Sickness Absence Policy

For all schools within the Bosco Catholic Education Trust

This policy has been approved and adopted by the
Bosco Catholic Education Trust.

Approved	For Review
March 2025	March 2028

Contents

Bosco Catholic Education Trust Mission Statement 3
1. DEFINITIONS 3
2. SCOPE OF PROCEDURE 4
3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES 4
4. INFORMAL APPROACH 5
5. EMPLOYEE'S OBLIGATIONS 5
6. SICKNESS NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE 5
7. RETURN TO WORK DISCUSSIONS 6
8. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REFERRAL 7
9. ABSENCE REVIEWER, FINAL ABSENCE REVIEWER AND APPEAL MANAGER 8
10. PERSISTENT INTERMITTENT ABSENCE 9
11. LONG TERM ABSENCE 9
12. FORMAL ABSENCE REVIEW MEETINGS 10
13. FORMAL RESPONSES 10
14. DIRECTORS'/GOVERNORS' PANELS 13
15. COMPANION 13
16. TIMING OF MEETINGS 14
17. VENUE FOR MEETINGS 14
18. ASSISTANCE 14
Appendix 1: Employment Terms for Sick Pay Entitlement 15
Appendix 2 - Staff Absence Insurance 16

Bosco Catholic Education Trust Mission Statement

The Bosco Catholic Education Trust ("Bosco CET") is a Christ-centred family of Catholic academies, within the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, working together as one body to provide an outstanding education for all. As Catholic schools, we endeavour to develop confident, compassionate and faithful young people. Through partnership, collaboration and mutual support, we seek to enable all those entrusted to our care to become the person God called them to be.

"Serve the Lord joyfully"

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1. In this Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

1.2. 'Academy' means the academy named at the beginning of this Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure and includes all sites upon which the academy undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.

1.3. 'Academy Trust Company' means the company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Academy.

1.4. 'Board' means the board of Directors of the Academy Trust Company.

1.5. 'Chair' means the Chair of the Board or the Chair of the Local Governing Body of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.

1.6. 'Clerk' means the Clerk to the Board or the Clerk to the Local Governing Body of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.

1.7. 'Companion' means a willing work colleague not involved in the substance of the employee's performance issues under review by this Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure, or an accredited representative of a trade union or other professional association of which the employee is a member, who should be available for the periods of time necessary to meet timescales under this Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure.

1.8. 'Diocesan Schools Commission' means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Diocesan Education Service.

1.9. 'Directors' means directors appointed to the Board of the Academy Trust Company.

1.10. 'Governing Board' means the body carrying out the employment functions of the Academy Trust Company and such term may include the Board of Directors and a Local Governing Body of the Academy.

1.11. 'Governors' means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Governing Body of the Academy, from time to time.

1.12. 'Local Governing Body' means the group of governors appointed and elected to carry out specified functions in relation to the Academy as delegated by the Academy Trust Company.

1.13. 'Vice-Chair' means the Vice-Chair of the Board or the Vice-Chair of the Local Governing Body of the Academy elected from time to time, as appropriate.

2. SCOPE OF PROCEDURE

2.1. This Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure applies to you if you are an employee or worker at the Academy (hereinafter referred to as an "employee" or "you").

2.2. The purpose of this procedure is to establish a framework for the effective management of staff sickness absence taking into account both the welfare of employees and the requirements of the Academy to deliver an effective education to its pupils.

2.3. An employee is entitled to have access by arrangement to their personnel file and to request the deletion of time-expired records in line with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

2.4. The Academy Trust Company delegates its authority in the manner set out in this policy.

2.5. When implementing this policy and procedure, the Academy Trust Company should have regard to the Academy's Health and Safety Policy and Procedure in relation to any overlapping health and safety consideration(s) that may arise.

2.6. For the avoidance of doubt this policy may be used concurrently with the Academy's Capability Policy and Procedure and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

2.7. In this policy "working day" means any day on which you would ordinarily work if you were a full-time employee. In other words, "working day" will apply differently to teaching and non-teaching staff. However, part-time and full-time staff will not be treated differently for the purposes of implementing this policy and procedure.

