

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL



STAFF ATTENDANCE POLICY

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS

DUE FOR REVIEW

RESPONSIBLE PERSON – HEADTEACHER

SIGNED BY CHAIR OF GOVERNORS _____

1. Introduction

1.1 This document provides clear guidelines on staff attendance so that the school can reach optimum levels in order to maintain efficient use of its resources. It should be read in conjunction with local authority guidelines for monitoring and managing absences and the model procedure for handling impaired capability on grounds of ill health.

2. Conditions of Service

2.1 Regular attendance is a requirement for school staff to carry out their professional duties as set out in their contracts of employment, job descriptions and statutory conditions of employment. The two relevant documents outlining the conditions of employment for staff in this school are the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (DCFS) for teachers and the Bromley localised pay arrangements for all other staff.

2.2 Riverside is a Community Special School and all school staff are employed by the Local Authority. References to staff attendance are contained in relevant sections of Bromley's Personnel Handbook for Schools. This Handbook provides a reference manual which incorporates the main policies, procedures and general information governing the employment of staff in Schools.

3. Absence through sickness

3.1 A satisfactory level of attendance at work is crucial to the smooth running of the school. High absence rates not only impact on staff left to cover the absence but have major implications for the school budget. Unsatisfactory absence rates ultimately lead to lower standards of work and service, in other words, the children lose out.

3.2 The Headteacher must therefore, as a part of normal day-to-day supervision, ensure that staff are aware of the standards of attendance required, where improvement is required and how these will be monitored and reviewed over time.

3.3 The expectation for all staff in the school is that there will be very high levels of attendance. There is acceptance, of course, that people can become sick; however, employees need to know that there is an expectation that absence through sickness should be kept at a minimum and that sickness records are rigorously monitored.

3.4 To support staff to maintain attendance the school provides an employee assistance scheme through the well-being people who operates a 24hour support help-line to provide information and counselling to enable staff to manage during difficult times both personally and professionally.

3.5 Staff need to know that failure to reach an acceptable level of attendance may result in formal action being taken under the LA Procedure for Handling Impaired Capability on the Grounds of Ill-Health.

4. Annual Leave

4.1 With the exception of the School Business Manager and the Site Manager, no annual leave provisions are specified for employees of the school, as duties are mainly undertaken during term-time.

4.2 Special leave of absence for holidays in term-time is not allowed (as stated in employees' conditions of service).

5. Special Leave (Paid and Unpaid Leave)

5.1 In accordance with LA guidelines, there may be exceptional circumstances when the head teacher may grant special paid or unpaid leave. With the exception of compulsory court attendance, maternity/adoption/paternity leave, school governor duties, agreed trade union duties, jury service, graduation of a partner or child, all special leave, whether paid or unpaid, is at the discretion of the head teacher.

5.2 General guidelines as to criteria for considering requests for special leave are given in the Appendix. As specified in the Staff Handbook, all staff requests for special leave should be submitted on the green special leave application form. All special leave application forms (whether approved or refused) are kept on record.

5.3 Special leave forms must be submitted at least 7 days in advance of the proposed period of absence. This will give the Head Teacher adequate time in which to decide on applications and will give him or her time to seek LA advice, if necessary. All special leave, whether paid or unpaid, is included on the school's weekly absence return form to the LA for salary purposes. Special leave forms are kept in a file by the Personnel Administrator.

5.4 Staff must use special leave forms to request attendance for hospital appointments as records may also indicate a medical problem that may need further action, for example, referral to the LA Occupational Health Physician. In exceptional circumstances, the Head Teacher may consider a request for special leave within 7 days, e.g., if a medical appointment is urgent.

6. Absence Reporting

6.1 The requirements for reporting absence are set down in the school staff handbook. Staff (or partners / family members if this is not possible due to illness) must telephone the school between 8.00 – 8.15 and leave an absence message giving the reason for their absence.

6.2 Staff must ring the school each day unless they have received and submitted a sickness absence medical certificate. Staff must inform the office of their return to school.

7. Staff Cover

7.1 Staff should be aware of the difficulties that the school faces in finding appropriate staff to cover the duties of staff absent through sickness and the financial consequences of bringing in replacement staff. This applies to teaching and non-teaching staff.

7.2 It is not always possible to find replacement staff, especially on the first day of a person's absence through sickness. Contingences may need to be made using the complement of staff in school on a particular day. In other words, staff may be moved from their usual classes to cover for someone absent.

8. Employee Notification of Sickness Absences

8.1 The requirements for notifying sickness absences are set down with the written statement of employment particulars issued to every employee on taking up appointment and within the school's staff handbook. As part of the staff induction process, the School Business Manager will ensure that new employees understand these requirements.

8.2 Absence reporting procedures are also set down on the reverse of Bromley's self-certification form (PER 1). Staff need to complete the self-certification form when they are absent for more than 3 calendar days (including Saturday and Sunday) and a doctor's certificate needs to be attached to this form for any illness, etc., exceeding 7 calendar days. It is important that staff complete this form correctly. It is necessary to indicate not only the actual day of return to duty but also the day fit to resume work, if these are not the same, in order that the correct entitlement for sick pay purposes can be applied. For example: absent Friday, fit Saturday, return to work Monday.

9. Return to Work interviews

9.1 All staff members who have been absent may be required to meet with the Head Teacher at Riverside St Pauls Cray and the School Business Manager at Riverside Beckenham (or other nominated Leadership team member).

