Fiveways School
Sickness Absence Management Policy

Policy Review

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
Annual	October 2025	SSE	October 2026 or on release of new model

Policy Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors	Malcolm Gulliver	At governors meeting	03.10.25
Head Teacher	Swavek Nowakiewicz	At governors meeting	03.10.25

Details of Policy Updates

Date	Details
March 2023	Section 11 Updated guidance from SSE
October 2023	Latest guidance from LA
September 2024	Latest guidance from LA
October 2025	No new model policy available on SSE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to support the effective reporting, recording and management of sickness absence to reduce its impact on service delivery and provide appropriate support to employees. It aims to encourage employees to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of attendance and is designed to ensure fairness and consistency in the management of concerns about attendance.

This policy statement aims to set out Fiveways school's arrangements for managing Staff Absence for the purpose of providing all staff with information about Local Authority Guidance that the school has adopted. It sets out:

- Procedures in relation to Staff Sickness Absence Management.

Somerset Council | Support Services for Education

Sickness Absence Management Policy

Version Number	1
Location	Guidance for Schools Volume 1 Section 11
Author	Schools HR Advisory Service
Published	September 2024
Review Date	September 2025
Effective Date	Formal Adoption by school
Consultation	The Sickness Absence Management Policy is in-line with Somerset Council's Policy and has been subject to consultation and agreement with the recognised trade unions. In addition, a number of Headteacher guides are included that schools may wish to adopt / amend / consider when managing sickness absence and attendance issues and these can be found in Section 11a – Headteacher Guides and Template Forms and Letters
Updates	Updates made to health and safety information: • Absence due to Contact with Serious Infectious Diseases • Recording Accidents • Procedure for Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences New information added on ill health retirement

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1. Policy Statement

This policy is recommended for adoption by all Somerset Council Maintained Schools and Academies that purchase HR Advisory Services through SLA online (SSE).

Regular attendance at work is a vital factor in providing effective and high-quality public services and it is expected that employees will take all reasonable measures to ensure good attendance at work. Sustained levels of attendance at work will also contribute to and provide positive assistance in the planning and provision of quality services and high morale among employees.

High levels of absence can impact on not only the quality of service but also on its delivery.

The school / academy is committed to maximising attendance by maintaining good working practices at all stages of employment and at all levels within the school. A collaborative approach to the management of sickness levels will be adopted involving management, employees and their representatives.

The overall aim of this policy is to maximise attendance and ensure that employees are treated fairly, in a considerate manner and with respect in order for them to fully recover from sickness and return to work. The benefit of reducing sickness absence and improving attendance levels is felt at different levels:

- Alleviating the extra workload on colleagues.
- Improved productivity and positive effect on service delivery.
- Reducing the need to bring in supply staff or offer additional hours to current employees.

Any reduction in sickness levels should bring about a considerable saving as well as improved productivity and service delivery through close attention to employee health and welfare.

When establishing the causes of absence and likely future patterns, this policy should be considered alongside associated policies in relation to Health and Safety, Work-related Stress, Disability, Ill Health Retirement, Alcohol and Substance Misuse, Fairness and Dignity at Work and Flexible Working/Work-Life Balance policies.

The school/academy is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of this policy by recording, monitoring and communicating sickness absence levels, with the aim of improving attendance.

All sickness absence information will be handled sensitively and with due regard to confidentiality and Data Protection Principles.

2. Confidentiality

Any information in relation to sickness, should always be regarded by the Headteacher/Manager as confidential and only shared with those who need to know. However, there may be occasions when the reason for absence is of such a sensitive nature the Headteacher/Manager may want to minimise who else is made aware of it and decide to be the only person who is involved in the management of the absence. If the Headteacher/Manager does have any concerns about the

complexity of a particular case, then it is strongly advised they obtain further advice from their HR Advisor.

3. Responsibilities

Employees

Employees are expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own health, wellbeing and attendance at work.
- Read and understand the policy.
- Comply with the sickness absence notification procedure.
- Maintain contact with their manager during periods of sickness absence and co-operate with all reasonable requests to attend meetings. (Also reference information around maintaining contact below.)
- Agree to an Occupational Health referral and co-operate with medical advice, to facilitate a return to work.

Headteachers/Managers

- Encourage a positive attitude to attendance at work.
- Make employees aware of the Sickness Absence Management Policy.
- Ensure every absence is accurately recorded.
- Monitor employees' sickness absence through the management information available.
- Discuss on-going sickness absence with the employee at an Absence Review Meeting and keep written documentation of agreed action points.
- Seek help, guidance and support from the school's HR Advisory Service or other professionals, e.g., Occupational Health, in interpreting sickness figures and finding solutions, which are consistent and fair while allowing for flexibility to individually tailor responses.
- Ensure a return-to-work interview is conducted with each employee as soon as possible, ideally within 5 working days of the return from sickness absence.
- Create a supportive environment to facilitate a successful return to work for employees.
- Always consider reasonable adjustments and put in place where appropriate.

School Governing Bodies

- Provide clear leadership for the reduction of sickness absence levels and ensure this policy is implemented within the school.
- Ensure action plans are in place to deal with areas of high sickness absence and support managers in achieving defined standards.
- Expect regular information on sickness absence levels and its cost.

Trade Unions

- Protect the reasonable interests of their members and support management in their efforts to improve attendance levels.

4. Notification Procedure for Reporting Sickness Absence

Employees must comply with the notification procedure set out below to ensure they receive their correct entitlement to sick pay.

As soon as an employee is unable to report to work due to illness, they must make every effort to ensure their Headteacher/Manager (or person to whom they are required to report) is notified, by telephone at the earliest opportunity at the beginning of the working day. Only in exceptional circumstances should alternative communication be used. The employee is required to speak to their Headteacher/ Manager (or person to whom they are required to report) and give a reason for the absence and the anticipated return date. If the return date is not known, the employee should agree with their Headteacher/Manager to maintain regular contact until a return date is known.

If an employee has been off sick for 4 consecutive days (including Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays) they must notify their Headteacher/Manager of their continued sickness and give an expected date of return to work. They may be entitled to payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and this will be paid as part of their sickness allowance provided that they have followed the notification procedure.

A Statement of Fitness for Work or 'fit note' should be submitted for sickness absences longer than 7 calendar days, all statements must be submitted to the Headteacher/Manager as soon as is practicable on or before the 8th day of absence.

