ACT MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

ATTENDANCE AND SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

(further info if needed)

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Field	Detail
Name of document	Disciplinary Procedure
Status	Trust-wide statutory employment policy
Approved by	Trust Board
Policy owner	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (Interim HR Lead)
Review cycle	Annual
Next review date	July 2027
Applies to	All employees of ACT Multi Academy Trust
Version	v1.0
Date approved	15/07/2026
Date issued	October 2026
Scheme of Delegation reference	Applies in accordance with ACT Multi Academy Trust Scheme of Delegation
Related policies	Capability Procedure, Grievance Procedure, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, People and Employment Framework
Publication	Trust internal policies (available

VERSION CONTROL
PREVIOUS POSITION)
If you want to show transformation more clearly to Trustees:

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
0.9	2024	Legacy	Previous EPM-model sickness absence procedure with school-level variation, limited Trust-wide governance, and lower level of operational detail and consistency.

1.0	May 2026	CEO	Full redevelopment of the Attendance and Sickness Absence Policy, replacing the previous model with a fully integrated ACT Multi Academy Trust policy, embedding Scheme of Delegation, strengthening legal compliance, and establishing a consistent Trust-wide attendance management system with clear operational processes, governance oversight and alignment to the full HR framework.

1. PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the framework through which ACT Multi Academy Trust manages sickness absence and employee attendance.
The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure a consistent, fair and legally compliant approach to managing absence across all academies and Trust functions
- support employees experiencing ill health, including both short-term and long-term conditions
- ensure that employees are able to return to work safely, appropriately and sustainably
- maintain continuity of education, safeguarding and service delivery
- ensure attendance expectations are clearly defined, communicated and consistently applied

This policy establishes a **clear and structured process** which must be followed by managers and employees and which includes:

- reporting absence
- maintaining contact
- monitoring attendance
- providing support
- conducting meetings
- implementing formal procedures where required

The Trust recognises that:

- sickness absence may arise from short-term illness, recurring health conditions or long-term medical issues
- each case must be considered on its individual merits
- employees must be treated with dignity, sensitivity and fairness
- absence must be actively managed to ensure the effective operation of the Trust

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1.2 Nature of the Policy

This policy is a **supportive management procedure**, not a disciplinary process.
However:

- where employees fail to comply with absence reporting requirements, or provide inaccurate information, this may be addressed under the Disciplinary Policy
- where absence is sustained or recurring and impacts the employee's ability to fulfil their role, this may progress into formal action under the Capability Procedure (ill health), where appropriate

Managers must ensure that:

- the correct policy route is followed at all times
- employees are clearly informed of the stage of the process they are in
- there is no overlap or confusion between this policy and disciplinary or capability procedures

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1.3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- all employees of ACT Multi Academy Trust, regardless of role, grade or location

This includes:

- teaching staff (in accordance with STPCD and Burgundy Book)
- support staff (in accordance with Green Book conditions of service)
- centrally employed Trust staff

Managers must ensure that:

- the provisions of this policy are applied consistently to all staff groups

- any variations required by contractual or statutory frameworks are properly applied

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1.4 The Trust as Employer

ACT Multi Academy Trust is the legal employer of all staff.
All decisions taken under this policy:

- are taken on behalf of the Trust
- must comply with the Scheme of Delegation
- must be made by appropriately authorised managers

No individual academy, Headteacher or manager:

- operates as an independent employer
- may act outside of delegated authority

All decisions must:

- be based on clear and accurate information
- be reasonable, proportionate and consistent
- be fully documented and capable of audit

Managers must be able to demonstrate:

- how decisions have been reached
- what evidence has been considered
- how the policy has been applied

1.5 Equality and Legal Considerations

Sickness absence may be related to a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
Where this is the case:

- the Trust has a legal duty to consider reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- adjustments to working duties
- changes to working hours
- workplace adaptations
- adjustments to attendance expectations
- modification of elements of this procedure where appropriate

Where a line manager believes that:

- an employee's absence may be linked to an underlying medical condition or disability

the line manager must:

- seek HR advice at the earliest opportunity
- consider Occupational Health referral
- ensure that any decisions take full account of Equality Act obligations

Failure to do so may:

- expose the Trust to legal risk
- result in decisions being overturned

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2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Principles of Responsibility

Responsibility for managing attendance and sickness absence rests with:

- ACT Multi Academy Trust as the employer

All actions under this policy:

- are undertaken on behalf of the Trust
- must comply with the Scheme of Delegation
- must be applied consistently across all academies

Managers must ensure that:

- they are acting within their delegated authority
- they follow the procedure in full
- decisions are based on evidence and properly recorded

2.2 Line Managers

Line managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of sickness absence.
The line manager will:

- receive and record absence notifications
- ensure that reporting requirements are followed
- maintain appropriate and proportionate contact with employees during absence
- conduct return-to-work meetings following every absence
- review attendance records and identify patterns of concern
- take early action where absence levels give cause for concern
- arrange and conduct informal absence meetings
- implement monitoring periods and review arrangements
- initiate formal procedures where required

The line manager will also:

- ensure that all meetings are conducted appropriately
- ensure that accurate written records are kept
- provide copies of documentation to the employee
- ensure that all actions are clearly explained to the employee

All actions are taken:

- on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust

2.3 Headteachers and Senior Leaders

Headteachers and senior leaders will:

- ensure that this policy is applied consistently within their academy or service
- oversee formal stages of the procedure where required
- provide support and challenge to line managers
- ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are in place for employees
- ensure that absence is managed proactively

Headteachers will also:

