



WELL BEING POLICY 2016

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POLICY REVIEW	
Policy Agreed (Date):	
Signed Chair of Governors:
Date for Review:	January 2019



1. Why Well-Being Is Important at The Radclyffe School

The Radclyffe School aspires to be an 'employer of choice'. Our aim is to support each and every member of staff to enable them to work together for excellence and to foster a working environment that protects their physical and mental well-being. We believe all staff need time in their lives outside work, with their families and with their other interests, and to ensure they make time to sleep, eat and exercise properly. Our approach is to secure the best circumstances for our staff and our students as we believe this is the hallmark of a school that is on a journey to be 'beyond outstanding'.

2. Actions Speak Louder than Words

The school embraces its moral and legal duty to take steps to promote employee well-being as far as is reasonably practicable. The school is committed to providing a working environment and applying management practices which promote well-being.

It is only by turning words into action that staff well-being can be realised and this policy outlines a number of practical measures in support of this approach. It is a framework within which the school will encourage and facilitate working practices and services that support well-being. It is not an exhaustive list and new suggestions to promote well-being are always welcome.

The policy is applicable to all staff and is complementary to other established policies:

Health and Safety

Family Leave (Maternity, Paternity and Parental leave)

3. Working in Partnership and With Union Representatives

Working in partnership both within the school and with external agencies enables a broader spectrum of support for staff. Links are therefore maintained and developed with a number of support agencies, including: the Local Authority, the Health Service an Occupational Health Provider; a Health and Safety Advisory Service, and most importantly; both school, local and regional trade union officials.

The school is particularly keen to facilitate good trade union links within school and staff are strongly encouraged to engage and make use of representation. Experience shows that if members of staff are able to quickly secure the independent and timely advice and support of a union colleague, they are much better prepared to access systems and procedures. They do so with more confidence and clarity and this is helpful in resolving any concerns. This approach is important to maintaining and restoring well-being.

4. When Extra Help is Needed

4.1 Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantially adverse and long term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. In the workplace such activities are taken to include things like accessing the building; using the telephone or computer, interacting with colleagues, following instructions, driving and carrying everyday objects.

As a rights respecting school, we aim to ensure that we do not discriminate against those with a disability. This approach is enshrined in all that we do but can be evidenced at key times such as, when:

- Recruiting new staff (application form, interview arrangements, pre-employment checking, making reasonable adjustments to accommodate a suitable employee)
- Supporting a member of staff who becomes disabled to enable him/her to remain in their employment (making reasonable adjustments)
- Supporting a member of staff who is responsible for the care of a disabled person
- Maintaining a building that is accessible and disability friendly

Reasonable temporary or permanent adjustments might include:

- A reduction or alteration in hours
- A review of duties and responsibilities
- Time off for medical treatment
- Closer car parking arrangements
- Use of a lift key
- The provision of other equipment

This list is not exhaustive and every effort will be made to understand need and to look for opportunities to support reasonable requests to enable someone to join the school or to remain in our employment. This makes good business sense but as with any other organisation we must still maintain our core duties as a school and the needs of students (learning and teaching) and colleagues will be a key consideration when making a judgement about reasonableness.

4.2 **Family leave**

The ways in which The Radclyffe School meets its employer responsibility in respect of maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave are covered in a separate Family Leave Policy.

4.3 **Menopause**

The menopause affects all woman but in different ways. It is a natural part of ageing and not an illness as such. As a school we recognise, however, that the physical and emotional symptoms of the menopause can be severe and have a significant impact on everyday activities.

As with any other well-being issue, the school is committed to providing support if this is reasonable and can be managed. Women who experience significant problems are encouraged to discuss this with a senior colleague or direct with the HR Manager so that opportunities for support can be explored.

4.4 **Mental Health (Including Stress)**

We all have mental health and it is just as important as our physical health. If you are in good mental health you can make the most of your potential, cope with life and play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends. The aim in school, of course, is to manage and support colleagues in such a way as to promote good mental health and certainly not to undermine it. It is estimated that one in four of us, however, will have problems with our mental health at some time in our lives and the cause of difficulties may not be work related but require support in the workplace. Mental health problems can range from worries we all experience as part of everyday life (bereavement, loss of self-esteem, relationship/family problems) to serious longer term conditions (anxiety, depression, schizophrenia etc.).

We recognise that everyone is different. One person may have the resilience to bounce back from a set-back while someone else may be weighed down by it for a long time. It is healthy for colleagues to have an opportunity to say how they are feeling and there are people who can listen in school or outside support is available (see Occupational Health and The Employee Assistance programme at para 6.7 and Appendix A).

4.4.1 **Work Related Stress**

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure that can be a positive state if managed correctly and stress that can be detrimental to health.

