

HARRIS MIDDLE SCHOOL

STAFF ABSENCE POLICY

AUTUMN TERM 2009

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS: _____

MINUTED: _____

DATE OF REVIEW:- AUTUMN TERM 2010

Harris Middle School Staff Absence Cover Policy

The following policy will give guidance to staff about expectations and procedure for any absences. Staff have a responsibility to keep the school informed of any absences and should use this policy to clarify and support these.

The school has a responsibility to support members of staff during periods of absence and will show sensitivity to any requests for absence following the guidance in this document.

Aims

It is the intention of this policy to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the management of staff absence.

Teacher Absence - Definition of absence

Absence occurs when the teacher normally responsible for teaching a particular class is absent from the classroom during the time they have been timetabled to teach. This absence could be for a variety of reasons, including internal and external activities as well as sickness. It could be short or long term.

General Absence

- Absence will be covered by Cover Supervisors or supply agency staff except in an emergency situation.
- The Cover Manager will provide a timetable for those staff who will be assigned to cover for an absent colleague.
- The Cover Manager maintains a record of the teachers used to cover classes and will attempt to distribute the load as fairly as possible given the constraints of the timetable. A record of the cover by staff will be maintained by the Cover Manager.
- For absences between 1 and 5 working days, staff should self certificate by completing a form available from the school office. After this a doctor's certificate is required which should be sent to the office.
- The school follows the nationally agreed terms and conditions for longer absences such as paternity and maternity leave.

- There is no absolute entitlement to absence for private and personal reasons (P&P).
- Requests for absence on compassionate grounds should be made to the governors through the Headteacher. Reasons might include graduations, house moves, close family illness or funerals. Thereafter staff would need to make a request through the Headteacher for further periods of paid leave or extended periods of unpaid leave.
- Routine dentist, doctor and other such appointments should be made for out of school hours when possible, or in exceptional circumstances, during PPA time
- Staff will cover absent colleagues rarely within the academic year; only in an emergency.
- The Deputy Head will identify 10% of teaching time for each member of staff that will be used for Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) Staff will not be asked to cover during this time.

Long term absence

- Absence longer than 5 days needs to be covered by a medical certificate
- Staff absent for long periods may be asked to send any keys into work to enable other staff to access cupboards, resources and such like.
- Staff who are signed off from work by their GP should not come into work (other than to drop off a medical certificate or collect personal items from the office). This is for health and safety reasons as they are not covered by any insurances!
- Any member of staff, following either an absence of two weeks or longer, or repeated absences, will meet with the Headteacher (or SLT member) for a reintegration meeting. This will enable the member of staff to share any issues or needs which have arisen from illness, any school information, changes or news which needs to be discussed and to ensure that staff wellbeing is taken into consideration.

Absence known in advance

- Absence known in advance includes absence for Private and Personal (P&P), as well as courses, training and activities linked to the School Improvement Plan, Performance Management Targets and NQT induction Arrangements. Where absence is foreseen, permission must be sought in advance from the Headteacher.

Interviews

- Interviews may be taken during working hours however there is an expectation that when possible, staff attend or return to work before or after an interview as it is not always necessary to take a day's leave to attend.
- There is an expectation that staff inform the Headteacher as to the outcome of the interview as soon as it is known.

Internal Cover Procedures

- A cover list is displayed on the noticeboard in the staffroom each morning that staff are absent. This is done as early as possible, but depends on the amount of notice of absence received by the Cover manager.
- To report an absence staff should telephone the Cover Manager at home the night before or between 7.30 am and 8.00 am on the day of absence.
- All staff must contact the school **before 2pm** of the following day to either confirm attendance at work or continued absence the next day. It is essential that the cover manager is informed of any break duties, clubs, trips, parents' or staff meetings and suchlike which will need cover as a result of your absence.
- The Business Manager keeps a record of the length of absence and the reasons for absence.
- Cover sheets are filed by the Cover Manager and kept for the rest of the financial year.
- The Business Manager uses information gathered each month to complete returns and pay sheets for County and to check against supply teacher's pay.

External Cover Procedures

- Supply Teachers are organised to come into school by the Cover Manager
- Cover is worked out and distributed by the Cover Manager.
- Teachers should leave lesson plans and class information with the Cover Manager.
- The Business Manager keeps a record of the length of the absences and the reason for the absence.