Failure to follow the notification procedure may lead to non-payment of sick pay and disciplinary action.

5. Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note)

The term 'Fit note' is the informal name for the Statement of Fitness for Work. The Fit Note is used to advise if an employee is either 'not fit for work' or 'may be fit for work' with additional recommendations or support in place. It is not possible to obtain a certificate to prove that an employee is fit to return to work. The statement is not required until after the 7th calendar day of sickness and self-certification during the first 7 days will continue. The fit note should also state how long the fit note applies for and whether they are expected to be fit for work when the fit note expires. Any statement will be limited to a maximum period of 3 months in the first 6 months of sickness.

From July 2022, fit notes can be certified and issued by nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and physiotherapists in addition to doctors. The new version of the fit note can be handwritten, computer-generated and printed out or computer-generated and sent digitally to the employee. It must include the issuer's name and profession and the address of the medical practice. If they are sent digitally or printed from a GP's system, it will contain a bar code. This can be scanned using a QR code scanner so this can be added to the employee's sickness records. If a healthcare professional has issued the fit note following hospital treatment, they may also provide a yellow Med 10 form stating the time the employee has spent as a hospital inpatient.

If the employee provides a fit note stating they are fit to return to work, but the Headteacher/Manager still has concerns about an employee's ability to return to work they are advised to refer the employee, with their consent, to Occupational

Health and also seek further advice from the schools HR Advisor if they think it is necessary.

For further information refer to Section 11a Headteacher Guides and Template Forms and Letters: Statement of Fitness for Work or Fit Notes.

6. Requesting Notification of Sickness from a Doctor for Absence Spanning less than 8 Days

There may be occasions when a Headteacher/Manager requires an employee to obtain a letter or note from their Doctor for absences spanning less than 8 calendar days, for example where absences are being monitored under the Managing Frequent Intermittent Sickness Absence protocols. If the GP charges for this service, the cost will be reimbursed to the individual by the school. The school reserves the right to suspend sick pay if a Doctor's letter cannot be produced, depending on the circumstances.

7. Unauthorised Absence

If an employee is absent from work and does not follow the notification procedure and/or does not offer a reasonable explanation as to why they were absent, then the absence can be considered unauthorised, and the Headteacher/Manager can advise them they will be unpaid for the entire duration of their absence.

Unauthorised absence may be treated as a misconduct matter, which could result in disciplinary action.

Examples of two situations that would be considered as unauthorised absence and therefore, would require further investigation are:

1. An employee's request for leave of absence was refused, but the employee has reported in sick for the period the leave of absence was requested. (In this circumstance, a Doctor's Certificate should be requested).
2. The employee has not followed the notification procedure for sickness absence, e.g., the employee fails to submit a Statement of Fitness for Work to cover absence beyond the self-certification period. (For further details please refer to Notification Procedure for Sickness Absence.)

8. Recording Sickness Absence

Accurate and accessible information is a pre-requisite of effective absence management. Headteachers/Managers cannot manage sickness absence and returns to work without having access to the appropriate information.

The procedure for recording sickness absence is as follows, although individual schools and academies may wish to tailor this depending on their size and payroll provider:

1. Employees are responsible for notifying their Headteacher/Manager of sickness absence.
2. Headteachers/Managers are responsible for recording and ensuring the payroll provider is notified of the sickness absence.
3. On their return to work, the employee should complete and sign a self-certification form (the Sickness Declaration and a Return-to-Work Form) and

pass to the Headteacher/Manager. The Headteacher/Manager should then check the form for accuracy, sign it and arrange to undertake the return-to-work interview with the employee.

4. The form should be retained by the school together with any appropriate Statement of Fitness for work for their records and the school's payroll provider should be informed of the absence via the provider's agreed payroll reporting procedures.

The Sickness Declaration and Return to Work Form requires employees to indicate both calendar days and working days lost due to sickness absence. Both are vital for the overall management of sickness absence.

Calendar days absence is required for sick pay and timely referrals to Occupational Health.

Working days lost due to sickness absence are defined as those days on which the employee would have been expected to work. Part-time employees will only be counted as absent for the hours which they would normally work, which are likely to be shorter than full-time equivalent days. This is required because it enables the school to accurately monitor the cost of sickness absence, compare sickness absence levels with other organisations and to inform action plans for improvement.

An individual can "self-certify" for absences up to 7 calendar days, after which any continued absence will need to be covered by a medical certificate provided by their GP. These will continue to be required for extended absence, should run consecutively and should be submitted to the school in a timely manner to enable accurate reporting and processing of sickness payments.

9. Sickness during School Holidays

All Staff

If, an employee is already off sick before the start of the school holidays and remains unfit to work, then they must continue to provide GP certificates to cover the duration of their sickness.

Should, an employee advise they are fit to return to work, during the school holidays, then they must provide a fit note from their GP as confirmation of this.

If the Headteacher/Manager has concerns regarding the actual fitness of the employee to return to work, they can stipulate the employee's return to work is conditional on their fitness also being confirmed by Occupational Health, in addition to the GP fit note.

If an employee becomes unwell during the school holidays, then there is no requirement for them to provide a GP Cert/Fit Note, if they would not normally be required to work during this period.

Should the employee continue to remain unwell and is unfit to return to work when they are contractually required to do so, they are then required to provide a GP cert/Fit Note, which should be backdated from the date, they would have returned to work.

10. Sickness during Booked Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Support Staff

Where an employee is receiving sick pay from the employer, they should continue to receive such pay if a public holiday occurs during sick leave. Where an employee has exhausted their period of entitlement to sick pay, no payment should be made (other than SSP as applicable) in respect of a public holiday occurring during the period of sick leave. No substitute public holiday should be given.

In the event of a member of the support staff falling sick during the period of their annual leave they must obtain a Doctor's statement. They should be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of the Doctor's statement and further annual leave shall be suspended from that date. Self-certification during annual leave entitlements will NOT be accepted and a Doctor's medical certificate must be submitted. In the event the employee incurs a cost for obtaining this evidence on the request of the employer, the employer may consider reimbursing the charge.