- ensure that decisions taken are consistent with Trust expectations
- review complex or high-risk cases
- seek HR advice where appropriate

Where the employee is a Headteacher:

- the Chief Executive Officer (or delegated senior leader) will act as the line manager
- all responsibilities within this policy will transfer accordingly

2.4 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer will:

- ensure the consistent application of this policy across all academies
- monitor absence levels, trends and patterns across the Trust
- identify areas of concern or inconsistency
- challenge decisions where necessary
- provide assurance to the Trust Board regarding attendance management

The CEO may:

- review individual cases
- request additional information or evidence
- require managers to reconsider decisions
- intervene where policy has not been applied correctly

2.5 Authority to Conduct Sickness Absence Meetings

Meetings under this procedure must be conducted by appropriately delegated managers.
The following roles normally apply:

Return-to-work meetings

- Conducted by: Line Manager

Informal sickness absence meetings

- Conducted by: Line Manager

Stage 1 formal meetings

- Conducted by: Headteacher or delegated senior leader (or Trust equivalent)

Stage 2 formal meetings

- Conducted by: Chief Executive Officer, Headteacher, or a formally constituted Trust panel in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation

The manager or panel conducting the meeting will:

- ensure that the procedure is followed correctly
- consider all available evidence
- ensure that the employee has the opportunity to respond
- ensure that outcomes are:
    - clearly explained
    - confirmed in writing
    - fully recorded

2.6 Employees

Employees must:

- report absence in accordance with this policy
- maintain regular contact during absence
- provide accurate and truthful information
- submit certification (self-certification or Fit Notes) as required
- engage with support offered by the Trust
- attend Occupational Health or medical appointments when required

Employees must also:

- co-operate with the absence management process
- participate in meetings
- follow agreed support or return-to-work plans

Failure to do so may:

- delay support
- impact sick pay (where applicable)
- result in further management action

2.7 Consistency and Oversight

The Trust will ensure that:

- the policy is applied consistently across all academies
- decisions are fair and equitable
- similar cases are treated in a comparable way

Senior leaders, including the CEO, may:

- review absence management decisions
- request supporting documentation
- require reconsideration of decisions where inconsistencies are identified

Managers must ensure that:

- their decisions can be clearly justified
- appropriate evidence has been considered
- records are sufficiently detailed to support decision-making

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3. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 General Duty to Attend Work

Employees are expected to:

- attend work regularly and reliably
- be fit to carry out the duties of their role
- take reasonable steps to maintain their health and wellbeing

Where an employee is unfit for work due to illness or injury:

- they must follow the requirements set out in this policy

Failure to do so may:

- delay support
- affect entitlement to sick pay (where applicable)
- result in further management action

3.2 Requirement to Follow the Trust Procedure

All employees must follow the Attendance and Sickness Absence Procedure in full.
This includes:

- employees in their probationary period
- employees working across multiple sites
- employees on temporary or fixed-term contracts

Employees must:

- follow Trust reporting procedures (not local variations)
- ensure that all required information is provided accurately and promptly

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3.3 Notification of Sickness Absence

Where an employee is unable to attend work due to illness or injury, they must:

- personally notify their line manager by telephone
- do so as early as reasonably practicable on the first day of absence
- normally do so **before the start of the working day**, unless exceptional circumstances apply

Notification must not be made:

- by text message
- by email (unless agreed in exceptional circumstances)
- through a third party, unless the employee is medically unable to contact the manager directly

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3.4 Information to be Provided

At the point of notification, the employee must provide sufficient information to allow the Trust to manage the absence.
This must include:

- the nature of the illness or injury (general description is sufficient)
- the expected duration of absence (where known)
- current contact details during the period of absence
- details of any urgent work, responsibilities or safeguarding matters requiring attention

The line manager may:

- ask further questions where necessary
- clarify expected return dates or support needs

Employees are expected to:

- provide accurate and honest information
- update the manager if circumstances change

3.5 Contact During Absence

During any period of sickness absence, the employee must:

- maintain regular and reasonable contact with their line manager
- keep the Trust informed of:
    - progress towards recovery
    - likely return to work
    - any changes in circumstances

The frequency and method of contact will:

- be agreed between the employee and the line manager
- be appropriate to the nature of the illness

Where contact is not maintained:

- the line manager may initiate contact
- lack of engagement may be addressed through this procedure

3.6 Failure to Report Absence

Where an employee:

- fails to report for work
- and has not notified the reason for absence in line with this policy

the line manager will:

- make reasonable attempts to contact the employee to establish their wellbeing and the reason for absence

This contact:

- does not replace the employee's responsibility to report absence

Where absence is not reported correctly:

- it may be treated as unauthorised absence
- this may lead to action under the Disciplinary Policy

3.7 Self-Certification Requirements

For any period of sickness absence up to and including 7 calendar days:

- the employee must complete a self-certification form

The employee must:

- complete the form immediately on return to work
- ensure that all relevant details are included
- submit the form to their line manager without delay

The line manager will:

- review the information provided
- retain the form as part of the employee's attendance record

Failure to complete self-certification:

- may delay absence recording
- may result in further management action

3.8 Fit Notes (Medical Certification)

For any absence of 8 calendar days or more:

- the employee must provide a Fit Note issued by a medical practitioner

Fit Notes must:

- be submitted as soon as reasonably practicable
- cover the entire period of absence
- be updated where absence continues

Where a Fit Note states:

- "not fit for work" → the employee will remain on sick leave
- "may be fit for work" → the employee must contact their line manager immediately

The employee must:

- discuss any recommendations included within the Fit Note
- co-operate in agreeing any adjustments

3.9 Submission of Ongoing Fit Notes

Where absence continues:

- the employee must ensure that Fit Notes are provided without gaps
- each Fit Note must be submitted promptly following issue

This requirement applies:

- during term time

- during school closure periods

The Trust may:

- retain a copy of the Fit Note
- return the original to the employee

Failure to provide Fit Notes:

- may result in sick pay not being paid (where applicable)
- may result in absence being treated as unauthorised

3.10 Attendance at Medical and Occupational Health Appointments

Where required, employees must:

- attend Occupational Health appointments
- attend medical assessments arranged by the Trust

These appointments are arranged to:

- obtain expert medical advice
- support the employee's return to work
- inform management decisions

Employees must:

- co-operate fully with the process
- provide consent where required for medical information to be shared

Failure to attend or engage may:

- limit the Trust's ability to provide support
- result in decisions being made based on available information

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3.11 Accuracy and Honesty in Reporting

Employees are required to:

- provide accurate and truthful information in relation to sickness absence
- ensure that all documentation submitted is genuine

The provision of:

- false or misleading information
- fraudulent documentation

will:

- be treated as a serious matter
- be addressed under the Disciplinary Policy

3.12 Engagement with the Process

Employees must:

- engage with all stages of this procedure
- attend meetings as required
- participate in discussions regarding support and return to work

Employees are expected to:

- co-operate with agreed action plans
- take reasonable steps to improve attendance
- follow medical advice where appropriate

Failure to engage may:

- delay support
- affect outcomes
- result in the procedure progressing based on available evidence

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4. MONITORING ATTENDANCE

4.1 Monitoring Principles

Attendance will be monitored:

- regularly
- consistently

- across all academies

4.2 Identification of Concerns

Managers will review:

- frequency of absence
- duration
- patterns

This includes:

- repeated short-term absence
- identifiable patterns (e.g. specific days)
- long-term absence

4.3 Trigger Points

Examples include:

- 5 days in a half term
- more than 5 days in a term
- 10 days over three terms
- 3 occasions in a term

These are:

→ guidance only

→ not automatic

Managers must consider:

- individual circumstances
- medical history
- Equality Act implications

4.4 Equality Act Considerations

Where absence may relate to disability:

- reasonable adjustments must be considered
- trigger thresholds may be modified
- HR advice must be sought

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5. RETURN-TO-WORK PROCESS

5.1 Purpose of the Return to Work Process

The return-to-work process is a key stage in the management of sickness absence.
It is designed to:

- confirm that the employee is fit to return to work
- ensure any health or workplace concerns are identified at an early stage
- provide an opportunity to discuss any support or adjustments required
- enable the Trust to monitor and manage absence consistently
- ensure that accurate records of absence are maintained

A return-to-work discussion must take place following **every period of sickness absence**, regardless of duration.

5.2 Arranging the Return to Work Discussion

The line manager (acting on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust) will:

- arrange the return-to-work discussion as soon as reasonably practicable following the employee's return
- normally hold the meeting on the employee's first day back, or as soon as possible thereafter
- ensure the meeting takes place in private and without interruption

Where the employee is a Headteacher:

- the meeting will be conducted by the Chief Executive Officer or delegated senior leader

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5.3 Preparation for the Meeting

Prior to the meeting, the line manager will:

- review the employee's attendance record
- identify:
    - the duration of the most recent absence
    - any patterns or repeated absence
    - any previous informal or formal action taken
- consider whether:
    - the absence may indicate a wider concern
    - there are any safeguarding, operational or staffing implications

The manager may also:

- review any previous medical information or Occupational Health advice
- prepare relevant documentation (including self-certification or Fit Notes)

5.4 Conduct of the Return to Work Meeting

The return-to-work meeting will be a structured professional discussion.
During the meeting, the line manager will:

- welcome the employee back to work
- confirm the dates and reason for absence
- review the period of absence and any supporting documentation
- confirm whether the employee is fit to return to full duties

The employee will be given the opportunity to:

- explain the reason for their absence
- raise any concerns about their health
- discuss any issues relating to their work or working environment
- identify any support or adjustments that may be required

5.5 Assessing Fitness to Work

The line manager will establish:

- whether the employee is fully fit to return to work
- whether there are any ongoing health concerns
- whether the absence may be linked to:
    - a medical condition
    - a workplace issue
    - a potential disability under the Equality Act 2010

Where a Fit Note includes recommendations:

- these must be discussed in detail with the employee

The manager must:

- consider whether the recommendations can reasonably be implemented
- seek HR advice where necessary

5.6 Consideration of Adjustments and Support

Where appropriate, the line manager will consider whether support or adjustments are required.
This may include:

- a phased return to work
- temporary or permanent adjustments to duties
- adjustments to working hours or working patterns
- workplace adaptations
- additional supervision or support

In making decisions, the manager must consider:

- the needs of the employee

- the needs of pupils and service delivery
- the impact on colleagues
- the operational requirements of the Trust

All adjustments must be:

- reasonable
- proportionate
- clearly agreed

5.7 Phased Return to Work

Where a phased return is required:

- this will normally be based on medical advice (e.g. Fit Note or Occupational Health)

A phased return plan will:

- set out the hours and duties to be undertaken
- define the duration of the phased return
- include review points

The line manager will:

- confirm the plan in writing
- monitor progress
- adjust arrangements where necessary

Pay during phased return will:

- be managed in accordance with contractual sick pay arrangements

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5.8 Recording the Meeting

A written record of the return-to-work discussion must be completed.
This record will include:

- the dates and reason for absence
- summary of discussion
- any concerns identified
- any support or adjustments agreed
- any next steps

The employee will:

- receive a copy of the record
- have the opportunity to comment

The record will:

- be retained on the employee's personnel file
- be used to inform any future absence management decisions

5.9 Identifying Concerns and Patterns of Absence

During the meeting, the line manager will consider:

- whether the absence forms part of a pattern
- whether absence levels are becoming a concern
- whether further action may be required

Where concerns are identified, the manager will:

- explain these clearly to the employee
- reference specific evidence
- explain the impact on the Trust

5.10 Outcomes of the Return to Work Meeting

Following the meeting, one of the following outcomes will apply:

(a) No Further Action

- the employee returns to normal duties
- no concerns are identified

(b) Support and Adjustment

- support measures are agreed
- a review period may be set

(c) Monitoring Required

- attendance will be monitored over a defined period
- expectations will be clearly communicated

(d) Informal Absence Management

- the employee will be invited to an informal sickness absence meeting under Section 6

5.11 Failure to Engage or Provide Information

Where an employee:

- fails to attend a return-to-work meeting
- refuses to provide required information

the manager will:

- make reasonable attempts to rearrange the meeting
- record the failure to engage

Where necessary:

- decisions may be made based on available information

5.12 Consistency and Oversight

The Trust will ensure that:

- return-to-work processes are applied consistently across all academies
- similar cases are treated in a comparable way

Senior leaders may:

- review return-to-work records
- ensure consistency of practice
- intervene where required

Managers must ensure that:

- their decisions are clearly recorded
- all actions are supported by evidence

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6. INFORMAL MANAGEMENT OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

6.1 Purpose of Informal Management

Where an employee's level or pattern of absence gives cause for concern, the line manager will address this at an early stage through an informal sickness absence meeting.

The purpose of the informal stage is to:

- identify and understand the reasons for absence
- provide appropriate support
- agree clear expectations for attendance
- prevent escalation to the formal procedure where possible

6.2 Triggers for Informal Action

An informal meeting may be arranged where, for example, an employee has:

- a total of 5 working days' absence within a half term
- more than 5 working days' absence within a term
- 10 working days' absence within a rolling three-term period
- three or more separate occasions of absence within a term
- any pattern of absence which gives cause for concern

These triggers:

- act as guidance only
- must be considered in the context of:
    - individual circumstances
    - medical evidence
    - Equality Act considerations

6.3 Preparation for the Meeting

Prior to the meeting, the line manager will:

- review the employee's attendance record in detail
- identify patterns, frequency and duration of absence
- consider:
    - the employee's role
    - operational impact on pupils, staff and service delivery
- review any relevant:
    - previous meetings
    - support provided
    - medical information

The manager may also:

- compare attendance data across the Trust to ensure consistency

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6.4 Conduct of the Informal Meeting

The meeting will:

- be held in private
- be conducted by the line manager (or CEO for Headteachers)

There is no statutory right to representation at this stage.

During the meeting, the manager will:

- explain the purpose of the meeting
- set out the employee's absence record clearly
- explain why attendance is causing concern
- explain the impact on the Trust

The employee will be given the opportunity to:

- explain the reasons for absence
- identify any underlying issues or medical conditions
- raise any work-related concerns
- discuss any support required

The manager will explore whether absence may be linked to:

- a medical condition
- workplace factors
- a potential disability

6.5 Agreement of Action Plan

Following the discussion, an action plan will be agreed.

This will include:

- expected improvements in attendance
- clear attendance standards
- any support or adjustments to be provided
- timescales for improvement
- review date(s)

The manager will ensure:

- expectations are clearly explained
- the employee understands the consequences of not improving

6.6 Recording the Meeting

The manager will:

- complete a written record of the meeting (using Trust proforma)

The record will include:

- absence summary
- key discussion points
- agreed actions
- review arrangements

The employee will:

- receive a copy
- be asked to sign to confirm accuracy

The record will be:

- retained on the employee's personnel file

6.7 Monitoring Period

Following the meeting:

- a monitoring period will be set

This will normally be:

- between 1 and 3 months

During this period:

- attendance will be closely monitored
- further meetings may be held if absence continues

The manager may require:

- absences during this period to be medically certified

6.8 Review of Informal Stage

At the end of the monitoring period, the manager will review attendance.
Outcomes will be:

(a) Attendance Improved

- no further action required
- employee returns to normal monitoring

(b) Partial Improvement

- monitoring period may be extended
- additional support may be introduced

(c) Insufficient Improvement

- the employee will be informed that the matter will progress to Stage 1 of the formal procedure

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7. FORMAL PROCEDURE – STAGE 1

7.1 Initiation of Stage 1

Where an employee's attendance has not improved to an acceptable standard following the informal procedure, or where the level or nature of absence is sufficiently serious, the matter will be progressed to Stage 1 of the formal procedure.
The decision to progress to Stage 1 will be made by:

- the line manager or Headteacher (acting on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust)

The manager must ensure that:

- sufficient evidence exists to justify progression
- informal action and support have been properly considered or implemented (unless inappropriate due to seriousness)
- the decision is reasonable, proportionate and compliant with the Equality Act 2010

7.2 Invitation to Stage 1 Meeting

The employee will be invited to a formal Stage 1 meeting in writing.
The letter will:

- explain the purpose of the meeting
- outline the concerns regarding attendance
- include relevant documentation, which may include:
    - absence records
    - notes of previous meetings
    - action plans or monitoring records
    - medical or Occupational Health advice (where applicable)
- confirm:
    - the date, time and location of the meeting
    - the name and role of the person conducting the meeting
    - the employee's right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague

The employee will be given:

- reasonable notice to prepare for the meeting

7.3 Preparation for the Stage 1 Meeting

Prior to the meeting, the manager will:

- review all relevant documentation
- ensure that attendance data is accurate
- consider:
    - reasons for absence
    - impact on pupils, service delivery and colleagues
    - whether Equality Act considerations apply
- consider whether:
    - Occupational Health referral is required
    - further medical advice should be sought

The manager must ensure:

- that they are fully prepared to explain the rationale for proceeding to Stage 1
- that all relevant evidence is available during the meeting

7.4 Conduct of the Stage 1 Meeting

The meeting will be conducted by an appropriately delegated manager.
A note taker may be present to record the discussion.
During the meeting, the manager will:

- explain the purpose of the meeting
- outline the employee's attendance record in detail
- explain clearly why attendance is considered to be unsatisfactory
- explain the impact of the absence on:
    - pupils
    - colleagues
    - service delivery
- review the informal stage, including:
    - support provided
    - action plans agreed
    - outcomes of any monitoring

The manager will also:

- consider any medical evidence available
- refer to any Occupational Health advice
- explore any underlying causes of absence

7.5 Employee Response

The employee will be given the opportunity to:

- respond to the concerns raised
- provide explanations for absence
- present any mitigating circumstances
- provide additional evidence (including medical evidence)
- raise any work-related issues or concerns

The employee (and their representative, if present) may:

- ask questions
- challenge evidence
- make representations

7.6 Considerations at Stage 1

In reaching a decision, the manager must consider:

- the nature and frequency of absence
- whether there is an underlying medical condition
- whether absence may be linked to a disability
- whether reasonable adjustments have been considered or implemented
- the likelihood of improvement
- the impact of absence on the Trust

The manager must ensure that:

- all decisions are evidence-based
- Equality Act obligations have been fully considered
- alternatives to escalation have been explored where appropriate

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7.7 Occupational Health and Medical Advice

During or following the meeting, the manager may:

- seek the employee's consent for referral to Occupational Health
- request further medical information where necessary

This may be used to:

- assess fitness for work
- identify appropriate adjustments
- inform decisions about return or continued employment

7.8 Stage 1 Action Plan

Following the meeting, an action plan will be agreed (or set where agreement is not possible).
The action plan will clearly identify:

- the improvements required in attendance
- how attendance will be measured and monitored
- the expected standard of attendance
- the review period (normally between 1 and 3 months)
- any support or adjustments to be provided

Support may include:

- Occupational Health referral
- adjustments to duties or working arrangements
- access to wellbeing or support services

The employee will be:

- informed clearly of expectations
- informed of the consequences of failing to meet the required standard

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7.9 Outcome of Stage 1 Meeting

Following the meeting, the manager will confirm the outcome in writing.
The outcome letter will include:

- a summary of the key points discussed
- details of the action plan
- the improvements required
- the review period
- the consequences of failing to improve (including progression to Stage 2)
- confirmation of the employee's right to appeal

A copy of the letter will:

- be retained on the employee's personnel file

7.10 Stage 1 Monitoring and Review Period

During the review period:

- attendance will be monitored closely and objectively
- regular meetings will take place between the employee and line manager

Where practicable, these meetings may:

- occur weekly or at agreed intervals
- provide an opportunity to:
    - review attendance
    - provide feedback
    - offer additional support

The manager will:

- keep written records of all review discussions
- provide copies to the employee

7.11 Review of Attendance During Stage 1

At the end of the review period, the manager will formally assess attendance.
This assessment will consider:

- whether the employee has achieved the required improvement
- whether the improvement is sustainable
- whether further support is required

7.12 Outcomes Following Stage 1 Review

The outcome will be one of the following:

(a) Satisfactory Improvement

- attendance has improved to the required standard
- no further formal action will be taken

The employee will be informed in writing:

- that improvement must be sustained
- that further absence within a 12-month period may result in progression to Stage 2

(b) Insufficient Improvement

- attendance has not improved to the required standard

The manager will:

- progress the matter to Stage 2 of the formal procedure

(c) Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional cases:

- the review period may be extended
- additional support may be provided

7.13 Appeal

The employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of the Stage 1 meeting.
Any appeal must:

- be submitted in writing
- be made in accordance with the Trust's governance arrangements

8. FORMAL PROCEDURE – STAGE 2

8.1 Initiation of Stage 2

Where an employee's attendance has failed to improve to an acceptable standard following Stage 1, or where the nature of absence is such that progression is appropriate, the matter will be escalated to Stage 2 of the formal procedure.

The decision to progress to Stage 2 will be made by:

- an appropriately delegated manager acting on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust

The manager must ensure that:

- all previous stages of the procedure have been followed appropriately
- sufficient evidence exists to justify escalation
- all relevant support and reasonable adjustments have been considered
- Equality Act obligations have been fully addressed

8.2 Invitation to Stage 2 Meeting

The employee will be invited to attend a Stage 2 formal meeting in writing.

