



United Learning
The best in everyone™

GLEBE PRIMARY SCHOOL UNITED LEARNING ACADEMY

Absence Management Policy 2023-2028

Updated: Autumn 2023
New Review: Summer 2028

Approved by the Local Governing Board on 6th February 2024

Signed by: Mr. James Dempster
Position: Chair of the Local Governing Body



United Learning
The best in everyone™

■ Ambition ■ Confidence ■ Creativity ■ Respect ■ Enthusiasm ■ Determination

United Learning Absence Management Policy and Procedure

Document Control	
Document Title:	United Learning Absence Management Policy and Procedure
Version:	5.0
Summary of Changes from Previous Version:	2023: reference to MSS
Name of Originator/Author (including job title):	Reward and Policy Team – September 2016
Target Audience:	All staff
Review By Date:	December 2028
Date Issued:	December 2023
JNC Involvement:	Subject to consultation but not agreed

Contents

1.	Scope	3
2.	Introduction.....	3
3.	Policy.....	4
4.	Definitions of Sickness Absence	5
5.	Procedure For Absence Reporting – including the employees responsibility.....	6
6.	Absence Indicators and Absence Reviews.....	8
7.	Formal Absence Review Hearing and Employee Rights	9
8.	Stages of Absence Management	10
9.	Right of Appeal	12
10.	Terminal Illness.....	13
11.	Employee Support	13
12.	Equality.....	13
	Appendix and Supporting Information to Absence Management Policy.....	14
	Self-Certification & Return to Work Discussion Form.....	16



1. Scope

The policy and procedure set out in this document applies to all staff employed by United Learning (United Learning Trust and United Church Schools Trust), other than those who are still covered by TUPE policies.

We are a values-led organisation which puts children first, expects the best from everyone and aims to bring out the best in everyone.

Where this policy refers to 'Line Manager' this should be interpreted to be either the direct line manager of the individual or the designated person who is responsible for recording sickness absences. Where this policy refers to 'Management' this should be interpreted to be either the Head Teacher or member of SLT within a school or the Central Office Head of Department.

Where this policy refers to 'School', 'Head Teacher' or 'Senior Leadership Team', within Central Office this should be interpreted to refer to the department where a member of staff works and their Head of Department.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 United Learning is committed to promoting the health, safety, welfare and well-being of all our staff and will support individuals who may have health difficulties. As part of this aim it is essential that throughout the organisation, all staff and managers are committed to achieving the lowest possible level of unexpected absence.
- 2.2 United Learning recognises that there are many different causes of absence from work. The policies and procedures relating to sickness stem from the need to provide support for employees during a period of sickness and also from the need to monitor and manage absence from work. This policy only covers absence due to sickness, but additional policies provide instruction on other forms of leave such as jury service, maternity leave, etc.
- 2.3 Mental health is as important as physical health. Everyone has mental health, and the term 'mental ill health' is one that encompasses a wide range of experiences which can affect someone's ability to manage with day to day tasks. These can range from stress through to mental health conditions, diagnosed or otherwise. Mental ill health can affect anyone, and people will experience mental ill health differently. Both mental and physical ill health are covered by our absence management procedures.
- 2.4 The absence management policy aims to provide a sympathetic, equitable and consistent process for dealing with employees whose attendance or work performance are affected by ill health.
- 2.5 Employees who are ill will be treated with consideration and respect, with every effort being made to assist their recovery and to safeguard their employment.
- 2.6 It is the responsibility of all employees to look after their own general health and well-being and, as far as possible, to minimise absence from work.
- 2.7 Employees are expected to attend for work regularly at the times required. United Learning recognises that from time to time this will be impossible and is always ready to assist employees with genuine difficulties, whilst applying sanctions, in accordance with the United Learning Disciplinary Policy, to those who seek to abuse such assistance.

- 2.8 Line Managers will inform members of staff of the notification of absence procedure during their departmental induction, and of the fact that their attendance will be monitored.

