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## SERVICE UPDATE

<b><u>Name of Cluster:</u></b>	People & Citizen Services
<b><u>Date:</u></b>	19 January 2026
<b><u>Title of Update:</u></b>	Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy
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### **UPDATE:**

At Staff Governance Committee on 3 November 2025, a report on the “Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy” (CORS/25/198) was presented and the policy was approved with an implementation date of 1 February, however one of the Trade Unions, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), voiced that they had concerns that the policy’s appendix – an annex which outlined applicable Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) provisions was not sufficiently populated.

Since this time, the annex has now been formally agreed with all Education Trade Unions. The full policy, including the SNCT Annex, was ratified by the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) on 16 December 2025.

The annex sets out the conditions within the SNCT Handbook which are relevant to sickness absence and ensures that the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy is applied to teachers in a manner consistent with the SNCT Handbook and Aberdeen City Council LNCT agreements.

### **Additions made to the Supporting Attendance SNCT Annex are as follows:**

A section was added on “Work-Related Stress and Mental Health absence” which states:

Where absences are related to work-related stress or mental health, managers should consider undertaking a stress risk assessment and make reasonable workload adjustments before any formal escalation.

A section was added on “Right to be Accompanied” which states:

Teachers have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague at all formal stages of the absence management process in line with Part 4, Section 1 of the SNCT Handbook.

A section was added on “Confidentiality of Medical Information” which states:  
All medical information obtained in connection with absence or occupational health referrals will be treated as strictly confidential and will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

An additional bullet point under “progression to Level 3” was added which states:

Occupational health advice or medical evidence confirming the teacher’s prognosis and fitness for work has been obtained, in line with Section 6.13 of the SNCT Handbook, to ensure that decisions regarding capability are evidence-based and fully informed.

A copy of the full annex to accompany the approved policy is attached for information.



## Aberdeen City LNCT Agreement

### Annex - Application of Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy to Teachers (SNCT and LNCT Provisions)

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This annex sets out how the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy must be applied to teachers, to ensure consistency with the SNCT Handbook and Aberdeen City Council LNCT agreements. Where there is any conflict between this Policy and the SNCT/LNCT frameworks, the latter shall take precedence.

#### 1. Notification of Absence

Teachers may notify absence directly to their school, normally to the Head Teacher or line manager.

This reflects school-based management responsibility and ensures alignment with SNCT practice. Notification will normally be given personally by the teacher. However, where this is not possible (e.g. serious illness, accident, hospitalisation), a representative can notify on their behalf. The school must accept third-party notification to avoid discrimination against teachers with disabilities or sudden serious illness.

#### 2. Phased Return to Work

Teachers are entitled to a phased return on full pay following long-term sickness absence. In line with SNCT and Aberdeen LNCT Agreement, this entitlement is normally 4–6 weeks, with extensions considered locally where appropriate. Managers must record and support phased return arrangements as part of the employee's Support Plan.

#### 3. Industrial Injury Absence

Where absence relates to an industrial accident, teachers must be managed with reference to SNCT Handbook, Part 2, Section 6 (Absence Due to Accident at Work). Such absences must not be counted towards absence triggers under this policy.

#### 4. Assault in the Course of Employment

In line with SNCT Handbook, Part 2, Section 6, absences resulting from assault in the course of employment shall not be treated as sickness absence and shall not count against sick pay entitlement.

Such absences will be treated as SNCT special leave with pay, normally up to 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay, on the production of a fit note.

The employer must ensure the incident is reported under the appropriate violent incident and accident reporting procedures.

Absence must be kept under medical review, and reasonable adjustments must be provided to support return to work.

If the absence ceases to relate to the assault but continues due to another reason, it will then revert to sickness absence provisions under SNCT Part 2, Section 6.

### **5. Infectious Diseases**

In line with SNCT Handbook, Part 2, Section 6, an employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with notifiable infectious diseases shall advise the Council immediately and shall be entitled to full pay during absence.

Any such absence will be recorded as Special Leave and not count against the teacher's sickness allowance.

### **6. Respiratory Tuberculosis**

In line with SNCT Handbook, Part 2, Section 6, where a teacher is absent due to respiratory tuberculosis and supported by a doctor's statement, the teacher shall be entitled to full salary for up to 12 months and half salary for up to a further 6 months.

The teacher shall not return to duty until certified fit to resume work.

### **7. Ill-Health Retirement**

Teachers' ill-health retirement is governed by the Scottish Teachers' Pension Scheme (SPPA) under SNCT provisions, not the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Managers must ensure the correct process is followed and that teachers are referred under SPPA arrangements.

### **8. Disability-Related Absence**

Disability-related absence must be managed in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and SNCT provisions.

Before escalation through absence triggers, managers must:

- Explore and implement all reasonable adjustments (including Reasonable Adjustment Passports where applicable).
- Record adjustments and support measures in the Support Plan.
- Ensure absences are treated in a supportive manner and not automatically escalated.

### **9. Pregnancy-Related Absence**

Absences relating to pregnancy or maternity must be managed in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the SNCT Handbook (Part 2, Section 6 – Sick Leave and Pay), and relevant LNCT agreements.

Specifically:

- Pregnancy-related absences must not be used as a trigger for progression through absence review stages under this Policy.
- Pregnancy-related absences should remain at Level 1 supportive monitoring only, with no escalation to formal review levels.

Managers must ensure that pregnancy-related absence is recorded separately from sickness absence and handled in a supportive and non-discriminatory manner.

## 10. Work-Related Stress and Mental Health Absence

Where absences are related to work-related stress or mental health, managers should consider undertaking a stress risk assessment and make reasonable workload adjustments before any formal escalation.

## 11. Competence and Capability

In line with SNCT:

- Health or disability-related absence must not be confused with competence or performance issues.
- Where absence due to a health condition impacts attendance, the matter must be addressed under capability, not conduct.

## 12. Right to be Accompanied

Teachers have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague at all formal stages of the absence management process in line with Part 4, Section 1 of the SNCT Handbook.

## 13. Progression to Level 3

Teachers must not be moved directly to a Level 3 Capability Meeting unless:

- Medical evidence confirms that a return to work is not anticipated within a reasonable timeframe;
- All reasonable adjustments, phased return options, redeployment, and ill-health retirement routes (SPPA) have been considered and documented;
- Occupational health advice or medical evidence confirming the teacher's prognosis and fitness for work has been obtained, in line with Section 6.13 of the SNCT Handbook, to ensure that decisions regarding capability are evidence-based and fully informed.
- Advice has been sought from People Services.

This safeguard ensures Stage 1 and Stage 2 remain meaningful supportive stages.

## 14. Appeals

Teachers retain the right to appeal dismissal decisions to either:

- A Director who has had no prior involvement in the case, or
- The Appeals Sub-Committee.

## 15. Confidentiality of Medical Information

All medical information obtained in connection with absence or occupational health referrals will be treated as strictly confidential and will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

This maintains alignment with SNCT provisions for independent review.