The letter will:

- state clearly that the meeting is a Stage 2 formal hearing
- outline the concerns regarding attendance
- confirm that dismissal is a potential outcome
- include all relevant documentation, which may include:
    - full absence record
    - notes of informal and Stage 1 meetings
    - action plans and monitoring records
    - medical evidence and Occupational Health reports
- confirm:
    - the date, time and location of the meeting
    - who will conduct the meeting (manager/panel)
    - the employee's right to be accompanied

The employee will be given:

- reasonable notice to prepare for the hearing

8.3 Composition of the Stage 2 Panel

The Stage 2 meeting will be conducted by:

- a senior manager or panel with appropriate delegated authority

This may include:

- the Chief Executive Officer
- a Headteacher (where appropriate)
- or a formally constituted Trust panel

The meeting will normally be supported by:

- an HR adviser

A note taker will be present to:

- record the proceedings

8.4 Purpose of the Stage 2 Meeting

The purpose of the Stage 2 meeting is to:

- review the employee's attendance record in full
- consider all previous management action taken
- assess whether sufficient improvement has been achieved
- determine whether continued employment is viable

8.5 Conduct of the Stage 2 Meeting

The meeting will follow a structured process.
The Chair will:

- open the meeting and explain the purpose
- confirm the procedure to be followed
- introduce all attendees

The manager who has managed the case (usually Stage 1 manager) will:

- present the case, including:
    - details of the employee's absence record
    - summary of informal and Stage 1 action
    - support and adjustments provided
    - monitoring and review outcomes

8.6 Review of Evidence

The panel will review:

- absence data and patterns
- notes of previous meetings
- action plans and progress against them
- Occupational Health advice
- any other relevant medical evidence
- measures taken to support the employee

The panel will also consider:

- the expected standards of attendance
- the operational impact of absence on:
    - pupils
    - colleagues
    - service delivery

8.7 Employee Response

The employee (and their representative, where present) will be given the opportunity to:

- respond to the concerns raised
- present their account of events
- provide any additional evidence
- explain mitigating circumstances
- comment on medical advice or reports

The employee may also:

- suggest alternative solutions
- propose adjustments or redeployment

8.8 Key Considerations for Decision-Making

In reaching a decision, the panel must consider:

- whether the employee has achieved satisfactory improvement in attendance
- whether any further improvement is likely within a reasonable timeframe
- whether the employee is capable of sustaining acceptable attendance
- whether all reasonable support has been provided
- whether reasonable adjustments have been considered and implemented
- whether further adjustments are viable

The panel must also consider:

- Equality Act obligations
- medical evidence and prognosis
- the impact on the Trust

8.9 Adjournment and Decision-Making

Following the hearing, the panel will:

- adjourn to consider the decision

The decision must be:

- reasonable
- proportionate
- based on all available evidence

The panel may:

- seek further clarification or advice before reaching a decision

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8.10 Possible Outcomes

The panel may decide one of the following:

(a) No Further Action

- attendance is deemed acceptable
- no further formal action is required

(b) Further / Final Review Period

- a final opportunity is provided to improve attendance
- a further review period is set
- additional support or adjustments may be implemented

The employee will be informed that:

- failure to improve may result in dismissal

(c) Redeployment

- consideration is given to redeployment to a more suitable role
- this will depend on:
    - availability of roles
    - employee suitability

(d) Ill-Health Retirement

- where applicable, the employee may be advised to explore pension options

(e) Dismissal on Grounds of Capability (Ill Health)

Dismissal may be appropriate where:

- there is no realistic prospect of a sustained return
- attendance cannot be maintained at an acceptable level
- all reasonable support and adjustments have been exhausted
- the Trust cannot reasonably sustain the absence

8.11 Outcome of Stage 2

The outcome will be:

- confirmed in writing to the employee

The outcome letter will include:

- the decision reached
- full reasons for the decision
- summary of evidence considered
- any actions required
- details of any notice period (where applicable)
- the employee's right of appeal

This letter will:

- be retained on the personnel file

8.12 Notice of Dismissal (Where Applicable)

Where dismissal is the outcome:

- the employee will be given notice in accordance with their contractual entitlement

The Trust may:

- continue to explore redeployment during the notice period where appropriate

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8.13 Right of Appeal

The employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of the Stage 2 meeting.
The appeal must:

- be submitted in writing
- set out the grounds for appeal
- be lodged within the specified timeframe

8.14 Consistency and Oversight

The Trust will ensure that:

- Stage 2 decisions are applied consistently
- similar cases are treated comparably

The CEO may:

- review decisions
- request additional evidence
- ensure that decisions are in line with Trust standards

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9. LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

9.1 Definition of Long-Term Absence

For the purposes of this procedure, long-term sickness absence is typically defined as:

- a continuous period of absence of four weeks or more

However, managers must also consider:

- recurring absence related to a single underlying medical condition
- cases where medical advice indicates a likely extended absence

The approach taken will:

- reflect the individual circumstances of the case
- remain flexible and proportionate

9.2 Principles of Managing Long-Term Absence

The Trust will manage long-term absence in a manner that is:

- supportive and sensitive
- proactive and structured
- compliant with legal obligations

The aim is to:

- support the employee's recovery
- facilitate a safe and sustainable return to work where possible
- ensure that decisions are fair, reasonable and evidence-based

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9.3 Maintaining Contact

During a period of long-term absence, the line manager (acting on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust) will:

- maintain regular and appropriate contact with the employee

The purpose of contact is to:

- check on the employee's wellbeing
- obtain updates on recovery
- discuss likely return to work
- ensure the employee remains informed about workplace matters

Contact arrangements will:

- be agreed with the employee wherever possible
- take account of the employee's medical condition
- be reasonable and proportionate

Contact may include:

- telephone calls
- virtual meetings
- meetings at a mutually agreed location (including the workplace where appropriate)

All contact will:

- be recorded
- be professional and supportive

9.4 Medical Evidence and Occupational Health

In managing long-term absence, the Trust will obtain appropriate medical advice.
This may include:

