

Cardiff West Community High School

Absence, Cover and Educational Visits 2024-26

Created by: Local authority

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Introduction

This policy applies to all employees of the school and has been agreed by the governing body following consultation with staff and union representatives at the school. The governing body, through the Head Teacher, will ensure that the policy is implemented.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to outline a clear process for the setting, managing and evaluating of cover in Cardiff West Community High School and the process that must be followed when organising educational visits.

1. Absence

When a staff member is unable to attend work for any reason, this must be reported to the school at the earliest possible time. In cases of illness, caring responsibilities, emergencies or bereavement, this can be done by emailing the school absence address 'absence@cwchs.co.uk'. Informal methods of communicating an absence, such as by text message to a colleague, is not an appropriate means to report staff absence.

Following an absence, due to sickness, a return to work form should be completed within 4 working days. It is the responsibility of the absent member of staff to complete this not that of the line manager or SLT, as set out in the local authority attendance and well-being policy. Stages that follow absence are:

- a. Informal support stage;
- b. Stage one written caution (with HR present);
- c. Stage two final written caution (with HR present);
- d. Stage three potential termination (with HR, governing body and headteacher present.)

In each return to work meeting, all staff can request to speak to occupational health if there are significant issues or health matters that may affect their work. The school will always support this. Further information about the stages and issuing of cautions can be found in the local authority attendance and well-being policy.

Where an absence is planned for, such as attending a course, family event such a wedding or a hospital appointment, a leave of absence form needs to be completed and given to the school's data manager. The school will always endeavour to support LOA requests however, if the school cannot support a LOA request this will be communicated in person.

Payment for special leave requests will be in-line with the local authority guidance. As school employees, we are not entitled to annual leave outside of school holidays (other than those support staff that are on 52-week contracts.) Absence is monitored through the school's management information system. Where there are patterns of absence or frequent requests for LOA without good reason, this may be addressed in line management or with a member of SLT.

2. Cover

Where staff have responsibility for delivering to classes or groups, appropriate cover will need to be set to ensure that the pupils' learning is not impacted by the absence. Cover work should be set using the EdCover system online.

For staff that are on a planned absence, the work must be set in advance and if any printing is required, this should be completed and left with the area lead or head of department.

Staff that have an unforeseeable absence may or may not be in a position to set cover work. Where possible, it is best that the work is set by the absent member of staff so that the pupils' learning is not disjointed from the previous learning or the sequence of the scheme of work. However, where this is not possible, the area lead, head of department or leader of learning must set appropriate work.

Cover work will be evaluated at the end of each lesson so that absent staff can get feedback. The quality of the cover work set will also be monitored by leadership at all levels.

3. Educational Visits

Where an absence or cover request is linked to an educational visit, the following process must be undertaken:

1. **The approval of a trip must be granted before the trip is booked.** Any trip requests should be sent in writing (email) to the Deputy Headteacher (EVC). The school will endeavour to support educational visits and opportunities however, there will be no more than 2 events/trips on any day. This decision is to minimise the impact on the wider curriculum and ensure that as many pupils as possible are receiving high quality learning experiences with their teachers.
2. **If approved, the educational visit must be added to Evolve.** All details and timings of the information on Evolve should be in-line with the local authority policy. For trips that take place during the school day, supporting staff may be allocated based on minimising impact on the wider curriculum. Trips that take place out of normal school hours require staff to give up their own time and this will, of course, be more of a voluntary basis.
3. **If a bus is required for an educational trip** there are a number of actions that need to happen:
 - a. If the trip is unfunded, the finance team will get prices. There is a transportation fund available however, once this fund is exhausted, the costs of transportation will have to be covered either by pupils, departmental budget or fundraising.
 - b. Once a bus is booked, the company *must be* recorded on Evolve, not just 'external bus provider' this is for emergency and health and safety purposes.
 - c. If the school mini-bus is being used, this has to be booked and not reliant on it being available. Drivers of the mini-bus need to be identified on Evolve. If teaching staff have to miss lessons to drive the mini-bus (but not accompanying the trip) and support staff are not available due to shift patterns (for example) to drive the mini-bus, an external provider may have to be used and the cost factored into the visit as above.
4. **Following an educational visit the aims (set out on Evolve) must be evaluated by the lead member of staff.** This is in-line with local authority policy.

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the local authority attendance and well-being policy and the schools' educational visit policy. This policy sets out internal processes to ensure compliance with the local authority attendance and well-being policy, not to replace it.