- The Business Manager uses information gathered each month to complete returns and pay sheets for County and to check against supply teacher's pay.
- Occasionally gain time is available when a supply teacher is employed for a teacher who has non contact time. This time is allocated at the discretion of the SLT and the Cover Manager who will take account of the following:
 1. Staff who have temporarily increased work loads
 2. Pay back for staff who have done emergency cover
 3. Staff who are allocated specific tasks to do in that time
 4. Staff who are involved in mentoring NQT's or carrying out Performance Management observations
- The SLT will support supply teachers at points during the school day to assist with their understanding of the school routines and classroom management strategies.

Emergency Cover

- Occasionally cover has to be organised at very short notice, for example if someone is taken ill, or a very serious accident occurs.
- The Cover Manager will arrange cover under these circumstances and inform the teachers as soon as possible. So that staff may be found easily it is essential that all timetable and room changes are only made with the agreement of the Deputy Head.
- Pay back will be arranged as soon as can be conveniently arranged.

Courses, Training School Activities, training and activities linked to the School Improvement Plan, Performance Management Targets and NQT Induction Arrangements.

- Permission must be obtained from the CPD Coordinator and Deputy Head before undertaking any of the activities listed in the heading above.
- A "Request for Cover" form must be completed, following the procedures above.
- At the end of a course an evaluation should be completed and given to the CPD Co-ordinator.

School Visits/Activities

- Specific activity week/days, day visits or residential trips which are timetabled in advance on the school calendar will be deemed to be part of a teacher's timetable. In this instance staff can be asked to take different classes or subjects, or combined classes to allow colleagues to undertake the activity. During these pre-planned times all PPA will be maintained but the timings of said PPA may be changed. Staff making local arrangements with colleagues to cover classes are not sanctioned in this policy.
- Teachers organising visits during school time must complete the appropriate paperwork about such visits and ensure Governors have given approval. The visit leader should also make sure that a copy is received by the school office at least one week before the visit, including a risk assessment, lists of staff and children who will be out of school along with the visit timings. In accordance with the School Visits Policy a copy of this information must be posted in the staffroom for the convenience of colleagues.
- In order that staff are allowed to leave their class early to take sporting teams etc, staff will need to be willing to provide cover for each other if it becomes necessary.

Work for Classes

- In the event of sudden illness or other unforeseen circumstances it may not be possible to set work. However, for short term absence and for planned absence, work must be set and instructions left for cover teachers. If staff have access to the internet work can be emailed into the office at: harris_office@yahoo.co.uk
- In the event of planned absence work should be left with the Cover Manager. If this is impractical, because, for example, many resources are required which are in a teaching room, a copy of the instructions must be given to the Cover Manager so that people know where to find things.
- Cover lessons for supply teachers must be left with the Cover Manager.
- If possible, staff should speak to the Cover Supervisor or Supply Teacher beforehand.
- Cover teachers should be given a seating plan for a teaching room and any details for pupils needing specialist support whenever possible.

- The Cover Manager should be given resources by Co-ordinator in order that a bank of learning resources can be built to assist with cover arrangements.

Request for holiday

Requests for holiday leave during term time is not likely to be granted, unless in exceptional circumstances. Examples of these are: partners in the armed forces, immediate family or own wedding or similar event.

The Head will consider any exceptional request, take into consideration the length of time and period in the year and may discuss where appropriate with the governing body. Any holiday leave granted, is likely to be unpaid.

Religious observance

Any member of staff who requires time off in relation to religious or cultural observance should discuss with the Head in advance.

Frequency of absences

If a member of staff has had repeated absences, either of one day during a term or of longer periods, to ensure the ongoing well being of staff, the Head will meet with them to discuss the nature of these absences and the possibility of a referral to Occupational Health.

Unauthorised absences

Any absence taken without permission from the Head for whatever reason will be investigated by the Head, governors. Advice may be sought from the HR department within the LA and if appropriate followed up in accordance with the school's disciplinary policy. Staff will be fully informed of the course of action.

Budget

The supply budget is regularly reviewed by the bursar and the Headteacher.

Non Teaching Staff

All parts of the above policy apply to non teaching staff in so much as it applies to their responsibilities as described within their individual job descriptions.