2.8. The Academy is committed to ensuring respect, objectivity, belief in the dignity of the individual, consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of this policy. This commitment extends to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination throughout the Academy community.

2.9. This Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure offers opportunities to ensure justice for teachers, support staff and pupils alike and has the potential for the expression of Christian qualities such as honesty, self-knowledge, respect for others and their gifts, recognition of the needs and achievements of others, challenge to self and others, personal growth and openness.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Academy Trust Company expects all schools to:

3.1. Never ignore sickness absence

3.2. Always monitor attendance

3.3. Ensure that short term absences do not go unnoticed

3.4. Take swift, supportive action if the absence is work related

3.5. Keep accurate, up to date, employee attendance records

3.6. Handle attendance problems promptly and sensitively, in a supportive manner

3.7. Develop and maintain an atmosphere that encourages people to come to work

3.8. Deal with each person as an individual

3.9. Treat all staff fairly
3.10. Keep the Academy Trust Company informed about the Academy's sickness absence rate
3.11. Seek support and advice from its HR provider, Occupational Health and the Diocesan Schools Commission, as appropriate

4. INFORMAL APPROACH

4.1. Prior to invoking the formal steps set out in this procedure you and/or your line manager may (where appropriate and practicable) initiate an informal discussion regarding your absence from work.
4.2. Depending on the circumstances and cause of your absence, an informal discussion may lead to agreeing strategies with you to help improve and maintain attendance levels. In agreeing to a strategy informally you are entitled if you wish to include your Companion in the informal discussion process.
4.3. The Academy is not procedurally required to implement an informal approach to investigating the reason for your absence and it is your responsibility to follow the appropriate procedure in informing the Academy of the reason for your absence and to fulfil your obligations set out in Paragraph 4 below.

5. EMPLOYEE'S OBLIGATIONS

Employees are expected to:

5.1. Comply with the Academy's sickness notification procedure
5.2. Ensure medical advice and treatment, where appropriate, is received as quickly as possible in order to facilitate a return to work
5.3. Take and follow the medical advice and treatment offered
5.4. Keep in regular touch (consistent with your medical condition) and inform the Headteacher, or nominated person (or Chair in the case of sickness absence of the Headteacher), of any significant developments affecting the period of absence
5.5. Attend medical appointments promptly.
5.6. Inform the Headteacher (or Chair in the case of the sickness absence of the Headteacher) immediately of any side effects associated with your health condition and/or medication that could have an impact on your suitability to work with children.

6. SICKNESS NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

6.1. You must contact the Academy in accordance with your Contract of Employment (and/or the Staff Handbook or equivalent document).
6.2. You should contact the Academy personally and not ask third parties (such as members of your family or friends) to inform us on your behalf. This is because we cannot be certain of the identity of the third party and whether they are acting in your best

interests. In exceptional circumstances where you are physically incapable of communicating with us yourself (for example due to being hospitalised in a state of concussion), we may need to rely on a third-party explanation for your absence.

6.3. Brief details of the reason for absence and, if possible, some indication of a likely return to work date should be given during this contact. The position in relation to current workload should be discussed in order to help the Academy make appropriate cover arrangements.

6.4. If your absence is the result of an accident or an injury sustained at work then this information must be made known. You should indicate if the incident has been reported, when it was reported and to whom.

6.5. If you are still unfit for work after three successive working days you must once again contact the Principal/Headteacher or nominated person on the fourth day of absence and advise them of the likely duration of your continued absence according to any medical advice you have received.

6.6. The Conditions of Service for Teachers in England and Wales (the Burgundy Book) (which applies to teachers employed by the Academy Trust Company) stipulates that a self-certificate should be completed from not later than the fourth working day of absence. Teachers are required to complete a self-certificate to cover every day of absence, including half days.

6.7. A doctor's Statement of Fitness for Work (a "doctor's statement") must be provided by all staff and sent to the Principal/Headteacher or other nominated person from the 8th calendar day of sickness.