- Fit Notes provided by the employee's GP
- referral to Occupational Health
- specialist medical reports where appropriate

The line manager will:

- seek the employee's consent for referral to Occupational Health
- provide relevant information to support assessment
- consider the advice received carefully

Medical advice will be used to:

- determine fitness for work
- understand the nature of the condition
- assess likely timescales for return
- identify reasonable adjustments

9.5 Consideration of Equality Act Obligations

Where a condition may qualify as a disability under the Equality Act 2010, the Trust will:

- consider reasonable adjustments

This may include:

- adjustments to duties or responsibilities
- changes to working hours or patterns
- workplace adaptations
- adjustments to attendance expectations

Managers must:

- seek HR advice where a disability may be present
- ensure that all decisions fully consider Equality Act obligations

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9.6 Planning for Return to Work

Where medical advice indicates that a return to work is possible, the line manager will:

- meet with the employee to discuss the return

The purpose of the discussion is to:

- agree a structured and supported return to work plan

This may include:

- a phased return to work
- temporary reduction in hours
- adjusted duties
- workplace adaptations

9.7 Phased Return to Work

Where a phased return is appropriate:

- this will normally be based on medical advice

The phased return plan will:

- set out:
  - hours to be worked
  - duties to be undertaken
  - duration of the phased return
- include review dates

The line manager will:

- monitor progress
- review and adjust the plan as necessary

Pay during a phased return will:

- be managed in accordance with contractual sick pay provisions

---

9.8 Where Return to Work Is Not Immediately Possible

Where medical advice indicates that the employee is not yet fit to return:

- the employee will remain on sick leave

The line manager will:

- maintain contact
- continue to review updated medical advice
- set regular review points

Decisions will not be delayed unnecessarily.

Managers must:

- balance support for the employee with the operational needs of the Trust

---

9.9 Review of Long-Term Absence

At appropriate intervals, the line manager will formally review the employee's absence.

These reviews will consider:

- updated medical advice
- likelihood of return within a reasonable timeframe
- effectiveness of any support provided

The employee will:

- be invited to participate in review discussions
- have the opportunity to provide input and evidence

Notes of reviews will:

- be recorded
- be shared with the employee

9.10 Consideration of Alternative Options

Where a return to the employee's substantive role may not be possible, the Trust will consider:

- redeployment to a suitable alternative role
- adjustments to the current role
- ill-health retirement (where applicable)

Redeployment will:

- depend on availability of suitable roles
- require the employee to meet the minimum requirements of the role

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9.11 Progression to Formal Procedure

Where:

- the employee is unable to return to work
- or attendance cannot be sustained
- or there is no reasonable prospect of improvement within an acceptable timeframe

the matter may be progressed to the formal procedure (Stage 2), if not already reached.

The employee will:

- be informed in writing
- be given full details of the next steps

9.12 Decision-Making in Long-Term Absence Cases

Any decision relating to long-term absence must:

- be based on up-to-date medical evidence
- fully consider any reasonable adjustments
- take into account Equality Act obligations
- be reasonable and proportionate

The Trust must be satisfied that:

- all reasonable steps have been taken to support the employee
- there is no viable alternative to the proposed course of action

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9.13 Outcomes in Long-Term Absence Cases

Possible outcomes include:

(a) Return to Work

- full return
- phased return with support

(b) Continued Absence with Ongoing Review

- further medical review
- continued monitoring

(c) Redeployment

- movement to an alternative role

(d) Ill-Health Retirement

- where applicable under pension scheme

(e) Dismissal on Grounds of Capability

Where:

- there is no reasonable prospect of return
- or sustained attendance cannot be achieved

dismissal may be considered in line with Stage 2 of the procedure

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9.14 Record Keeping and Documentation

Throughout the management of long-term absence:

- all meetings, discussions and decisions will be recorded
- copies will be provided to the employee
- documents will be retained on the personnel file

Records must be:

- clear
- accurate
- capable of supporting decision-making

9.15 Consistency and Oversight

The Trust will ensure that:

- long-term absence is managed consistently across academies
- similar cases are treated in a comparable manner

Senior leaders, including the CEO, may:

- review long-term absence cases
- request additional information
- ensure consistency in decision-making

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10. APPEALS

10.1 Right of Appeal

An employee has the right to appeal against decisions made at:

- Stage 1 of the formal procedure
- Stage 2 of the formal procedure (including dismissal)

The right of appeal ensures that:

- decisions are fair and reasonable
- the correct procedure has been followed
- the employee has had appropriate opportunity to present their case

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10.2 Grounds for Appeal

An appeal must be based on one or more of the following grounds:

- the procedure was not followed correctly
- the decision was unreasonable or disproportionate
- new evidence has come to light which was not previously considered
- there has been a failure to properly consider relevant information (including medical evidence or Equality Act considerations)

10.3 Submitting an Appeal

To lodge an appeal, the employee must:

- submit the appeal in writing
- clearly state the grounds for appeal
- provide any supporting evidence

The appeal must be submitted:

- within the timeframe specified in the outcome letter (normally within 5–10 working days)

Appeals must be sent to:

- the governance professional or designated Trust representative

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10.4 Arranging the Appeal Hearing

The governance professional will:

- acknowledge receipt of the appeal
- arrange an appeal hearing as soon as reasonably practicable
- provide written confirmation of:
    - date, time and location
    - the panel members
    - documentation to be considered

The employee will be:

- given reasonable notice of the hearing
- provided with all relevant documentation in advance

10.5 Composition of the Appeal Panel

Appeals will be heard by a panel which:

- is independent of the original decision-making process
- has not previously been involved in the case

