



Sickness Absence

CHARITY POLICY & PROCEDURE

Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure	
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Content

The following sections are included in this policy document:

Introduction

1. Principles
2. Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure
3. Company Sickness Absence Pay
4. Sickness Absence Recording Monitoring Procedures and Evidence of Incapacity
5. Sickness and Annual Leave
6. Keeping in Contact during Sickness Absence
7. Informal Sickness Absence Support Plan, Informal Meeting Procedures and Sickness Absence Payments when on an Informal Sickness Absence Plan
8. Formal Sickness Absence Meeting Procedure
9. Right to be Accompanied at Formal Meetings
10. Stage 1: First Sickness Absence Meeting
11. Stage 2: Further Sickness Absence Meeting(s)
12. Stage 3: Final Sickness Absence Meeting
13. Long Term Sickness Absence
14. Appeals
15. Ad-hoc Medical Appointments
16. Pregnancy-related Sickness Absence
17. Disability-related Sickness Absence
18. Absence due to Injuries Caused by Accidents
19. Unauthorised Absence
20. Occupational Health / Medical Advice
21. Internal Triggers
22. Data Protection
23. Policy Review

Please always collect a form from the HR Department, to ensure you have the most up to date document, as forms are subject to change from time to time.

Statement of Intent

This Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure sets out our procedures for reporting sickness absence to ensure the management of sickness absence in a fair and consistent way across Talbot House Children's Charity ("the Charity") and establishes guidelines for managers and staff.

Sickness absence can vary from short intermittent periods of ill-health to a continuous period of long-term absence and can have a number of different causes (for example sickness, injuries, recurring conditions, or a serious illness requiring lengthy treatment).

The Charity wishes to ensure that the reasons for sickness absence are understood in each case and investigated where necessary. In addition, where needed and reasonably practicable, measures will be taken to assist those who have been absent by reason of sickness to return to work.

Any information provided to the Charity about health will be processed lawfully and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. We recognise that such data is sensitive and will handle it in a confidential manner.

Abuse of sickness absence, including failing to report absence in accordance with the Charity's policies and procedures or falsely claiming sick pay will be treated as misconduct under our **Disciplinary Policy & Procedure**.

This policy applies to all Employees and is applicable from the date of direct employment with the Charity only.

This policy and procedure does not form part of any Employee's contract of employment and the Charity may amend it any time, temporarily or permanently. Talbot House Children's Charity may also vary this procedure, including any time limits and/or payments, as appropriate in any case.

The Charity expects all Employees to work within the Charity's rules and procedures. All Employees have a responsibility to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner in accordance with the Charity's Code of Conduct and values and co-operate in the application of this procedure.

1. Principles

- Accurate records of all sickness absences and actions taken must be kept and monitored on a regular basis.
- Employees must complete an Absence Reporting Form (also referred to as a self-certification form) once the Employee has returned to work. Forms must be completed during the first day back to work. The Employee should collect a form from the HR Department, complete their section (page 1) and then take the form to their Line Manager, at the start of their working day. The Line Manager will complete page 2, before the Employee returns the fully completed form no later than the end of the first day back on duty.
- Managers must always conduct a return-to-work interview where absence is 3 days or more, and / or where the Employee has hit three or more internal triggers (see below for details of internal triggers) and / or where the Employee is still within their probationary (regardless of length of absence), where a pattern has been identified, and / or on a Sickness Absence Support Plan (regardless of length of absence). However, the Charity reserves the right to conduct a return-to-work interview for any absence.
- When applicable, Line Managers should hold a return-to-work interview at the earliest opportunity and follow the procedures set out in this policy.
- Where work may be impacting on an Employee's health, or where health problems may be affecting an Employee's attendance or performance, managers should consider obtaining further medical advice, in consultation with CEO and HR Manager.

2. Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure

The Employee who is sick and cannot attend work should contact their Line Manager, in person, by telephone at the earliest opportunity and prior to their start time (see 2.3 below for full details of the absence reporting procedures). You must speak to your Line Manager, please do not leave a message. The Employee should not normally ask anyone else to make contact on their behalf unless it is not possible for them to do it.