6.8. If more than one doctor's statement is required for any period of absence, you must keep the Principal/Headteacher, or nominated person, informed of developments on a weekly basis. The Principal/Headteacher, or other nominated person, is also entitled to make reasonable contact with you during your sickness absence, whether or not you have complied with the requirement to make weekly contact. The purpose of maintaining such contact (whether on a weekly or reasonable basis) during such period of sickness absence is to ensure that the educational needs of the Academy are fulfilled, to give you the opportunity to indicate if there are any ways in which the Academy may be able to support you and to give you the opportunity (if you wish it) to be kept up to date with developments at the Academy.

6.9. The requirement that you maintain weekly contact during any period of sickness absence may be relaxed by the Academy if a doctor's statement indicates that such contact would hamper your return to work or, alternatively, by agreement between you and the Academy.

7. RETURN TO WORK DISCUSSIONS

7.1. After every absence your line manager (or other appointed person) will welcome you back to work and discuss with you:

7.1.1. the reasons for your absence;

7.1.2. whether the appropriate notification has been completed;
7.1.3. your fitness to work; and
7.1.4. whether there are any issues which require particular support from the Academy.

7.2. A record of this return to work discussion should be placed on your personnel file.

7.3. Your line manager (or other appointed person) may use the return to work discussion as an opportunity to bring you up to date with developments within the Academy during your absence.

7.4. It is anticipated that a return to work discussion would normally last up to 15 minutes, but this is an indication only.

7.5. Because of the nature of your medical condition you may prefer not to discuss the reasons for absence with your line manager (or other appointed person) and, in that case, you may hold the return to work discussion with a member of the senior leadership team.

8. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REFERRAL

8.1. The Academy may, at any time it considers appropriate, refer you to Occupational Health for an assessment of:
8.1.1. Your health
8.1.2. Its impact on your attendance at the Academy
8.1.3. Its impact on your fitness to perform the duties required by your employment
8.1.4. Its impact on your ability to attend formal meetings or interviews under any other procedure particularly in the light of the guidance at page 20 of the Health and Work Handbook produced by the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, Royal College of General Practitioners, Society of Occupational Medicine
8.1.5. What steps the Academy could take to improve your health and/or attendance.

8.2. A referral to Occupational Health is a supportive measure and you are expected to cooperate fully where such a referral is made. Occupational Health appointments will be scheduled during working time, where possible.

8.3. Before making any decision to dismiss you on notice under this Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure the Academy will have referred you for at least one Occupational Health assessment.

8.4. Notwithstanding Paragraph 8.2 above, if you decide not to engage in an Occupational Health referral the Academy will have no option but to proceed to make decisions without the benefit of medical advice.

9. ABSENCE REVIEWER, FINAL ABSENCE REVIEWER AND APPEAL MANAGER

9.1. The table below sets out the persons to be appointed, where possible, throughout the stages of the sickness absence review procedure depending on the person who is/has been absent from work due to sickness:

Employee Level	**Absence Reviewer**	**Final Absence Reviewer**	**Appeal Manager (re Written Warnings)**	**Appeal Manager (re Dismissal)**
Headteacher	Chair or a non-staff Director/Governor (other than the Vice-Chair) nominated by the Chair	Directors'/ Governors' Absence Panel appointed by the Vice-Chair	A non-staff Director/ Governor (other than the Chair or Vice-Chair) nominated by the Vice-Chair	Directors'/ Governors' Appeal Panel, appointed by the Vice- Chair
Other Leadership Spine	Principal/Headteacher	Chair or a non-staff Governor nominated by the Chair	A non-staff Director/ Governor nominated by the Vice-Chair	Directors'/ Governors' Appeal Panel
Other Teaching Staff	(1) A member of the Leadership Team (other than the Headteacher) appointed by the Headteacher or in the event that (1) above cannot be complied with, (2) A person appointed by the Headteacher	Headteacher	Chair or a non-staff Director/ Governor nominated by the Chair	Directors'/ Governors' Appeal Panel
Other Support Staff	A person appointed by the Headteacher	Headteacher	Chair or a non-staff Director/ Governor nominated by the Chair	Directors'/ Governors' Appeal Panel

9.2. In law, only the Academy Trust Company, as the employer of staff, has the power to terminate employment, so the Academy Trust Company will need to ensure that it has

delegated this power to the Final Absence Reviewer in accordance with the table above. Where the Academy Trust Company amends the table above, it will need to ensure that it has delegated its power to dismiss to the panel of persons and/or the individual that it appoints as the Final Absence Reviewer.

