

Attendance, Lateness and Absence Notification 2025-26



Date approved	July 2025
Approved by	Trust Board
Date adopted by the Trust	Sep 2025
Review cycle	Annually
Last review date	Sep 2024
Date of next review	Sep 2026
Policy owner	Kingsbridge EIP SCITT
Changes made in last review	This policy has been reviewed with the addition of details of the online form to complete for absence and Leave of Absence Requests.

Legislation

Leading statutory authority
Employment Rights Act 1996
Employment Relations Act 1999
Equality Act 2010

Introduction

Kingsbridge Teacher Training is committed to maintaining the health, safety and welfare of its trainee teachers, seeks to provide a positive and healthy training environment and recognises the value of its trainee's work/life balance. Regular attendance is an integral part of our teacher training programme. However, it is recognised that trainees will on occasion have genuine and acceptable health reasons to be absent from programme and on those occasions, Kingsbridge will aim to support a trainee during the period of absence, with the aim of assisting their return to programme at the earliest opportunity.

This guidance documents aims to enable a provider to exercise its duty of care and responsibilities in relation to ensuring that its trainees pursue their studies with diligence and avail themselves of the educational opportunities made available. It recognises that in such an intensive, one-year course absence, for whatever reason, leads to missed learning opportunities which may impact on the ability to provide evidence relating to the successful demonstration of the Teachers' Standards at the end of the course. It is, therefore, expected that a trainee will be regular and punctual in attendance at all centre and school-based sessions prescribed by the course.

This policy encompasses, with minor adaptations, approaches to the management of absence commonly used in the teaching profession as a whole.

Scope and Expectations

- This procedure is applicable to all Kingsbridge Trainee Teachers on the Core Primary or Secondary Programmes.
- Failure to sustain attendance of 90% or above (on school placement, Kingsbridge or BSU) may jeopardise the trainee's ability to demonstrate competence against the Teachers' Standards.
- Attendance at Kingsbridge and any other central training takes priority over other school commitments.
- There is no provision for annual leave entitlement for trainee teachers. They are required by statutory order under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions of Service Document to be available for training for 195 days each training year, of which 190 shall be days on which they may be required to teach pupils. Requests from trainees to take leave within

term-time and any requests within term time will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

- Kingsbridge sessions cannot easily be replicated and they make up the core of the trainees' pedagogical and subject training. Although trainees are actively encouraged to take part in school activities, trips and training, it is politely requested that trainees do not miss Kingsbridge to attend such events except in exceptional cases that have been agreed with the training manager.
- The following are examples of leave of absence which may be requested (this is not an exhaustive list):
 - Bereavement leave
 - Time off to care for dependants
 - Urgent domestic reasons
 - Jury service/witness summons
 - Personal health and welfare
- Trainees must inform their placement/employing school of any absence and the reason for that absence in accordance with the placement school's policy for reporting employee absence.
- Trainees should also inform the Kingsbridge SCITT Central Team on the first day of absence via the online system.
- All reported absences will be administered / processed in line with the SCITT's Trainee Teacher Privacy Policies.
- Trainees are expected to attend school-based activities and central training activities on time. They must let the relevant people know if they are going to be late and why.
- All planned absence must be approved in advance by Hub Lead (central training) or General Mentor (school based activities).
- As would be expected in teaching employment, trainees should normally arrange non-urgent personal medical appointments (e.g. doctor, dentist, hospital, elective procedures) outside of their normal working time, including Kingsbridge Sessions where possible.
- Absence extending over five working days must be accompanied by a Medical Certificate.
- Kingsbridge Initial Teacher Training and the placement school may, as appropriate, require a referral to an Occupational Health Advisor where a trainee's absence or other issues indicate a potential health concern. In these circumstances, the trainee will be advised of the process and the reasons for this referral. The purpose of the referral is to explore options to support the trainee to minimise absence.
- Persistent lateness - If the trainee is late to more than 10% of school based or central training activities, or attendance falls below 90% then Stage 1 of the procedure outlined below will be invoked.

Stages of the Procedure

Stage 1

- Inform trainee in writing when close to 10% absence with offer of informal meeting to provide support.

- Inform trainee of procedures that will be followed.
- Outcome of Stage 1 could lead to trainee being informed of the requirement to improve his/her overall programme attendance. A warning may also be issued at this stage that further absence could put ultimately their training placement at risk of failure.