2.1 The details the Employee should provide are as follows (Line Manager may request further details):

- The nature of the illness or injury.
- The anticipated length of absence from work.
- Confirm contact details.
- Share any outstanding or urgent work requirements that need to be addressed and details of meetings, appointments, or arrangements for any of our pupils. The procedures for informing the Charity of an absence differ slightly depending on the area of work. See table below for details of how to inform the Charity of absence for the first 5 working days:

Sickness Absence

Step	School Staff School & Kitchen Staff	Central Staff Admin, HR, Maintenance & Domestic Staff
1	Contact the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher at your earliest convenience. This can be done by email or text if before normal working hours.	Contact your Line Manager at your earliest convenience. This can be done by email or text if before normal working hours.
2	<p>First Day of Sickness Absence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Reception and ask to be put through to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher to report your sickness absence. • You must speak to your Line Manager directly on your first day of absence. • Calls should be made as close to 8am as possible. <p>Line Managers will inform HR of all absences immediately following receipt of the call.</p>	<p>First Day of Sickness Absence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Reception and ask to be put through to your Line Manager. • You must speak to your Line Manager directly on your first day of absence. Note: Maintenance can speak to the Head Teacher if the CEO is unavailable. • Calls should be made as close to 8am as possible. <p>Line Managers will inform HR of all absences immediately following receipt of the call.</p>
3	<p>First Week of Sickness Absence (excluding Step 2, First Day of Sickness Absence):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call reception every day at 8am. • Please do not leave a message, you must speak to a Receptionist to report your continued absence. 	
4	<p>Follow Steps 1 to 3 every day for the first 5 working days, unless your Line Manager (only with the agreement of the CEO or HR Manager), has stated otherwise. If you are absent for more than 1 week you must speak to your Line manager as set out in step one, ongoing contact will then be discussed and agreed.</p>	

2.2 Where an Employee becomes ill while at work and feels too unwell to continue working, they must speak to their Line Manager (for School, Kitchen and Domestic staff, Line Manager refers to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher only) who will give permission for the individual to leave their work either temporarily or for the remainder of the working day.

3. Company Sickness Absence Pay

- Employees who are absent due to sickness may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if they satisfy the relevant statutory requirements. Qualifying days for SSP are Monday to Friday, or as set out in the employment contract. The rate of SSP is set by the government in April each year. No SSP is payable for the first three working days of absence. SSP starts on the fourth day of absence and may be payable for up to 28 weeks. If the Employee is not eligible for SSP, or if SSP entitlement is coming to an end, the Charity will send the Employee a SSP1 form informing them the reasons (excludes the first 3 days).

Sickness Absence

- Any employer and Employee pension contributions will continue subject to the relevant scheme rules during any period of SSP.
- Employees who have followed the sickness absence procedure set out above within this document, are usually entitled to receive company sick pay, in accordance with the table below. Company sick pay is inclusive of any SSP (or incapacity benefit) that may be due for the same period and is paid on the following basis (pro-rata for part-time staff or where applicable):

Length of Service	Maximum payment of sickness absence pay (providing rules have been followed and triggers have not been hit, as outlined above). Note: this is calculated pro-rata where applicable.
Under 6 months of continuous employment (or 26 continuous term weeks of employment for school staff / those who do not usually work during school holiday periods), and where Employees are within their probationary period AND Unauthorised Absence AND Employees on a Sickness Absence Support Plan	SSP only, if eligible, or unpaid
After a minimum of 6 months employment, (or 26 continuous term weeks of employment for school staff / those who do not usually work during school holiday periods), and where Employees have successfully passed their probationary period, to include any period of extended probation, where applicable.	2 weeks full pay; and 2 weeks half pay in any 12 month rolling period
After 1 st year of service	1 month's full pay and 1 months half pay in any 12 month rolling period
After 2 nd year of service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay in any 12 month rolling period
After 3 rd year of service	3 months full pay and 3 months half pay in any 12 month rolling period
After 4 th year of service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay in any 12 month rolling period
after 5 th year of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay in any 12 month rolling period
After 6 years' service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay in any 12 month rolling period

- 1 Month is calculated as any full calendar month of absence, or 22 days (pro-rata for part-time Employees or where necessary), where absence is spilt over a number of occasions.