Teachers

When a teacher is ill immediately preceding a closure of the school, and has exhausted his/her sick leave entitlement, or is on less than full pay, and recovers during the period of closure, such teacher shall be deemed, for the purpose of calculating the amount of salary due, to have returned to duty on the day he/she is authorised medically fit to do so by means of a Doctor's statement obtained for that purpose, provided he/she actually returns to duty on the first day after the period of closure. Where a teacher in these circumstances does not return to duty on the first day after the period of closure, he/she shall refund such sum as the employer at their discretion may decide.

If, during the period of closure a school teacher falls ill and becomes entitled to Statutory Sick Pay or becomes or would become (but for the election to be excepted from liability to pay contributions) entitled to claim any of the benefits referred to in sub-paragraph 5.1 of the Burgundy Book, it shall be his/her duty to notify the employer thereof (as if the days of closure were working days) so that the employer may either pay Statutory Sick Pay (where appropriate) or make the appropriate deductions.

11. Return to Work Interviews

Following any period of sickness absence, it is strongly advised the Headteacher/ Manager completes a return-to-work interview with the employee either before their return to work or on the actual date of their return. However, if this is not possible then it is advised it is held no later than 5 working days following the date of their return.

The return-to-work meeting is a supportive measure for the employee but also for the Headteacher/Manager to establish the reason/s for the absence (if this is not already known), and if the employee is well enough to return to work and if any workplace adjustments (temporary or permanent) may need to be considered to support the return.

The Headteacher/Manager can use the return-to-work template in Section 11a - Headteacher Guides and Template Forms and Letters as guidance for conducting

the return-to-work interview. The completed form should then be retained on the employee's personal file.

12. Employees taking Medication

It is strongly advised when an employee is off sick or has been diagnosed with a health condition, as part of the return to work interview the Headteacher/Manager may want to consider clarifying with the employee whether they are taking any medication and if they are, if this could then impact on their ability to carry out their job role. If it will, then the Headteacher/Manager may need to consider whether they need to put in place any reasonable adjustments to support the employee, either as a temporary or permanent arrangement. Examples of reasonable adjustments are: the removal of some of the employee's duties (however, in doing this the employee would still be expected to be able to do the majority of their job role), redeployment to another role or allowing them to work from home.

Before the Headteacher/Manager agrees to put any reasonable adjustments in place, they may want to consider whether it would be appropriate for them to refer the employee to Occupational Health for further advice. The Headteacher/Manager may also want to consider seeking further advice from HR.

Sickness Absence Management

13. Short-term Frequent & Intermittent Sickness Absences

Definition

Frequent intermittent sickness absence is a series of short-term sickness absences often for minor or unconnected illnesses; many of which will be for periods of less than 7 calendar days and so will not be certified by a doctor. Frequent intermittent sickness absences warrant close scrutiny where certain trigger points are met.

Procedure

Frequent sickness absence is often more disruptive than long-term absence due to the unpredictable nature of the absence. The school/academy can, therefore, take reasonable action to manage frequent absenteeism and should inform an employee when their sickness absence level is becoming a cause for concern. This can initially be addressed at the return-to-work meetings. However, if the level of sickness absence continues to remain a concern, then it is advised it is managed under the sickness absence review procedure, providing the level of absence has triggered this. Please refer to Triggers for holding an Absence Review Meeting below.

14. Long-term Sickness Absence

Definition

A long-term absence is defined as a continuous absence of over 28 calendar days, or it is known in advance that the employee is likely to be absent for such a period due to illness.

When an employee has a long-term absence in which their illness is due to a longstanding medical condition, or sudden severe illness or disabling injury they may have already had more than one period of long-term absence.

15. Maintaining Contact & Arranging Meetings with the Employee

Maintaining Contact

It is important that regular contact is maintained between the school/academy and the employee when an employee is off sick. This ensures the employee is kept updated about what is happening at work and feels supported. It also enables the Headteacher/Manager to determine the employee's welfare, to identify whether there is a likelihood of a return to work and establish whether the employee's work needs to be reallocated to ensure service delivery is maintained.

It is strongly advised the Headteacher/Manager, or a nominated individual advises the employee who will be their point of contact from the start of the employee's absence or if this is not possible, from the earliest opportunity. In certain circumstances, it may not be appropriate for the point of contact to be the Headteacher/Manager and the employee may prefer it to be another Manager or a close colleague, of the same gender for example. It is important the Headteacher/ Manager keeps a written record/notes of any contact that is made with the employee.

In some situations, for example when the absence is related to stress in the workplace, the Headteacher/Manager may want to encourage the employee to contact their trade union representative for further advice and support.

In some situations where the relationship between the Headteacher/Manager and the employee has broken down and there is no one else who can be the point of contact then it may also be more appropriate for communication to be made via the employee's trade union representative, although employees should always be encouraged to have direct contact themselves where possible. In this situation, the trade union representative may represent the employee at any meetings if the employee is unable to attend.

Arranging a Meeting

During the early stages of sickness absence, contact between the Headteacher/ Manager and the employee is likely to be via telephone/e-mail. However, when the employee has been absent for 28 days or longer it is advised the Headteacher / Manager may want to arrange a meeting with the employee.

When arranging the meeting the Headteacher/Manager may want to take into consideration where it is going to be held as the workplace may not always be the most appropriate location. Therefore, they may wish to consider offering the employee the options for it to be held at either the workplace, the employee's home, or another mutually agreeable location. Although, written notes can be made at the meeting, recording of the meeting via an electronic device is not permitted under the provisions of this policy, however, there may be circumstances where this may be appropriate as a reasonable adjustment for the employee, but any recording of a meeting must be agreed by all parties prior to the meeting commencing (please refer to Section 11a - Headteacher Guides and Template Forms and Letters – Invite to Sickness Absence Management Meeting).

If the absence is likely to be long term then it is advised the Headteacher/Manager may also want to refer to the Frequently Asked Questions on Long-term Sickness Absence and provide a copy of this to the employee.

16. When to refer to Occupational Health

A referral to an Occupational Health is recommended when:

- an employee has been or is likely to be absent for 28 days or longer;
- it is believed an employee may have, an underlying health problem which is causing their attendance levels to be a concern especially if the majority of the sickness absence is self-certified (7 calendar days or less). The Headteacher/ Manager can refer them to Occupational Health for an opinion on the employee's medical condition and whether the employee's absences are likely to remain at the same level;
- an employee states a work-related problem is causing them ill health;
- an employee states their absence is caused by either work or non-work-related stress or both. When the absence is stress related it is strongly advised an early referral is made to Occupational Health and where it is identified the stress is work-related the Headteacher/Manager also asks the employee to complete a stress risk assessment (it is not mandatory for the employee to complete this but they should be encouraged to do so). When the employee has completed and returned the stress risk assessment to the Headteacher/Manager, it is advised the Headteacher/Manager arranges a meeting with the employee to discuss it and agree an action plan. This is providing the employee is considered fit to attend a meeting.

