

Spruce House School Absence Management Policy

The Proprietor of Spruce House School adopted this policy in October 2013 and will review it annually.

Application of the policy

This policy applies to:

- The Assistant Education Director and Head of Education.
- All Teachers and Teaching Assistants employed by Spruce House School except teachers who are the subject of capability procedures.

Purpose

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of periods of absence of teaching and support staff.

Frequent Intermittent Attendance

It is important that Spruce House School has a clear definition of what can be regarded as an unacceptable standard of staff attendance.

An unacceptable standard of staff attendance is:

- three or more separate periods of uncertified or self-certified absence over one school term or,
- five or more separate absences in any 12-month period.

Return To Work Meetings

After every uncertified or self-certified absence a meeting with the Lead Teacher will be held to either renew contact or to discuss individual workload and working conditions. If the meeting identifies work circumstances as a factor, a detailed discussion exploring what relevant assistance can be offered to improve attendance will take place.

Return to work meetings will normally take place on the day of return to school or as soon as is practically possible.

Absence Monitoring Interviews

Should a member of staff produce an unacceptable standard of staff attendance an interview conducted by the Head Of Education will take place. The member of staff will be informed beforehand and in writing of the date, venue and time of the interview. It will be an informal disciplinary interview.

The meeting represents a preliminary stage in a process the purpose of which is to:

- express and explain concern at the member of staff's absence record and the impact it has on the school;
- explore the reasons for the absence;
- find ways to resolve problems that might improve attendance and identify areas of assistance and support;
- seek a commitment from the member of staff to improve attendance and, where appropriate and helpful, discuss and set realistic targets;
- give the member of staff the opportunity to comment on the situation and for the comments to be considered.

The member of staff will be informed that their future attendance will be monitored and a date for a review interview will be set (usually one term ahead).

First Formal Stage

In the first formal stage should the member of staff not show sufficient improvement in their attendance following the preliminary interview, he/she will be required to attend a first formal stage interview conducted by the Head Of Education. The member of staff will be informed beforehand and in writing of the date, venue and time of the interview.

The purpose of the formal meeting is to:

- explore why the absence level continues to be unsatisfactory and the reasons for it;
- explain concerns at the absence level;
- offer any further help or guidance;
- seek a commitment to improve attendance and discuss and set realistic targets. Referral for specialist advice from the Occupational Health Unit will be considered to help to determine whether there is an underlying medical condition;
- give the member of staff the opportunity to comment on the situation and for the comments to be considered.

The member of staff will be required to provide medical certifications for all future absences.

The Head Of Education will repeat the points raised in the preliminary interview. A further interview date will be set and the member of staff will be informed that unless there is a significant improvement disciplinary or capability action will be considered.

A letter confirming the above points will be sent together with a record of the meeting to the member of staff within 5 working days of the meeting.

If the member of staff's record improves following this stage, the Head Of Education will write to the member of staff and inform him/her that that the improvement has been noted, should be maintained and will continue to be monitored.

Second Formal Stage

In the second formal stage should the member of staff not show sufficient improvement in their attendance following the first formal stage interview, he/she will be required to attend a second formal stage interview.

The purpose of the formal meeting is to:

- explore why the absence level continues to be unsatisfactory and the reasons for it;
- explain continued concern at the absence level;
- seek a final commitment to improve attendance;
- give the member of staff the opportunity to discuss advice from reports from the Occupational Health Unit.

The member of staff will be required to provide medical certifications for all future absences.

The Head Of Education will repeat the points raised at the first formal stage interview. A further interview date will be set and the member of staff will be informed that unless there is a significant improvement action which could lead to the termination of his/her employment will take place.

A letter confirming the above points will be sent together with a record of the meeting to the member of staff within 5 working days of the meeting.

If the member of staff's record improves following this stage, the Head Of Education will write to the member of staff and inform him/her that that the improvement has been noted, should be maintained and will continue to be monitored for the following twelve months and failure to maintain the improvement may result in the termination of his/her employment.

Final Stage

In the final stage should the member of staff not show sufficient improvement in their attendance following the second formal stage interview or whose attendance has deteriorated again following improvement after the second formal stage interview, he/she will be notified that action will be initiated through the Spruce House School capability procedure.

Policy review

This policy document will be reviewed by the Education Director on an annual basis to ensure it is up to date with current legislation and best practice.

Date approved: March 2016

Date last reviewed: September 2026

Next review (or before): September 2027

Signed: 

Position: Education Director

Staff Acknowledgement

In signing this document I am confirming I have read the information and have an understanding of the procedures outlined within the information provided.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this document with a Senior Leadership member of staff to gain further clarity.

I also know that if I feel I need further guidance I know I can access through the Head Of Education.

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Staff member name:

Position:

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Staff member name:

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