10. PERSISTENT INTERMITTENT ABSENCE

10.1. Persistent intermittent sickness absence can be defined as frequent short-term absences from work that are normally sporadic and attributable to minor ailments, in many cases unconnected.

10.2. Managerial problems are created by the frequency of the absences and the reasons behind the absences. It can only be addressed effectively through proper monitoring systems and effective management action.

Triggers

10.3. Whilst each case of sickness absence should be considered individually and based on your working arrangements, the following triggers will normally lead to a Formal Absence Review Meeting:

10.4. Sickness absence of 10 or more working days in any 12-month period, accrued over 3 periods of absence or more.

10.5. Sickness absence of 6 or more days accrued over 2 or more periods in any 4-month period.

10.6. Two periods of sickness absence both lasting 4 or more days in any 12-month period.

10.7. Any levels of absence which show a trend or pattern e.g. Friday – Monday absences, monthly dates (e.g. last Friday every month) and any other notable dates.

11. LONG TERM ABSENCE

11.1. Long-term absence is where an employee is absent from work for a considerable number of weeks or months as the result of a serious health problem or planned medical procedure. It can normally be distinguished from persistent intermittent absence in that it tends to be continuous and usually can be traced to an underlying medical condition.

Trigger

11.2. An absence lasting 4 working weeks will normally lead to a Formal Absence Review Meeting.

12. FORMAL ABSENCE REVIEW MEETINGS

12.1. Where a Formal Absence Review Meeting has been triggered in accordance with Paragraphs 10.2 or 10.3 above, the Academy will appoint an Absence Reviewer in accordance with Paragraph 9. The Absence Reviewer will write to you inviting you to a Formal Absence Review Meeting. You will be given at least 5 working day's notice of such meeting. At the same time as sending you the letter inviting you to the meeting, the Absence Reviewer will also send you a copy of the Absence Report which they have prepared and which shall:

12.1.1. Set out your absences from work indicating your reasons given for the absence

12.1.2. Set out any suggestions made by you or the Academy to make reasonable adjustments to working arrangements that could reduce your absence or assist your return to work

12.1.3. Include copies of self-certificates, doctor's statements and all medical reports including those obtained from Occupational Health.

12.1.4. State that one of the possible outcomes of the procedure could be the termination of your employment where this applies.

12.2. At a Formal Absence Review Meeting you will have the opportunity to:

12.3. Present any medical evidence in your possession

12.4. Make reasonable suggestions about managing your return to work including any phased return to work, change or reduction of duties and/or working hours

12.5. Make suggestions of other reasonable adjustments that could be made

13. FORMAL RESPONSES

The Absence Reviewer will confirm the outcome of the Formal Absence Review Meeting in writing within 5 working days of the date of such meeting. The Absence Reviewer may, in addition to making an Occupational Health referral, make the following formal responses:

13.1. Reasonable adjustments to working arrangements

Adjustments will vary on a case by case basis depending on the medical condition identified:

13.2. A First Written Caution

13.2.1. In the context of a persistent intermittent absence this is a caution that if you are absent from work for two or more days in the period of the next six months you will be at risk of a Final Written Caution.

13.2.2. In the context of a long-term sickness absence this is a caution that if you are not fully back to work within between 4-12 working weeks there will be a further Formal Absence Review Meeting. The precise number of working weeks will be set by reference to the available medical evidence.

13.3. A Final Written Caution

13.3.1. In the context of a persistent intermittent absence this is a caution that if you are absent from work at all in the period of the next six months you will be at risk of dismissal.

13.3.2. In the context of long-term sickness absence this is a caution that if you are not fully back to work within between 4-12 working weeks you will be referred to the Final Absence Reviewer in accordance with Paragraph 9 which could lead to dismissal. The precise number of working weeks will be set by reference to the available medical evidence.