Sickness Absence

- Employees who do not usually work during the holiday period, who are absent from work due to sickness on their last working day prior to a school holiday period, will continue to be classed as absent for the duration of the school holiday period. This will be included for the purposes of recording sickness absence. Sickness absence payment will reflect the Employee's rolling sickness absence pay entitlement and will not revert to normal pay until the Employee has returned from sickness absence following the school holiday period.
- Employees who work all year round and who have pre-booked annual leave, will be classed as annual leave for the periods of pre-booked holiday. Following the annual leave period, the Employee will be classed as returning to sickness absence leave, unless they have returned to work.
- The CEO shall have the discretion to extend the period of sickness absence pay in exceptional cases.
- The CEO has the discretion to withdraw company sick pay at any time.
- Company sickness absence pay will not be paid to Employees working notice of employment following termination by either party for any reason. Any periods of absence taken during this time will be unpaid, or paid at the applicable rate of SSP, only if applicable.
- During any period of phased return to work, Employees will be paid at their contracted salary for hours worked only. The CEO shall have the discretion to pay additional hours, at the applicable rate (full or half) in exceptional cases. Phased return to work periods will be considered a continuation of the same period of sickness absence for recording purposes.
- If an Employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct, prejudicial to recovery or the Employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional or non-professional sport or injury, while working in the Employee's own time, on their own account for private gain or for another employer, sick pay may be suspended at the discretion of the CEO. The Charity shall advise the Employee of the grounds for suspension of pay and the Employee will be subject to investigation. Once the investigation is complete, a decision will be made as to the appropriate action to be taken. The outcome will be confirmed in writing and may be as follows:
 - No formal action.
 - Recommend further support with or without company sick pay.
 - Invite to attend a disciplinary hearing.
- If it is decided that the Employee is to be invited to attend a disciplinary hearing, the possible outcomes of a disciplinary hearing may be that the Employee is issued with a disciplinary sanction and shall forfeit the right to any further payment in respect of that period or subsequent periods of absence. Alternatively, no sanction may be issued, however, payment of company sick pay may still be removed as set out within this policy and procedure.
- Repeated abuse of the sickness scheme will be dealt with under the Charity's **Disciplinary Policy & Procedure**.

4. Sickness Absence Recording, Monitoring Procedure and Evidence of Incapacity

Following each sickness absence, HR will prepare an Absence Reporting Form, that the Employee will collect from the HR Department on their first day back at work. This form will detail information for the Manager to use during any return-to-work meeting, to include the number of days and occasions of sickness absence in the previous 12 rolling months, the Bradford Factor points this equates to and whether or not any patterns of absence have been identified in the period, and will confirm if the Employee is still within probationary. The form will indicate if a return-to-work meeting is required as well as an indication of any sick payment due, note: this is not confirmation of any payment due.

4.1 Line Managers are expected to:

- Notify HR when a member of staff has phoned in sick.
- Complete the Line Manager section of the Absence reporting Form.
- Conduct a return-to-work meeting, where applicable, and complete all relevant paperwork and return to the Employee.
- Conduct Sickness Absence Support Plan meetings as required.

4.2 Employees are expected to ensure that they follow the correct procedures following a sickness absence, as outlined below:

- Collect a 'Absence Reporting Form' once they have clocked in, and complete the Employee section in full, providing as much information as possible. This must be completed on the first day Employee's return to work.
- Take the completed form to their Line Manager upon their return to work
- Part-take in a return to work meeting with their Line Manager, if applicable.
- Obtain a medical certificate, for absences of more than 7 calendar days (5 working days), from their doctor (a "Statement of Fitness for Work", known as a "Fit Note") stating that they are not fit for work and the reason(s) why. The Employee must advise their Line Manager and send the medical certificates to HR for recording purposes and to ensure payment of any statutory and/or company sick pay. Failure to forward medical statements promptly, or at all, may result in a delay or non-payment of statutory sick pay and/or company sick pay and failure to follow procedures may result in disciplinary action.
- Fit Notes should be sent to the Charity no later than the 8th day of absence.
- If the Employee's absence continues, further medical certificates must be provided, upon expiration of the current Fit Note and must cover the whole period of absence.
- Employees must keep their Line Manger informed of their intended return to work date at all times.
- If the Employee's doctor provides a certificate stating that they "may be fit for work" they should inform their Line Manager immediately. We will discuss with the Employee any additional measures that may help facilitate their return to work, taking account of their doctor's advice. This may take place at a return-to-work interview. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, the Employee will remain on sick leave, and we will set a date

Sickness Absence

to review the situation. Employees without suitable criteria selected on the fit note may not be allowed to return to work.