3. Policy

To ensure that employees who are absent from work are treated fairly;

3.1 **United Learning will:**

- a) Ensure that this policy is applied equitably and consistently to provide a supportive environment for those members of staff affected by ill-health and disability;
- b) Provide appropriate well-being support to all staff, including but not limited to access to an employee assistance programme, supporting schools to establish workload and well-being initiatives, providing central well-being resources and developing supportive policies and procedures;
- c) Ensure that sickness absence is managed responsibly with a view to balance the interests of the individual and the operational needs of the organisation;
- d) Ensure that appropriate training is provided for all managers involved in the various stages of the procedure;
- e) Operate an Occupational Sick Pay Scheme which provides sick pay to employees who are genuinely unfit for work in accordance with their conditions of service;
- f) Provide an external occupational health referral service to which employees may be referred so that a professional medical opinion or advice may be obtained;
- g) Show support to an employee who is, or anticipates being, absent for a period of ten days or more, which may, if appropriate, include home visits with the individual's prior agreement;
- h) Monitor levels of sickness/absence and make every effort to reduce unacceptable levels of absence in line with the needs of the employee and the organisation;
- i) Provide an appropriate electronic HR system to accurately record and report on staff absence, which will support the management of sickness absence across United Learning and enable the correct payment of occupational sick pay.
- j) Enable HR Business Partners (HRBP) to work closely with schools and Educational Directors to identify and investigate any underlying causes of high levels of absence within departments, jobs or job groups as identified within individual school health dashboards. HR Business Partners will work with and support Head Teachers in working to address any underlying causes.

3.2 **Head Teachers / Central Office Managers will:**

- a) Ensure that this policy and associated procedures are followed;
- b) Ensure that the appropriate Line Manager or designated person conducts an informal return-to-work meeting with staff who have been absent through sickness to establish and record what support needs to be given to the individual in relation to any on-going medical condition (please see Supporting Information – Reasonable Adjustments);



- c) Ensure that all sickness absence is accurately entered into the HR System to enable accurate reporting and sick pay processing (see [iTrent](#) page on the United Hub for full details on how to enter and review absence data);
- d) Monitor absences fairly and develop a positive culture towards attendance at work;
- e) Identify and investigate employees whose absence record is unsatisfactory to ensure that all possible steps are taken to provide appropriate support in order to improve their attendance record;
- f) Complete Occupational Health referrals as appropriate;
- g) Treat people who are sick with dignity and respect;
- h) Ensure that their duty of care to their employees is met at all times (see [ACAS - Defining an employer's Duty of Care](#)).

3.3 **All employees will:**

- a) Personally let the designated person, this may be the employee's line manager, member of the SLT, the Head Teacher or an appropriate designated role, know as soon as possible when they are sick, as detailed in section 5.
- b) Head Teachers and Central Office Managers should advise their PA and Line Manager of their own sickness, or where this is confidential or likely to be longer term, to advise their Line Manager directly (e.g. Director) of the anticipated duration of the absence;
- c) Attend an informal return-to-work discussion with the designated person, once they have returned to work, to ensure appropriate support is given;
- d) Self-certify their absence when they have been absent for less than eight days. If they are absent for more than seven days, they will need to provide a Statement of Fitness for Work;
- e) Inform their Line Manager if they are taking medication that is likely to impair their ability to properly care for students to enable a full risk assessment to be carried out. To also consider the impact the medication may have on their ability to carry out their duties effectively and if regular travel is part of the role to assess if this remains appropriate and safe while on medication. Employees are responsible for ensuring that any personal medication brought into the workplace is appropriately stored, posing no risk to either students or fellow staff. This should be discussed with their line manager or school HR representative.