Stressors at work can undermine anyone’s well-being, even the most robust person. This is particularly the case when workplace demands combine with other life circumstances, or after a traumatic incident or during periods of change. No-one should feel embarrassed or see stress as a sign of personal weakness. As with physical health issues, everyone, at some point can succumb to a period of mental ill health and everyone has different levels of resilience.

Our aim is, through effective leadership and management, to eliminate avoidable stressors in the work place (including a focus on workload, student behaviour, communication and conflict at work), encourage individuals to recommend changes in work practices/procedures to reduce and manage stress and to provide support for members of staff whose health and well-being is effected by stress (work related or otherwise).

Risk assessment is a key tool for identifying the causes of stress and who might be harmed in order that controls can be put in place. The school will periodically undertake a stress risk assessment in consultation with staff and school representatives in order to monitor stressors and current practice in relation to control measures.

For their part, members of staff are encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal lifestyle and health management and be prepared to seek help if they are experiencing the signs of stress (see Appendix B). Part of The Radclyffe School ethos is for a member of staff never to go home at the end of the day with a problem. Staff are encouraged to have a discussion before leaving. A member of the SLMT is always available at the end of the day. Problems shared can often be halved and there is rarely any problem that is insurmountable. The best kind of support is preventative.

4.5 **Alcohol and Drug Related Health Difficulties**

Our duty of care to students, higher absenteeism, lowered performance, safety at work and upholding the reputation of the school are all reasons why a perceived alcohol or drug related problem will be investigated, discussed and managed, initially as a health problem (including occupational health support and counselling as appropriate) but potentially as a disciplinary matter if the situation proves unmanageable.

It goes without saying that proven cases of alcohol or drug abuse on the school premises may immediately be considered in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. Alcohol should only be consumed on the school premises as part of an organised school (adult) event and when permission has been given by SLMT.

Members of staff experiencing problems and seeking help can be assured that their privacy and confidentiality will be protected. All members of staff may independently and confidentially access the Employee Assistance Programme and/or request occupational health advice without jeopardising their job. Trade union representatives are experienced in signposting additional union support and their involvement is encouraged.

4.6 **Hot Weather**

The weather in the U.K does not often result in prolonged, extremely hot temperatures but it is accepted there will be times when our staff find themselves working in warmer than usual conditions. Although there is no maximum temperature that a workplace is allowed to be, as a school we want our staff and students to feel as comfortable as can be safely achieved. Whilst it is possible to provide fans in some areas in school, we are mindful that it may not be safe to place units where they may be tampered with by students.

Working with our building facility managers, our strategy is to:

- ensure doors are opened to increase ventilation around the building
- relax dress codes when necessary
- encourage the correct use of blinds and ventilation
- maintain good access to cold water
- remind staff who spend time outside to use sun screen to protect from sunburn.

Staff or students who are fasting may find hot weather particularly challenging and may require additional measures if hot weather is extreme and/or prolonged.

Similarly, it is accepted that hot weather can make vulnerable staff (young, older, pregnant or on medication) feel tired and less energetic and again additional measures may need to be put in place.

4.7 **Bereavement**

It is recognised that the death of a student or a colleague can have a significant impact in school. Whilst maintaining our work responsibilities, the aim is to provide mutual support to both students and staff to help cope with the death, being sensitive to how they might be feeling and facilitating tangible opportunities to offer their condolences and pay their respects. Setting up a book of condolence, allowing attendance at the funeral and looking for appropriate ways

to commemorate the person who has died may all be appropriate ways of dealing with the sad event.

Where there is a longer term impact on a member of staff (beyond what might be expected in a normal grieving process), the school can arrange occupational health support with access to counselling as appropriate.

5. Work Life Balance – Flexible Working and Special leave

5.1 Flexible Working

The school manages a number of contract types, meeting the school's needs but also offering flexible employment opportunities. The school manages full time, part-time, full year and term time only working patterns in different roles. Where the needs of students continue to be met and standards upheld, it is possible to meet individual requests in support of personal circumstances so that reduced hours contracts, job sharing and amended work patterns may be facilitated. Each request is considered on its own merits and the formal process for requesting flexible working is set out below.

Any member of staff who has worked for The Radclyffe School for 26 weeks continuously at the date an application is made and has not made another application during the previous 12 months, has the right to request flexible working arrangements. This may include any working arrangement where the number of hours worked, the time worked or the place that work is undertaken varies from the standard practice. There is no automatic right to work flexibly but the school will give careful consideration to the implications of any requests, including e.g.: teaching and learning and outcomes for students (a request is unlikely to be supported in cases where the impact would be detrimental), the impact on colleagues (workload and their health and safety) and the budget. Similarly a member of staff requesting flexible working will want to explore the personal implications of the proposed change, the impact on: pay, pension and family leave (maternity, paternity etc.), all of which will continue to be entitlements but on a pro rata basis if a contract is reduced. Initial informal discussions are therefore invited before submitting a formal application. The success of a request may be subject to having sufficient time to put supporting arrangements in place and so early planning for any changes wherever possible is advised. Members of staff can get further advice about flexible options e.g. job sharing, working reduced hours or different work patterns from the school HR Manager.