The Final Absence Reviewer may (in addition to the responses available to the Absence Reviewer) make the following responses:

13.4. Dismissal with Notice

13.4.1. In coming to such a decision in relation to a case of persistent intermittent absence the Final Absence Reviewer will consider:

- The total absence and pattern of absence
- The available medical prognosis
- Advice from Occupational Health
- The reasons advanced for the absence
- How long the employee has worked for the Academy
- Is the job a key job? If so, how long can the Academy effectively function without that contribution?
- The additional demands the persistent intermittent absence has generated for other employees and the Academy
- Whether other reasonable adjustments have been considered
- Whether other reasonable adjustments have been made and, if so, whether they were effective

13.4.2. In coming to such a decision in relation to a case of long-term absence the Final Absence Reviewer will consider:

- The available medical prognosis
- Advice from Occupational Health
- Is complete recovery likely and, if so, when?
- How long the employee has worked for the Academy
- Is the job a key job? If so, how long can the Academy effectively function without that contribution?
- The additional demands the absence has generated for other employees and the Academy
- Whether alternative employment or a transfer is available, suitable and acceptable
- Whether ill-health retirement has been explored

- Whether other reasonable adjustments have been considered
- Whether other reasonable adjustments have been made and, if so, whether they were effective

13.4.3. In a case where your employment is terminated, the Final Absence Reviewer will recommend to the Academy Trust Company that your employment is terminated in accordance with your contract of employment, and the Academy Trust Company will take appropriate steps to terminate your employment.

13.5. In the event that your employment is terminated in accordance with Paragraph 13.4 above:

13.5.1. If your contract of employment contains a garden leave clause the Governing Board may exercise that clause so that you are not required to attend the Academy during your notice period but remain employed and so bound by the terms of your contract of employment until the expiry of the notice period; or 12.3.2 If your contract of employment contains a payment in lieu of notice clause the Governing Board may exercise that clause to bring your contract to an end with immediate effect.

13.5.2. You may appeal against a First Written Caution or a Final Written Caution by writing to the Clerk within 5 working days of being sent the relevant caution.

13.5.3. You may appeal against a dismissal with notice by writing to the Clerk within 10 working days of being sent the notification of termination.

13.5.4. Any appeal letter lodged in accordance with Paragraphs 13.5.2 or 13.5.3 above must set out the grounds of your appeal in detail.

13.5.5. The fact of the appeal does not delay the commencement of any period under any caution or of any notice period.

13.5.6. Any appeal should normally be heard within 20 working days of the Clerk receiving your appeal letter.

13.5.7. The Appeal Manager is not required to hear oral evidence and may rely on written evidence.

13.5.8. If the Appeal Manager does decide to hear oral evidence, you will be given an opportunity to comment on it either by (a) attending the meeting or (b) reviewing the notes of that oral evidence after the meeting (if you were not present at the meeting where such oral evidence was given). In the event of (b) you must provide any response to the notes of the oral evidence within 5 working days of receipt of the same.

13.5.9. The Appeal Manager will confirm the outcome of the Appeal Meeting in writing to you within 5 working days of the date of the Appeal Meeting. The decision of the Appeal Manager is final and there will be no further right of appeal. The outcomes of the Appeal Meeting are that:

13.5.10. (a) the Appeal Manager may uphold the decision of the Final Absence Reviewer; or (b) the Appeal Manager may uphold the employee's appeal,

overturn and refer the matter back to the Final Absence Reviewer for reconsideration.

14. DIRECTORS'/GOVERNORS' PANELS

14.1. Directors'/Governors' Absence and Appeal Panels shall comprise three non-staff Directors/Governors not previously involved in the matter and shall not comprise the Chair or Vice-Chair unless there are insufficient numbers of non-staff Directors/Governors not previously involved in the matter, in which case the Chair and/or Vice-Chair may be appointed to a Directors'/Governors' Absence or Appeal Panel.

