



Staff Sickness and Absence Policy

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External reference points	• Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 • Employment Rights Act 1996 • Equality Act 2010 • ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance • Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Regulations 1982 • Office for Students (OfS) Conditions B2 and E2 • UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018		

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1. Introduction

LCK Academy values the health and wellbeing of its staff. This policy supports the effective management of sickness absence and ensures fair and consistent treatment for all employees, in line with legal requirements and ACAS best practice.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out how LCK Academy manages staff sickness and absence to protect wellbeing, meet legal obligations, and maintain operational effectiveness.

We aim to:

- Keep staff safe, healthy, and supported.
- Ensure absence is reported and managed fairly and lawfully.
- Enable smooth and timely returns to work.
- Use data to improve wellbeing and reduce avoidable absence.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed on full-time, part-time, permanent, or temporary contracts. It covers all absence due to illness or injury, including both short-term and long-term conditions.

4. Application

The following section explains how the staff sickness policy is applied at LCK Academy, including the general steps that need to be taken when staff are unable to come to work due to ill health.

4.1. Reporting Absence

Staff must notify their line manager by telephone by 8:00 AM on the first day of absence. Text or email notifications are not accepted unless agreed in advance. The nature of the illness and expected return date should be communicated.

4.2. Certification and Evidence

Absences up to 7 days require a self-certification form. From day 8 onwards, a GP Fit Note is required. Failure to submit the appropriate certification may result in loss of statutory or contractual sick pay.

4.3. Sick Pay Entitlement

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) applies from day 4 of continuous absence. Waiting days are unpaid. Entitlement and eligibility are detailed in the Staff Handbook and government regulations.

4.4. Occupational Sick Pay

In addition to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), LCKA may offer Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) depending on length of service, subject to appropriate medical evidence and line manager and HR approval.

The entitlement is as follows:

- During Year 1 of service: Up to 5 working days at full pay. Thereafter, only SSP is payable.
- During Year 2 of service: Up to 1-month full pay, followed by 1 month at half pay.
- From Year 3 onwards: Up to 2 months' full pay, followed by 2 months at half pay.

The above entitlements are not automatic and are subject to:

- Receipt of valid medical certification or GP Fit Notes
- Completion of the relevant internal forms and return-to-work process
- LCKA's management discretion, including consideration of occupational health recommendations and operational needs
- Extended or repeated absence may require review by Occupational Health and/or a phased return-to-work plan.

4.5. Remote/Hybrid Working

Absence reporting requirements apply equally to staff working remotely. Employees who are unwell but capable of performing limited duties from home must discuss this with their line manager to agree on expectations. Partial working while sick will not affect the requirement to submit a Fit Note if absence exceeds statutory thresholds.

4.6. Return to Work Process

- Upon returning from any period of sickness absence, staff must:
- Submit a completed Self-Certification Form (Appendix 1), (for absences up to 7 calendar days), OR
- Ensure the GP Fit Note is on file (for 8+ day absences).
- A Return to Work Meeting will be conducted by the line manager and a form will be filled and signed (Appendix 2) within 3 working days of return. This meeting is intended to:
 - Welcome the employee back
 - Confirm they are well enough to resume duties
 - Discuss any further support, adjustments, or phased return if needed
 - Address any patterns of absence or potential concerns sensitively
 - If the absence was due to a notifiable contagious illness (e.g. COVID-19, norovirus, flu), a GP clearance note may be required before return. In such cases, staff should notify HR and not attend work until fit to do so.

All Return-to-Work Meetings must be conducted in confidence. Any agreed adjustments or phased return arrangements must be documented and provided to HR for the employee's record.

4.7. Long-Term and Frequent Absence

Sickness absence lasting 28 calendar days or more is classified as long-term absence. In such cases, LCKA will work with the employee to explore support options, which may include an occupational health referral, reasonable adjustments, or a phased return-to-work plan.

In addition, repeated short-term absences that form a pattern or cause operational disruption may trigger an informal review. The line manager and HR will meet with the employee to explore any underlying causes, offer support, and agree a way forward.

At all times, LCKA's approach is intended to be supportive rather than punitive, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and ACAS Code of Practice.

5. Health, Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

In line with the Equality Act 2010, LCKA is committed to supporting employees with disabilities or long-term physical or mental health conditions. We will take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce workplace barriers by making reasonable adjustments that enable staff to perform their roles effectively.