5.2 Applying for Flexibility

A request must be put in writing to the Headteacher, specifying:

1. What change to current working time, pattern, location is being requested;
2. The reason for the request;
3. What implications you foresee for the school arising from the change and how these might be accommodated;
4. The date from which you wish the change to take place.

A proforma for making a request can be found at Appendix C.

Within 28 days of receiving the request, a meeting will be arranged to discuss it, to be clear about what flexibility has been requested (and why) and to begin to explore the implications of meeting the request both for the school and for the member of staff. The member of staff has the right to be represented by a work based colleague or a trade union representative at this meeting. This meeting may not be necessary if these details were resolved informally before the formal process commenced or if there is outright agreement to the request.

Within 14 days of the meeting, the Headteacher will consider the implications of the request, make a decision and respond in writing to the member of staff. The Headteacher will either:

1. Accept the request (or an agreed compromise) and establish a start date;
or
2. Reject the request and set out clear reasons for the decision, together with notification of the appeal process.

Unless the agreement is for a temporary flexible arrangement (e.g. a trial period may have been agreed), the change is permanent until such time as the member of staff formally requests a further change - via the same process but not within 12 months of the first request. Similarly, subject to appeal outcomes, if a request is declined, the member of staff may not make a further request until a further 12 months has elapsed. The school will, however, always be flexible and compassionate when considering a member of staff's position and any requests for further changes, subject to the impact on the school. A return to an original work pattern, however, cannot be guaranteed.

5.3 Appealing Against a Declined Request for Flexibility

If a member of staff wishes to appeal, he/she must write to the Headteacher within 10 working days of the Headteacher's original decision being received in writing. The letter must set out the grounds for the appeal and it must be dated. A meeting of the Governing Body's Appeal Committee will be convened within 14 days of being informed of the employee's decision to appeal. A member of staff has the right to be accompanied by a work based colleague or a Trade Union representative at the meeting. The format for the meeting is at Appendix D. The outcome of the appeal meeting will be notified in writing within 5 working days of the meeting.

The above timescales may by agreement be extended if further time is required to consider a member of staff's request, the agreed revised timescale will be recorded in writing.

5.4 Special Leave

The majority of staff work term time and this affords individuals the opportunity during regular school closures to plan for holidays and other personal arrangements. Those who work full year are expected to take their annual holidays etc. during school closure. It is recognised, therefore, that members of staff do not have the flexibility to respond to urgent life situations by taking annual leave. The school therefore operates a Special Leave policy whereby staff may request absence for personal circumstances. The Special Leave provisions build in some flexibility for staff to be able to cope with unforeseen emergencies or to attend those special life events that should not be missed but their timing is not in the member of staff's control. Approval may be given with or without pay in accordance with the policy framework below and subject to the context of the

request i.e. the number of previous requests, multiple requests and the level of support given with pay. These provisions should also be read in conjunction with the Family Leave Policy which includes details of a statutory entitlement to Parental Leave and how to apply for it.

Special Leave Categories	Notes	Leave and Pay Implications
MEDICAL /DENTAL / OPTICIAN APPOINTMENTS		
Routine Appointments	Routine medical appointments (doctors, dentists, opticians) should be made out of normal working hours	If unavoidable, the time required for the appointment - Unpaid
Specialist / Emergency Treatment	These are appointments where the member of staff has no choice but to attend during working hours	The time required for the appointment - Paid
Attending Outpatients – follow up treatment	Every effort should be made to attend appointments outside of normal working hours.	The time required for the appointments - Paid
Medical Screening (including cancer)	Necessary time off will be allowed for the purpose of medical screening	As above
IVF	Every effort should be made to attend appointments outside of normal working hours.	Paid leave for the agreed terms of the support plan – thereafter Unpaid
Regular Treatment – Agreed Disability Adjustments	Every effort should be made to attend appointments outside of normal working hours.	As above
CARE OF DEPENDENTS (normally a husband/partner, child or parent or a family member living in the same household)		
A dependent falls ill or has been injured or assaulted and relies on the member of staff for assistance	Time off is given to deal with the unexpected situation and to make any necessary longer term arrangements	3 days per year – Paid Thereafter - Unpaid
A dependent is giving birth	In situations where the member of staff is the person the pregnant woman will depend on at the birth	1 day - Paid
To deal with the death of a dependent	To be able to deal with immediate 'on the day' issues (see also funerals and bereavement)	1 day - Paid
To deal with the unexpected disruption or	Time off is given to deal with the unexpected situation and to make	1 day- Unpaid

