongst other things) potential causes of absence and measures which could be utilised to further support attendance

5. Forms of absence

The governing body accepts the following definitions of absence:

- Unauthorised absence:** occurs when the employee does not attend work at the place of employment at the required times and does not have prior management approval for their absence. Unauthorised absence includes late attendance, prolonged breaks, taking annual leave without approval and taking sick leave without following the notification procedure. Individual instances of unauthorised absence will be dealt with in accordance with the procedure defined in the *Manual of Personnel Practice*.
- Authorised absence:** occurs when an employee does not attend work at the place of employment and has obtained prior management approval for their absence. Authorised absence may arise from a statutory right (including statutory maternity leave), time off for public duties and time off for trade union duties/activities or a contractual entitlement (including annual leave, occupational maternity leave and paternity leave). Authorised absence will be granted in accordance with employees' statutory rights, contractual entitlements and the guidance contained in the *Manual of Personnel Practice* concerning

time off for miscellaneous purposes.

iii. **Sickness absence:** is regulated by employees' contractual entitlements under the relevant conditions of services and is not normally authorised in advance. The governing body accepts the following definitions of sickness absence:

- *sporadic self-certificated absence* – occasional days' absence (up to and including 7 calendar days in length) which is covered by the self-certification procedure
- *short-term certificated absence* – absence which exceeds 7 calendar days but is less than one month. Absence of this nature requires a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner
- *long-term certificated absence* – absence of one month or more. Absence of this nature requires a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner. In certain circumstances the absence may also require medical suspension followed by medical clearance before the employee may return to work.

Sporadic and short-term absences which are repetitive in nature and long-term ill-health absence will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedure defined within the *Manual of Personnel Practice*.

6. **Expectation of employees when they are absent from work**

Generally, all employees are expected to obtain advance management approval for any period of absence. It is inevitable, however, that absence required to deal with an unforeseen emergency (e.g. the illness of a dependant) and most instances of sickness absence will not be authorised in advance. In these circumstances employees are expected to follow the agreed notification procedure, shown at *Annex A* to this policy.

The school expects to maintain regular sensitive contact with employees who are absent from work due to illness. This contact will be of a constructive and supportive nature and will normally seek agreement on the date and form of the next contact. Usually it will be the appropriate line manager's responsibility to maintain this contact although sometimes, with the agreement of the absent employee, this role may be delegated to another member of staff (see 'Handling Absence Matters' in [Section 4](#) of the *Manual of Personnel Practice*).

The governing body cannot require, and does not expect, staff to carry out official duties whilst off sick.

7. **Supporting employees returning to work**

The governing body is committed to assisting all employees who are absent for reasons of ill-health, and particularly those who experience a period of long-term absence, to make a smooth and effective return to work when they are fit to do so.

It is the governing body's intention to apply the same principles to all staff, and accordingly on their return to work a member of staff will be supported by their line manager/Headteacher,

whilst the return to work of the Headteacher will be supported by the County Education Officer or his representative.

Where medical advice suggests this is necessary, the governing body will support an employee in making a phased return to work (initially on reduced hours/workload) where this will enable them to return to normal working within a reasonable period.

With a view to supporting employees returning to work from any period of sickness absence, the governing body is committed to introducing a system of back-to-work interviews. These interviews will be conducted by an employee's immediate line manager where the employee has been absent up to 7 days. For absences of 7 calendar days or more, these will be conducted by a member of SLT. For absences of less than three days, there will be a responsibility on the line manager to check on the employee's welfare.

Back-to-work interviews will be conducted in a sensitive manner and will be focused upon facilitating the employee's return to work and supporting future attendance. Before a system of back-to-work interviews is introduced the governing body will ensure full consultation with staff and their representatives concerning the development of this system and its implementation. Appropriate training/briefings will be provided for all employees and line managers before implementation. The governing body is committed to the consistent application of the agreed system of interviews at all levels and for all employees within the school.

Following the introduction of back-to-work interviews, the governing body may decide to establish a pattern of specific benchmarks which will link specified levels of absence to key management actions. Before establishing benchmarks the governing body will ensure full consultation with staff and their representatives.

8. Monitoring and reporting aims

The school will establish an effective system for the accurate recording of all types of absence. The Bursar will produce a monthly report for the Headteacher showing a count of sickness absences on a rolling 12 month period for all staff. Any concerns will be raised with the Governing Body on a termly basis, and will include a list of absence measures currently in place for staff. The absence management process used will be that set out under the Manual Of Personnel Practice.

Average attendance rates at Toynbee School range between 97 and 97.5%. It is reasonable to expect that all staff fall within this range in relationship to sickness absence. Staff who do not meet appropriate levels of attendance will be subject to the procedures below.

Following an adequate period of accurate absence monitoring, the governing body will set a target to reduce sickness absence where this is considered to be appropriate to the

circumstances of the school. If the governing body believes it is appropriate to set such a target, there will be full consultation with staff and their representatives before a target is established.