The Headteacher/Manager must obtain consent from the employee before they make an Occupational Health referral. For employees covered by the Green Book, the national terms, and conditions specifically state that an employee shall agree to a medical examination, subject to the provisions of the Access to Medical Reports Act. For employees covered by The Burgundy Book, it states a teacher must undertake any examination that the employer may require by an approved medical practitioner nominated by them. For further advice or guidance, you may also want to contact your HR Advisor.

For schools or academies who purchase Occupational Health through Somerset County Council, the current provider is Health Management Limited (HML) and they can be contacted on 01273 976 655 or South.03@healthmanltd.com. A referral can be made online via Health Management | MAXIMUS. If a school/academy who purchase this service are unable to access the online system, they should email hrod@somerset.gov.uk for further support.

Once the Headteacher/Manager has made the referral, Occupational Health will normally notify the employee of the date and time of their medical appointment and inform the referring manager in the same way, normally this is by e-mail or the employee's preferred method of contact, which it is advised the Headteacher/ Manager should clarify with the employee before they make the referral.

Normally the first appointment is a telephone consultation, although video consultations may also be available if these are requested. However, should the employee or the Manager require a face-to-face meeting or other adaptations to be made, to enable the employee to attend an appointment, they are advised to contact

Occupational Health directly by telephone to discuss this (see above for contact details).

If Occupational Health identifies an underlying health problem, they will advise on the likely duration and whether the employee's job could be having a detrimental effect on their health. For long term absences Occupational Health may also advise on the prognosis for recovery to enable the Headteacher/Manager to decide on the best way to manage the on-going absence.

Following receipt of the report from Occupational Health, the Headteacher/Manager may wish to discuss it with the school's HR Advisor before speaking to the employee. It is recommended that a meeting to discuss the report and any recommendations made by Occupational Health is held at the earliest opportunity with the employee to ensure any reasonable adjustments or unresolved workplace issues can be addressed. The employee may wish to be accompanied at this meeting by their professional association/trade union representative and it may be appropriate for HR to also attend the meeting.

17. Obtaining Medical Reports Directly from the GP

Occupational Health may also need to write to the employee's GP and/or consultant if further information is required.

There may be some occasions where it may be appropriate for a medical report to be obtained directly from the employee's GP without referring them to Occupational Health to enable more immediate advice and information regarding an employee's health to be accessed (for example where there are concerns regarding an employee's mental health).

It is advised before the Headteacher/Manager considers this approach they first seek advice from HR to determine if this would be appropriate. The employee must provide their consent prior to the Headteacher/Manager writing to the GP. Template letters for requesting employee consent and also requesting a medical report from the GP can be found at Section 11a – Headteacher Guides and Template Forms and Letters.

18. Occupational Health Report and Advice

Once Occupational Health has all the information they require, they will produce a report which will contain advice that broadly falls into one of the categories outlined below.

19. Full Return to Work in Reasonable Time

If it is known that the employee will make a full recovery and return to work within a reasonable time, the employee should be reassured, that their post will remain open pending their return to work.

20. Partial or Phased Return to Work to Aid Rehabilitation and Ultimate Full Return to Work.

If a partial or phased return to work is recommended by Occupational Health or by the GP on a Statement of Fitness for Work, the Headteacher/Manager must give it serious consideration and accommodate it wherever possible to facilitate a

successful return to full contracted hours and duties where possible. A return to work on a partial basis must be approved by the Headteacher, who will need to consider operational implications. It is also strongly advised there are regular reviews held between the Headteacher/Manager with the employee, with a view to gradually increasing the hours worked as soon as practicable. A phased return to work may include a temporary contractual reduction in hours or, where applicable and with agreement from the employee, use of outstanding annual leave. Schools/academies should contact their payroll provider to agree how best the phased basis of the return is recorded.

21. Return to Work is Possible but not to the Existing Post or Terms and Conditions of Employment

If returning to work is possible but not to the existing post, then the Headteacher/ Manager is strongly advised to consider exploring the option of redeployment

22. Redeployment

If Occupational Health or the GP advises on the Statement of Fitness to Work that a return to work is possible, but not to the employee's existing post or terms and conditions of employment (e.g., permanently reducing hours or grade) this must be explored by the Headteacher/Manager, and every effort made to redeploy the individual into a suitable alternative position.

It is strongly advised that before the Headteacher/Manager makes a decision, they contact HR for further advice.

Although, the preferred option would be for the Headteacher/Manager to redeploy the employee to another post in their school, in federations or Multi Academy Trusts (MAT's) this could be redeployment to another school within the federation or MAT. If this is not possible, (applicable to LA maintained schools only), it is strongly advised the Headteacher/Manager contacts HR to discuss whether the employee could be placed in the Resource Pool for redeployment.

If alternative work is available, the employee should be invited to discuss this option. It is important to ensure that the employee accepts the medical view that a return to their previous post is not possible, and that action needs to be taken.

If an employee refuses the alternative work this may potentially lead to termination of employment. Before the Headteacher/Manager makes a decision, it is strongly advised they contact HR for further advice.

23. If Redeployment is Not Possible

If the employee cannot be redeployed to another post, they must be informed of this by the Headteacher/Manager who should then discuss their options with them.

If the decision is taken to terminate the employee's employment, although, the employee will have been issued with notice to terminate their employment the school can continue to seek suitable alternative employment for the employee during their notice period.

24. If Recovery is Likely to be Long

If Occupational Health advises the employee's recovery will be long, then a decision needs to be made on whether the employee's absence can be sustained by the school and if it can for how long. The decision will depend on the anticipated timescales for the employee's return to work and the service delivery requirements which would have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

25. If Recovery Will Not Occur

If Occupational Health advises the employee's recovery will not occur, then it is strongly advised before a decision is taken to terminate an employee's employment on the grounds of capability the Headteacher/Manager has asked Occupational Health if the employee may be eligible to apply for ill health retirement. This will only apply if the employee is a member of the LGPS or Teacher's Pensions and must have been a member of the relevant pension scheme for at least 2 years to be eligible.

