Kingsway Primary School

Absence protocol

Designated Governor	James Hill	**Designated Teacher**	Sam Bell
Status	Non-statutory	**Review Cycle**	Annual
Last Review	29th September 2025	**Next Review Date**	September 2026

This protocol is based on the school approach and sickness absence policy from GCC

1. Introduction

1.1 This protocol sets the expectation of high levels of attendance at work and details the various circumstances of sickness absence and how they will be managed.

1.2 The headteacher/SLT are responsible for managing absence fairly and in a consistent manner.

1.3 The protocol applies to all school staff.

1.4 The protocol does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and is entirely non-contractual. It may be amended, withdrawn, suspended or departed from at the discretion of the school at any time.

2. Sickness absence reporting process

2.1 The appropriate member of SLT (as set out below) must be informed of sickness absence as soon as possible and **no later than 7.15am** on the day of the absence.

2.2 A **phone call** is to be made to inform the appropriate member of SLT of the absence.

2.3 School absences are to be reported to SLT as follows:

Day	SLT	Contact number
Monday	Emily	07930896905
Tuesday	Emily	07930896905
Wednesday	Sam	07757258372
Thursday	Lee	07944976116
Friday	Sam	07757258372

Nursery absences to be reported to Nursery Manager Michelle on 07368307967

2.4 On the day of the absence, a phone call must be made **by 2.30pm** to the school office to inform of a continued absence unless self-certifying or in possession of a fit note (and the school are already aware of this). It is the duty of the staff member to keep school reasonably informed about how they are progressing.

2.5 Employees must self-certify for absences up to seven calendar days.

2.6 For absences of eight calendar days or more the employee must:

- Give their manager/headteacher a 'fit note' or appropriate document
- Speak to their manager on the eighth day
- Continue to update the manager and provide a continuous fit note (including absence during a school closure period)

2.7 If someone is physically incapable of calling in, a friend, relative or medical professional can call in on their behalf but, as soon as possible, the employee must call and provide evidence (for example, a Fit Note) of their circumstances.

2.8 Failure to follow the reporting procedure **may result in the absence being treated as unauthorised, and sick pay may be withheld and/or disciplinary action taken**.

3. Fit notes

3.1 From the eighth day of absence onwards, a fit note must be submitted to their manager until the employee is fit to return to work. Doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists or physiotherapists can issue Fit Notes, which will either state that an employee is 'not fit' or 'may be fit'.

3.2 The fit note will provide guidance on the employee's level of fitness and how this may affect their ability to work. For those who may be fit, the appropriate health professional will indicate on the Fit Note guidance about the employee's condition and where appropriate tick boxes to recommend actions that may enable an earlier return to work. These recommendations might include matters such as phased return, altered hours, amended duties or workplace adaptations. The fit note will indicate the period of time to which this advice relates.

3.3 The manager will discuss with the employee the contents of the fit note and whether any guidance can be accommodated wholly or with some adjustment, in line with the needs of the school. If for any reason it is not possible to accommodate the employee's return to work at this stage, the employee will remain "off sick".

3.4 If the school is able to accommodate the advice/guidance the employee must return to work. Should they refuse, the school may consider taking action under the Conduct Policy.

4. Contacting an employee during sickness absence

4.1 Regular contact should be maintained during any period of sickness absence, and this could reasonably include a meeting with the employee.

5. Return to work and return to work meetings

5.1 If during the period of a 'not fit' fit note the employee feels they have recovered sufficiently to return to work, the employee should discuss this with their manager.

5.2 In considering a return to work the employee and manager will undertake a risk assessment. Any early return to work should be confirmed in writing.

5.3 Managers will discuss sickness absence with the employee on their return to work and may ask the employee to attend a return to work meeting after any period of sickness absence, but particularly when:

5.3.1 Short term absence totals eight days accumulated over the last 12 months

5.3.2 A single period of absence is more than 14 consecutive calendar days.

5.4 The purpose of the meeting is to:

5.4.1 Welcome the employee back to work and check they are well enough to work

5.4.2 Clarify the cause of the absence

5.4.3 Together address issues that may be causing or contributing to the absence

5.4.4 Agree any initial support that may be needed

5.4.5 Discourage unjustified absence and demonstrate the importance of absence management to the school.

6. Failure to follow sickness procedure

6.1 If the employee fails to follow the sickness procedure, the absence will be unauthorised and dealt with as a conduct matter and sickness pay will be suspended.

7. Time off for an emergency

7.1 When time off is needed for an emergency, sick leave is not appropriate. However, leave may be taken under the Authorised Special Leave Policy on Schoolsnet, which covers compassionate leave and family care leave.

7.2 Should the need arise to leave the school site unexpectedly, a member of SLT must be informed before leaving.

8. Requests for time off including to attend appointments

8.1 Any requests for time off must be made in writing to the headteacher via email with reasonable notice (typically, with a minimum of two weeks' notice). Requests must be supported by evidence (such as hospital letters, screen shot of a GP appointment etc).

Sickness Absence flowchart – Manager/employee responsibilities

Manager	Time scale	Employee
Record sickness absence Initiate Sickness Absence Declaration form Consider fast track referral to OH if absence relates to mental health or musculoskeletal	Day One	Ring and speak to appropriate member of SLT by 7.15am Notify them of the date and time illness started (including Saturday, Sunday and holidays) and the precise reason for absence Contact school office by 2.30pm to advise
Continue to record absence as appropriate	Day Four	Ring and speak to manager to confirm or amend information given on day one
Keep fit notes until employee returns to work Continue absence recording	Day Eight	Ring and speak to manager to confirm or amend information given on day four Must provide a fit note from day eight onwards and update manager prior to expiry of each fit note
If employee returns to work days 1 – 14 conduct a return to work discussion or if appropriate conduct return to work meeting on day of return. Complete sickness recording process attaching fit notes	Return to work: Absence duration 1 – 14 days	Return to work discussion and complete relevant absence recording documents
If employee returns between days 15 – 28 conduct return to work meeting. Complete absence recording process attaching fit notes	Return to work: absence duration 15-28 days	Return to work meeting and complete absence recording documents
If employee remains absent, contact them. Consider OH referral. Liaise with payroll about any changes to pay arising from ongoing absence	If employee still absent after four weeks	Attend any OH appointments
Contact the employee on a regular basis Manage the employee's long-term absence in line with the Attendance Policy – contribute to and comply with any action plan agreed Continue absence recording / keep payroll informed	Ongoing requirements throughout the absence	Employee must continue to keep in regular contact with the manager and must be available to meet with the manager, as requested, during the employee's normal working times unless otherwise agreed The employee must maintain the submission of doctor's fit notes and follow any medical advice to improve health Advise manager / OH of any new medical information including when fit note states you may be fit for work
Conduct **structured return to work meeting** and complete absence recording process. Advise payroll	Return to work after four weeks absence or more	Attend meetings i.e., performance reviews with manager and OH appointments and contribute to and comply with any action plan agreed Attend **structured** return to work discussion and complete Sickness Absence Declaration form