

Absence Management Procedure

At KidzRus we encourage all our employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work due to sickness. By implementing this policy, we aim to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of our business needs and the genuine needs of employees to take occasional periods of time off work because of sickness. This policy and procedure establishes a framework to support individuals and the organisation in times of sickness absence. It ensures that appropriate and consistent advice is provided and that assistance and support is offered to employees and, where necessary, action is taken.

Principles

We aim to provide a healthy working environment and demonstrate commitment to health, safety and the welfare of staff in order to maximise attendance.

Management is responsible for regularly monitoring and taking appropriate action in connection with sickness and other unplanned absence.

Exclusion periods for contagious illnesses

Working with children means that you are in contact with illnesses which can be highly contagious. We take the health of children and staff very seriously therefore if you have any contagious illness you must adhere to the same exclusion periods as children. This will ensure that you are able to recover appropriately and that this illness is not passed on to other staff, children or parents. The manager will advise you of any exclusion times required (see the sickness and illness and infection control policies).

Sickness absence reporting procedure

Reporting sickness absence should be done using the following guidelines. Failure to follow these guidelines could delay any sick pay due to you and could possibly result in disciplinary action.

On your first day of absence, you must:

notify your manager by telephoning your setting personally, and speaking to the duty manager to report sickness before 7.30 or with a minimum notice of one hour before the start of your shift. Text message and emails are not acceptable forms of communication for this purpose.

Give brief details of your illness and your expected length of absence.

Practitioners MUST contact their manager by telephoning the setting by 16:00pm on the day of sickness to confirm if attending the following day or to report further absence. This procedure needs to be followed for everyday of absence/sickness unless a sick note is provided. Exceptional circumstances will be considered. As it is a small nursery this allows for staffing to be organised.

For absences of more than seven consecutive days, you must provide a 'fit note' completed by a qualified medical practitioner for the period of absence.

After returning to work from any sickness absence leave, a 'return to work' interview will be undertaken by the employee and line manager.

During the return to work interview the following will be discussed:

The reason for absence

Whether adjustments to the role (on a temporary or more permanent basis) are required and what they are. These might include adjusted work patterns, start and finish times and changes of duties

Future requirements and expectations, using the Bradford Factor scoring system may be actioned e.g Improved attendance

The return to work interview should be recorded and signed by both the manager and employee and a copy attached to the employee's file.

Ongoing Suitability Checks

Managers will monitor sickness/absence using the Bradford Sickness Factor following the guidelines below:

$$B = S^2 * D$$

Where:

B is the Bradford Factor score.

S is the total number of spells (instances) of absence over the designated set period.

D is the total number of days absence

The set period is traditionally set as a 52 week rolling period.

Kidz R Us use the scoring system as follows:

50-124 points = Consider a verbal warning

125-399 points = Consider a first written warning

400-649 = Consider a final written warning

650+ Consider dismissal

Managers discretion is used throughout and there may be instances where action is appropriate a lot sooner than Bradford Factor suggests for example, three occasions off on a Monday/Friday for example would only score 27, but the pattern of absences may warrant earlier management intervention. In these instances, Kidz R Us should be commencing action as soon as a pattern begins to emerge, and if your enquiries justify a concern, action should not wait until any trigger points are reached.

There an employee's attendance record gives cause for concern because of the duration or frequency of absence, this should be brought to the attention of the employee through a discussion with the manager.

Throughout any stage of discussions on sickness absence, employees may be accompanied by a work colleague.

The abuse of sick leave and pay regulations may be classified as misconduct and will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Long-term sickness absence

For the purposes of the policy, long-term sickness absence is defined by the nursery as absences lasting over one month.

Where absences have lasted over 14 calendar days or more the manager should contact the member of staff concerned to obtain an initial assessment of the problem and to offer any further help or assistance. This informal contact may be maintained with the employee's agreement until one month's continuous absence.

At this point and where felt appropriate after further assessment of the problem, the manager will arrange a face-to-face meeting or telephone conference between themselves and the member of staff. The meeting should:

Seek to confirm the reasons and nature of the absence and its likely duration

Ensure that the member of staff is aware of the nursery's concern regarding their health and necessary absence from work

Consider offering alternative duties or a shorter working week if this would enable a quicker return to work subject to medical advice

Give consideration to any personal problems being encountered and discuss possible ways of helping the individual resolve these

Advise the member of staff that in their best interests they may be asked to see a registered medical practitioner or occupational health provider appointed by the nursery to enable a medical report to be prepared. Alternatively, and if appropriate, gain agreement from the member of staff to contact their doctor or specialist in order to establish the likely length of absence and the long-term effect on capability in relation to job performance and attendance at work.

If all other avenues have been investigated, the absence continues or, following return to work, the attendance record does not improve, a subsequent meeting should be arranged. At this point, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe there will be an improvement in the foreseeable future, the manager should inform the member of staff that long-term sickness absence due to ill health may put their employment at risk and the possibility of termination by reason of capability or suitability to work with children might have to be considered, taking into account any medical information available.

The position will be reviewed periodically and ultimately it may become necessary from a business perspective to consider termination of employment. In these circumstances, the nursery will:

- Review the employee's absence record to assess whether or not it is sufficient to justify dismissal
- Consult the employee
- Obtain up-to-date medical advice through occupational health
- Advise the employee in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility
- Meet with the employee to discuss the options and consider the employee's views on continuing employment
- Review if there are any other jobs that the employee could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss
- Allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss the employee on grounds of long-term ill health
- Arrange a further meeting with the employee to determine any appeal
- Following this meeting, inform the employee of its final decision
- Act reasonably towards the employee at all times.

Any decision to terminate employment will be taken by the managing director making sure the capability procedure has been exhausted.

Occupational health

The nursery will engage the services of an independent Occupational Health Advisor in situations where expert medical opinion is required and work with them to identify the best course of action in circumstances of sickness absence.

Access to medical records

The Access to Medical Records Act 1988 gives individuals the right of access to medical records relating to themselves which have been prepared by a medical practitioner for employment purposes. The Act provides that:

- Employers must gain the consent of employees before requesting reports from medical practitioners
- Employers must inform employees of their rights in respect of medical reports
- The employee has the right of access to the report before the employer sees it, provided appropriate notification is given
- The employer is responsible for notifying the medical practitioner that the employee wishes to have access
- The employee may ask for a report to be amended or may attach a statement to the report
- Having seen the report, the employee may wish to withhold consent to it being supplied.

Where the nursery requests further medical information about the health of staff from an individual's General Practitioner or Specialist, or its own occupational health provider, the provisions of the Act will be followed.

Throughout any interviews regarding sickness absence, staff are entitled to the support of and/or representation by a colleague or union representative.

The nursery reserves the right to request employees see a medical advisor (e.g. consultant, GP or Occupational Health Advisor) during their employment, if it is reasonably deemed necessary due to sickness absence, changes in health or the role, or where it is necessary to seek expert medical opinion as to whether or not the employee can fulfil their job role.

Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid in accordance with Department for Work and Pensions requirements and no payment will be made for the first three working days in a period of incapacity for work