



The right support, at the right time

Staff Absence Policy

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This policy sets out the procedures regarding staff absence at the Leading Futures Alternative Provision.

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1. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures and expectations regarding staff absences due to illness, annual leave, or other unforeseen circumstances. It aims to ensure consistency, fairness, and compliance with employment legislation across the organisation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Leading Futures Alternative Provision, including full-time, part-time, and temporary staff.

3. Reporting Absence

- Employees must report any absence due to illness or other reasons as soon as possible, so suitable cover can be arranged. This should be done by contacting either of the Directors of Leading Futures, via telephone call, by 7.30am on the first day of illness/ absence.
- Notification should include the reason for absence and an estimated return date.
- Absences exceeding seven calendar days require a valid medical certificate (fit note). This should be provided in a timely manner.
- On the fourth day of sickness, employees must contact their line manager to provide an update regarding their absence and expected return to work.

4. Stages of Absence Management

Stage 1 – Initial Concern

- **Trigger:** 2–3 instances of short-term absence (e.g., sickness of 1–3 days) in a rolling 3-month period or minor patterns of unauthorised absence.
- **Action:**
 - Informal meeting with line manager to discuss the absence pattern.
 - Agree on strategies to improve attendance (e.g., workload review, support adjustments).
 - Record meeting and agreed actions.
- **Outcome:**
 - Attendance monitored over the next 6 weeks.
 - If improvement occurs, no further action.
 - If no improvement, escalate to Stage 2.

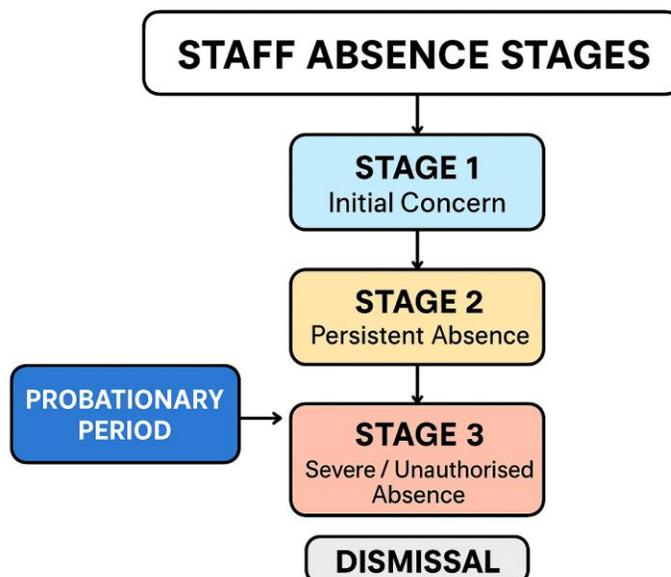
Stage 2 – Persistent Absence

- **Trigger:** Continued absences after Stage 1, or 5+ days of unauthorised absence in a 3-month period.
- **Action:**
 - Formal meeting with line manager and HR (or senior management).

- Written warning issued, clearly outlining concerns, required improvements, and potential consequences.
- Support offered (e.g., occupational health referral, flexible working adjustments).
- **Outcome:**
 - Failure to improve attendance within the agreed monitoring period (usually 6 weeks) escalates to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Severe / Unauthorised Absence

- **Trigger:** Ongoing unauthorised absence, repeated failure to meet Stage 2 targets, or long-term absence causing significant disruption.
 - **Action:**
 - Final formal meeting with senior management and HR.
 - Final written warning issued, making clear that continued absence may lead to dismissal.
 - Consider redeployment or adjustments where appropriate.
 - **Outcome:**
 - If attendance does not improve or absence continues without valid reason, employment may be terminated following HR procedures.
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- All stages must be documented in writing.
 - Exceptional circumstances (e.g., serious illness, family emergencies) are considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - Staff have the right to appeal formal warnings or dismissal under the organisation’s grievance procedure.
 - Confidentiality will be always maintained regarding medical information and absence details.



5. Probationary Periods

- During the six-month probationary period, any absence that significantly affects the employee's ability to perform their role may result in immediate dismissal.
- Probationary staff are expected to maintain consistently good attendance and demonstrate reliability.
- Probationary absences are reviewed individually, and dismissal decisions are made following consultation with HR and Directors.

6. Sick Pay Entitlement

- During the first year of service, including the six-month probationary period, employees are not entitled to contractual (company) sick pay. Employees are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) in accordance with UK employment law, provided they meet the eligibility criteria.
- After successful completion of the first year of service, employees may be eligible for enhanced sick pay as outlined below:
 - Second year of service: 3 weeks full pay
 - Third year of service: 5 weeks full pay
 - Fourth + years of service: 6 weeks full pay
- If the illness is ongoing and the employee is unable to return to work, they will be entitled to 28 weeks of SSP.
- Periods of illness will be linked and calculated from the initial date of absence.
- The employer applies a pro-rata calculation to part-time and job share employees.
- If an employee is absent during their 'notice period' before leaving company employment, they will not be eligible for contractual sick pay, only SSP.

7. Return to Work

- Upon returning from any period of absence, employees must complete a self-certification form and will be required to attend a return-to-work interview.
- The purpose of this interview is to confirm the employee's fitness to return and to discuss any support or adjustments needed.

8. Long-Term Absence

- For absences exceeding four weeks, the company may request additional medical information and refer the employee to occupational health.
- The company will collaborate with the employee to explore phased returns or reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

9. Annual Leave

- Employees working term-time contracts are not entitled to request annual leave during term time.

- Additional unpaid leave may be requested and granted at the Director's discretion, subject to service needs.
- All bank holidays throughout the calendar year that fall on a scheduled working day are awarded to staff.

10. Planned Absence (Non-Illness Related)

Staff are entitled to 1.5 days of paid planned absence during each academic year to attend their own children's events (e.g. school performances, sports days, graduation ceremonies, or similar occasions) or personal events (e.g. funerals or weddings).

- **Notification:** Staff must notify their Line Manager at least four (4) weeks in advance of the planned absence to allow sufficient time for Directors to plan for appropriate cover.
- **Evidence:** Staff will be required to provide evidence of the event or appointment, such as an invitation, confirmation letter, or similar documentation.
- **Additional Planned Absence:** Any additional planned absence (not related to illness) beyond the 1.5 days will be considered at the discretion of the Directors. Where granted, such absence will be unpaid.

11. Unauthorised Absence

- Failure to follow the absence reporting procedure may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised and could lead to disciplinary action.

12. Monitoring and Review

- Absence records will be monitored regularly to ensure compliance and identify trends.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation.