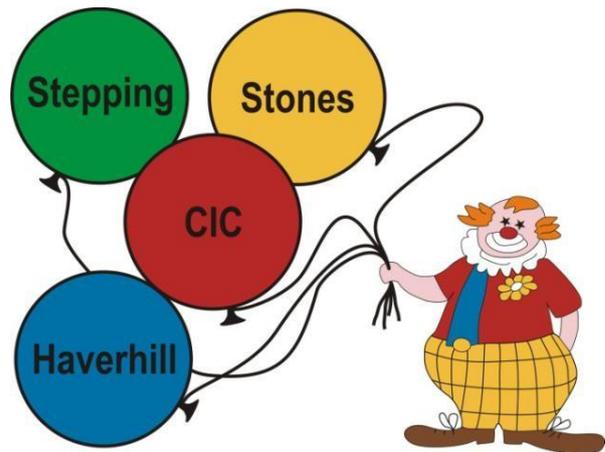


General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children’s Welfare

The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.



51 Staff Sickness and Absence Policy

Policy statement

This staff sickness and absence Policy Statement at Stepping Stones recognises that employees may be absent from the organisation for a variety of reasons. To ensure that all staff are treated in a consistent and equitable manner, this document provides the framework for dealing with such circumstances. Absence: whether due to illness or any other circumstances is defined (for the purpose of this document) as the non-attendance of workers when they are contracted to attend.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3 Keeping safe 1.4 Health and well-being	2.1 Respecting each other	3.4 The wider context	4.2 Active learner

Procedures

Any sickness/absence should be reported to the Manager by 7.30am, by telephoning the preschool landline (01440 703833 and all staff should take a note of this) giving a clear indication of the nature of the illness/absence and a likely return date. The staff member (absent due to illness) is required to ensure cover for the Pre-School. (It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure their absence has been received by the Manager- so a left message or text is not acceptable).

Any sickness absence of less than seven days (short-term sickness/absence) requires an employee to complete a 'Self-Certificate' available from any Doctor's Surgery or downloadable from www.direct.gov.uk. 'Self-Certificates' are enforced at the Manager discretion and is dependent on an employee's previous record of short term sickness/absence). Sickness absence which exceeds seven days (long-term sickness/absence) requires an employee to obtain a 'Fit Note' from their GP and attend a 'Return to Work Meeting' with the Manager.

A back to work meeting will take place after each period of long-term sickness/absence and before the employee can return to work. The back to work meeting will be held within an agreed timeframe once the employee indicates their request to return to work. The Manager must offer a return to work meeting to the employee within two working days of their request to return to work. The fit note and back to work meeting is to establish the reason for and cause of the absence, to consider whether there is anything the Manager or organisation can do to help (make reasonable adjustments) and to confirm that the employee is fit to return to work. If the employee is deemed unfit for work then they must return to their GP and the cycle of absence, fit note and back to work meeting will be repeated until the employee is able to return to work or a formal process will be triggered and if appropriate their employment may be terminated. This formal process will also be triggered if an employee's explanation for absence is not forthcoming, considered to be unsatisfactory or if absence is not reported following the needed procedure listed in this policy.

- If long term sickness /absence prevents an employee returning to work or is recurrent or if frequent illness or absence exceeds recommended short term illness/absence within an agreed timeframe a more formal process will be triggered (agreed absence and timeframes can be agreed and extended on the advice of an employee's GP).
- A fit note can be obtained from a GP or hospital (the employee may be charged for the fit note if requested or completed before the 7th day of absence).

At Stepping Stones we adhere to Government recommendations -

If an employee is sick twice for 4-7days in a relatively short period (within a 3 month period) or sick for 4 or more short periods in a 3 month period, a formal process will be triggered.

The Manager can contact HMRC to arrange for an employee to be medically examined (this can be actioned once the employee returns to work).