The panel will normally consist of:

- appropriately delegated senior leaders or Trust representatives

- and, where required, members of an Appeals Committee in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation

The panel will be supported by:

- an HR adviser

A note taker will:

- record the proceedings

10.6 Conduct of the Appeal Hearing

The appeal hearing is not a rehearing of the entire case, unless:

- the panel determines that this is necessary

The purpose of the hearing is to:

- review the grounds of appeal
- consider whether the original decision was reasonable
- ensure that the correct procedure was followed

The hearing will normally proceed as follows:

- the Chair explains the process
- the employee (or representative) presents their appeal
- the original decision-maker presents the reasoning behind the original decision
- both parties may ask questions
- the panel may ask questions to clarify any issues

The employee has the right to:

- be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague

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10.7 Scope of the Appeal

The panel will consider:

- the original evidence presented
- the rationale for the decision
- whether the procedure was followed correctly
- whether the decision was reasonable and proportionate

The panel may also consider:

- new evidence submitted by the employee, where appropriate
- whether additional medical or Occupational Health advice is required

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10.8 Adjournment and Decision-Making

Following the hearing, the panel will:

- adjourn to consider the outcome

The panel will ensure that the decision is:

- based on evidence
- consistent with Trust practice
- compliant with legal obligations, including the Equality Act

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10.9 Possible Outcomes of Appeal

The panel may decide to:

(a) Dismiss the Appeal

- the original decision remains in place

(b) Uphold the Appeal

- the original decision is overturned

This may include:

- reinstatement (in cases of dismissal)
- removal of formal action

(c) Substitute a Different Outcome

- reduce the level of action taken
- return the case to an earlier stage of the procedure
- amend the action plan or expectations

(d) Require Further Action

- refer the matter back for further investigation or consideration
- require additional medical or Occupational Health input

10.10 Outcome of Appeal

The outcome of the appeal will be:

- confirmed in writing to the employee

The outcome letter will include:

- the decision reached
- the reasons for the decision
- any actions required
- confirmation that the decision is final

10.11 Finality of Decision

The decision of the appeal panel is:

- final

There is:

- no further internal right of appeal

10.12 Record Keeping

A full record of the appeal process will be maintained.
This will include:

- appeal submission
- documentation considered
- notes of the hearing
- outcome letter

All records will:

- be retained on the employee's personnel file
- be available for audit or review if required

10.13 Consistency and Governance Oversight

The Trust will ensure that:

- appeals are conducted fairly and consistently
- outcomes are aligned with Trust policy and practice

Senior leaders and the CEO may:

- review appeal outcomes
- ensure that decisions are consistent across the Trust
- identify any learning or improvements required

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11. MONITORING AND ASSURANCE

The Trust will:

- analyse absence data
- ensure consistency
- monitor equality impacts

The CEO will:

- review trends
- provide Board assurance

12. POLICY REVIEW

The policy will:

- be reviewed annually
- reflect legal changes
- be approved by the Trust Board

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following ACT Multi Academy Trust policies:

• Capability Procedure

• Disciplinary Procedure

• Grievance Procedure

• Redundancy and Restructuring Procedure

• Maternity Leave and Pay Policy

• Family Leave Policy (Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave)

• Flexible Working Policy

• Code of Conduct

• People and Employment Framework

• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (where applicable)

Appendix A: Sickness Absence Meeting Record

This is the management record of a meeting held under paragraph 10 of the sickness absence policy and procedure. It is strictly confidential. It will be held on the employee's personnel file until such time as the employee's attendance is wholly satisfactory and for 12 months thereafter. The record may be accessed and referred to by those with authority to manage the informal and formal stages of the sickness absence procedure. A sickness absence meeting is not part of the formal procedure and there is no entitlement for the employee to be accompanied or represented. The meeting will be held in private.

Employee name:	
Length of service:	
Date of meeting:	
Interviewing manager:	

Details of Sickness Absence

Period of absence	
Number of days absent	
Reason/s for absence	

Is absence related to a known or possible disability under the Equality Act? Has there been consideration of whether the 'trigger point' relating to days absence should be extended, or if the sickness absence policy should otherwise be modified? (If yes – details of medical evidence must be attached)	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐

Details of Meeting

Key points discussed:
Welcome and update, if necessary, on work events and changes
Reasons for absence – underlying medical condition?
The value of your contribution? The impact of absence on teaching and learning, service delivery and colleagues. How your work has been covered in your absence.

Are you fully recovered and able to resume full duties?	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐
If your view is no then action plan should consider: Referral to Occupational Health (OH) Temporary adjustments which can reasonably be accommodated?		

Action Plan

The objective is that attendance will be satisfactory to the employer. Is there anything we can do to improve your attendance, e.g. OH referral, counselling, a review of risk assessment, temporary or permanent reasonable adjustments to the workplace, working practices or working hours or training?

Is your absence in any way related to work?
Are you doing all you can to improve your attendance?
e.g. Act on medical advice, lifestyle choices, attention to work life balance, non-medical support e.g. counselling.

Fit note required for any period of absence during the monitoring period?
(see paras 3 and 10.3)
Yes: ☐ No: ☐

Review

Attendance will be reviewed in:	**1 Month**	**2 Months**	**3 Months**
	☐	☐	☐

Date of review	
Please note that further absence during this period may, depending on the circumstances, mean that the review is held under Stage 1 of the formal procedure if appropriate.	

Copy of sickness absence policy and procedure has been provided and process explained (must be provided and explained prior to a formal meeting)	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐	**Date**	
Signature of manager			**Date**	
Signature of employee			**Date**	