26. Ill Health Retirement under Local Government or Teachers Pension

If the employee is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme or the Teachers' Pension Scheme, they may be eligible for early payment of pension benefits under ill health retirement. The decision regarding whether a member of the pension scheme is eligible for benefits, can only be made by the Pension Scheme Approved Independent Occupational Health Physician and is entirely separate to the school's decision to terminate employment.

An assessment can be made on whether the employee meets the requirements under ill health retirement criteria so that the decision in relation to continued employment and ill health retirement can be made to coincide and result in the employer and employee mutually agreeing that employment has ceased. Pension benefits cannot be granted until the employee has left employment (whether they leave through dismissal, resignation or mutual termination).

The Local Government and Teachers Pension Schemes have set procedures for dealing with employee's ill health retirement. Full details of eligibility criteria, ill health retirement application form and guidance for completion are outlined in the ill health retirement guidance.

Further information on the process the headteacher or manager will need to follow for the employee to apply for ill health retirement for Local Government Pension Scheme members can be found in 11a

Further information on the process the headteacher or manager will need to follow for the employee to apply for ill health retirement for Teacher's Pension Scheme members can be found in 11aIf an employee is not a member of a pension scheme or Occupational Health advises they are not eligible to apply for ill health retirement and they are not able to return to work and it is decided that employment can no longer be sustained, the options are:

1. The employee can choose to resign from employment.
2. The employer and the employee mutually agree that employment ceases.
3. Termination of the contract on grounds of capability (i.e. the employee is incapable of fulfilling the terms of their contract due to ill health), or for ' Some Other Substantial Reason (SOSR).

27. Dismissal on the Grounds of Capability Due to Ill Health

If dismissal on the grounds of capability due to ill health is the only option, then the Headteacher/Manager must ensure they have fully consulted with the employee and their trade union representative (if they have one). Therefore, it is advised the Headteacher/Manager holds a meeting to discuss the 3 options (above) and informs them that if they don't wish to consider options 1 or 2 then a further meeting will be held by the Headteacher/Governors at which they will consider a recommendation to dismiss the employee on grounds of capability due to ill health. It is important clarity is obtained from the employee about which option is being pursued so that there is no misunderstanding.

The decision to dismiss should be made using the most up-to-date medical advice. Any decision to terminate the employment will be made by either the Headteacher (providing the Headteacher has been delegated the authority by the Governors to dismiss and also hasn't already been involved in the management of the sickness absence) or a panel of Governors. It should be carried out in accordance with the dismissal procedure as outlined in the Disciplinary procedure.

The employee is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague only. The employee must be given written confirmation of the decision to terminate their employment, their eligibility to any paid notice, in line with the contract of employment, and informed of the right to appeal. If dismissed by a panel of Governors the employee must be informed of the right to appeal to the Staff Appeals Committee of the Governing Body, within 10 **school** days of receipt of the decision, stating the grounds for the appeal.

It should be noted that particular consideration should be given to the timing of meetings for teachers, to ensure that enough notice can be given for the decision to take effect on a valid date i.e., 31st August 31st December, and 30th April. If mutually agreed these contractual notice periods may be waived.

28. Returning to Work Following Long-Term Absence

An employee who has had a long-term absence from work may require some additional support when returning to work. The Statement of Fitness for Work from the GP should provide detail of any recommendations or additional support that would assist the employee in returning to the workplace. It is also advisable to carry out a risk assessment with an employee, based on the recommendations in the Statement of Fitness for Work, within the first week of returning from long-term absence to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to ensure a successful return, in particular if absence was related to stress.

Consideration of a Risk Assessment or Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) may also be required with more detailed advice available through Health and Safety.

Regular reviews with the employee need to be scheduled for the first weeks/months to ensure the employee is settling back into work successfully.

In the first instance please contact HR for further advice.

29. Unsatisfactory Levels of Absence Causing Concern Unrelated to Ill Health

If, following discussion with the employee or via referral to Occupational Health, it is apparent the cause of their level of absence causing concern is unrelated to ill health, for example where a personal or domestic difficulty is identified, then the Headteacher/Manager should discuss whether there are any support options they can consider putting in place that will help the employee; for example, temporary flexible working arrangements or if appropriate, signposting the employee to the school's Employee Assistance Programme (for maintained schools this is currently provided by Care First). If any work-related matters are raised, these should be investigated promptly, and any reasonable action taken.

An action plan for the employee's attendance record to improve should also be agreed, allowing a reasonable amount of time for the support to assist improvement and review periods should also be set. Confirmation of any support put in place should then be put into writing in the format of an action plan, a copy given to the employee, and one retained on their file. If an employee's attendance does not improve after a reasonable period of time, then the formal absence management procedure (Absence Review Meeting) should then be followed.

30. Monitoring Sickness Absence

Some levels of absence due to sickness or other circumstances may be a cause for concern and require management action. When reviewing employees' sickness absence levels, in the interest of treating full time and part time employees consistently, the Headteacher/Manager should take account of the full period of sickness in calendar days rather than working days lost. For example, if an employee has a health problem, which results in them being unfit for work for 10 calendar days (whether they work full time or part time) this is cause for concern, regardless of the number of working days absence.

As schools are responsible for recording their own sickness absence information then they will need to run their own reports. However, schools who also purchase payroll from SC can request sickness absence information from HR Admin & Payroll.

31. Triggers for Holding a Sickness Absence Review Meeting

The triggers for the Headteacher/Manager holding a sickness absence review meeting with an employee are:

- In a three-month period, the employee has had three or more instances of sickness absence.
- In a six-month period, the employee has had a recurring, recognisable pattern of absence e.g., absent on a Friday, Monday, before or after Public Holidays or Annual Leave.
- In a three-month period, the employee's absences have added up to a total of ten or more calendar days.
- The employee has a Bradford score of 144 or more in a 12-month rolling period.

A Bradford score of 144 or more in a 12 months' rolling period can be due to frequent periods of short-term absences or for fewer occasions of absence the duration of each absence is for a longer period. The Bradford Factor is only an indicator and should be considered alongside all other available information relating to the individual's absence record.