4. **Definitions of Sickness Absence**

Description	Definition	Management Approach
Short Term / Occasional absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermittent absences of one day or more (but under four consecutive weeks) 5 days absence in rolling 3 month period Absences occur over separate periods i.e. 3 occasions in a 6 month period 	<p>Review: To take place after each period of sickness absence during the Return to Work discussion.</p> <p>Support: If the absence(s) is/are potentially related to an underlying medical condition OR is cause for concern (e.g. work related stress) an Occupational Health referral may be made prior to further action.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reason for absences could either be connected or unconnected 	Action: If following the review and support stage (where relevant) the absence remains a cause for concern, then the case should be managed as documented within this policy.
Frequent / Recurring patterns of absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sickness absence highlights a recurring pattern of absence which is cause for concern. 	
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One continuous period of absence that lasts (or expected to last) over four consecutive weeks. 	Review: When an employee has been off (or expected to be off) for four weeks. Support: Maintain contact with the employee during their absence and refer to Occupational Health where appropriate. Action: Following the support stage, and where appropriate depending on the individual circumstances the case should be managed as documented within this policy.

5. Procedure For Absence Reporting – including the employees responsibility

- 5.1 All staff must report their absence as detailed in 5.2 and 5.3 below. If for any reason you are not able to speak to your Line Manager or designated individual in person, you are not obliged to give any personal and confidential information to the person receiving your call, except to say that you will be off work that day and will call again to explain your absence. Any person receiving a call from a colleague should handle the call with sensitivity and confidentiality. A text is not appropriate. It is important to have a telephone conversation with your line manager/designated person to review if you require any support and where possible to rearrange any planned work commitments.
- 5.2 You are personally responsible for reporting any absence and must contact your Line Manager/designated person, directly as early as possible on the first day of absence. In exceptional circumstances, where you are prevented from doing this yourself, a family member or friend may notify United Learning on your behalf. The person conveying the detail of the absence must confirm their name and relationship to you.
- 5.3 The information your Line Manager/designated person will require is:
- The general nature of your illness;
 - Whether the absence is the result of an injury at work;
 - The day you became ill; *and*
 - The anticipated duration of absence (if known).
- 5.4 If your illness is due to a contagious or infectious disease, or to someone living in your household who is suffering from an infectious or contagious disease, you must take such precautions as may be required by your Line Manager/the school, including any requirement not to attend work.
- 5.5 If you are unable to return to work on the date anticipated in 5.3 above, your ongoing absence must be reported as per clause 5.2 above.
- 5.6 As soon as you become fit to return to work or if you are likely to return to work earlier than anticipated, you must report this via the designated absence reporting procedure; as detailed in clause 5.2 above.



- 5.7 If you become ill whilst at work, you should notify your Line Manager/designated person before leaving the workplace. If you leave your workplace as a result of sickness during your working day this will be counted as a normal working day for the purpose of pay, but will be recorded for the purpose of sickness absence monitoring.
- 5.8 **Accident or Injury at work** - If the absence is as a result of an accident or injury at work then you must ensure that you complete an incident / accident form and pass this on to the appropriate person. (See also Supporting Information – Accidents at Work).
- 5.9 During periods of long term absence, a representative of the school/department will ensure you are kept up to date on developments both within the school/department and within United Learning where appropriate. Depending on the nature of the medical condition, contact may not always be appropriate. Keeping in touch during sickness absence is a difficult issue for all parties and striking the right balance is important. Line Managers/Head Teachers should therefore consider how much information is passed to a member of staff who is absent, the relevance and importance of this information to ensure that the information is well received and not likely to cause any anxiety. General information about the school/department developments or activities is likely to be appropriate. Job and training opportunities are also likely to be well received if handled carefully, depending on the nature of the illness.
- 5.10 **Return to Work**
- On return to work after no more than seven days' absence (including any non-working days), you must complete a Self-Certification / Return to Work form (see Appendix). For Central Office colleagues this form will be completed within Employee Self Service. Schools will use the form included in the Appendix.
- On return to work after 8 or more days' absence (including any non-working days), you will require a Statement of Fitness for Work or a "Fit Note" from your GP.
- a) If you do not return to work when the Fit Note expires, then further consecutive Fit Notes must be provided covering all dates of sickness absence and you must contact United Learning via your designated absence reporting procedure (clause 5.2) to provide an update on your ongoing absence and progress, e.g. submission of further Fit Notes or expected return to work date.
 - b) If you are in hospital you should provide a Fit Note as soon as reasonably practicable after admission. Once you are discharged, you should provide a Fit Note that covers the time you have been an in-patient.
 - c) It is important that Fit Notes are provided for the whole of the relevant period of absence and that the Fit Note(s) state the days (including non-working days) that they cover.
- 5.11 Regardless of the length of absence, on your return to work, an informal return to work discussion will be held with the Line Manager or appropriate designated person (this may be the employee's line manager, another appropriate line manager, member of the SLT, the Head Teacher or an appropriate designated role). During this discussion, the Self-Certification/Return to Work Form will be discussed, where appropriate, and Fit Notes reviewed. The purpose of this discussion is not a disciplinary or capability hearing, it is an opportunity to welcome you back to work following an absence, discuss with you any underlying issues which may be causing your absence as well as any additional support or adjustments that may be appropriate. This discussion will also ensure that accurate documentation of the discussion is provided on the Return to Work discussion form.



- 5.12 During informal Return to Work discussions, there will be no right to representation.
- 5.13 Where an employee is suffering from a condition of an intimate nature, the member of staff may request that this meeting take place with an appropriate person of the same sex.
- 5.14 Failure to adhere to the sickness absence procedure concerning any absence may result in such absence being considered unauthorised which may include the withdrawal of Occupational Sick Pay. It may also result in formal action being taken in accordance with the United Learning Disciplinary Policy.
- 5.15 If you become sick during annual leave/school holidays and have followed the sickness absence reporting procedure (including the submission of relevant Fit Notes) you will be regarded as being on sickness absence.
- 5.16 It is expected that most issues of sickness absence will be resolved informally according to the procedure detailed above, however where these measures prove ineffective, it may be necessary to deal with the issue more formally in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.
- 5.17 All absence-related paperwork, e.g. completed self-certifications, return to work discussion forms, Fit Notes, risk assessments and Occupational Health reports should be stored on the employee's personnel file.

6. Absence Indicators and Absence Reviews

- 6.1 If a member of staff reaches an "indicator", this does not automatically mean that an employee's level of absence is unacceptable. Reaching an "indicator" does not necessarily mean that an absence review hearing has to take place, nor that the employee has to receive a formal warning for their absence. The following absence/threshold levels may be regarded as 'indicator points' at which an absence review should take place:
- a) Short-Term and frequent sickness absence: 3 instances in a rolling 6 month period or 5 days absence within a 3 month period (pro rata'd for part time workers);
 - b) Where a combination of odd days, longer periods and patterns of absence causes concern. The school should seek advice from a HRBP/HRA in reviewing this.
 - c) Long-Term sickness absence: continuous period of 4 weeks or more.
- 6.2 Managing absence is primarily the direct Line Manager's responsibility. It is their responsibility to hold meetings with members of staff, during long-term sickness absence, and following every period of sickness absence. Where the member of staff is on long-term sickness absence, these meetings might involve a HRBP/HRA or the HR lead in the school. The Line Manager's responsibility may be delegated to another appropriate individual determined by the school's local procedures.
- 6.3 Line Managers can view the absence records of their direct reports in the iTrent Manager Self-Service module.
- 6.4 Where one of the 'indicators' has been reached, this will require a review of the employee's absence history. Any review should take place as part of the Return to Work discussion and could result in one of the following outcomes:
- a) If it is believed that there may be an underlying medical condition, an Occupational Health referral may be made and to determine any additional support required.



- b) Where it is felt that the level of absence is not satisfactory, an absence review hearing should be arranged.
 - c) It may be decided that an absence review hearing is not appropriate on this occasion and the employee's absence will continue to be monitored.
 - d) It may be decided that an absence review hearing is not appropriate, but that clear short term targets to drive an improvement in attendance are set.
- 6.5 In the case of frequent and long term sickness absence, the employee may at any time at United Learning's expense be invited to undergo a medical examination by a medical practitioner nominated by United Learning, subject to the provisions of the Access to Medical Records Act 1988 where appropriate (see Appendix). This will involve gaining written consent by the individual.
- 6.6 Absence indicators should only include absences related to Sickness absence. The following absence reasons should not be 'counted' when reviewing an employee's absence record:
- a) Adoption / Maternity leave and pregnancy related absence; Paternity, Parental or Emergency Dependency Leave
 - b) Personal Leave
 - c) Public duties e.g. Jury service, School Governor duties, Armed Forces Reservist
 - d) Bereavement or Compassionate leave
 - e) Annual leave
 - f) Trade Union duties
 - g) Attending authorised training courses
 - h) Paid or unpaid suspension from work
 - i) Medical appointments where it has not been possible to arrange them outside working hours (e.g. hospital appointments).
- 6.7 United Learning takes a positive and supportive stance when working with disabled employees (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). There is a requirement under the Equality Act for employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' in assisting disabled employees to remain at work, and managers must discuss this with the employee and take appropriate advice from HR and Occupational Health. Further details regarding reasonable adjustments can be found in part 4 of the Appendix. Where absence still exceeds an acceptable level, despite reasonable adjustments, this does not preclude United Learning from taking appropriate decisions with regard to an individual's sickness record, in accordance with the absence indicators and review processes set out in this policy.

7. Formal Absence Review Hearing and Employee Rights

- 7.1 Employees will be given five working days' notice of any formal absence review hearing for both short term and long term absence concerns. Along with this notification, employees will be informed of their right to representation at formal absence hearings.
- 7.2 Any decision from a formal absence review hearing will be communicated to the employee, in writing, within seven working days of the hearing. In some cases, the outcome may be communicated verbally following an adjournment to the absence review hearing and followed up in writing.



- 7.3 Once a formal warning has been issued, should there be any further absence indicators met during the validity of the warning then formal action will re-commence at the next stage as detailed in either Section 8.1 or 8.2, as appropriate.

8. Stages of Absence Management

8.1 Short Term, Frequent or Recurring Patterns of Absence

At the end of each Return to Work discussion, the Line Manager/appropriate designated person should confirm to the member of staff what their current absence levels are and highlight how this compares to the agreed absence indicators.

Stage 1

If the Line Manager/designated person, assesses that there is a matter of concern, then the employee will be invited to a formal absence review hearing to discuss the absence concerns. This meeting will be chaired by the appropriate Line Manager/designated person, with a HR representative present. The employee is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague at this hearing.

If it is considered that there may be an underlying medical condition, an Occupational Health referral may be made in order to determine whether any additional support is required.

A potential outcome of this absence review hearing is that the employee is issued with clear attendance targets which are to be set for a period not exceeding one full term and that further action under this procedure will be taken if these targets are not met. A First written warning may be issued at this stage. The employee will be made aware of their right of appeal as per this policy.

A follow up meeting will take place at the end of the review period even if the matter has been resolved. This will provide a formal acknowledgement of the achievement of targets set.

Stage 2

If absence problems continue and these targets are not being met during the period specified or a further indicator is met whilst there is an active warning, the Line Manager/designated person may refer to HR for a medical report to be obtained from Occupational Health.

If there is not a requirement for Occupational Health involvement, then the employee will be invited to a further absence review hearing. This meeting will be chaired by the appropriate Line Manager/designated person with a HRBP/HRA present. The employee is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague at this hearing.

A potential outcome of this absence review hearing is that the employee is issued with further attendance targets for a period not exceeding one full term. A Final Written Warning may be issued at this stage and the outcome letter will state that failure to comply with these targets may result in dismissal. The employee will be made aware of their right of appeal as per this policy.

Stage 3

If these final targets are not met a further referral to Occupational Health may be made, to ascertain the employee's ability to undertake their duties. A further absence review hearing, chaired by a



member of the Management team and a HRBP/HRA will be convened. The Chair Person will usually be the Head Teacher or Central Office Head of Department. The Chair will review the case history and previous absence review hearing notes and information received from the Occupational Health report (where appropriate).

If at this stage, the Chair Person, having taken into consideration the information available and the information submitted by the employee, assesses that the absence level is unacceptable the employee may be dismissed.

