



Staff Sickness and Absence Policy

Introduction

Houghton and Wyton Pre-school is committed to promoting the health and well-being of its employees and ensuring appropriate procedures are followed when staff are unwell or absent. This policy outlines how staff should report sickness and other absence, and how the setting manages cover to ensure safe and effective care for children in accordance with the **Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2023)**.

Aim

To manage staff absence in a fair, consistent, and supportive manner, ensuring compliance with legal responsibilities and the needs of the children.

Objectives

We will:

- Ensure absences are reported promptly and managed effectively
- Maintain minimum staffing levels and ratios in line with EYFS
- Support staff through illness, disability, and return-to-work planning
- Monitor absence and take further action if needed to support staff or address ongoing issues

Roles and Responsibilities

- **All Staff:** Must report absence in line with this policy and keep the setting informed
- **Manager/Deputy:** Responsible for monitoring attendance, organising cover, maintaining records, and supporting staff
- **Trustees:** May be involved in reviewing long-term absence, or where further support or action is required

Procedures

1. Reporting Sickness or Unplanned Absence

- Staff must report absence **by 7:30am** by phone (not text/email)
- They should give an indication of:
 - The nature of illness or emergency
 - Expected return date (if known)
- Absence is recorded and monitored by the Manager

2. Medical Evidence and Fit Notes

- A Fit Note is required if a staff member is absent for more than 7 calendar days
- Shorter absences may require a self-certification form on return

3. Return-to-Work Discussions

- A brief meeting will be held after any period of sickness to:
 - Ensure staff are well enough to return
 - Discuss any adjustments needed
 - Confirm whether further support is required

4. Contingency and Maintaining Ratios

- The Manager will arrange cover using:
 - Bank staff or flexible team members
 - Agency staff as a last resort



- Where cover cannot be secured, sessions may be reduced, delayed, or cancelled following a risk assessment

5. Monitoring Absence and Recurrent Issues

- Absence patterns are monitored to identify where:
 - There is regular short-term absence
 - Reasonable adjustments may be needed
 - Capability or disciplinary procedures may apply
- Frequent or long-term absences will be addressed through supportive discussions with the Manager and may involve external medical advice or a formal review process if concerns continue

6. Sickness During Working Hours

- If a staff member becomes unwell during a shift:
 - The Manager will assess the need for early departure
 - Cover will be arranged immediately to ensure child ratios are maintained

7. Medical Appointments

- Wherever possible, non-urgent appointments should be made outside working hours
- Paid time off may be granted at the Manager's discretion depending on:
 - Nature of appointment
 - Role, notice given, and cover availability
- Medical appointments related to pregnancy are granted with paid time off by law

8. Emergency Leave and Dependants

- Emergency leave may be granted to care for a sick child or dependant
- Staff are asked to:
 - Notify the Manager as early as possible
 - Keep the absence to the minimum necessary
- This leave is usually unpaid unless otherwise agreed with the Manager

9. Bereavement and Compassionate Leave

- Staff may be granted paid or unpaid compassionate leave following the death of a close relative
- The length of leave is agreed with the Manager depending on the circumstances

10. Disability and Long-Term Illness

- The setting is committed to making reasonable adjustments to support staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions
- These may include:
 - Changes to working hours or duties
 - Additional rest breaks
 - Temporary phased return plans

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, EYFS guidance, or best practice changes.

Legislation and Guidance

- Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2023)
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- ACAS Managing Attendance Guidance



Registered Charity # 1203754

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Acknowledgment

All staff are expected to read and understand this policy. By doing so, they agree to follow the absence procedures and engage openly with the Manager about any sickness or related concerns.