- Will ensure to assist in circumstances where we may require a medical certificate for each absence regardless of duration. In such circumstances, the Charity will cover any costs incurred in obtaining such medical certificates, for absences of a week or less, on production of a doctor's invoice. Examples of situations where we may make such a request are where we have concerns about the reason for absence, or where there have been a number of frequent short-term absences.

5. Sickness and Annual Leave

- An Employee on long term sickness will continue to accrue statutory annual leave entitlement, the Charity will ensure the correct entitlement of statutory annual leave is paid to each Employee on long term sickness absence leave, we will inform the Employee if any element of statutory holiday will be carried forward to the next holiday year.
- Employees who work during school holiday periods may take annual leave whilst on sick leave, subject to the approval of annual leave in accordance with the normal procedures. For the period of any agreed (or pre-agreed) annual leave, sick pay entitlement will cease, and the Employee will receive their normal contractual basic salary. Accrued annual leave must be taken before the end of the leave year in which it is accrued.
- Employees who do not usually work during school holiday periods, and who are on long term sickness absence will carry unused statutory annual leave entitlement forward to the next leave year, if prevented from taking that leave due to sickness. Carried forward leave will be taken during school holiday periods, as normal, following the Employee's return to work. Any statutory leave not taken within 18 months of the end of the leave year in which it accrues (whether or not the Employee has returned to work) will be lost. Carry forward only applies to the statutory minimum holiday entitlement (4 weeks / 20 days), pro rata for part time staff, where applicable).

6. Keeping in Contact during Sickness Absence

- If an Employee is absent on sick leave, they should contact their Line Manager and Reception / HR as set out in the table above (see Clause 2.1), unless otherwise agreed in writing and / or unless a Fit Note is submitted for a period of more than 1 week.
- Following receipt of a Fit Note for a period of 1 week or more, the minimum contact with the Line Manager is at least once per week, unless otherwise agreed. Contact is imperative as this the only way we can continue to discuss expected length of continued absence from work, any work that requires attention and importantly, general wellbeing. Likewise, the Employee's Line Manager may contact them from time to time outside of agreed call dates and times. Such contact is intended to provide support and reassurance but may also be for work purposes in emergency situations, however, this will be kept to a minimum. This is more likely to occur with seniority of role.

Sickness Absence

- During longer term sickness absences, the Employee may be asked to attend informal or formal catch-up meetings from time to time, this may be on a regular or irregular basis. The frequency of which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with the main focus of ensuring the Employee remains in contact and to assess their future fitness to return to work.
- If the Employee has any concerns while absent on sick leave, whether about the reason for their absence or their ability to return to work, they should feel free to contact their Line Manager at any time. Employees should not feel that they are limited to only make contact during the agreed contact days or times.
- The Charity reserves the right to withdraw company sick pay if contact, as set out above, or agreed amended contact, is not adhered to.

7. Informal Sickness Absence Support Plan, Informal Meeting Procedures and Sickness Absence Payments when on an Informal Sickness Absence Support Plan

- The Charity has implemented an informal Sickness Absence Support Plan before Employees elevate to the formal procedure. It is aimed to give Employees every opportunity to improve their sickness absence levels prior to potential receipt of a discipline sanction.
- Employees who hit 3 of more internal triggers are considered to have higher absence levels, deemed unsatisfactory to the Charity (see 21).
- Employees will be informed during a return-to-work meeting that they have hit 3 or more internal triggers and that they will be monitored and supported by being placed on a Sickness Absence Support Plan. If they have a further absence within the next 12 rolling months. The Charity reserves the right impose this for noticeable patterns of absence whether or not any other triggers have been hit.
- Employees who are placed on a Sickness Absence Support Plan, will not be paid company sickness absence pay for absences, regardless of length of absence (excludes SSP, if applicable). The CEO does have discretion to make a payment, however, this would be in extreme circumstances only. No discipline sanctions will usually be imposed during this period unless further sickness absence occurs during this period. The formal meeting process may be invoked at the end of this period if attendance targets are made by the end of the 12 week period.
- A letter will be sent to the Employee informing them that they have been placed on a sickness Absence Support Plan, for a minimum period of 12 weeks (this may be extended due to school holidays periods to 26 weeks when applicable).
- Four separate meetings will be held during this time, these are informal meetings, between their Line Manager and Employee, however, the HR may be present at the request of the Line Manager. Minimal notes will be taken and retained on file. There is no right to be accompanied to these meetings, as they are informal.
- You will be informed of these meetings during a return-to-work meeting, Sickness Absence Support Plan meetings will then be held at 4, 8 and 12 weeks (term weeks for school staff and kitchen staff).