The Headteacher/Manager should hold the sickness absence review meeting with the employee. The employee can be accompanied at the meeting by either a trade union or work colleague. However, allowing the employee to be accompanied should not significantly delay the meeting from taking place. If a Union representative cannot attend the first meeting it is advised a second one is arranged to take place within 5 working days of the date of the first meeting to ensure it is not unreasonably delayed.

Guidance on conducting the absence review meeting can be found at Section 11a - Headteacher Guides and Template Forms and Letters: Absence Review Meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the employee's absence record, explore the reasons for absence, agree any support that is required and set targets for improvement.

The outcome from the meeting should be for the Headteacher/Manager and employee to agree an action plan which may include supportive measures/ adjustments being put in place and may also result in targets for improvement being set. A record of the absence review meeting will be made on the form "Record of Absence Review Meeting" and a copy placed on the employee's personal file and also the manager will follow up the meeting with a letter. Please refer to Section 11a – Headteacher Guides and Template Forms and Letters.

If the reason for the unsatisfactory level of sickness absence is due to work related stress, then the Headteacher/Manager may consider asking the employee to complete a stress risk assessment and then hold a meeting with them to discuss it (HS 015 - Work-Related Stress).

If the employee doesn't achieve their improvement target, then a further meeting should be arranged to discuss this if the Headteacher/Manager is satisfied that they have taken the appropriate actions to support the employee.

32. Formal Warning Procedure

Where informal management actions have failed to reduce the employee's level of sickness absence then it may then be necessary to move to the formal warning procedure.

If an employee's level of sickness absence is unsatisfactory and this is having a considerable impact on their colleagues and service delivery, then it may be justifiable for the Headteacher/Manager to consider omitting some stages of the formal procedure. However, before the Headteacher/Manager does this it is strongly advised they contact HR for advice first.

The formal meetings should be conducted by the Headteacher/Manager. The Headteacher/Manager may wish to consider asking their HR Advisor to attend the meeting to support/advise them.

The employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at all stages of the process. Cautions should not be issued to an employee whose absences are directly related to pregnancy.

33. First Formal Absence Review Meeting

The Headteacher/Manager should hold a first formal absence review meeting with the employee to discuss their unsatisfactory level of sickness absence and explore why they were unable to achieve the improvement target set. If, following the meeting the Headteacher/Manager is not satisfied with the employee's responses they can issue them with a First Written Absence Warning. This must be confirmed in writing and the letter should outline the seriousness of the problem and the importance of the requirement for the employee to achieve a clear sustained reduction in the level of absences within the improvement period, the minimum improvement period is one month and the maximum improvement period, is three months. Please refer to Section 11a – Headteacher Guides and Template Forms and Letters.

34. Second Formal Absence Review Meeting

If the employee does not achieve the improvement target within the improvement period that was set, or the level of improvement is not sustained over a reasonable period then a further meeting should be held.

The Headteacher/Manager should hold a second formal absence review meeting with the employee to discuss their unsatisfactory level of sickness absence and explore why they weren't able to achieve the improvement target set. If, following the meeting the Headteacher/Manager is not satisfied with the employee's responses they can then issue them with a Final Written Absence Warning. This must be confirmed in writing and the letter should outline the seriousness of the problem and the importance of the requirement for the employee to achieve a clear sustained reduction in the level of absences within the improvement period, the minimum improvement period is one month and the maximum improvement period, is three months. The letter should also state that if there is no further improvement over the improvement period, this may result in the termination of their employment. Please refer to Section 11a – Headteacher Guides and Template Forms and Letters.

35. Absence Review Hearing

If, after the second formal absence review meeting**,** the required improvement is not achieved within the improvement period or the level of improvement is not sustained after the expiry of the improvement period, termination of employment can be considered. It is strongly advised that advice is sought from HR prior to any decision being made. The employee should be given at least 5 working days written notice of the date of the Absence Review Hearing.

The Headteacher should arrange the hearing in line with the dismissal process as outlined in the disciplinary procedure. At the meeting the employee will have an opportunity to state their case before a decision is made on whether to terminate their employment.

The Headteacher/Manager should ensure before any decision is made in relation to the termination of the employee's employment, they have also obtained up-to-date medical information; therefore, they made need to refer them to Occupational Health.

If the decision is made to terminate employment with notice it must be confirmed in writing to the employee, and they should be informed of their right to appeal. The employee will be dismissed on the grounds of capability due to ill health with notice or full pay in lieu of notice.

At all stages of the formal process, the employee has the right to appeal any decision and has the right to be accompanied at any meetings by a workplace colleague or professional association representative.

36. Sickness Absence Unrelated to a Disability

If a disabled employee is absent from work due to sickness, which is unrelated to their disability, this sickness will not fall under the scope or protection of the Equality Act 2010 and, therefore, should be dealt with under the normal sickness management procedure. It may, in practice, be difficult to tell when an absence is disability related so it is vital that the employee is consulted, and medical advice sought at an early stage to ensure that the Manager can make an informed decision on how to manage the absence.

37. Sickness Absence Related to a Disability

Where the effect of an employee's disability results in a need to be absent from work due to illness, this will need to be accommodated as far as is reasonable within the terms of the Equality Act 2010. Before the formal caution process is commenced, it is essential to ensure any reasonable adjustments have been considered and where appropriate put in place.

38. Reasonable Adjustments

Headteachers/ Managers should always consider whether it is possible to reduce the extent of disability related absence through reasonable adjustments, e.g., provision of an auxiliary aid, providing the appropriate equipment, allowing an individual to have flexible working arrangements or other support mechanisms, which can reduce the need for absence. The Equality Act 2010 specifically identifies the provision of leave as a reasonable adjustment where a disabled person needs to be absent from work for 'rehabilitation, assessment or treatment'. (e.g., the routine assessment of hearing aids, hospital or specialist check-ups including monitoring of related equipment or treatment).

There may be financial help available from external agencies to make reasonable adjustments for an employee with a disability including employees who have become disabled in the course of their employment to return to their post.

For further information refer to the Disability Leave process within Guidance for Schools, Vol 1, Section 10a (if adopted). Advice is also available from the school's HR Advisor.

39. Access to Work

Occupational Health may advise the school to consider making reasonable adjustments to enable the employee to fulfil their role and may advise contacting Access to Work to help facilitate this. If they do, it is the responsibility of the employee (with support from the employer) to contact Access to Work to obtain this advice, support and funding.

