

Once Upon A Time Nursery
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Sickness and Staff Absence Policy

Employee Responsibility:

Once Upon a Time Nursery staff should of course strive to achieve 100% attendance, but we believe this should not fall below 95% attendance, which is reviewed at every supervision. Employees have a responsibility to help their own recovery by making doctors' appointments and getting the correct help. It is the employee's responsibility to be aware of the procedure to follow when reporting sickness or absence from work.

Sickness absence reporting procedure:

Reporting sickness absence should be done using the following guidelines. Failure to follow these guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

On the first day of absence, employees must:

- An email should be sent to the nursery in the first instance, as soon as you are aware you will miss your shift. Telephone the nursery on 01554 785173 at and no later than 8am the morning you are reporting yourself absent.
- A text message to management or communication through other staff will not be accepted.
- A brief description of your illness will be asked for by management.
- The employee who will be absent must be the person to speak with management unless you are hospitalised or incapacitated, then and only then will it be acceptable for a family member to call for you.
- If the employee is aware that the illness is likely to last for more than one day, they must discuss this with management when calling the setting.
- Any absences lasting 5 days or more you must provide a sick note completed by a medical professional for the period of absence.
- Employees must call the setting again no later than 4pm that same day to discuss upcoming days.

Exclusion Periods:

Working with children means that employees are in contact with illnesses that can be highly contagious. We take the health of our staff and children very seriously, therefore if employees have any contagious illness, they must adhere to the same exclusion periods as the children. This will ensure that staff are able to recover appropriately, and that this illness is not passed on to other staff, children, or parents. The manager will advise employees of any exclusion times required, following advice from Public Health Wales.

Return to work Interview:

After returning to work from any sickness/absence leave. A 'return to work' interview will be undertaken by the employee and management.

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

- The reason for absence
- Whether adjustments to the role (on a temporary or 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, 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.
- How many days have been taken off as sick since in the last 12 months.

*A copy of the back to work interview is attached along with this policy.

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

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

If it is deemed that the amount of sick leave taken by the employee is becoming regular and no action is being taken by the employee to help themselves, this may be classified as misconduct and will be dealt with through disciplinary action.

Short-term sickness absence; with no underlying health conditions

This is defined by patterns of sickness absence for which there is no common underlying problem. Short-term absence may be short periods of one or two days occurring frequently.

The manager will use their discretion in deciding which path to follow depending on individual circumstances.

Absence of this nature can be identified by one of the following indicators and should be classed as a trigger for further investigation.

- Four self-certified spells of absence in one calendar year.
- A total of 10 working days or more of self-certified absence in one calendar year.
- Patterns of absence over a period, e.g., an individual regularly taking Mondays or Fridays off.
- Where an employee's attendance record is significantly worse than those of comparable employees, or absence problems have gone on for a considerable length of time.

Long-term sickness absence:

For the purposes of the policy, long-term sickness absence is defined by the setting as absences lasting over one month. Where absence last over 14 calendar days or more the manager will contact the member of staff concerned, obtain an initial assessment of the problem and offer any further help or assistance. This informal contact may be maintained with the employee's agreement until one month's continuous absence.

Long Term sickness absence or absence with an underlying health problem:

This is defined as a period or pattern of sickness absence for which there is a common underlying health cause. This type of sickness absence will normally present itself as long-term sickness – a long period or periods of sickness absence normally with a high number of days absence but over few episodes. However, it can in some cases present in a different pattern, e.g. a number of short periods of sickness absence.

In using this guidance, the manager should use their discretion in deciding which path to follow depending on the circumstance of the individual employee.

Where 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 reason and nature of the absence and its likely duration.
- Ensure that the member of staff is aware of **Once upon a Time 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 employee that in their best interest they may be asked to see a registered medical practitioner or occupational health provider.
- Alternatively, and if appropriate, gain agreement from the employee 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 will 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 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, every 3 months, and ultimately it may become necessary from a business perspective to consider termination of employment. Reasons for termination could include failure to engage with medical services or attendance does not improve over an agreed period of time. In these circumstances, **Once Upon a Time 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 NHS/G.P.
- 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.
- Always act reasonably towards the employee.

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

Sick Pay

Any sick leave taken by employees will be either unpaid, or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid in accordance with the Department for Work and Pensions requirements.

Bradford Factor

The Bradford factor will be used to calculate staff absences, please see the following table and protocols pending each score.

Bradford Factor score = number of absences squared, times number of days missed

One absence of five days = $(1 \times 1) \times 5 = 5$

Five separate absences of five single days = $(5 \times 5) \times 5 = 125$

Score	What It Means
Under 50	Typical score for an average employee
Over 50	A threshold for concern or basic monitoring
Over 100	Potentially the start of a trend that requires keeping an eye on
Over 200	Some kind of action may be needed
Between 200-500	A signal that something is going on that needs to be addressed
Over 500	Potential grounds for dismissal or an in-depth meeting

. The Bradford Score is a diagnostic tool that assists in identifying frequent short term absences. This is calculated by multiplying the square of the number of absences over the previous rolling twelve months by the total number of calendar days lost. For example, 5 absences with the total of 8 calendar days lost would yield a score of $5 \times 5 \times 8 = 200$. It is recommended that a score of 200 should be regarded as the trigger point for a cause for concern. The Bradford Score does not replace the continuous management review of absence and is not the only means for having concerns about sickness absence.

Please see examples in Appendix B. 2.5. Points that would trigger management concern and intervention are: 2.5.1. Short term: \rightarrow 4 a Bradford score of 200 or more; \rightarrow 4 or more occasions in a rolling twelve month period; \rightarrow or a clear pattern of absence (e.g. sick days adjoining weekends or annual leave, or sick days falling on the same day(s) of the week/time of the year). 2.5.2. Long term: \rightarrow Absences which last or are expected to last for 28 calendar days or more. Managing Sickness and Absence 5 2.6. An employee returning to work from a period of long term sickness and whose Bradford score is 200 or more may also be subject to monitoring and transferring to the Short Term Sickness procedure. Assistance and advice should be sought from your HR Representative.

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Return to work after short term illness meeting

Staff name: _____

Date: _____

Absence date and duration:	
Reason for absence:	
Discussion will include: Whether adjustments to the role (on a temporary or 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 e.g. improved attendance or medical advice needing to be sought:	
Days taken off sick calculated over the previous rolling twelve months:	Instances ² : x Days:
Bradford score check:	
Staff member's comments:	

Staff member's signature: _____

Date: _____

Manager's signature: _____

Date: _____