Sickness Absence

- The purpose of these meetings are to discuss internal triggers hit, the reasons for absence, whether further absences are likely, to identify ways in which your levels of absence can be reduced to an acceptable level to minimise the impact these have on the business and to confirm expected absence improvement targets and any support that can be offered.
- Ahead of each meeting the HR Department will inform the Line Manager of the latest trigger level scores and Bradford Factor, and if any further absences have occurred during the period following the previous meeting. The total number of days, the total number of occasions and updated Bradford factor scores will be shared.
- If no further absences have occurred following the previous meeting, each meeting will still be held and will only be attended by the Employee and Line Manager.
- If further absences have occurred following the previous meeting, the next meetings will be held by the Employee and Line Manager, however, HR will also be present.
- If it is found that the Employee has had further absence during the 12 week monitoring period and absences are deemed as an unacceptable level, the Charity may decide to evoke the formal sickness absence meeting procedures at any stage during the informal sickness absence plan period. This absence will be unpaid.
- Sickness absence plan meetings are not formal meetings, the Employee will receive further correspondence if this should change. Please be aware that information gathered during the information meetings may be referred to during any formal process.
- Other absence will also be monitored and limited during this time, for example time off requests are likely to be rejected but will, in any event, be unpaid.
- It is the aim of the Charity to try and support the Employee back to 100% attendance during this process. The Charity expects the Employee to do everything possible to ensure they are working towards gaining 100% attendance during this process.
- A second sickness absence plan will not be issued in any 12 rolling month period. If triggers are hit again in this period, the absence will be unpaid and the Employee will move straight to formal procedure of this policy (except only in extreme circumstances, and where authorised by the CEO only).

8. Formal Sickness Absence Meeting Procedure

- The Charity may apply this procedure whenever considered necessary, including, for example, if the Employee:
 - Has been absent due to illness on a number of occasions.
 - Has discussed matters at a return-to-work interview that require investigation; and/or
 - Has been absent for more than 7 consecutive days (5 working days).
- The Charity will give the Employee written notice of the date, time and place of a sickness absence meeting. We will put any concerns about their sickness absence and the basis for those concerns in writing or otherwise advise why the meeting is being called. A reasonable opportunity for the Employee to consider this information before a meeting will be provided.

Sickness Absence

- The Employee must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. Failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If the Employee or their companion are unable to attend at the time specified the Employee should immediately inform the person conducting the meeting, who will seek to agree an alternative date and time on one occasion only.
- A meeting may be adjourned if the person conducting the meeting is awaiting receipt of information, needs to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at a previous meeting. The Employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the meeting is reconvened.
- Confirmation of any decision made at a sickness absence meeting, the reasons for it, and of the right of appeal will be given to the Employee in writing.
- If, at any time, we consider that the Employee has taken, or are taking, sickness absence when the Employee is not unwell, they may refer matters to be dealt with under our **Disciplinary Policy and Procedure**.

9. Right to be Accompanied at Formal Meetings

- The Employee may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure.
- A companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague. Their details must be given to the HR Department, in good time before it takes place, no later than 48 hours in normal circumstances.
- A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up the Employees position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on their behalf. The Employee may confer privately with their companion at any time during a meeting.

10. Stage 1: First Sickness Absence Meeting

The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting may include:

- Discussing the reasons for absence.
- Where the Employee is on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last.
- Where the Employee has been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences.
- Considering whether medical advice is required.
- Considering what, if any, measures might improve the Employees health and/or attendance.
- Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure. This may, depending on steps we have already taken, include a written warning for sickness absence.