Access to Work is a provision by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) aimed at providing support and funding for reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities in the workplace in order to start, remain or return to work. Further

information is available in Guidance for Schools - Section 11e – Access to Work Guidance.

40. Sickness Absence Payment Schemes

41. Occupational Sick Pay Entitlement

Entitlement to sick pay is set out below and can also be found in the appropriate handbooks of the National Joint Council/Burgundy Book. However, when an employee is due to transfer from full pay to half pay or to terminate sick pay altogether, it is essential that the employee is notified in advance and in writing. Employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods:

Support Staff

During 1st year of service	1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay
During 2nd year of service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During 3rd year of service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During 4th and 5th year of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years' service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

N.B. Support Staff: The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of pay in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day of the aggregated periods of paid absences during the 12 months immediately preceding the first day of absence.

Teachers

During 1st year of service	full pay for 25 working days (and after completing four calendar months' service) half pay for 50 working days
During 2nd year of service	full pay for 50 working days and half pay for 50 working days
During 3rd year of service	full pay for 75 working days and half pay for 75 working days
During 4th and subsequent years	full pay for 100 working days and half pay for 100 working days

N.B Teachers

- A year is deemed to begin on 1 April and end on 31 March of the following year.
- Where a teacher starts service after 1 April the full entitlement for that year will be applicable.
- Where a teacher is on sick leave on 31 March in any year no new entitlements shall begin until the teacher has resumed duty and the period from 1 April until the return to duty is regarded as part of the preceding year's entitlement.
- Service means aggregated teaching service with one or more LEA/relevant employer.
- Working day means teaching and non-teaching days within 'Directed Time'.

For support staff and teachers, the date used to establish years of service is quoted in the employee's Statement of Particulars taking into account any previous relevant service. (Refer to Appendix 4 of Continuous Service Provisions for Teaching and Support Staff, in Guidance for Schools Volume 1 Section 6 for further information).

Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

In the case of half pay periods, sick pay will be an amount equal of half normal earnings plus an amount equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance receivable, so long as the total sum does not exceed normal pay.

42. Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

New employees may be entitled to payment under the Statutory Sick Pay Scheme from turning up to work on their first day of employment. However, payments can only be made if the payroll provider is notified appropriately.

Statutory Sick Pay can be paid by the employer for up to 28 weeks, subject to the employee being covered by the relevant statutory regulations.

SSP will be paid only if sickness occurs on a 'Qualifying Day'. For the majority of school support staff, qualifying days are Sunday to Saturday (including non-working days). However, for teachers employed in educational establishments, qualifying days will be Monday to Friday. In most cases an employee will not receive SSP for the first 3 qualifying days; these are 'Waiting Days' (subject to their being no linking with a previous period of sickness absence).

SSP is subject to deductions for income tax, national insurance and pension.

If employees are excluded from SSP or the employer's liability to pay SSP has ended, they will be sent an SSP1, which will explain why they are excluded or why they are to be transferred to the state benefits system. Employees will be provided with the SSP1 form for them to see if they can claim state benefit from the Department for Work and Pensions. If they wish to claim any state benefits this form must be completed and sent to Jobcentre Plus with any current Statement of Fitness for Work, which will have been returned to them by their Headteacher/Manager.

Note - all Statements of Fitness for Work must be sent to the Headteacher/Manager in the first instance.

If the employee has claimed Employment and Support Allowance (previously Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disabled Allowance) within 8 weeks of a period of sickness absence, or was entitled to the 52 weeks benefit protection they may be able to get Employment and Support Allowance instead of SSP. Any relevant correspondence received from Jobcentre Plus should be passed to the payroll provider.

Further information on SSP may be available from the payroll provider.

43. Abuse of Sickness Absence Payment Scheme

Sick pay may be suspended if an employee abuses the Sickness Payment Scheme, through behaviour that is inconsistent with the stated reason for sickness absence or are absent on account of sickness due or attributable to the following:

1. Deliberate conduct which hinders or delays their recovery and return to work.
2. The employee's own misconduct or neglect.
3. Active participation in professional sport.
4. Injury while working in their own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer.

Abuse of the Sickness Payment Scheme will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

The Headteacher/Manager shall advise the employee of the grounds for suspension of sick pay in writing and the employee shall have a right of appeal to the Governing Body's Staff Appeals Committee within 10 school days of notification.

44. The Procedure for Alteration or Termination of Sick Pay

If the payroll provider is the County Council, they will write to the employee directly to give them advanced notice of the dates their sick pay is to be reduced to half pay and when the half pay period will end together with the date SSP will end. Normally 6 weeks' notice is given.

If the school also purchases any additional services e.g., they purchase cover to backfill for any employees who are off sick (teachers and/or support staff) then they will also be informed by payroll. These changes will be automatically put into effect unless the Headteacher advises otherwise.

If the County Council is not the payroll provider, the school will need to make their own arrangements to ensure the employee is informed of any change to their pay.

45. Accrual of Annual Leave during Long-term Sickness Absence

Where employees are on a period of long-term sickness absence which crosses the leave year, they will be able to carry over automatically only that portion of outstanding leave (i.e., statutory entitlement less any leave already taken) up to a maximum of the statutory entitlement of 28 days per annum (i.e., 20 leave days and 8 Bank Holidays). This is pro-rata for part-time employees.

Teachers' pay and leave arrangements are expressed differently to other Local Government employees and so are dealt with slightly differently.

Teachers do not have a contractual entitlement to paid annual leave. However, teachers are entitled to 28 days (5.6 weeks) of statutory annual leave under the Working Time Regulations 1998. This is not an additional entitlement to annual leave on top of the current school closure arrangements. Therefore, the entitlement to statutory annual leave can be offset by any periods of school closure, whether they occur before or after the period of sickness. Where there is insufficient school closure time to allow the statutory annual leave to be taken, employers should allow the teacher to carry forward the leave to be taken in a school closure following their return.

When a teacher commences sick leave, the amount of 'leave' a teacher has had in the current leave year will be established by the amount of school closure periods that have already occurred during the leave year. If this exceeds the entitlement to statutory annual leave, there will be no further entitlement to leave.

Annual leave for all support staff consists of a statutory entitlement and an additional contractual element. While there is no automatic right to a carry forward of contractual leave Headteachers/Governors may use their discretion, in conjunction with advice from the HR Advisor, to allow the carry forward of a proportion of the outstanding leave that equates to contractual leave.