breakdown of care arrangements for a dependent e.g. unavailability of child minder / school closure	any necessary longer term arrangements	
To deal with an unexpected incident at the member of staff's child's school	Time out of the school day is given to deal with this unexpected situation	The time required on the day of the incident - Paid
Longer term care of a dependent due to illness or injury	In situations where the member of staff needs to take time to make plans for the longer term care of a dependent	Up to 5 days - Unpaid
BEREAVEMENT, FUNERALS AND COMPASSIONATE CARE		
In the event of the death of a close relative and/or when the member of staff is named as the Executor of the will	Some time to attend the funeral, to grieve, support others who are grieving and to put effects in order	Up to 5 days - Paid
In the event of other family deaths	Time to attend the funeral. It is recognised that there are other significant relationships that in the event of death may merit this support	Up to 1 day - Paid
Compassionate Leave	To be used to support a member of staff experiencing real difficulties e.g. spending time with a close family member who is terminally ill	Up to 5 days - Paid
RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE		
Time off for the purpose of practising a particular belief (one that holds society's respect)- for a specific act of religious observance, celebration or commemoration	Regular (weekly) observances should be incorporated in a revised work pattern There is no entitlement to time off in lieu for observations that fall at the weekend or a non-working day	Up to 3 days - Paid - per academic year (with a maximum of 2 days per occasion)
Travelling abroad for the purposes of religious observance	This provision allows support for those who need to travel to undertake an observance. Travelling time and time for the observance should not be confused with combining a religious observance visit abroad with a holiday / sightseeing / visiting relatives for which there is no special leave provision (see Holidays)	Unpaid for the agreed period (kept to a minimum during term time)

PUBLIC DUTIES – a maximum total for all public duties each year is 28 days – Paid		
Jury Service	The member of staff will claim an allowance for loss of earnings which is paid direct to them by the courts. A deduction of an equal amount will be taken from the member of staff's pay. The member of staff does not lose out by being on Jury Service but does not gain	Unpaid – for the sum equal to the allowance paid by the courts
Magistrate Duties	Subject to approval, a member of staff may be paid to undertake magisterial duties to a maximum of 208 hrs/ 28 days	Up to 28 days - Paid
School Governing Body Meetings	To enable a member of staff to undertake Governing Body duties during the school day if necessary	Up to 5 days per year – Paid
Election Duties	Subject to approval of the request to undertake election duties	Paid
Court attendance	Members of staff summoned to court for reasons directly relating to their job are allowed paid time off to attend court. For unrelated job reasons – time out is unpaid	Paid if job related, otherwise Unpaid
Service in Non-Regular Forces e.g TA	Members of staff should negotiate to attend annual camp outside of term time	If agreed - Unpaid
Mountain Rescue	Subject to agreement.	3 days - Paid
OTHER REQUESTS The examples below are not exhaustive and other requests will be considered in the spirit of the policy and the circumstances of the request.		
Holidays during term time	Holidays during term time will not normally be approved	Unpaid for any agreed period
Attending job interviews	Excessive requests for special leave to attend interviews may be refused	3 days - Paid - per annum. Additional days by agreement - Unpaid
Attending induction events in relation to a new job	Support of such requests will be subject to the impact in school and ability to provide cover	1 day - Unpaid
Studying for and taking an exam – for a qualification supported by the school	Absence for study and exams that are school agreed job related training are more likely to be supported and with pay	By agreement according to the study agreement / number of exams etc.

		Paid
Driving test	It is possible to book driving lessons and a test out of working hours	None
Transport failure / Bad weather	Requests from staff who have made every effort to travel to work in an unforeseen situation will be treated most favourably	Paid / Unpaid - subject to circumstances

6. Fit For Work and Managing Attendance

6.1 Reporting, Monitoring and Managing Absence

6.1.1 National statistics indicate a strong correlation between schools that perform well and their attendance records (both students and staff). The aim at The Radclyffe School is to promote a culture of well-being resulting in high attendance. For staff this means ensuring there is both personal support and the kind of working conditions that will help maximise attendance i.e. putting into practice the well-being initiatives outlined in this policy. In return, it is anticipated that good staff attendance will secure the very best outcomes for both students and staff: building firm relationships; ensuring continuity and consistency in learning and teaching; safeguarding the budget; managing the workload of colleagues and minimising stress.

6.1.2 It is the responsibility of each member of staff to make every effort to maintain a high attendance at work. It is not likely, however, that every member of staff can maintain a 100% attendance record for every year of their employment. Even the most committed and healthiest members of staff can fall foul of ill health conditions and life events necessitating absence from work. Whilst the school policy is to promote high attendance and to reduce unnecessary absence, it is not expected that members of staff should report for work when they are too unwell to operate effectively or safely. As an alternative to absence, it may be possible, however, to provide additional support to enable someone to remain in work.