If dismissal is not appropriate, the Chair Person may set a further target in accordance with Stage 2. The decision of the Chair Person will be notified to the employee, in writing, within seven working days of the hearing. The employee will be made aware of their right of appeal as per this policy.

8.2 **Long Term Sickness Absence**

Any sickness absence which is expected to last over four weeks will be treated as long term absence. An occupational health referral should be made to provide guidance to the Line Manager/designated person, which may include information on phased return, short term adjustments or additional support or medical advice. A review of the appropriate next steps can take place at the start of the absence for expected long term sickness e.g. for a pre-planned operation and recovery period.

Stage 1

Contact will be made with the employee in order to establish the present position/circumstances relating to the absence and if possible, assess the likelihood of a date for a return to work. This will take the form of a welfare meeting (agreed by mutual consent either as a home visit, at the workplace, at a mutually convenient location or a telephone call) between the employee, Line Manager/designated person and appropriate HR support. The employee may wish to have a trade union representative, workplace colleague or family member present for support within this meeting. Employees must be given five working days' notice of any welfare meeting.

The Line Manager/designated person will discuss the likely length of absence with the employee and suggest further dates for review. If at this stage it is clear that the employee has an expected return date and that there will not be a recurring or subsequent problem, then no further action will occur.

Stage 2

If the employee continues to be absent then a second welfare meeting will be held as per Stage 1, normally within one month of the meeting in stage 1. This meeting will utilise any new reports from Occupational Health as a guide and allow for all parties to give consideration to the options available (e.g. Return to Work – Phased or amended hours, Redeployment or alternative / amended roles or Medical Retirement).

It will be necessary to allow the employee, advised by their representative, time to consider any options that may be identified.

Stage 3

If the employee continues to be absent then a third welfare meeting will be held as per the stages above and normally within 2 months of the meeting in stage 2. This meeting will explore any changes



to the employee's health and medical diagnosis and to give further consideration to the options available.

This period may be extended where the employee's absence is related to a disability, or in exceptional circumstances following advice from the HR Business Partner.

Stage 4

If the employee's absence continues, then the case will be referred for a formal absence review hearing. The absence review hearing will review the facts of the case and previous meetings which will form the basis of a hearing, at which the employee (and/or their representative) will be present. If the employee is unable to attend, then their representative may present the employee's position on their behalf.

The meeting will usually be chaired by the Head Teacher or Central Office Head of Department, with a HRBP/HRA and a note taker present. The Chair Person will make a decision after considering the case history and the following points:

- a) Review the medical evidence available;
- b) Is it appropriate to await further developments (i.e. referral for treatment)?
- c) Will the future performance of duties by the employee be seriously impaired due to the nature of the illness?
- d) Is there a likelihood of return to work?
- e) Are there any risks to the employee or pupils should the employee return to work?
- f) Is a Medical Retirement available?
- g) Has reasonable alternative employment been identified/offered?
- h) Can lighter duties be offered?
- i) Could duties/shift patterns/working hours be amended to facilitate a return?

As a result of the hearing the Chair Person may determine that the employee should be dismissed or decide upon an alternative course of action.

The decision of the hearing will be notified to the employee, in writing, within seven working days of the hearing. The employee will be made aware of their right of appeal as per this policy.

9. Right of Appeal

- 9.1 Employees will have the right to appeal against all written warnings or dismissal decisions issued by managers, by sending written notice within ten working days of notification of the decision, setting out the specific grounds for appeal. The appeal will be heard as per the table below.

Original Sanction issued by:	Appeal to be addressed to:	Appeal to be chaired by:
Line Manager / SLT member	Head Teacher / Central Office Head of Department	Head Teacher / Central Office Head of Department
Head Teacher / Central Office Head of Department	Director of HR	Executive Headteacher / Chair of the Local Governing Body / Central Office Senior Manager



- 9.2 The appeal decision shall be final. If the warning or dismissal is upheld the date of the sanction shall be the date of the original sanction.
- 9.3 Appeal hearings will normally take the form of a full rehearing of the case. However, both the employee and the School/department can request that new relevant evidence be presented at the hearing. Any such request must be submitted to the appeal panel at least five working days before the hearing. The decision of the appeal panel in this respect is final.

