

# *Mad Hatters*

## **Absent Staff Policy**

### **Absence of Nursery Manager**

- Manager to contact Deputy or the Supervisor at the earliest opportunity to arrange changes to shifts.
- Deputy and Supervisor to work on opposite shifts.
- Deputy to arrange other staff shift patterns accordingly.
- Deputy to assume position of Manager.
- Supervisor to assume position of Deputy.

### **Absence of Deputy Manager**

- Deputy to inform Manager or Supervisor at earliest opportunity.
- Manager to contact Supervisor – vice versa – to arrange changes to shifts so both are on opposite shifts.
- Manager to arrange other members of staff's shift patterns accordingly.
- Supervisor to assume position of Deputy.

### **Absence of Supervisor**

- Supervisor to contact Nursery Manager or Deputy at the earliest opportunity.
- Manager or Deputy to arrange other members of staff shift patterns accordingly.

### **Absence of Nursery Practitioner/Assistant**

- Nursery Practitioner/Assistant to contact Nursery Manager at the earliest opportunity.
- Nursery Manager to either move other staff to relevant rooms if possible or to telephone for agency staff.

All staff are expected to call the nursery telephone before 7am on the day of their absent and report all absences as soon as possible. Before 7am is ideal as this allows time to arrange cover, as ratios need to be maintained to ensure nursery is adhering to legal requirements. Staff are not to call or text staff personal phones or send emails, or use social media such as Facebook, to report absences. If this occurs, and a call is not made to the nursery telephone, then this will be treated as no communication made to inform management of your absence, and disciplinary action will be taken.

Staff need to call as soon as possible, before they are due back to work, before 4pm the day before, to inform management if they will be returning to work. Calling before 4pm is preferable as this ensures we can maintain ratio and arrange for cover staff if needed to maintain legal requirements. This may also allow us to assess your absence and understand how to support your return to work. Failure to inform management of your return to work will lead to you being sent home, without pay, as cover will have already been arranged for that day, or alternate arrangements for staff sorted, and disciplinary action will be taken.

Return to work interviews will be completed for each period of absence to ensure we can put any appropriate support measures in place for your return to work, including ensuring you are fit for work on your return. These will also be kept on staff files to monitor any reoccurring absences.

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## Welfare meetings

During a period of long-term absence, you are required to attend any scheduled welfare meetings with the Nursery. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss your current state of health, how long you expect to be absent from work and what steps, if any, the Nursery can take to facilitate your return to work.

If you are medically incapable of attending your place of work, a representative of the Nursery will come out to visit you or a virtual meeting maybe able to take place. If the time scheduled for the meeting is not suitable, you should contact the Nursery immediately so that an alternative time can be agreed. You are also required to respond to any correspondence from the Nursery and any requests for information about your health.

## **Fit to Work**

To ensure we can deliver an outstanding practice it is important to ensure our staff are fit for work, and due to working around food we use the Food Handlers: fitness to work, Regulatory Guidance and best practice advice for food business operators 2009 as guidance.

Bacterial and viral infections are very common in nurseries, and for children we would exclude a child if they have 3 or more episodes of sickness or loose stools (unless you are aware this could be the result of something else i.e. you suffer with Irritable Bowl Syndrome). This is also the rule we follow for staff, however, if it is accompanied with other symptoms, and you feel generally unwell please speak to management and let them know you are not fit for work and to be sent home. An exclusion period of 48hours (In accordance with the NHS guidelines) is then followed unless it is apparent that the sickness or diarrhoea is for other reasons as mentioned in the guidance above.

## **COVID-19**

As we start “living with COVID-19” the guidance is always written with the guidance from the government in mind and therefore, Mad Hatters is currently following the guidance to self-isolate for 5 days if you receive a positive COVID-19 test. If you are absent from work due to COVID-19 normal sick pay procedures would apply. When reporting COVID-19 absences there no additional measures in place, and normal absence reporting procedures are to be followed. With this mind there is now no need to report this absence over the weekend, and if you become unwell over the weekend or you test positive over the weekend, you are able to report this as normal on Monday morning.

As we all start to live with COVID-19 please respect other staff members wellbeing, as we try and move forward with a work/life balance and ensure we follow the above reporting procedures including, the use of social media when reporting absences.

## **Wellbeing**

Nursery is open Monday-Friday, 6:45am-6pm and will only reply under circumstances which may need addressing before opening each morning Monday-Friday. Management may contact outside of these hours in an emergency for example, shifts needing to be changed at short notice to ensure appropriate staffing, and legal requirements are maintained however, we will endeavour not to do this. Nursery will always try, and honour requested time off for example, early shifts or late starts,

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however, due to ratios this may not be adhered to, in addition, we may need to change your shift at short notice if staff are absent. If certain time off is required and nursery is not able to accommodate, you may be able to book the time off as holiday or have this time off unpaid however, due to needing to maintain ratios the time off may be denied if the notice is too short (please see reporting time off/holiday procedures).

All staff reserve the right to time off and to have the opportunity to “switch off” from work when they have finished their shift. Management will honour this and only contact in emergency and Nursery respects employees Health and Wellbeing. Nursery will only contact regarding working matters if an emergency, for example, regarding staffing due to short notice of absence staff. Please also respect the Management Team’s working hours and only use nursery telephone or email to inform of absence or working matters. Do not contact due to absence or working matters on the Management Team’s personal media’s such as phone or social media etc. Please respect ALL staff’s health and wellbeing.

Attached to this policy is the Food Handlers: fitness to work, Regulatory Guidance and best practice advice for food business operators 2009 Guidance.

Please use this policy alongside the Employee Handbook.