

# ***Employee Absence: Sickness Policy***

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This policy applies to SAE Education Limited staff employed in the UK (henceforth referred to as “SAE UK”) and reflects current UK legislation and will be updated in line with any legislative changes.

## 1. Introduction

This policy reflects the culture and values of our organisation.

## 2. Policy purpose, scope and application

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline a framework for dealing with attendance so that employees clearly know what is expected of them, how an absence from work may be approved, and to clarify whether this would be paid by SAE or authorised as unpaid, so as not to breach the employee’s contractual obligations.

There are times when we are unable to attend work due to sickness, and it is our aim to treat employees sensitively and with respect. Likewise, employees need to appreciate the impact their non- attendance may have on their students and colleagues.

### 2.2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees, and covers absences which may occur due to sickness, i.e. where a member of staff is too unwell to work.

### 2.3 Application

Every manager and staff member should ensure that they understand this policy and adhere to these procedures in order for us to fairly support staff when they cannot attend work due to sickness, and adopt the same approach to all staff, consistently and in line with our duty of care responsibilities. It is also important that staff abide by these procedures to enable their line manager and team as best manage business as usual in their absence.

## 3. Key principles

- a. **To create a working environment which we are proud of, can rely upon each other and which others wish to learn in, work within and tell others about**

We commit to promoting the well-being of all our employees and will support our employees during periods of sickness and ill-health. We also have a commitment to our students and colleagues, and employees are expected to regularly attend work.

If the sickness policy is not followed, the company reserves the right to withhold payment of contractual sick pay and if this relates to conduct, may initiate disciplinary action.

**b. To understand the statutory rights of our employees**

This policy follows the guidelines set out by ACAS, as well as employee's legislative and contractual rights and we will follow these guidelines fairly and consistently.

We will continually promote and drive up standards to ensure SAE is a great place to work and a great place to study. We are committed to these aims and the standards set out in this policy and will effectively manage the consequence of absence to ensure that we all demonstrate the behaviours and conduct in line with our values.

## **4. Policy guidelines**

### **1. Absence due to sickness guidelines**

This policy applies to all eligible paid employees, in line with the terms set out within their contract of employment.

Company paid sick leave (full pay inclusive of statutory sick pay (SSP) is two weeks at full pay in a rolling twelve-month year. SSP will apply thereafter for up to a maximum of 28 weeks in line with the amounts and qualifying periods, which can be found on the UK Government's website: <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>.

To be eligible for company and statutory sick pay, the absence procedure must be fully followed and adhered to, and the absence authorised by the line manager.

### **2. Reporting absence**

It is our policy that employees must telephone their line manager to notify them as early as possible on their first day of absence, no later than 30 minutes before normal start time. If their immediate manager is unavailable, the employee should contact another manager or member of staff on campus.

Where it is not possible for an employee to contact their line manager themselves, i.e. they are too unwell, a close relative or friend may call on their behalf in the immediate instance. However, the employee should still contact their line manager directly as soon as they are capable of doing so.

Contact by text message or email is not acceptable as the sole means of informing the company of an absence.

Instances of regular or longer-term absence, i.e. more than a week must be notified to HR.

We expect employees to remain in regular contact with their manager throughout any periods of absence:

- In cases of self-certification, daily verbal contact is required unless otherwise agreed by the line manager.
- For longer absences, more than seven consecutive days, this must be covered by a GP's Fit note, and contact made weekly as a minimum, or as agreed by the line manager & HR.

Employees should make their line manager aware of any changes or updates to their condition, provide feedback from medical appointments, and advise if an earlier return date is anticipated.

It is our policy that a Return to Work meeting with the employee must be held by the line manager upon return from a period of absence in every case.

### **3. Longer term absences**

If an employee's absence has become a regular occurrence, is more complex or may require work-place adjustments, HR will seek further medical guidance from an Occupational Health specialist and/ or the employee's medical practitioners.

Where medical records and reports are requested, the requirement of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 and Access to Health Records Act 1990 will be met.

### **4. Sickness during annual leave**

If an employee is sick during a period of annual leave in the UK, they should report this to their line manager, in line with policy. A doctor's Fit note must be provided and subject to adherence with the attendance procedure, an absence due to ill health will be authorised in place of annual leave from the date of the first note. This may be taken on another occasion in line with usual leave procedures.

If sickness occurs while an employee is on annual leave abroad, as well as notifying their line manager, they should also contact HR, preferably by telephone, or email, giving details of the nature of their illness and likely date of return. A medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner is required, covering the dates of illness, and for which the employee is responsible for providing and paying.

