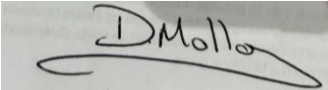
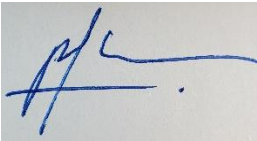




First **Star** Scholars **UK**

Staff Sickness and Absence Reporting Policy

Date of Last Review	18/11/2024
Review Cycle	Annually
Date (Month/Year) of Next Review	11/2025
Date Policy was Ratified	18/11/2024
Named Lead for Writing/Review	Emily Hollis MBE
Signed:	Date
CEO	18/11/24
	
FSSUK Board of Trustees – Chair	
	

First Star Scholars UK recognises the importance of maintaining a productive and supportive work environment for all staff. To ensure that absence is managed effectively and that appropriate support is provided, we have developed the following Sickness and Absence Reporting Policy. This policy applies to all employees of First Star Scholars UK and outlines the procedures for reporting and managing staff absences due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances.

Reporting Sickness or Absence

In the event that a staff member is unable to attend work due to illness, they are required to notify their line manager (or designated person) as soon as possible and no later than 7:30 am on the first day of absence. In most instances, this will be the CEO. For the CEO, this is the Chair of the Board.

The procedure for reporting sickness or absence is as follows:

- Notification by Staff Member:
The staff member must notify their line manager by 7:30 am on the day of their absence. Notification should be made by phone, explaining the nature of the illness or reason for absence. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, staff should give an indication of the anticipated duration of the absence.
- Details Required:
In the notification, the staff member should provide:
 - The reason for their absence (if they are comfortable doing so).
 - Any relevant medical information that may affect their ability to return to work (e.g., a long-term condition).
 - An indication of the likely duration of their absence, if known.
- Failure to Notify:
If a staff member fails to notify their line manager by 7:30 am or provide the required information, this will be considered an unreported absence, and a follow-up conversation will be required to establish the reason for the absence which may result in further action.

Absence and Sickness Certification

- Short-Term Absences (Up to 7 Days):
For short-term illnesses lasting up to 7 consecutive calendar days, staff are required to complete a self-certification form upon their return to work. This form will confirm the reason for the absence and provide any necessary information regarding their ability to return to work. The self-certification form should be submitted to the line manager or Director of Operations within 2 working days of returning to work.
- Long-Term Absences (More Than 7 Days):
For absences lasting more than 7 consecutive calendar days, a fitness to work certificate from a qualified healthcare professional (such as a GP) is required. This certificate should state that the staff member is fit to return to work and outline any adjustments that may be needed, such as phased returns or modified duties. The certificate must be provided as soon as possible and no later than the 8th day of absence.
- Occupational Health Referral:
If a staff member has been absent for an extended period, or if there are concerns

regarding their fitness to work, the line manager or Director of Operations may recommend a referral to Occupational Health for an independent assessment. This may be particularly relevant if there are ongoing health issues or if the staff member is absent due to mental health conditions. Occupational Health assessments help to determine what support, adjustments, or changes may be required to facilitate a safe and successful return to work.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

SSP is a payment made by employers to employees who are unable to work due to illness or injury. SSP is a legal requirement for eligible employees and is intended to provide financial support for a limited period while they recover.

Eligibility for SSP

An employee is eligible for SSP if they meet the following criteria:

1. They are an employee: SSP is only available to employees (not self-employed individuals or workers with a different status).
2. They have been off work due to illness for at least 4 days in a row: This includes non-working days (e.g., weekends or holidays) as part of the total sickness period.
3. They earn at least £123 per week (as of 2024): The employee must earn a minimum amount in gross earnings (before tax) to qualify for SSP. This is based on their average weekly earnings.
4. They provide evidence of illness: If the employee is off work for more than 7 days, they must provide a medical certificate or "fit note" from their GP or healthcare professional to confirm they are unfit for work.

How Much Is SSP?

As of April 2024, the SSP rate is £109.40 per week. SSP is paid for up to 28 weeks.

When is SSP Paid?

- Waiting Days: SSP is not paid for the first 3 days of illness. These are known as "waiting days," meaning that employees will not receive SSP for the first 3 days they are off sick. After 3 days, SSP is paid from the 4th day of illness onward.
- Payment Frequency: SSP is paid in the same way as normal wages, typically on the employee's regular payday. SSP is paid by the employer.

How Long Is SSP Paid?

- SSP is paid for up to 28 weeks. After 28 weeks, employees are no longer entitled to SSP, though they may be able to claim other benefits such as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if their illness continues.
- Employees who are off sick for more than 28 weeks may need to apply for other forms of financial support.

Return to Work Process

Upon returning to work, staff members are required to attend a return-to-work meeting with their line manager or Director of Operations. This meeting serves to:

- Review the absence: The staff member will briefly discuss the nature of their illness, ensuring any medical or support needs are addressed.
- Discuss any adjustments or support: If necessary, adjustments to the staff member's duties, hours, or work environment will be discussed. This may include a phased return or temporary changes to workloads.
- Update sick leave records: The line manager or Director of Operations will ensure all sick leave records are updated accurately in line with company policies.
- Provide support: The meeting is also an opportunity for the staff member to discuss any concerns related to their return, and for the manager to offer appropriate support.

Ongoing Monitoring and Support

- Monitoring Absence Patterns: The Director of Operations will track patterns in staff absence, paying close attention to frequent short-term absences or recurring long-term sickness. If a pattern emerges, the line manager or Director of Operations will initiate a conversation with the staff member to explore any underlying issues that may require additional support or intervention.
- Support for Mental Health and Well-being: First Star Scholars UK is committed to supporting the well-being of its staff. We have a qualified Mental Health First Aider available to support you and direct you to services.
- Regular Check-Ins: For longer-term absences, line managers will arrange regular check-ins (via phone or email) to maintain communication with the staff member, provide support, and discuss any necessary adjustments to the return process.

Managing Absence Related to Mental Health

Mental health-related absences will be treated with the same importance as physical health-related absences. First Star Scholars UK is committed to reducing the stigma surrounding mental health and offering the necessary support to staff who experience mental health difficulties. Employees are encouraged to be open about any mental health challenges they are facing, and the company will provide reasonable accommodations where necessary, including referrals to specialist services or Occupational Health support.

Monitoring and Record Keeping

All records related to staff absence, including self-certification forms, GP certificates, and Occupational Health assessments, will be securely stored and managed in accordance with data protection regulations (GDPR). The Director of Operations will maintain accurate records of all absences, including dates, reasons, and return-to-work discussions.

Disciplinary Process for Unauthorised or Excessive Absences

Excessive absenteeism or failure to comply with the absence reporting process may lead to disciplinary action. Staff members who do not provide adequate notice or fail to provide required medical documentation may face consequences in line with First Star Scholars UK’s disciplinary procedures. Please refer to the Disciplinary Policy for further information.

Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No.	Approved by	Approval Date	Main Change	Review Period
1.0	Diarmuid Molloy	18 November 2024	New policy format approved	Annually