General Welfare Requirement: Suitable People

Providers must ensure that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.

Employment

2.1.3 Sickness and absence

Policy Statement for St Joseph's Pre-school
St Joseph's Pre-school recognises that employees may be absent from the organisation for a variety of reasons. To ensure that all staff are treated in a consistent and equitable manner, this document provides the framework for dealing with such circumstances.

Absence: whether due to illness or any other circumstances is defined (for the purpose of this document) as the non-attendance of workers when they are contracted to attend.

Procedure

- Any sickness/absence should be reported to the member of staff's line manager[1] by 7.30pm, by telephoning his/her personal mobile **(all staff should take a note of this)** giving a clear indication of the nature of the illness/absence and a likely return date. The individual member of staff must make the call unless they are physically unable.
- The Treasury Administrator will contact the Treasurer to inform him/her of the illness/absence and likely return date.
- **It is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure their absence has been received by the Lead Practitioner (or Chair in the case of the Lead Practitioner) – so a left message or a text message is unacceptable.**
- The Lead Practitioner should report the absence of Early Years staff to the Chair or in his/her absence a committee member by 7.45am. The Lead Practitioner, or the Chair in the case of the Lead Practitioner's absence, is required to make every effort to ensure cover for the Pre-school. This will primarily be by using our qualified bank staff who are on call.
- We have contingency plans to cover staff absences as follows[2]:
  - Deputy Practitioner will cover for Lead Practitioner
  - Practitioner will cover for Deputy Practitioner
- At the end of each day, the Lead Practitioner contacts any Early Years staff who is absent to catch up and check on how they are. The Chair and Treasurer will do likewise with regards the Lead Practitioner and Treasury Administrator respectively.
- Any sickness absence of less than seven days requires an employee to complete a 'Self Certification Form (see Appendix 1).
- Sickness absence which exceeds seven days requires an employee to obtain a 'Fit Note' from a GP or a hospital doctor.
- A 'back to work' discussion with the staff member's line manager will take place after each period of sickness/absence. This is to establish the reason for and cause of the absence, to consider whether there is anything the Lead Practitioner or organisation can do to help and to confirm that the employee is fit to return to work.
- The Lead Practitioner's 'return to work' discussion should take place with the Chair or another committee member, as nominated by the Chair.
- The Treasury Administrators 'return to work' discussion should take place with the Treasurer or another committee member, as nominated by the Treasurer.

[1] Deputy Practitioners/Practitioners/Bank Staff to Lead Practitioner; Lead Practitioner to Chair; Treasury Administrator to Treasurer
[2] The Pre-school use their WhatsApp group to organise cover

- A more formal review will be triggered by:
  - Frequent short term absences, eg. three periods of absence in a six month period;
  - Or after a long term absence.
- In exceptional circumstances, eg. after a long term absence, we may ask the employee's permission to ask for a report from their GP. This request will be made in writing requesting the employee's counter signature.
- Longer absences will require a phased return to work schedule to be implemented. This will be discussed and agreed at the 'return to work' meeting. This will help the Pre-school plan workloads.
- Absences of one to three days will be considered as a 'short term' absence.
- Absences of four days or more will be considered as a 'long term absence.
- If an explanation for the absence is not forthcoming or considered to be unsatisfactory, disciplinary procedures will apply.
- All records relating to staff sickness/absence will be stored confidentially and securely.

Sick pay

- Normal statutory sick pay applies to those staff who qualify.[3] Staff to refer to their individual contract of employment.

Maternity

- Absence relating to pregnancy will be recorded separately from sickness records. Employees are entitled to have reasonable time off with pay, to attend antenatal clinics. Statutory Maternity Pay will apply as appropriate. Staff to endeavour to make routine appointments outside of work time where possible.

Disability

- Absence relating to disability will be recorded separately from sickness records. We work within the framework of the Equality Act 2010 to ensure an inclusive and anti-discriminatory approach.
- If an employee is disabled or has a physical or mental health condition that makes it hard for them to do their job, they can get extra help via an Access to Work (AtW) grant, including mental health support. However, before applying for the grant the employee should talk to their line manager first about any 'reasonable adjustments' that can be made to assist them in their role. An AtW grant can pay for:
  - special equipment, adaptations or support worker services to help the individual do things like answer the phone or attend meetings;
  - help getting to and from work.

