



# Absence Policy and Procedures

## POLICY

Dunscore Pre-school Centre recognises that from time to time staff may require to be absent from their place of work due to illness. The length of time lost through illness must however be monitored to ensure that each member of staff is able to do their job, effectively and without putting themselves or others at risk. It is not the intention of the Centre to penalise the genuinely sick, however it must be recognised that an employee who is medically unfit to carry out his/her contractual duties may not be able continue in that employment.

The committee will consider cases of sickness absence on an individual basis and ensure the provision of appropriate support, and advice. However, it is recognised that in some cases, patterns/levels of absence will be unacceptable and formal management action will be required.

Employees who become aware that they have an illness problem are encouraged to inform the manager at the earliest opportunity. All such requests will be dealt with as speedily and compassionately as possible.

## OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURAL STAGES

On return from any absence all staff must be interviewed by the manager, administrator or chair. At this interview the staff member and the manager, administrator or chair must complete a 'Return to work interview' form agreeing the reason for the absence, the period of absence and, where appropriate, what course of action is required as a result of the absence. This form must be signed by both parties before being filed.

### Stage 1

In situations where a staff member's sickness record is giving some cause for concern, then the manager, administrator or chair will discuss those concerns with the employee, providing support and counselling where appropriate. It is essential that any message conveyed in this manner is clear and unambiguous.

### Stage 2

If there is no obvious improvement in the health of the employee or any sign of patterns emerging in an employee's absence then the manager, administrator or chair would arrange for the employee to meet with the chair of the committee who would 'formally' review the employees case. At this formal stage the member of staff must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation by a work colleague or trade union official.

The member of staff must be given the outcome of this meeting in writing and where appropriate they must be given notice that their level of absence is unacceptable and a period of time to improve.

### Stage 3

If they fail to improve in the given time scale then a formal second Review must be undertaken. The member of staff must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation at this time. Prior to the Meeting the employee must provide medical evidence of their condition and its implications for their work.

The employee must be given the results of this meeting in writing. Where appropriate they must be given notice that their level of absence is unacceptable and that they are given a period of time during which to reduce their level of absence. The employee must also be informed at this stage if any further absences may result in their employment being terminated due to incapacity.

## Stage 4

If there is still no improvement within the laid down time scale a Review will be held with the Chair, other committee member and/or representative of the SPPA. The employee must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation at this meeting. They will review all the available evidence including the Doctor's report.

If there are no special circumstances the employee will be dismissed on the grounds of incapacity and their inability to meet the acceptable standards of attendance required by the Centre

## APPEALS

Every member of staff has the right to appeal against the outcome of any formal review stage of the absence procedure. The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

- (i) that the Policy had not been followed correctly.
- (ii) that the resulting action was inappropriate.
- (iii) that the need for action was not warranted.

### Appeals against the formal stages of the Absence Procedure

An appeal should be put in writing to the chair of the committee. The letter of appeal may be constructed by the member of staff or their representative. The letter should contain the grounds for appeal and should be lodged within 7 days of receipt of the issue of a formal letter. An appeal hearing should be arranged within 7 days of receipt of the appeal letter. An appeal against Dismissal will be considered in the same way, but should be heard by a member of the committee along with a SPPA representative who has not previously been involved in the case.

## PROCEDURES CHECK LIST

### Stage One :Return to Work Interview

This is an informal part of the Procedure, however in order to give the process credibility the following rules should be followed :-

- 1 Every member of staff should complete a 'Return to work interview' form with the manager, administrator or chair.
- 2 Interviews should be carried out in an area where there will be no interruptions and where both parties may feel at ease.
- 3 The member of staff should always be informed of the reason for the meeting.
- 4 The meeting should be prefaced by an indication of concern for the employee as well as the need for the Manager, administrator or chair to be aware of the health of his/her employees.
- 5 The employee should be encouraged to discuss any problems they may be having with their health and to actively contribute to the solution to the problem.
- 6 Any apparent problem or patterns of absence should be brought to the member of staff's attention.
- 7 All relevant absence documentation **must** be recorded on the member of staff's personnel file.

### Counselling

As the first step in procedure it is vital that the message conveyed is clear and unambiguous.

Prior to counselling, full details of the member of staff's absence record along with reasons should be made available to both participants.

The member of staff should be made aware of the date and location of the Meeting and the reasons for it.

The member of staff should be given the opportunity to explain absence records and present any evidence required.

If there are medical problems it may be necessary to adjourn the Meeting for medical advice.

The Manager will advise the member of staff of the outcome of the meeting and where appropriate of the need for improvement of their current absence level. Written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting will be given to them and a copy recorded on their personnel files.

### Stage 2

- 1 Prior to calling a hearing, full details of absence record along with reasons should be made available to all participants.
- 2 The member of staff should be made aware of the date and location of the Review and the reasons for it.
- 3 In addition they should be informed of the right to be represented at the Review.
- 4 They should be given the opportunity to explain absence records and present any evidence required.
- 5 If there are medical problems it may be necessary to adjourn the Meeting for medical advice.
- 6 The Chair should set out clearly the improvements expected and the time scale over which these improvements must be achieved.
- 7 The member of staff should be informed in writing of the requirements and the time scale and advised if the warning is to be recorded on his record.
- 8 Any warning letter should be copied to the Trade Union Representative if present at the hearing. The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision.
- 9 Any warnings issued will remain on the record for 12 months.

### Stage 3

- 1 If there has been no improvement in the absence record in the period set at the first Review or there has been a further breach of policy during the lifetime of a written warning then the employee must be informed and asked to attend a Second Review. In addition they should be informed of the right to be represented at the Review.
- 2 Medical reports must be sought prior to the date of the Meeting and results made available to both parties.
- 3 The member of staff should be given the right to present any evidence in mitigation.
- 4 They should be informed of the need to improve their record and the possibility of dismissal if they do not do so. They must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision. (see Appeals). This should be confirmed in writing to the member of staff and held on their personnel file for 18 months.

### Stage 4

- 1 The member of staff must be given full details of the case and the possible consequences prior to attendance. They must also be informed of their right to representation at this meeting.
- 2 All medical evidence should be taken and considered before a final decision is taken.
- 3 If the decision is taken to dismiss then this should be done by giving full entitlement to notice (even if sick pay is exhausted).
- 4 The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision. (see appeals).



# Dunscore Pre-school Centre

## RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW FORM

Name:

Designation:

First Day of Absence :

Last Day of Absence:

Total number of days absent:

Total number of days off work:

Is absence due to an injury at work? YES/ NO

Have you seen a doctor ? YES/ NO

Reason for absence(Please give a brief description of the illness or other reason for absence)

Action Taken(please give a brief description of any action taken to date)

Proposed Course of Action

I understand that if I knowingly provide inaccurate or false information regarding my absence it may result in disciplinary action

Employee's Signature:

Manager's / Administrator's / Chair's Signature:

**Policy adopted at Committee Meeting of Dunscore Pre-school on:**

29/01/13 (date)

Alison Borthwick (signed)  
(Chair)

**This policy was reviewed by the committee on:**

Date	Signed :	Designation
30/01/14	Alison Borthwick	Chair
2/3/1+5	Alison Borthwick	Chair
14/04/16	Toby Lowery	Chair