For all year-round support staff, a request to take annual leave can be made in the normal way during a period of long-term sickness absence. Employees are able to ‘swap’ sickness absence for annual leave; however, the period of sickness absence will not be broken for the purposes of calculating sick pay entitlement. Activities undertaken during annual leave should not be inconsistent with the reason for sickness absence or prolong or worsen the illness, the school reserves the right to stop statutory sick pay or occupational sick pay and, in some cases, this may result in disciplinary action.

46. Sick Pay during Probationary Period – Support Staff only

Please refer to the Induction Arrangements for New Teachers and Probationary Policy for Support Staff (Section 7, Guidance for Schools).

47. Extension of Sickness Payments

In certain circumstances it may be possible for a Governing Body to extend the period of sickness payment laid down in the appropriate handbook of the National Joint Council. Special consideration should be given in matters of financial hardship, where it is felt that such a move will assist in the individual's recovery and as a reasonable adjustment for disabled employees. In such cases the advice of the school’s HR Advisor should be sought. Headteachers must maintain detailed records for monitoring purposes and to ensure consistent decision making.

48. Insurance Claims for Loss of Earnings in the Event of an Accident Outside of Work

If an employee is absent as a result of an accident outside of work, damages may be claimed from either the individuals or the third party's insurance to cover for loss of earnings. In this event, the school may pay the employee sick pay under the Occupational Sickness Payment Scheme. However, this is subject to the employee undertaking to refund to the school the total amount of such payments or the proportion paid by the insurance company for loss of earnings. Any period of

absence in such a case where a refund of the monies advanced is made in full, shall not be recorded for the purposes of sick leave entitlement. Where only part of the earnings is paid, the school has the discretion to decide to what extent, if any, the period of absence may be recorded against the sick leave entitlement.

49. Industrial Injury/Diseases

All Accidents at work should be recorded using the appropriate recording systems (please refer to reporting accidents on how to do this which is below).

Support Staff

In line with the Green Book, if an employee has a period of absence due to industrial injury or disease, accident or assault arising out of, or in the course of, employment with the school and without their own fault, this will be recorded separately from normal sickness records for the purposes of the Sickness Payment Scheme.

Periods of sickness absence in respect of an industrial injury or disease are counted independently and are not linked to any other periods of sickness absence for the purposes of calculating the 12 months rolling entitlement.

Teachers

In line with the Burgundy Book, if a teacher is absent due to accident, injury or assault attested by an approved medical practitioner to have arisen out of, and in the course of, the teacher's employment, including attendance for instruction at physical training or other classes organised or approved by the employer or participation in any extra curricular of voluntary activity connected with the school, full pay shall in all cases be allowed, such pay being treated as sick pay for the purposes of paragraphs 3 to 7.5 of the Burgundy Book, subject to the production of self-certificates and/or Doctors' statements from the day of the accident, injury or assault up to the date of recovery, but not exceeding 6 calendar months.

Where a teacher is still absent due to accident, injury or assault after the initial 6 months period, the question of any extension of payment under paragraph 9.1 of the Burgundy Book shall be considered. In the event of no extension of leave being granted under paragraph 9.1, the teacher shall be entitled to normal sick leave and pay according to his/her length of service as prescribed by that paragraph.

Absence resulting from accidents, injuries or assaults referred to in sub-paragraph 9.1 of the Burgundy Book shall not be reckoned against the teacher's entitlements, though such absences are reckonable for entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay.

For the purpose of sub-paragraph 9.1 "absence" shall include more than one period of absence arising out of a single accident, injury or assault.

50. Sickness Absence during other Formal Procedures

If an employee is absent from work due to ill health whilst they are subject to a formal procedure i.e. disciplinary, capability or grievance etc, the formal procedure will continue to apply during the sickness absence. All reasonable efforts will be made to adjust the process to enable the employee to attend or be represented by a trade union representative or a work colleague at any meetings or hearings.

Employees may be asked to engage with Occupational Health to determine their fitness to attend a formal meeting or hearing. If the absence is likely to last for an extended period, the meeting/hearing may proceed without the employee's attendance.

51. Sickness Absence related to Pregnancy

Any sickness absence that is pregnancy related should not be included when reviewing an employee's level of sickness absence. Please also refer to the Maternity Leave Policy (Section 8, Guidance for School) for further information.

52. Sickness Absence due to Contact with Serious Infectious Diseases

An employee who is prevented from attending their place of employment because of contact with a serious infectious disease should notify the school or Headteacher immediately.

For further information the school or Headteacher/ should contact the Southwest (South) Acute Response Centre (formerly Somerset Health Protection Team) on swhpt@phe.gov.uk. 0300 303 8162.

For general advice on infectious diseases, such as isolation periods the school can refer to the Spotty Book https://cypsomersethealth.org/hes_guidance.

When an employee is absent as a result of a serious infectious disease contracted during the course of their employment, the employee will be entitled to receive their normal pay. In addition, the period of absence will not be counted against the employee's entitlement to occupational sick leave.

In the case of contact with other infectious diseases the employee does not need to stay away from the workplace, if they otherwise feel well but they should still report they have been in contact with an infectious disease, to the school or Headteacher.

53. Recording of Health & Safety Incidents

Somerset LA maintained schools use European Educational Consultants (EEC) as its primary Health and Safety Management System. This system enables schools to compile risk assessments, record accidents and near misses, submit off-site visit applications for endorsement and provides the platform for Somerset Council to complete its health and safety audit of maintained schools.

Foundation and VA schools can choose to report their own RIDDORs

54. Reporting Serious Infectious Diseases

A school is required to report Serious Infectious Diseases using the EEC website accident reporting module within 7-days of the school being notified by the employee. Once notified Somerset Council's Corporate Health and Safety Unit, (CHSU) will contact the school for more information so that they can determine whether the incident is reportable to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) under RIDDOR and report the incident accordingly.

Schools can contact Somerset Council's Corporate Health and Safety Unit by email on **CHSU@somerset.gov.uk** or by telephone on **01823 255089** for further advice.

55. Associated Procedures

Significant accidents, incidents, acts of violence, near misses, injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences need to be recorded on EEC, more information, training, and examples in this link:

Reporting accidents, incidents, acts of violence and near misses on EEC (somerset.gov.uk).