10. Terminal Illness

- 10.1 Line Managers/designated individuals should be aware of the need to handle cases involving terminal and potentially terminal illness with great care. In such cases the Line Manager/designated person should contact their HR Business Partner to discuss the best means of managing the absence as sensitively and compassionately as possible.
- 10.2 Contact should be maintained with consent via a designated member of the employee's family during treatment, hospitalisation and/or while at home.
- 10.3 Ill health retirement, where appropriate, should be considered.

11. Employee Support

11.1 Employee Assistance Programme

Employees can obtain free and confidential information, support and counselling on a wide range of work, personal, financial and family issues. All employees can access free support from Health Assured through [Perkbox](#) and where schools have access to the Employee Assistance Programme, CiC can be contacted through www.well-online.co.uk, 0800 0851376.

11.2 Benefits at United Learning

United Learning operate a benefit scheme in partnership with [Perkbox](#) which offers over 250 exclusive benefits, including a cycle to work scheme, discounted gym memberships through Gymflex, and a green car lease scheme with Novalease. Perkbox also runs a Wellness hub with content to support physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, including workout videos, meditation guides, yoga sessions and sleep stories.

12. Equality

In applying this policy, United Learning will have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and provide for good relations between people of diverse groups. In particular on the grounds of the following characteristics protected by the Equality Act (2010); age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.



1. Relevant Employment Legislation

1.1 Access to Medical Records Act 1988

Under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 an employer may not seek a medical report on an employee from a medical practitioner without the employee's written consent. The employee is entitled to see a copy of any such medical report before it is supplied to the employer and either withhold consent to its supply or ask the doctor to make corrections to it.

An employee may refuse permission for the employer to contact his or her medical practitioner or the Occupational Health provider. Where this occurs, the employer should explain to the employee the reasons behind the request. However, if permission continues to be refused, the employer should inform the employee that it will have no option but to make decisions affecting their employment without the benefit of medical opinion.

Where a report is obtained, an employer should make decisions affecting the employee's employment only after consulting with the employee and fully considering all the relevant facts.

1.2 Data Protection

Any information held about an employee will be held securely on file, (either computer or paper-based) and used only when needed. United Learning may:

- a) Disclose the data internally, for instance, to a manager or to the payroll team.
- b) Disclose the data (but not sensitive data) to external individuals and organisations.

United Learning will ensure that our obligations and responsibilities are carried out in line with the General Data Protection Regulations and the United Learning Employee Data Protection Policy.

1.3 Equality Act 2010

In cases where an employee is diagnosed with a long term health condition, or becomes, disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, the manager will meet with the employee to:

- a) Seek to establish the nature of the illness. The employee may be asked to consult with our Occupational Health team to enable a medical report to be prepared or agree to a report being requested from their own doctor. This will be in accordance with the policy on Obtaining Medical Reports and will be paid for by the employer;
- b) Consider making reasonable adjustments to the particular job to accommodate either short-term or long-term requirements;
- c) Consider offering alternative employment or a change to the employees' working patterns or such other adjustments to their job as may be reasonable in the circumstances. See section 4 below.

2. Accidents at Work

If an employee suffers an injury during the course of their employment, it should be immediately reported to the Line Manager/designated person and the incident must be recorded in the accident book.



If an employee's absence is medically certified as an accident arising from their employment or from participation in extra-curricular or voluntary activities connected with their employment, the employee will be entitled to sick leave with pay for the period specified within the Sick Leave and Pay Policy, but the initial absence will not be taken into account for calculating your entitlement to sick pay for any subsequent absence, however this may be reviewed if the initial absence becomes an ongoing period of sick leave. If the absence exceeds the period for which a full pay allowance is made, United Learning, at its discretion, may grant an extension of full pay, otherwise normal sick leave and pay entitlements will commence.