9.2 This meeting can provide a context in which to discuss a staff member's attendance record and helps fulfil the employer and employee's responsibilities for occupational health and safety, i.e., determining that employees are fit to resume their full duties and responsibilities. A return to work form will be completed and signed by the employee.

10. Record Keeping and Monitoring

10.1 The school has rigorous and effective mechanisms to record and monitor staff sickness. Currently, manual and electronic records are kept each day on individual staff attendance. The LA also sends 6-monthly computerised records of individual staff absences.

10.2 The Head Teacher will refer a member of staff to the Occupational Health Physician at an early stage if there are concerns about a staff member's attendance.

10.3 Staff should be aware of guidelines for referral to Occupational Health which normally occur after 20 days of absence or 5 separate incidence of absence regardless of number of days. It is possible to make a referral in other cases where particular concerns about a staff member's attendance have been raised or it is felt that a staff member may need additional support.

10.4 School Governors should have an overview of how effectively the Head Teacher is monitoring staff absence and any action he or she takes to improve staff attendance. Staff attendance is an agenda item at Governors' Resources Committee meetings.

11. Dependants Leave

11.1 The Employment Relations Act 1999 provides a right for employees, regardless of length of service, to take a 'reasonable' amount of time off work to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies involving dependants and to make any necessary longer-term arrangements.

11.2 Dependants is defined as a spouse or cohabitee, child, parent or anyone who reasonably relies on the employee either for assistance if the person falls ill, is injured or assaulted, or to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury. The right does not include an entitlement to paid dependants leave.

11.3 It is at the Headteacher's discretion whether to pay dependants leave. Staff should have a clear understanding of the notion of 'emergency' action on these occasions; there is an expectation that they will do everything in their power, as quickly as is practicable, to make satisfactory arrangements for the dependant so that the staff member can attend work.

11.4 The Headteacher will handle dependants leave sensitively; however, staff should acknowledge any shared responsibility for dependants, for example with their partner (where this is applicable). Staff should also understand that it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether they are paid for time that they take off from school to care for a dependant. Staff will not be paid, in any circumstances, for the second and subsequent days of absence of Dependants Leave.

12. Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave

Details of Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave can be obtained from the School Business Manager or from the Human Resources department of the Local Authority.

13. Disciplinary Action

If, following investigation, the school has evidence that an employee is abusing the right to time off, disciplinary action shall be taken, in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.



Riverside School's Guidelines for Special Paid/Unpaid Leave ~ With effect from September 2015.

Activity/Occasion	Applies to Teaching Staff	Applies to Support Staff	Paid/Unpaid	Maximum Number of Days in any Year	Notes
Compulsory Court Attendance	Yes	Yes	Paid	All days required	For situations where the member of staff has no option but to attend.
Death/Serious Illness of close relative, i.e Husband, Wife, Partner, Child, Parent, Sister, Brother, Grandparent, Grandchild or, in special circumstances, of other near relative.	Yes	Yes	Paid	5 days	1 day may be granted in addition for attendance at a funeral.
Illness of child/dependent	Yes	Yes	Paid (first day only)	To a maximum of 3 days for separate illnesses.	Leave only granted in the understanding that the other parent/carer is ill or otherwise unavailable and alternative arrangements cannot be made at short notice
Child/carer related medical appointments/ reviews	Yes	Yes	Paid	To a maximum of 3 days.	Appointments should be made to ensure a minimum period of absence. Appointment letters will be required
Medical appointments for self	Yes	Yes	Paid		Appointments should be made to ensure a minimum period of absence. Appointment letters will be required
Examinations - approved by Head Teacher for purposes of professional development	Yes	Yes - NJC Recommendation	Paid	All	Approved by Governing Body and Head Teacher.
Examinations - Study Leave relating to approved course	Yes	Yes - NJC Recommendation	Paid	1 day	
Graduation Ceremony, Investiture and similar events - self, spouse, partner or child.	Yes	Yes	Paid	1 day	2 nd day for travelling if attendance would otherwise not be possible.
Interviews	Yes	Yes	Paid	Such as is reasonable	Paid leave should only be granted for interviews outside of the Local Authority after one year's service.

Visiting School before applying for post	Yes	Yes	Paid	4 days	If required as part of recruitment process
Jury Service	Yes	Yes	Paid	All	
Maternity Support Leave/Foster Carer Leave/Adoption Leave	Please see separate Bromley Guidelines				
Paternity Leave	Please see separate Bromley Guidelines				
Parental Leave	Please see separate Bromley Guidelines				
Moving House	Yes	Yes	Paid	1 day	
Justice of Peace, Member of Local Authority	Yes	Yes	Discretionary	12 days	
Religious days of obligation	Yes	Yes	Discretionary	Such as is reasonable	
Representing Country in International Sports and Games or similar events of a similar Status as an Amateur.	Yes	Yes	Paid	10 Days	
School Governor Duties	Yes	Yes	Unpaid	Such as is reasonable	
Serious domestic emergency (eg Burglary, Burst Pipes).	Yes	Yes	Paid	2 days over separate occasions	
Service on Examination Board	Yes	No	Unpaid	10 days Chief Examiner 5 Days Assistant Examiners and moderators	
Other request not covered by the above but Head Teacher is satisfied as to the justification of the request.	Yes	Yes	Discretionary	5 days	