### **5. Conduct during periods of absence due to sickness**

In all cases of absence, it is expected that the employee will do their utmost to facilitate a speedy return to work. Consequently, we would not expect any employee who is absent from work due to sickness or injury to:

- Participate in any activities which could aggravate the illness or injury or could delay recovery.
- Undertake any other employment whether paid or unpaid.

Such action may, depending upon the circumstances, lead to disciplinary action.

## 6. Unauthorised absence

Absence that has not been notified according to the above procedures will be treated as unauthorised. Any unauthorised absence will be unpaid.

If an employee does not report for work and has not informed their line manager or another senior manager as to why they are unable to attend, the line manager should make all reasonable efforts to contact them, e.g. by telephone, email and inform HR. They should also record any actions taken. Failure of an employee to follow the employee leave policy and procedure may lead to a disciplinary investigation.

## 7. Medical appointments

These should, wherever possible, be arranged to take place outside normal working hours. If this is not possible, employees should try to make an appointment at the start or end of the working day.

Employees should be given reasonable unpaid time off to attend hospital appointments or agree alternative working arrangements at the discretion of their line manager. The line manager may request to see an appointment card or letter.

## 8. Phased return to work and other reasonable adjustments

After a long-term illness and with guidance from Occupational Health where required, a return to work may be agreed on a phased return/ reduced hour increasing weekly.

Employees will only be paid for the hours that they work.

## 9. The role of the Occupational Health Service

HR may refer an employee to Occupational Health for a work-related medical assessment where health problems may be affecting their work or work may be impacting on their health.

Reasons may include: -

- Persistent periods of short-term absence, with the aim of determining if there is an underlying medical condition and to provide advice and support how best handle this.
- Long term absence, where the date of the return is not clear and the aim to support the individual and assess their capability towards a return to work in their role.
- Long term absence where the date of return is clear, to support the individual and SAE in planning a rehabilitation programme/ phased return, when necessary.
- Workplace injury, or medical problem arising out of the individual's duties and responsibilities connected with their job, including advice on managing disabilities and considering reasonable workplace adjustments.
- The individual's health may be impairing their ability to carry out their duties.

The referral process is an opportunity for the individual to discuss their health and work-related issues with a medical professional and can be a beneficial way forward for the individual. Written consent will be obtained from the individual prior to a referral being made.

A report will be produced by the Occupational Health Practitioner and sent to the HR Business Partner. The employee is entitled to see a copy of the report if requested.

An absence review meeting will be arranged with the employee, their line manager and the HR Business Partner to agree the appropriate course of action.

#### **10. Absence monitoring and management**

To effectively promote and manage well-being and attendance, employee absence levels will be monitored and reviewed to identify areas for concern and determine appropriate intervening action.

Line managers are responsible for promptly logging all absences via IRIS and raising any concerns with HR. These may be regular sickness absences, cumulative periods exceeding 10 working days in any twelve-month rolling period, (pro-rata for part-time employees), any single period of absence exceeding 10 working days, or “pattern-related” absences.

#### **11. Support for employees: Employee Assistance Programme**

Our Employee Assistance Programme is available to all employees and their family to access counselling and support advice in times of need.

This is a free and confidential service offering counselling, legal and financial consultation as well as online support and resources. Details about HealthAssured are available in Sage Documents > Staff Benefits.

### **5. Approval policy**

This Policy is fully supported by the ELT and Board of Directors.

### **6. Related policies**

Please see the following policies for more information:

- All leave policies
- Disciplinary policy

### **7. Further assistance**

If you have any questions or require further assistance, please discuss with your line manager. Managers may discuss individual cases with the HR Business Partner if further guidance is needed.

## 8. Revision history

### Version Control

| Issue Date:  | Summary of Changes                                                      | Review Date   |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| March 2016   | New policy                                                              | November 2017 |
| October 2018 | Clarification of policy & introduction of EAP                           | October 2020  |
| June 2020    | Rebranding and minor updates                                            | May 2022      |
| October 2020 | Rebranding, review and published to Policy Hub                          | October 2022  |
| July 2022    | Policy wording and branding updated in line with the sale of SAE to ADE | October 2023  |

## 9. Document protocol

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|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Document I.D.      | Employee Absence – Sickness Policy   |
| Responsibility     | HR Business Partner, Human Resources |
| Initial Issue Date | March 2016                           |

End