HMRC report will give an opinion of the employee's fitness to work, state if there are medical grounds/reasons for an employee to have frequent or long-term absence and will help employers to decide if the employee is capable or incapable to work (the employer must obtain the employee's consent for a medical exam). However if the employer deems the medical exam is necessary and the employee withholds consent, then this will trigger a formal process.

Formal Process (In conjunction and taken from Stepping Stones Disciplinary Process)

Informal Action/Verbal Written Warning:

Employees committing what are deemed to be minor breaches of discipline will normally be approached by their supervisor/manager and spoken to informally about the matter. A performance improvement plan will be agreed; detailing objectives and time scales; if the objectives are not met within the agreed timescale than a full written warning will be issued. Employees experiencing any sort of difficulty either personally or at work are encouraged to raise the matter with their supervisor as the issues arise, and will be given the opportunity to do so at an informal meeting. It is hoped difficulties may be resolved informally where possible and a further meeting will be arranged to review the situation within a reasonable time. If informal action does not bring about an improvement, or the misconduct or unsatisfactory performance is considered to be too serious to be classed as minor, employers should provide employees with a clear signal of their dissatisfaction by taking further action.

Step 1: Written Statement/Letter

The first step in any formal process is to let the employee know in writing what it is they are alleged to have done wrong. The letter or note should contain enough information for the individual to be able to understand both what it is they are alleged to have done wrong and the reasons why this is not acceptable. The Manager/Deputy will issue the written statement /letter to the employee. The employee should be invited to meet with the Manager/Deputy and discuss the problem.

Step 2: Meeting and Discussion

Where possible, the timing and location of the meeting should be agreed with the employee. The length of time between the written notification and the meeting should not exceed two weeks. The employer should hold the meeting in a private location and ensure there will be no interruptions. Remember the employee has the right to be accompanied. At the meeting, the employer should explain the complaint against the employee and go through the evidence that has been gathered. The employee should be allowed to set out their case and answer any allegations that have been made. The employee should also be allowed to ask questions, present evidence, call witnesses and be given an opportunity to raise points about any information provided by witnesses. Following the meeting, the employer must decide whether disciplinary action is justified or not. Where it is decided that no action is justified the employee should be informed. Where it is decided that disciplinary action is justified, the employer will need to consider what form this should take. Before making any decision, the employer should take account of the employee's disciplinary and general record, length of service, actions taken in any previous similar case, the explanations given by the employee and - most important of all- whether the intended disciplinary action is reasonable under the circumstances. If deemed appropriate a performance improvement plan will be actioned, clearly stating the desired objectives and timeframe, if the objectives are not met within this agreed timescale than a written warning will be issued.

Performance

Following the meeting, an employee who is found to be performing unsatisfactorily should be given a written note by the Manager/Deputy setting out:

- The performance problem
- The improvement that is required
- The time scale for achieving this improvement
- A review date
- Any support the employer will provide to assist the employee. The employee should be informed that the note represents the first stage of a formal procedure and that failure to improve could lead to a final written warning and, ultimately, dismissal. A copy of the note should be kept and used as the basis for monitoring and reviewing performance over a specified period (eg: six months).

Final Written Warning:

Where there is a failure to improve or change behaviour in the time scale set at the misconduct stage, or where the offence is sufficiently serious, the employee should normally be issued with a final written warning - but only after they have been given the opportunity to present their case at a meeting. The employee will also have their final performance improvement plan

actioned, again clearly stating the desired objectives and timeframe, if the objectives are not met within this agreed timescale than the employee will be given a final written warning. The final written warning should give details of, and grounds for the complaint. It should warn the employee that failure to improve or modify behaviour may lead to dismissal or some other penalty, and refer to the right of appeal. The final written warning should normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after two years.

Dismissal or Other Penalty:

If the employee's conduct or performance still fails to improve, the final stage in the disciplinary process might be dismissal or (if the employee's contract allows it or it is mutually agreed) some other penalty such as demotion, or loss of seniority/pay. A decision to dismiss should only be taken by a manager who has the authority to do so. The employee should be informed as soon as possible of the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment contract will terminate, the appropriate period of notice and their right of appeal.