Keeping people in work or getting them back to work more quickly if they go off sick is now known to be a key factor in protecting their longer term health and well-being. An open dialogue about options is therefore encouraged. Preventing people from falling out of work because of ill health is always better than having to pick up the pieces afterwards.

6.1.3 When absence due to ill health is unavoidable, the relevant terms and conditions of all school staff give them access to sick pay and the school also operates a special leave policy (see section 5.4) in order that emergency/key life events can be supported. Our records show that the majority of staff manage to keep absenteeism to a minimum and are proud to receive their end of year 100% attendance certificate. We believe good staff attendance has contributed to our success as an outstanding school, a position we seek to maintain.

All absences (including agreed Special Leave – see Section 5.4) must be accounted for and are recorded and monitored. The appropriate school response to a member of staff's absence record will be determined by the context and the particular circumstances of each case. There is no one best way of responding to

absence from work and it is not automatically fair to treat everyone the same. A consistency of approach will be achieved by always taking into account factors that are relevant in any particular case and working within the scope and spirit of the procedures outlined below.

6.2 Trade Union Support - Ill Health and During Absence

The Radclyffe School has a track record of working successfully with Trade Union representatives and recognises and welcomes the valuable support they can give to colleagues experiencing health difficulties.

An employee is entitled to be accompanied by a TU representative or a work place colleague at any formal absence review meetings and this entitlement is enshrined in the formal procedure set out below.

The support of a Trade Union representative at an earlier informal stage is also recognised and valued and members of staff are encouraged to make use of their representatives in any mediation or discussion about health support in school. We welcome this approach. Preventative measures that avoid formal absence management measures are preferred.

6.3 Reporting Sickness Absence

To be eligible for statutory and occupational sick pay during periods of sickness absence, all staff must follow the following reporting procedure.

- a) The **first day of absence** must be reported via the school absence line (0161 622 3200) **by 8:00 am at the latest**, providing the following information:
 - the precise reason for the absence ("not feeling well" or "will not be in today" are insufficient);
 - when the incapacity commenced (including holidays and weekends);
 - the anticipated duration of the absence;
 - whether the sickness absence is a result of an accident or incident at work.
- b) An update on **each following day of the absence** is required, following the above procedure, unless the expected duration of the absence was reported on day 1 or a Statement of Fitness for Work (a 'Fit Note' or Med 3, formerly a 'Sick Note') has been issued by a General Practitioner (G.P) and provided to the school.
- c) **On the 4th calendar day** (unless a 'Fit Note' has been provided to school), there must be further contact to clarify circumstances:
 - the precise reason for the absence;
 - the anticipated duration of the absence.
- d) Sickness absence for any of the days 1-7 not covered by a 'Fit Note' must be covered by the completion of a **Sickness Absence Self-Certification Form**. A copy can be downloaded from Frog. If the return to school is at the end of, or within days 1-7, the form can be completed on the return to school and submitted via the return to work interview. For an absence beyond 7 days, a copy should be sent to school with the 'Fit Note' (see below).

- e) On the **eighth day of absence**, a 'Fit Note' must be submitted to school, f.a.o the HR Manager – to arrive no later than the 8th day of absence. Subsequent fit notes must arrive by the date the previous one expires i.e. there should be end-on cover throughout the period of absence. All staff should ensure they understand their G.P's instructions regarding fitness to return to work at the close of a 'Fit Note' i.e. whether permission has been given to return at that date without a further appointment, or not. This should have been stated on the 'Fit Note'. In all cases, a member of staff may return earlier than the end date on a 'Fit Note' if there has been a discussion and agreement in school. Agreement is important if a G.P has indicated s/he must see their patient again before they return to work and the member of staff wants to return in advance of that appointment.
- f) A G.P may record on the 'Fit Note' that a member of staff is fit to return if one or more conditions in the workplace can be met. If this is the case, the school's ability to support the suggested adjustments must be confirmed before a return is made. Early notice of, and discussion about, any such conditions is therefore important.

In the unlikely event that a member of staff does not follow the school's absence reporting procedure, including the timely provision of medical certification, he/she may have salary payments withheld and there could be disciplinary consequences. Similarly, if it is suspected that a member of staff is abusing the sick pay scheme, then an investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

6.4 **Contact During Absence**

Absent members of staff are required to maintain contact during their absence from work. It is recognised, however, that in some cases agreeing suitable and specific contact arrangements can be beneficial to recovery. In exceptional circumstances, contact may be via a friend or a representative. Contact arrangements can be discussed and agreed early on in any absence.