Time off for dependents

- In emergencies where normal childcare arrangements break down or where an employee is primarily or solely responsible for a child, dependent relative or partner who becomes ill or incapable, then an employee can request up to two days leave to organise appropriate care. This leave will be unpaid and the request should be made to the Lead Practitioner or Chair as soon as the problem is identified.

Time off for medical appointments

- Where possible, appointments for Doctors, Dentist, Optician or Hospital etc. should be made outside normal working hours.

[3] www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay

Compassionate and emergency leave

- Compassionate leave is time away from St Joseph's Pre-school to deal with the arrangements and/or matters relating to a trauma, possibly of a close relative, or an urgent domestic matter.
- A "close relative" may (but not exclusively) include:
  - the spouse, partner, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, uncle or aunt of a member of staff, or
  - the parent, sibling, child, grandparent, uncle or aunt of the spouse/partner of a member of staff.
- In the event of a trauma involving a close relative, an employee may be granted up to 3 days paid compassionate leave in any one year. This will be confirmed by the relevant line manager. The Pre-school committee should be notified accordingly.
- A member of staff can request emergency leave in order to deal with urgent domestic problems such as burglary, fire or flooding. The appropriate line manager should normally grant one day's paid leave, and the Pre-school committee should be notified accordingly.
- It is not always possible to give notice of the need for compassionate or emergency leave, staff should agree the time required as soon as reasonably possible, with the appropriate line manager, who shall inform the Pre-school committee accordingly.

Bereavement leave

St Joseph's Pre-school has a separate Bereavement Leave policy[4].

Annual leave/holiday entitlement

- St Joseph's Pre-school's staff take their holiday breaks when the Pre-school is closed. Where staff need to take time off for any reason other than sick leave or training, this is agreed with the manager with sufficient notice, unless covered within this procedure.

For further guidance on all matters relating to sickness and absence, including your rights as an employee and the relative legislation, please refer to guidance found at www.acas.org.uk and/or www.gov.uk. These sites were also used as a point of reference/guidance in the process of creating this document.

Associated policies and procedures

- No 1.13 Valuing diversity and promoting equality
- No 2.1 Employment and staffing
- No 2.1.1. Disciplinary
- No 2.1.2 Grievance
- No 2.1.6 Bereavement leave
- No 2.1.7 Capability procedure

[4] See Policy 2.1.6

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
1.0	K Coupe	Formatted and page numbered	Sept 2015
2.0	Committee	Reviewed	Oct 2016
3.0	K Coupe & H Elliott	Reviewed, updated and version controlled	10/07/2019 AGM
4.0	K Coupe & A Hitchings	Reviewed and updated. • Reference to Bereavement leave taken out and put into a new policy: 2.1.6 Bereavement leave. • Reference to the Access to Work grant	18 May 2022 Cttee Mbr (M Montgomery)

Appendix 1

St Joseph's Pre-school
Self-Certification Form

This form should be completed immediately upon return to work, by all employees following an absence from work. If the sickness absence has been for 7 calendar days or more, a GP or hospital doctor note is also required (known as a 'Fit Note').

Name:	
To whom did you report your sickness?	
Date reported:	
Date of first day of incapacity (including non-working days):	
Date of first day of absence from work:	
Date of return to work:	
State briefly why you were unfit for work/unable to come to work:	

	Yes	**No**
Have you consulted a doctor?		
If absent for more than 7 calendar days, have you submitted a doctor's note?		
If absence was not due to illness, please state which of the following it was due to: **Urgent family leave:** **Parental leave:** **Authorised unpaid leave:** **Other (please state below):**		

I declare that the information given is true, to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false information may result in loss of sick pay/company pay and/or disciplinary action.

Signature of Employee: …… **Date:** ……

Signature of Manager: …… **Date:** ……..