11. Stage 2: Further Sickness Absence Meeting(s)

Depending on the matters discussed at the first stage of the sickness absence procedure, a further meeting or meetings may be necessary. The purposes of further meeting(s) may include:

- Discussing the reasons for, and impact of, the Employees absence(s).
- Where the Employee is on long-term sickness absence, discussing how long their absence is likely to last.
- Where the Employee has been absent on a number of occasions, discussing the likelihood of further absences.
- If it has not been obtained, considering whether medical advice is required. If it has been obtained, considering the advice that has been given and whether further advice is required.
- Considering the Employees ability to return to/remain in their job in view of both the Employees capabilities and our business needs and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to their job to enable them to do so.
- Considering possible redeployment opportunities and whether any adjustments can reasonably be made to assist in redeploying the Employee. Whether the Employee is able to return from long-term sick leave to the Employee's normal job or a redeployed job, agreeing a return-to-work programme.
- If it is considered that the Employee is unlikely to be able to return to work from long-term absence, whether there are any benefits for which they should be considered.
- Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting(s). This may, depending on steps we have already taken, include a formal written warning for sickness absence and warning the Employee that they are at risk of dismissal if their sickness absence does not improve.

12. Stage 3: Final Sickness Absence Meeting

Where the Employee has been warned that they are at risk of dismissal, we may invite them to a meeting under the third stage of the sickness absence procedure. The purposes of the meeting will be:

- Discussing the reasons for and the impact of the Employees' absence(s) ongoing).
- Where the Employee has been absent on a number of occasions, discussing the likelihood of further absences.
- If the Employee is on long term sickness absence, to consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood of them returning to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time or if there are any opportunities for redeployment that may facilitate a return to work.
- To review the meetings that have taken place and matters discussed with the Employee.
- To consider any further matters that the Employee wish to raise.
- To consider the possible termination of the Employee's employment.

Termination will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice.

13. Long Term Sickness Absence

The process set out in this Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure applies to both intermittent short term sickness absence and long terms sickness absence. However, it will not always be necessary to go through a 3 Stage meeting process for those Employees who are currently on long term sickness absence and / or where it is apparent at an earlier stage that the Employee is not fit to return to work within a reasonable timescale. Where this is the case then employment can be terminated at any stage of the formal process, however, the Employee will be informed prior to the meeting that this may be a potential outcome.

14. Appeals

- The Employee may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure and may bring a companion to an appeal meeting.
- An appeal should be made in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to the person stated in the outcome letter within 5 days of the date on which the decision was sent to the Employee.
- Depending on the circumstances, an appeal meeting may be a complete rehearing of the matter or a review of the original decision.
- The final decision will be confirmed in writing, and there will be no further right of appeal.
- The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.

15. Ad-hoc Medical Appointments

- Arrangements covering medical appointments such as doctors, hospital and dental appointment should be made outside of working hours where possible. In the case of an emergency or where this cannot be arranged, the Employee should contact their Line Manager to discuss this. A 'Leave Request Form' must be completed in these circumstances and arrangements for working back time may be agreed at the time of completing the form. Working time back may not always be required, and time off might be rejected or unpaid depending on a number of factors, including, but not limited to, workload, or previous number of requests.
- Line Managers do not have to grant leave requests. School staff may be asked to rearrange to a more convenient time, or to wait for a school holiday period, due to staffing ratios. Central staff may be required to take one day, or one-half day of annual leave.
- Any time off requested for interviews will automatically be unpaid, with no exceptions.

16. Pregnancy-related Sickness Absence

- Pregnancy related sickness absence should be recorded separately and should not be taken into account when looking at internal trigger points. Please refer to the **Family Leave Policy** & Procedure for further information regarding antenatal appointments. Appointments should be made at the start or end of the working day to ensure the least amount of disruption to

Sickness Absence

any working day, or ideally outside of normal working days/hours. Pregnancy related to sickness absence may still affect payment and so will still be monitored.

- Absence requests for IVF will be monitored. Time off will be agreed but should be discussed as soon as possible with the Line Manager. The Charity will agree to unpaid time off; however, we will allow a 'reasonable' period of paid time off where appointments cannot be taken outside of working hours. After two rounds of IVF during employment, time off will be unpaid. Unless at the discretion of the CEO under special circumstances.

17. Disability-related Sickness Absence

Disability-related sickness absence will be managed sensitively, and consideration given to appropriate workplace adjustments, for example, reasonable adjustments may include an amendment to internal triggers in some circumstances.