6.5 **Return to Work Discussions**

Following any absence from work, the Head of Department/Faculty or other nominated school manager will meet the member of staff for a Return to Work Discussion. The meeting is informal and in most cases likely to be short. There should be no requirement for union representation but a request to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a work place colleague should be agreed to. It may be helpful to facilitate representation if it is anticipated there are any underlying longer term health concerns to discuss or ongoing support/adjustments in the workplace to be managed. The content of the discussion will be subject to the length of absence and the member of staff's attendance record as well as any anticipated on-going health problem to be managed. The discussion may therefore include any/all of the following:

- welcoming a colleague back to work;
- confirming fitness to return;
- updating on anything missed during the absence;
- checking for any work related issues;
- setting up any ongoing support if required (including occupational health advice and/or adjustments);

- in some cases, establishing the impact the absence has had and seeking improved attendance.

The date of a routine Return to Work Discussion and whether any further support is required will be recorded by the manager on the Sickness Absence Self-Certification form completed and submitted by the employee. The form will be kept in the member of staff's personal file. The need for any follow up support will be discussed with the HR Manager. The school's HR Manager may support or conduct a Return to Work Discussion if the circumstances of the case merit it. Formal monitoring and the formal staged review process (below) may supersede the return to work discussion process.

6.6 **Planning a Return to Work e.g. Following a Lengthy Absence**

Due to the length of an absence or because of the nature of the ill health difficulty, it may be prudent to plan a return to work, building in the required support and adjustments that will facilitate a successful and sustained return. Support/adjustments may include a phased reintegration into the workplace (time and responsibility) and also take into account any medical advice (provided by a G.P on a 'Fit Note' or via the occupational health advice service). The length of a phased return will be subject to the needs of the individual but typically will be 3-4 weeks in length and without any impact on pay entitlement as it is recognised that under this arrangement, the returning member of staff is fit for work. Longer term arrangements may result in a temporary reduced hours/role contract (with a corresponding adjustment in pay). A permanent change to contract may be supported subject to the member of staff's and school's needs.

Early discussions about expectations and arrangements are important to ensure that the plan can be supported from the proposed return date.

6.7 **Occupational Health Advice**

At any point during informal or formal discussions about health and absence, it may be appropriate to seek independent and expert occupational health advice. Advice is available to both the member of staff and to school management to assist in the management of the health circumstances under review. Referral for Occupational Health advice is made by the HR Manager and outcomes discussed with the member of staff following a telephone or face to face assessment by an Occupational Health Practitioner and the receipt of written advice.

Separate to the referral process, all members of staff have access to the **Employee Assistance Programme**, a 24 hour, 7 days a week independent and confidential telephone help line. The service can be accessed directly and confidentially without school management knowledge. See Appendix A for more details.

6.8 **Informal Monitoring**

The school routinely records all absences and the reasons for absence. Routine monitoring may trigger an informal discussion out of concern for a colleague's welfare and to explore opportunities to provide support. Informal interventions may prevent a potential formal health / absence concern emerging. Open dialogue about health and the impact of the workplace is encouraged as experience shows that early intervention is preferable rather than allowing a difficulty to go unchecked, with the potential, therefore to become deep seated.

Stress and mental health issues are of particular concern as they can go unnoticed for some time if an individual does not feel able to seek support.

Routine, informal health discussions need not necessitate union representation but if it would be helpful to the member of staff, accompaniment by a union representative or work place colleague will be facilitated. During a member of staff's absence from school, by agreement informal welfare discussions may take place in school, at home or at another neutral venue as agreed.

6.9 The Decision To Proceed to The Formal Review Process (The Triggers)

In order to be fair and consistent, formal monitoring and a staged review process will be triggered by the frequency and/or length of absence over a rolling 12 month period. The following absence levels will trigger the formal review process:

3 occasions of absence

OR

10 working days' absence (or pro rata for part-time members of staff).

Before moving to the Formal Review Process, most absence problems will fall into one of these categories. There may, however, be rare occasions when an absence record does not fit neatly with either category but causes concern. In such situations, a decision to commence the Formal Review Process will be explained at the outset.

6.10 Focus of The Formal Review Process

The purpose of the Formal Review Process is to monitor attendance, explore the reasons for absence and to look for opportunities to support improved attendance or a return to work, identifying the actions required to facilitate this (as appropriate).