It is important for employers to bear in mind that if they dismiss an employee or impose a sanction such as demotion, loss of seniority or loss of pay, they must, as a minimum have followed the statutory dismissal and disciplinary procedures. The standard statutory procedure to be used in almost all cases requires the employer to:

Additionally, a sick employee will have their employment terminated

- If reasonable adjustments to their role, duties or hours cannot facilitate their return to work.
- If returning to work will not improve or worsen their health.

Advice on short and long term absence

National Insurance Contributions and Employers Office

HM Revenue and Customs

BA9 1AN

Enclosing

- Employees full name, address, and date of birth, gender and National Insurance Number
- Date of latest period and nature of absence (credited by a GP)
- Employee's written consent
- Copies of medical certificates or fit notes submitted to an employee within a 12 month period (naming the GP and GP Surgery address)
- Employee's occupation and main duties
- Reason for requesting an opinion
- Outcome of action already taken by employer
- Employees reason for their absence/s

Statutory Pay Disputes Team TEL: 03000560630

All records relating to staff absence/sickness will be stored confidentially and securely.

Sick Pay

- Normal statutory sick pay applies. Please refer to your individual contract of employment (Sick pay may be ceased as part of a formal process)

Maternity

- Absence relating to pregnancy will be recorded separately from sickness records. Employees are entitled to reasonable time-off with pay, to attend antenatal clinics. Statutory Maternity Pay will apply as appropriate. Staff should endeavour to make routine appointments outside of work time where possible.

Disability

- Absence relating to disability will be recorded separately from sickness records. We work within the framework of the 'Equality Act 2010' to ensure an inclusive and anti-discriminatory approach.

Time Off For Dependents

- In emergencies where normal childcare arrangements break down or where an employee is primarily or solely responsible for a child, dependent relative or partner who becomes ill or incapable, then an employee can request up to two days leave to organise appropriate care. This leave will be unpaid and the request should be made to the Manager as soon as a problem is identified

Time off for Medical Appointments

Where possible, appointments for Doctor, Dentist, Optician, Hospital etc. should be made outside of normal working hours.

Bereavement/Compassionate Leave

Please refer to individual contract of employment.

Annual Leave/Holiday Entitlement

Please refer in individual contract of employment.

For further Guidance on all matters relating to sickness and absence, including your rights as an employee and the relative legislation please refer to guidance found at

www.acas.org.uk and/or www.gov.uk/taking-sick-leave and/or www.direct.gov.uk

Gov.UK Sickness Guidance Library www.gov.uk/serach?q=Sickness

Gov.UK Statutory Sick Pay: Employee Fitness to Work

www.gov.uk/guidance/statutory-sick-pay-fitness-to-work--doctors-fit-note--statements-forwork

These sites were also used as a point of reference/guidance in the process of creating this document.

Please also refer to:

- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (Stepping Stones Childcare & Education CIC)
- Employment and Staffing Policy (Stepping Stones Childcare & Education CIC)
- Grievance Policy and Procedure (Stepping Stones Childcare & Education CIC)
- Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality (Stepping Stones Childcare & Education CIC)

This policy was adopted by	Stepping Stones Childcare & Education CIC
on	02.12.2018
Date to be reviewed	September 2019
Signed on behalf of the management	
Name of signatory	ELAINE MCMANUS
Role of signatory (e.g. manager/ deputy)	MANAGER

Review:

This policy is reviewed every year or whenever deemed necessary by the manager in the light of events and changes in the law.

This policy was given to staff to read on 03.12.2018 and was acknowledged and read by staff on:

Name of Staff Member	Date policy read	Staff signature
1. Anne Jessop		
2. Suzanne Rulten		
3. Chloe Mead		
4. Shelby Evans		
5. Lily Carr		
6. Kay Page		
7. Shannon Bronson		
8. Kelly Whitewood		
9.		
10.		