18. Absences due to Injuries Caused by Accidents

If a period of sickness absence is or appears to be occasioned by actionable negligence, nuisance or breach of any statutory duty on the part of a third party, in respect of which damages are, or may be recoverable, the Employee must immediately notify their Line Manager of that fact and of any claim, compromise, settlement or judgment made or awarded in connection with it and all relevant particulars that we may reasonably require. If we require the Employee to do so, they must cooperate in any related legal proceedings and refund to us that part of any damages or compensation the Employee recovers that relates to lost earnings for the period of sickness absence as we may reasonably determine, less any costs the Employee incurred in connection with the recovery of such damages or compensation, provided that the amount to be refunded to us shall not exceed the total amount we paid to the Employee in respect of the period of sickness absence.

19. Unauthorised Absence

- Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under the Charity's **Disciplinary Policy & Procedure** which may lead to disciplinary action, resulting in possible sanction, and removal of any company sick pay for that period, for a set period, or indefinitely.
- Absences that have not been notified according to this policy and procedure will be treated as unauthorised and will be unpaid.
- If the Employee does not report for work and has not telephoned to explain the reason for their absence, someone from the Charity will try to contact the Employee, by telephone. This may be followed up in writing if necessary. This should not be treated as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.
- In certain situations, the Charity may send a Manager and one other to visit the known address of an Employee and / or contact the emergency contact details on record,

20. Occupational Health / Medical Advice

Under this policy the Employee agrees that the Charity may, at any time, require the Employee to:

- Attend a medical examination by a doctor or other health professional, such as an occupational therapist, as appointed by the Charity, subject to the provisions of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 and, where applicable, the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Allow the Charity to request a report and / or a copy of the Employees health records from their doctor or other health professional.
- Supply health records to a doctor or other health professional appointed by the Charity.

Any costs incurred from medical professional regarding the above requests will be met by the Charity. All medical reports will be treated sensitively.

21. Internal Triggers

- The absence of an Employee who hits the triggers below will usually trigger the formal Sickness Absence Meeting Procedure (occasions, days, Bradford factor and / or identified patterns), as follows (these will be calculated pro-rata for part time Employees or where applicable):
 - 3 occasions of absence during a rolling period of 12 consecutive months.
 - 8 days of absence during a rolling period of 12 consecutive months.
 - 100+ points on the Bradford Factor Scale during a rolling period of 12 consecutive months.
 - Identified / perceived patterns of absence (such as, but not limited to, the day prior to, or after, a weekend, bank holiday, holiday, regular Monday, or Friday absences).
- The Charity believes these triggers to be reasonable and allow us to deal with all absences consistently.
- The Bradford Factor uses a simple formula in order to produce a score for every Employee. Bradford Factor points are calculated using the following method: occasions x occasions x number of days of absence during the previous 12 rolling months based on the first day of sickness absence.
- If the Employee hits one or more triggers, the Line Manager will raise this with the Employee upon completion of the Absence Reporting Form.
- If the Employee hits three or more triggers, a return-to-work meeting will be held and the Employee will be placed on a sickness absence plan and will have all payments withdrawn (excluding SSP, where applicable) from their next period of absence.
- If the Employee is still within their probationary period, a return-to-work meeting will be held.
- In cases of long-term absence, we may seek to agree a return-to-work programme, possibly on a phased basis.
- In cases of short-term, intermittent absence, we may set a target for improved attendance within a certain timescale.
- If matters do not improve, after a reasonable time, the Employee has not been able to return to work or if attendance has not improved within the agreed timescale, a further meeting will

be held. The Charity will seek to establish whether the situation is likely to change. If it is considered unlikely that the Employee will return to work or that the Employee's attendance will not improve within a short time, we may issue the Employee a written warning that they are at risk of dismissal, (see 10- 14). We may also set a further date for review.

22. Data Protection

The Charity processes the information provided on sickness absence form and on medical certificates for the purposes of meeting its legal obligations. In particular, where an Employee's data is disclosed to Line Managers for the purpose of responding appropriately and fairly to the Employee's overall level of sickness absence and for the appropriate management of the Employees' health and safety at work.

23. Review Policy

This policy is non-contractual and is subject for review at any time, in line with changes to legislation and may be subject for review prior to the date shown if deemed necessary. The HR Department will be responsible for reviewing this policy.

Sickness Absence



I have read, understood and acknowledge this Policy and will endeavour to follow the guidance outlined within.

Print name: _____

Job Title: _____

Department: _____

Sign: _____

Date: _____

Please complete full details above, once complete please return to the HR Department within 5 working days.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

HR Department

Talbot House Children's Charity