Via a series of formal meetings (normally a minimum of two meetings and a maximum of three), with representation, the school HR Manager will determine what action the school can undertake to support a member of staff to achieve satisfactory attendance. Timescales and attendance targets for each stage and relative to the circumstances will be discussed and determined as appropriate. At each staged formal review meeting, there are a range of questions worthy of consideration:

- Is attendance now at a satisfactory level
- What are the ongoing health circumstances (the prognosis and treatment plan)
- Is the health condition a disability
- What reasonable adjustments / support would facilitate satisfactory attendance
- Are adjustments short or long term
- What expectations are there of further improvements to health / attendance
- What likelihood is there that with support in place, the member of staff will sustain a satisfactory level of attendance going forward
- In cases of long term absence, is a return foreseeable and is this within a manageable time frame
- What is the current medical opinion on the health circumstances (including occupational health advice as appropriate)

- Would alternative employment/hours (redeployment) facilitate satisfactory attendance
- Is a consideration of retirement on grounds of permanent incapacity an option
- What is the member of staff's preferred way forward
- What is the impact of the absenteeism in school
- What is the member of staff's position in respect of sick pay entitlement

The underlying principles throughout the staged process are:

- a) From the outset, the aim is (with support) to enable a member of staff to achieve a sustained and satisfactory attendance record
- b) The school will put in place reasonable adjustments that are pertinent to the health circumstances in order to facilitate a successful review outcome
- c) The member of staff will be clear about the process they are in and at every stage what the next step is
- d) Union representation and support will be encouraged and is valuable throughout

6.11 **The Formal Review Process**

The Formal Review Process commences with a First Review Meeting with the HR Manager. The member of staff will be notified in writing and provided with a copy of their absence record. A minimum of 5 working days' notice of a First Review meeting with the HR Manager will be given and representation invited. The member of staff will be given access to a copy of this policy. Details of an Occupational Health referral may be provided as relevant.

Written notice of a subsequent Second Review and Third Review meeting as appropriate will clearly identify its purpose and stage. It may be appropriate for the Head of Faculty/Department to attend any of the review meetings to discuss impact of absence and the reasonableness of adjustments.

After each review meeting, the HR Manager will write to the member of staff, within 5 working days of the meeting, to outline key points of discussion and what has been agreed. The letter will be clear about next steps. The member of staff will be invited to put on record if in his/her opinion the letter does not accord with their understanding of the meeting and its outcomes.

Subject to the evidence arising from the above line of enquiry, after 1, 2 or 3 meetings the conclusion may be that attendance is satisfactory (i.e. satisfactory attendance record in the intervening monitoring period or a successful and sustained return to work) and the Formal Review Process can cease. This will be confirmed in writing and the formal process will cease, only returning to the stage reached at that point e.g. Second Review or Third Review if attendance again triggers a formal review in the following 12 month rolling period.

If satisfactory attendance is not achieved after 2/3 review meetings, the decision may be made to convene an Attendance Hearing to give consideration to the facts of the case and to determine whether it is reasonable to continue to manage the absenteeism or to else give notice of dismissal. This decision will be subject to the right of appeal.

At the point that convening an Attendance Hearing to consider dismissal is a possible outcome arising from the next review meeting, this will be clearly stated in the letter giving notice of the Review Meeting.

6.12 **Absence Hearing - Contemplating Dismissal**

The member of staff will be notified in writing of the date of the Attendance Hearing and given a minimum of 10 working days' notice. The possibility of a dismissal and the right of representation (by a Trade Union representative or a work place colleague) will be clearly stated in the letter. Failure to attend the Hearing or to be so represented will not prevent it from taking place. Should an employee be unable to attend due to their health, their representative may attend and act on his/her behalf.

If the original scheduled hearing date is not possible, an alternative date will be determined by the HR Manager, with a postponement of up to a maximum of 5 working days. If the reason for the postponement is the availability of the representative and the revised date still presents a problem, the member of staff must find an alternative representative. School management will not be unreasonable, however, in setting dates and attempting to secure preferred union representation.

All documentation (evidence) will be provided at least 5 working days prior to the date of the Hearing. If the member of staff wishes to furnish additional documentation, this must be provided at least 2 working days prior to the Hearing.

At the Hearing the case details will normally heard by the Headteacher unless he has personal or pecuniary interests in the outcome, in which case the Chair of Governors may hear the case.

The purpose of the Hearing is for the Headteacher/Chair of Governors to give consideration to the case as presented by the HR Manager and to determine whether it is reasonable to give notice of dismissal or to continue to manage the attendance.

The Head of Faculty/Department may attend as a witness to any adjustments and the impact of the absenteeism. A member of the Senior Management Team will normally attend to take notes.

The outcome of the Hearing will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the Hearing, stating the right of appeal.

The format for an Attendance Hearing is at Appendix E and for an Appeal Hearing at Appendix D.

6.13 **Records**

All letters and case documentation will be held confidentially by the HR Manager on a case file, with only final outcome letters being placed on personal files. Case files will be destroyed in accordance with the school's data retention policy (currently after 7 years due to the financial implications – sick pay).

If an Absence Hearing becomes necessary, the member of staff will receive a copy of all the documentation being submitted as evidence in their case and also have the opportunity to submit their own additional documentation. Similarly, there will an exchange of documentation in the event of an Absence Appeal Hearing.