If you are absent from work as a result of an accident and receive damages from a third party claim, you will be required to refund the school any sick pay paid in relation to that accident to which the damages refer.

3. Medical Suspension

A member of management may at any time suspend an employee pending a medical report, if in their view, the employee's state of health is likely to cause risk to themselves, pupils or other staff.

If there is someone within the employee's household who is suffering from an infectious or contagious disease, they must notify their Line Manager/designated person immediately, and take such precautions as may be required by the school including a requirement not to attend work.

Any period of medical suspension will be on full pay and will not count against the entitlements within the Sick Leave and Pay Policy.

4. Reasonable Adjustments

People with disabilities are protected against discrimination at work under the Equality Act 2010. The law requires employers to make reasonable adjustments for employees covered by the Act. This means, wherever possible, removing barriers that get in the way of a person with a disability attaining employment or promotion, doing their job or accessing training. Reasonable adjustments can include:

- a) changing the way in which work is done;
- b) providing equipment that will help the person do their job; or
- c) making changes to the building or premises where the person works.

In relation to absence, recommendations for reasonable adjustments may appear as part of a GP "Fit note" or Occupational Health report.

Reasonable adjustments may not be difficult to make and can take many forms. It is important for managers and school leaders to keep an open mind and deal with each situation in conjunction with the employee and HR/Occupational Health.

Reasonable adjustments to support a return to work and/or enable a colleague to remain at work could include:

Phased return to work – this is where a gradual return to work is likely to benefit the employee. This could be a gradual increase in either the intensity of work or the hours worked or a combination of both. A phased return to work is initially agreed for a period of up to six weeks (depending on the duration of the absence) during which the individual would be entitled to receive full pay. Where an



employee is unable to gradually increase their hours to the full contractual obligations within 6 weeks or where the employee can only manage a limited number of hours during the phased period, advice can be sought from the HRBP to review if pay should be aligned with the number of hours worked during this period rather than at full pay.

Altered Hours – an employee may benefit from changing their hours or pattern of work during the period when they are returning to full fitness. This may but does not necessarily mean working fewer hours.

Amended Duties – an employee may benefit from amending some of their duties to take account of their condition, For example, removing the need for heavy lifting or restricting tasks to purely administration for the agreed period.

Workplace adaptations – a temporary or permanent adaptation may enable an employee to return to work. Workplace adaptations could include providing the employee with a parking space whilst they have reduced mobility or enabling them to work on the ground floor.

Any program of reasonable adjustments should be discussed and agreed. The detail of agreed adjustments should be recorded together with the associated timescale and method of review.



Self-Certification & Return to Work Discussion Form

Employee Name:

Payroll/Staff
Number:

School/ Department:

PERIOD OF ABSENCE *(Employee to complete)*

First Day of Absence *(including :
Non-working days)*

Last Day of Absence:
*(including Non-working
days)*

First notification to (give date, time and method of notification, and name of person notified)

Total number of working days absent (including bank holidays)

REASON FOR ABSENCE *(Employee to complete)*

(Insert brief details of illness, symptoms)

Did you see a doctor or attend a hospital or clinic?

Yes No

If yes, give
details

Are you receiving any treatment/medication that may
affect your ability to perform your job?

RETURN TO WORK DISCUSSION *(Manager to complete)*

Has a Self-Certification been completed?

Yes No

Has the absence been more than
8 days? If so, has a Fit Note been supplied?

Yes No

(Insert details of areas discussed, e.g. treatment, medication, any adjustments in the workplace)

CURRENT ABSENCE TRIGGERS

(Insert details of where employee is near to/exceeds a trigger as detailed in the policy)

AGREED ACTION PLAN/SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

I can confirm that to the best of my knowledge that the information provided on this form is accurate and up-to-date

Employee's Signature:

Manager's Signature:

Date of Return to Work meeting

Entered on HR System by:

Date:

 The Best in Everyone

Ambition ■ Confidence ■ Creativity ■ Respect ■ Enthusiasm ■ Determination
STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL – MEDICAL IN CONFIDENCE