

2.7 Staff Sickness and Absence Management Policy

Crick Pre-School recognises that employees may be absent from the setting 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 agree to work.

Abuse of sickness absence, including failing to report absence or falsely claiming sick pay will be treated as misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time¹.

Procedures

- Any sickness/absence should be reported to the Manager by 7.30am, by telephoning 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.
 - It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure their absence has been received by the Manager, so a phone call is required; a text is not acceptable as this method does not allow the Manager to ask questions about the nature of the sickness. Occasionally a message may need to be left in which case the Manager will return the call as soon as possible².
 - When advising the Manager of their inability to attend for reasons of ill health, employees must:
 - provide specific information regarding the reasons for their absence, stating whether they intend to visit a doctor or have done so
 - provide an expected date of return if known or continue to call each day (by 1pm) in order to update the manager of any changes and their likely return to work date.
 - A record is created whenever an employee phones in to report that she/he is unable to come to work due to sickness. This includes recording when the call was made, the stated reason for the absence and how long the employee expects to be absent.
 - Employees who do not make reasonable effort to contact their manager without good reason will be regarded as being on unauthorised absence and will be dealt with via disciplinary procedures.

¹ However employees are expected to follow the stated guidelines. This policy may be updated and reviewed at any time by the Pre-School committee and any amendments will be communicated to you.

² Employees must personally make contact with Manager. A family member or friend should not report their absence unless in exceptional circumstances.

- The manager should ensure that there is a clear agreement made at the end of each contact about who will make the next call and when that will be e.g. the expiry of a Statement of Fitness for Work or appointment with a GP, consultant or specialist.
- For longer periods of absence it is the manager's responsibility to ensure contact is maintained during sickness absence, however employees also have a responsibility to maintain contact with their manager. The individual off sick should expect to be contacted at regular intervals by their manager so progress on recovery can be discussed and more generally, contact with the department maintained. Where there is an unexpected change in condition the individual off sick should contact their manager to update them on the change and discuss any implications. Employees must advise their manager if they intend to be away from their normal home address during sickness absence and provide alternative contact details.
- Where an employee remains absent for a continuous period of more than four weeks an attendance review will be triggered.
- The Manager is required to make every effort to ensure cover for the Pre-school.
- The Manager should report their own sickness/absence to the Deputy Manager and Chair or in the Chair's absence to a Committee member by 7.30 am. The Deputy Manager and Manager are required to make every effort to ensure cover for the Pre-school.
- Any sickness absence of 4 or more (to claim SSP) but less than seven days requires an employee to complete a 'Self Certificate' available from any Doctor's Surgery or can be filled in online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-sick-pay-employees-statement-of-sickness-sc2>.
- Sickness absence which exceeds seven days requires an employee to obtain a 'Fit Note' from their GP.
- A 'Return to Work Discussion' with Manager or committee representative if the Manager is sick or away, 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 manager or organisation can do to help and to confirm that the employee is fit to return to work within their normal role.
- An attendance review will be triggered by three periods of absence in a six month period; or after any long term absence.
- Absences of up to 4 weeks will be considered as 'short term' absence.
- Absences of 4 weeks or more will be considered as 'long term' absence.
- If an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or considered to be unsatisfactory, disciplinary procedures will apply.
- In cases of short-term, intermittent absence, we may set a target for improved attendance within a certain timescale.
- All records relating to staff absence/sickness will be stored confidentially and securely in the employee's personnel file.



Key children

In the event of a staff member being absent due to sickness for more than 14 consecutive calendar days, a temporary key worker will be assigned to children in their key group and this will be communicated to the parents.

Attendance review

This will be triggered by three periods of absence in a six month period; or after any long term absence. The purpose of an attendance review would be to investigate and discuss the reasons for your absence, whether it is likely to continue or recur, and whether there are any measures that could improve your health and/or attendance. We may decide that medical evidence, or further medical evidence, is required before deciding on a course of action. You will be given advance notification of any such meeting. We will usually give you at least 48 hours' notice. Meetings will be conducted by the Pre-school Manager and/or Committee Chair/representative. We set out full details of the procedure which we may follow in Appendix 1.

Medical Examinations

We may ask you to consent to a medical examination by a doctor or occupational health professional or other specialist nominated by us (at our expense). You will be asked to agree that any medical report produced may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with the specialist and with our advisers. All medical reports will be kept confidential and held in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Sick Pay

Normal statutory sick pay applies. Please refer to your individual contract of employment.

Maternity

See 2.5 Maternity Policy

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.

Time Off For Dependants

Please refer to your individual contract of employment.

Time off for Medical Appointments

Where possible, appointments for Doctor, Dentist, Optician, Hospital etc. should be made outside of normal working hours. If this is not possible, this time off will be logged on the Leave in term-time record.

Bereavement/Compassionate Leave

Please refer to individual contract of employment.

Annual Leave/Holiday Entitlement

Please refer to individual contract of employment.

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.direct.gov.uk. These sites were also used as a point of reference/guidance in the process of creating this document.

Please also refer to:

- 2.3 Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- 2.1 Employment and 5.1 Staffing Policies
- 2.4 Grievance Policy and Procedure
- 2.5 Maternity Policy
- 9.1 Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

Crick Pre-School

Held on

12th December 2018

Last reviewed

8th December 2021

Date to be reviewed

December 2022

Signed on behalf of the management committee



Name of signatory

Clare Thompson

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)

Chair

Appendix 1

Managing Long –Term or Persistent Short-term Absence – Attendance review process

Initial Absence Meeting

The purposes of an absence meeting or meetings will be to discuss the reasons for your absence, how long it is likely to continue, whether it is likely to recur, whether to obtain a medical report, and whether there are any measures that could improve your health and/or attendance.

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

If, after a reasonable time, you have not been able to return to work or if your attendance has not improved within the agreed timescale, we will hold a further meeting or meetings. We will seek to establish whether the situation is likely to change, and may consider whether there are any other opportunities within the pre-school and/or reducing your hours. If it is considered unlikely that you will return to work or that your attendance will not improve within a short time, we may give you a written warning you that you are at risk of dismissal. We may also set a further date for review.

Final Absence Meeting

Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, and the situation has not changed significantly, we will hold a meeting to consider the possible termination of your employment. Before we make a decision, we will consider any matters you wish to raise and whether there have been any changes since the last meeting.

Appeals

You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure. If you wish to appeal you should set out your appeal in writing to The Chair of Crick Pre-School, stating your grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

If you are appealing against a decision to dismiss you, we will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially and, where possible, by one of the management team at the pre-school who has not previously been involved in the case.

We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. There is 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.