7. Training and Development

There is a strong belief that staff development must be at the heart of everything we do at The Radclyffe School as it is a great contributor to well-being. Staff who have up to date knowledge and skills to do their job feel more competent in their roles. The opportunity to develop and grow is fundamental to the journey the school is on. This is evidenced by our appraisal policy which encompasses the right to set a professional development target, the annual programme of training in school, support given to individuals in their specialisms and the budget provision for training and development.

APPENDIX A

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Sometimes it can be difficult to balance the pressures of work with the needs of home life. We recognise that sometimes help is needed to deal with challenges, both practical and emotional.

Health Assured provide the school with an independent confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for all staff to access.

Support is available to you and your immediate family members (those who reside at the same address), including children in full-time education. Guidance and support on a wide range of issues is on offer including:

- Specialist information in regards to legal queries, consumer rights, debt or domestic matters;
- Personal (marital, relationship and family concerns, emotional issues, anxiety, depression, trauma, substance abuse, behavioural difficulties, bereavement and sexual identity);
- Work related (stress, bullying, anger management and career direction);
- Health;
- Child and dependent care.

Health Assured have qualified and experienced counsellors who will offer help and support in a professional, friendly and non-judgemental way. A range of additional support is available as part of the EAP.

FREE 24 HOUR 0800 030 5182

On-Line Health Portal @ www.healthassuredeap.co.uk

[Username: Oldham Password: Council]

N.B THE SCHOOL WILL NOT BE INFORMED OF YOUR CALL OR ITS CONTENT

CHECKLIST OF SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH STRESS

Physical Symptoms

Headaches and migraines
Sweating
Palpitations
Lethargy
General aches and pains
Muscular tension
Colds and other respiratory infections
Asthmatic attacks
Raised cholesterol level
Ulcers
Digestive tract disorders
Increased blood pressure
Thyroid disorders
Diabetes
Menstrual disorders
Heart disease
Increased risk of cancer

Mental Health Symptoms

Irritability
Depression
Withdrawal
Anxiety
Tearfulness
Poor concentration
Forgetfulness
Disturbed sleep and insomnia
Low self esteem
Post traumatic stress disorder

Behavioural Symptoms

Heavy drinking
Misuse of drugs
Smoking
Eating disorder
Poor time keeping
Increased sickness absence
Accident prone
Deterioration in personal relationships

IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH : LET SOMEONE KNOW

REQUEST FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING

Name	
Faculty	
Job Title	
Dates of any previous requests	

What is the flexibility you are requesting and why?

When do you want to commence this flexible arrangement?

Do you think your request will have implications for the school and if so, how can these be accommodated?

I wish to apply for flexible working as outline above:

Signed

Date

FORMAT OF AN APPEAL HEARING

THOSE PRESENT

- At least 2 members of the People, Pay and Performance Committee to hear the appeal
- Head teacher/Chair of Governors to explain the reason for the decision being appealed against (may attend as an adviser to the Committee, if not the original decision maker)
- Appellant (who could be the Head teacher)
- Appellant's Trade Union Representative/work place colleague
- Human Resources Manager (in an advisory capacity/witness as appropriate)
- A member of SLMT to take notes

PROCEDURE

1. The Appellant or his/her representative explains why he/she is appealing
2. Any questions for clarification from the Headteacher, the Committee, and its adviser(s)
3. The Head teacher responds, indicating why the original decision was made and refers to the evidence he feels is appropriate to the original decision (calling any witnesses as appropriate)
4. Any questions for clarification from the Appellant or his/her representative and the Committee
5. The Headteacher sums up (no new evidence shall be introduced at this stage)
6. The Appellant or his/her representative sums up the case for the appeal, no new evidence shall be introduced at this stage
7. All parties retire to allow the Committee to consider the case and to make their decision
8. All parties are recalled to indicate the decision of the Committee and that the Chair will confirm the decision within 5 working days.

FORMAT OF AN ATTENDANCE HEARING

Those present:

- The member of staff and his/her representative/work place colleague
- Headteacher to hear the case
- HR Manager to present the case
- Member of SLMT to take notes
- Head of Faculty/Department (HOD/F) as a witness [as appropriate]
- Witness(es) called by the member of staff

1. The Headteacher will ensure that all parties are introduced as necessary and explain the purpose of the Hearing: to give consideration to the member of staff's attendance record and to determine whether it is appropriate to continue to manage the level of absenteeism / impact on the school or else to give notice of dismissal.
2. The HR Manager will present the case and may call the HOF/D as a witness
3. The member of staff/ representative and Headteacher may ask questions of the HR Manager (and the HOF/D while in the room)
4. The member of staff / representative may respond and may call witnesses
5. The HR Manager and Headteacher may ask questions of the member of staff (and witnesses while in the room)
6. The HR Manager sums up
7. The member of staff / representative sums up
8. All retire to allow for the Headteacher to make a decision
9. All parties recalled for a decision
10. The decision and right of appeal are confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the Hearing.