14.2. In the event that there are insufficient numbers of Directors/Governors available to participate in a Directors'/Governors' Absence or Appeal Panel, the Academy Trust Company may appoint associate members solely to participate in the appropriate Directors'/Governors' Absence or Appeal Panel on the recommendation of the Diocesan Schools Commission.

15. COMPANION

15.1. If you are the subject of any Formal Absence Review Meeting and subsequent appeals, you may be accompanied by a Companion.

15.2. You must let the relevant Reviewer or Manager know who your Companion will be at least one working day before the relevant meeting.

15.3. If you have any particular reasonable need, for example, because you have a disability, you can also be accompanied by a suitable helper.

15.4. Your Companion can address the meeting in order to:

15.4.1. put your case;

15.4.2. sum up your case;

15.4.3. respond on your behalf to any view expressed at the meeting; and (d) Ask questions on your behalf

15.5. Your Companion can also confer with you during the meeting.

15.6. Your Companion has no right to:

15.6.1. answer questions on your behalf;

15.6.2. address the meeting if you do not wish it; or (c) prevent you from explaining your case.

15.7. Where you have identified your Companion and they have confirmed in writing to the relevant Reviewer or Manager that they cannot attend the date or time set for the meeting, the relevant Reviewer or Manager will not usually postpone the meeting for a period in excess of five working days from the date set by the Academy to a date or time agreed with your Companion provided that it is reasonable in all the circumstances. Should your Companion subsequently be unable to attend the Formal Absence Review Meeting, it may be held in their absence or written representations will be accepted.

16. TIMING OF MEETINGS

Meetings under this procedure may:

16.1. need to be held when you were timetabled to teach.
16.2. exceptionally be held during planning, preparation and administration time if this does not impact on lesson preparation.
16.3. be held after the end of the Academy day.
16.4. not be held on days on which you would not ordinarily work.
16.5. be extended by agreement between the parties if the time limits cannot be met for any justifiable reason.

17. VENUE FOR MEETINGS

The relevant Reviewer or Manager can hold the meeting off the Academy site to minimise any distress to the employee. Any reasonable request to do so will not be unreasonably refused.

18. ASSISTANCE

In all cases involving any cautions in relation to the Principal/Headteacher or to a person on the Leadership Spine, or to potential or actual dismissal of any other member of staff, the Diocesan Schools Commission may send a representative to advise the Absence Reviewer, the Final Absence Reviewer or the Appeal Manager.

Appendix 1: Employment Terms for Sick Pay Entitlement
Support Staff

Length of Service	Allowance
Date of joining to four months of service	1 month of full pay
From four months of service to one year	1 month of full pay and 2 months half pay
During second year of service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During third year of service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During fourth and fifth years of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After five years of service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

Teachers

Length of Service	Allowance
During first year of service	25 working days full pay and (after completing four months service) and 50 days half pay
During second year of service	50 working days full pay and 50 working days half pay
During third year of service	75 working days full pay and 75 working days half pay
During fourth and successive years of service	100 working days full pay and 100 working days half pay

Appendix 2 - Staff Absence Insurance

Bosco CET has a centrally negotiated Staff Absence Insurance policy with Schools Mutual to cover the absence of all staff across the Trust.

This policy awards the following benefits to schools:

- Absence cover for teachers at £100 a day after 5 days – benefit period of 190 days.
- Absence cover for support staff at £30 a day after 30 days – benefit period of 190 days.
- £3,500 maternity leave cover for teachers

The policy includes the following additional benefits which are available to all staff:

- Unlimited pre-employment health screening for new joiners
- Unlimited occupational health support and referrals for staff
- Unlimited staff wellbeing support including counselling, GP support, physiotherapy, access to private surgery.
- Pupil wellbeing support via the App

All of the above is free to the Trust's schools and comes at no cost whatsoever.

Further details are available from the Trust offices upon request.

Schools may wish to subscribe to additional, enhanced levels of cover and support, which can be negotiated independently and directly with Schools Mutual. This may include a higher level of daily payment to teachers and / or support staff, enhanced pupil wellbeing services, educational psychology services and more. Further details can be found at www.schoolsmutual.co.uk.