These may include (but are not limited to):

- Adjustments to duties or working hours
- Changes to workstations or equipment
- Flexible or phased return-to-work arrangements

Staff are encouraged to speak in confidence with their line manager or HR, who will assess the request and, where appropriate, consult Occupational Health to ensure adjustments are tailored and effective. While every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality, disclosures may need to be shared on a strictly limited basis where this is necessary to protect the safety of the individual or others, or where there is a legal or safeguarding obligation.

LCKA promotes a culture of inclusion and will never disadvantage staff for disclosing a health condition or requesting support.

5.1. Medical Assessments

In certain cases, particularly during extended absence, repeated intermittent absence, or where fitness to work is unclear, LCKA may request an employee to attend an independent Occupational Health assessment, or to consent to the Academy seeking a medical report from their GP or treating specialist.

These steps are intended to support both the individual and the organisation in making informed decisions about:

- Fitness to return to work
- Reasonable adjustments
- Phased return or redeployment options

Any such requests will follow the procedures set out in the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988, and will require the employees' informed, written consent.

All medical information will be treated as strictly confidential, shared only on a need-to-know basis, and handled in full compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

5.2. Accident Reporting

All accidents, injuries (including minor ones), and near misses must be reported immediately to the relevant line manager and HR and recorded in the Academy's Accident Book.

Prompt reporting helps LCKA identify risks, implement preventative measures, and maintain a safe working environment for staff and students.

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), reportable events include, but are not limited to, death, specified injuries (e.g. fractures, amputations), certain occupational diseases, and dangerous occurrences (e.g. structural collapse). Managers should contact the Health & Safety Lead immediately if unsure.

Serious injuries, dangerous occurrences, or work-related illnesses that meet the criteria for RIDDOR will be reported by the Health & Safety Lead (Director of Advancement and Operations) within the required timeframes.

Staff are encouraged to report all incidents, no matter how minor, so that lessons can be learned and future harm prevented.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Employees:

- Notify their [line](#) manager of absence as early as possible (by 8:00 AM on Day 1).
- Submit required documentation (e.g. self-certification, Fit Notes) promptly.

- Engage in return-to-work meetings and Occupational Health assessments if requested.
- Cooperate with phased return plans or reasonable adjustments where applicable.

Line Managers:

- Maintain accurate absence records.
- Conduct return-to-work meetings in a timely, supportive manner.
- Identify patterns or concerns and escalate to HR where needed.
- Support staff wellbeing and liaise with HR on reasonable adjustments.

HR Department:

- Monitor absence trends and ensure policy compliance.
- Advise staff on eligibility for SSP and Occupational Sick Pay (OSP).
- Coordinate referrals to Occupational Health.
- Ensure all personal health data is processed in line with GDPR and confidentiality standards.
- Support training of managers in handling absence consistently.

7. Data Protection and Confidentiality

All personal and medical information related to sickness absence is treated as confidential sensitive data and is processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Data is securely stored in restricted-access HR trackers and is only shared with individuals who have a legitimate business need, such as HR personnel, line managers, or Occupational Health professionals.

This information will only be used for the purpose of managing absence, supporting the employee, and fulfilling legal or regulatory obligations. Staff have the right to access or request correction of their data.

8. Monitoring and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually by the HR Staff, or earlier if prompted by changes in legislation, guidance, or internal feedback.

- Sickness absence data is anonymised and analysed regularly to identify trends, inform wellbeing initiatives, and support a healthy working environment across LCKA.
- Findings will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to support evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.

9. Appendix 1: Self-Certification Sickness Absence Form

This form must be completed and returned to HR for all sickness absences lasting up to 7 calendar days.

Employee Name:	
Job Title:	
Line Manager:	
Department:	
First Day of Absence:	
Last Day of Absence:	
Date Returned to Work:	
Nature of Illness (brief description):	
Have you consulted a GP or healthcare professional? (Yes/No)	
Are any adjustments needed to support your return?	

Declaration:

I declare that the information I have given is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false or misleading information may result in disciplinary action.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

10. Appendix 2 – Return to Work Form

This form must be completed by the line manager when staff return to work after a period of absence due to sickness.

Employee Name:	
Line Manager:	
Date of Meeting:	
Reason for Absence:	
Was the correct certification received?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Fit to return to normal duties?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Any adjustments required:	

Employee Signature: _____

Manager Signature: _____