

Absence Management Procedure



Nurture and Grow Childcare

Policy Statement

At Nurture and Grow, we encourage all our employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that, from time to time, employees may be unwell or unfit for work due to sickness, injury, or infection. This policy aims to strike a fair balance between operational requirements and staff wellbeing, providing a consistent framework to manage sickness absence with compassion, clarity, and fairness.

1. Principles

We are committed to promoting the health, safety, and well-being of our staff by:

- Providing a healthy working environment.
- Encouraging early intervention and supportive absence management.
- Monitoring attendance and addressing any issues promptly and fairly.

2. Exclusion Periods for Contagious Illnesses

Given our setting with young children, staff must adhere to the same exclusion periods as children for contagious illnesses. The manager will advise you of the exclusion timeframes as outlined in our Sickness and Infection Control Policy.

3. Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure

- You must telephone the nursery and speak directly with the manager on duty as soon as possible on the first day of your absence, and no later than one hour before your shift is due to start (e.g., by 6:30am for an early shift).
- Texts or emails are not acceptable.
- Briefly explain the nature of your illness and the expected duration of absence.
- Maintain daily contact with the nursery during the first week of absence.
- On return, complete the self-certification form and submit it to management.
- If off for more than seven calendar days, including the weekend and non-working days, you must provide a fit note from a GP.
- A return-to-work interview will be held upon your return to discuss the absence, any support needed, and future expectations. The meeting will be documented and signed by both parties.

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4. Managing Frequent and Persistent Short-Term Absence

Triggers for concern may include:

- Four self-certified absences in 12 months.
- Ten or more working days of self-certified absence in 12 months.
- Recognisable patterns (e.g., regular Monday/Friday absences).
- Absence is significantly higher than peers.

5. Managing Long-Term Sickness Absence

Absences over one month are considered long-term. A manager will:

- Contact the employee after 10 working days to understand the situation.
- Arrange a review meeting to discuss:
 - The nature and likely duration of the absence.
 - Possible adjustments or duties to aid the return.
 - Any personal concerns and support needs.
 - Medical assessments if necessary (occupational health or GP).

If there is no foreseeable improvement and all support measures have been explored, dismissal on capability grounds may be considered. This process will involve:

- Regular review meetings.
- Updated medical advice.
- A formal meeting with the option to appeal.

6. Occupational Health

The nursery reserves the right to request employees to attend an occupational health appointment during their employment if it is reasonably deemed necessary due to sickness absence, changes in health or the role, or where it is necessary to seek an expert medical opinion as to whether or not the employee can fulfil their job role or whether any reasonable adjustments should be made to the employee's role.

- Assess fitness to work.
- Explore reasonable adjustments.
- Support wellbeing and return to work planning.

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7. Access to Medical Records

In accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988:

- Employers must gain the consent of employees before requesting reports from medical practitioners
- Employers must inform employees of their rights in respect of medical reports
- The employee has the right to access the report before the employer sees it, provided appropriate notification is given
- The employer is responsible for notifying the medical practitioner that the employee wishes to have access
- The employee may ask for a report to be amended or may attach a statement to the report
- Employees can request changes or withhold consent.

Where the nursery requests further medical information about the health of staff from an individual's general practitioner or specialist, or its occupational health provider, the provisions of the Act will be followed.

8. Sick Pay

- SSP is paid if you are eligible.
- The maximum period for which SSP is payable is 28 weeks in one period of sickness absence and is paid at a rate specified by law. As with other earnings, SSP is subject to the deduction of income tax and all other normal deductions.
- We will inform you if you are not eligible for SSP
- SSP is paid in respect of qualifying days on which you are unable to work through sickness. Qualifying days are those days on which you would normally work.
- SSP is not payable for the first three qualifying days of sickness which are known as "waiting days", but this may not always be the case if you are absent on more than one occasion within a short period of time.
- SSP is only paid when the period of sickness is four or more consecutive day

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9. Annual Leave and Sickness

If sickness occurs during annual leave:

- Medical certification is required.
- Notify the Manager promptly, as soon as he/she knows that there will be a period of incapacity during the pre-planned annual leave in accordance with the Sickness absence reporting procedure.
- Submit a written request within five days of returning to work, setting out how much of the annual leave period was affected by sickness and the amount of leave that the employee wishes to take at another time.
- Replacement leave must be used within the same holiday year or carried forward only if near year-end.

10. Serious Illness or Injury of a Family Member

Leave will be agreed on a case-by-case basis and may include:

- This will be reviewed on an individual basis by the nursery manager.
- Additional unpaid leave.
- Use of annual leave/TOIL/flexible working.

11. Carer's Leave

Employees have the right to one week of unpaid leave per year to care for a dependent with long-term needs. This:

- A dependant is a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, a person who lives in the same household as the employee, or a person who reasonably relies on the employee for care.
- Long-term care is any illness or injury (either physical or mental) that requires or is likely to require care for more than three months, a disability under the Equality Act 2010, or issues related to old age.
- This leave can be taken in full or half-days and requires three days' notice (or double the amount of leave)
- The leave cannot be refused but it can be postponed where it is reasonably believed that the operation of the nursery would be unduly disrupted, but must be rescheduled within a month.
- Employees cannot be asked to provide proof of why the leave is required.

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12. Bereavement and Parental Bereavement Leave

- **Immediate family member:** Time off at manager's discretion (see Bereavement Policy). This leave applies on the death of an employee's spouse, life partner, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, dependant or other relative for whom the employee has special responsibility or has had special ties.
- **Death of a child:** Two weeks' statutory paid leave for eligible staff under the Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Act 2020.
- **Stillbirth after 24 weeks or child death while on shared/adoption leave:** Leave granted as per current legislation and with legal guidance.

Templates and Forms

- Self-Certification Form
- Fit Note Submission Record
- Return to Work Interview Template
- Occupational Health Referral Form
- Medical Report Consent Form

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
June 2025	Tracey Doidge	June 2026