Time off in Lieu (TOIL)

- 9** TOIL should only be accrued with agreement from the employee's line manager. No more than 37 hours TOIL can be accrued in one year. All TOIL accrued must be used before the end of the contractual year. This broadly matches HCC's corporate policy.

Annual leave roll over:

- 10** A Maximum of three days annual leave can be carried forward, and only with the written agreement of the employee's line manager. This applies only to staff on 52 week contracts.

11. Policy review and development

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body on an bi-annual basis.

Staff will be invited to give feedback on the policy and to make suggestions for improvement.

The governing body is committed to the involvement of staff in reviewing and developing this policy.

ANNEX A

PROCEDURES – STAFF ABSENCE

The governing body of Toynbee School is committed to ensuring that legislative and contractual requirements are met in the handling of all absence cases. To this end individual cases will be managed in accordance with the procedures for handling absence defined within the *Manual of Personnel Practice*, which has been adopted by the governing body, full details can be found in the aforementioned manual.

1. Absentee or their representative to phone the Cover Manager/Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher by 7.30am on the first day of sickness or absence and to keep the school informed of absence. Daily phone calls should then be made to school except where a doctor's certificate is in operation.
2. When an employee returns to work after an absence, he/she must inform the school of his/her return and complete the relevant absence form.
3. After lengthy or habitual absence, the Personnel Committee will refer the member of staff for assessment to Hampshire County Council's Personnel Department and/or the Occupational Health Department.
4. Every effort should be made to make Doctor and Dental appointments before or after school time, only in an emergency can your attendance at these appointments during the school day be considered. Hospital and consultant appointments will be honoured as these are not actually under your influence, but you should show an appointment card or letter to the headteacher or Admin Officer.
5. Reasons for staff absence are detailed in the *Manual of Personnel Practice*. This is available on request from the school office. The governing body acknowledges the following authorised reasons for staff absence, prior approval of the Headteacher and Chair of Governors must be sought in writing for these absences, and where appropriate may be referred to the Personnel Committee:-
 - i. Public Duties and Leave for Professional Duties – can be assessed by Headteacher and Governing Body on particular circumstance, please refer to *Manual of Personnel Practice*.
 - ii. Time Off for Dependants – statutory entitlement in these circumstances is unpaid and is limited to that which is reasonable. Reasonable time off must be judged on the particular circumstances, taking into account the need of the employee for time off and the operational requirements of the school. Please refer to the *Manual of Personnel Practice*.
 - iii. Death or serious illness of a close relative – in this circumstance the Headteacher may authorise paid leave for a period of three days. In exceptional circumstances leave may be extended by a further three days after approval by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

Should this period then need prolonging, some unpaid leave could be authorised, this would need to be reported to the full Governing Body.

iv. Non-serious illness of a relative – the Headteacher may authorise a maximum of one day, this leave will normally be without pay. Further leave may be possible following approval and consultation with the Headteacher and Governing Body.

v. Family Leave – the current Maternity, Paternity and Parental leave entitlements will be sought from Hampshire County Council Personnel Department for the relevant employee when applicable.

vi. Weddings – Headteacher can authorise one days paid leave to enable a member of staff to get married or to attend a wedding of a close relative.

vii. Graduations – Headteacher may authorise one days paid leave to attend the graduation of their child or partner, and also authorise one day's leave to enable the member of staff to attend his/her graduation ceremony.

viii. Removals – Headteacher may authorise one days paid leave, but may authorise an additional day in the case of a long-distance removal.

viii. Miscellaneous Reasons – the Headteacher may authorise leave for a maximum of one day to enable a member of staff to be absent from duty for any other reasonable purpose. In consultation with the governing body, the Headteacher has the discretion to authorise unpaid leave beyond one day per academic year per employee.

For other absence reasons reference should be made to the *Manual of Personnel Practice*.

6. Staff holidays must be taken in the school holidays, the only exception to this is support staff employed on a 52 week contract who are able to carry out their usual duties either during term time or school holidays.
7. Any unauthorised absences will be dealt with by the Governing Body in accordance with the guidelines within the *Manual of Personnel Practice* and may require consultation with Hampshire County Councils Personnel Department.
8. On extremely rare occasions the Personnel Appeals Panel of the Governing Body may be and can be called upon to give a decision with regards to the granting of paid/unpaid leave of absence.
9. The governing body can also authorise time off in lieu for teachers and support staff if they undertake professional duties or training courses outside of school time. Each application will be judged on its own merit. Staff should ensure that they give one month's notice to take time off in lieu and understand that no more than 2 staff can apply to be absent on any one day.



This policy has been designed to be used as a reference document, and summarizes County Council Policies. Full details are housed within the *Manual of Personnel Practice* and can also be gained from the County Councils Personnel Department.