Stage 2

- Formal meeting with Hub Lead to discuss possible course of actions which will include:
 - Continuing with improved attendance/punctuality
 - Extending the training programme
 - Deferring
 - Withdrawal from the training programme
- Individual Action Plan with specific attendance targets based on the above meeting will be drawn up.
- Outcome of Stage 2 will lead to trainee being informed of the immediate requirement to improve his/her overall programme attendance.
- A further final warning may also be issued at this stage that further absence could put ultimately their training placement at serious risk of failure.

Stage 3

- If attendance falls to 80% the Kingsbridge Leadership Team will discuss the matter; and unless there are exceptional mitigating circumstances the trainee will be removed from the course.

Appeal

- The trainee will have the right of appeal against a decision of the Kingsbridge Leadership Team
- The Appeals Committee will comprise of three Headteachers from the Strategic Leadership Board who have no previous involvement with the trainee.
- Any appeal must be made in writing within 5 working days (or 7 consecutive days out of term time) of the receipt of the letter of outcome and must state the grounds upon which the appeal is made.
- The appeal hearing will be arranged within 10 working days of notification of appeal

The trainee will be informed of:

- a) The date, time and place of the hearing
 - b) His or her right to attend and make representations to the panel
 - c) His or her right to be accompanied at the hearing by a colleague or union representative
- At the appeal hearing the Hub Lead and Trust HR will present the case to the Appeals Panel.
 - The appeal decision will be conveyed in writing to the trainee within five working days of the hearing (or seven consecutive days out of term time) and will make clear that there is no further appeal against that decision.

- The Appeal Committee's decision will be binding upon all parties.

Notification of Absence

Should absence occur, all trainees should report absence by completing the online absence notification form found on tGoogle Classroom

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOs4NJHXtiCBokcEfj-C6m3YoYiu2CEIEi_s9RkpkLnO2AnA/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=111983712098764732007

A trainee will, before the course commences, provide the contact details for a named representative who will contact, or can be contacted by, the provider, in relation to the trainee's absence from the course.

A trainee and the placement mentor will notify the provider of any absence from the course, whether the absence relates to school placement or central studies, no later than 10.00a.m. on the first day of any period of absence. If, by that time, the provider has not been informed of absence by the trainee, the provider will contact the named representative to confirm the safety of the trainee and ascertain why he/she is not in attendance.

If after ten working days the provider is unable to contact the trainee or the named representative, the provider will invoke a suspension of studies, informing Student Finance England (SFE) through a Change of Circumstances (COC) submission should one be required. This may have an impact on any maintenance loans and bursaries that have been arranged. If there is no contact in the following ten working days, the trainee will be deemed

Sickness Absence

Self-certificated absence

For absences of five days or less, a trainee will be required to complete the self-certification of absence form obtainable from the SCITT.

There is a limit for self-certification of six days within the course as a whole. Absences that exceed this limit will result in a management meeting to identify next steps and to support the trainee back into training.

Medically stated sickness

If a trainee is absent for more than five days, a medical certificate or statement signed by a doctor must be sent to the provider as soon as practicable.

If the trainee remains ill when the note expires, further medical evidence will be required.

If the absence continues for a prolonged period (more than 15 working days) or a date for the return to study exceeds 15 working days from the beginning of the absence, the provider will notify the trainee in writing that it is suspending the trainee's study from that 15 day point. If the trainee is in receipt of finance from Student Finance England (SFE) a Change of Circumstances form (COC) will be submitted to SFE by the provider suspending studies on medical grounds effective from that date.

If a trainee is subject to an ongoing illness such as depression, arthritis, unstable diabetes or asthma, a trainee should submit a form for mitigation together with a medical certificate which explains the

extent of the illness and the likely effect on their progress through the course before the 15 working day deadline. The situation will be referred to the provider to determine whether the trainee should be considered for deferral on medical grounds.

Convalescence

The nature of the course does not easily allow for light duties or other ways of reducing the workload. However, the provider will ensure that on return to the course a trainee has a few days' respite to become fully fit before carrying out important assessments.

A trainee returning to work after an extended period of absence may be required to submit to a medical examination by Occupational Health professionals to determine whether and what staged return to work should be implemented.

Maternity leave

General: The nature of this one-year course means maternity leave as such is not available but the provider will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible within the course structure to enable the trainee to achieve QTS. The length of absence anticipated means that the course will have to be extended into a second year providing there is no substantial change in the requirements for QTS anticipated. A trainee who becomes pregnant after being offered a place or during the first half term of the course can apply to have the course deferred for one year only, subject to there being no substantial change to the requirements for QTS during the deferment. Any trainee requesting maternity leave must complete the course within six terms. One of those terms must be the final term of an academic year. There may be some implications for a trainee receiving finance from SFE.

The preferred plan is for a trainee to return in the second year two weeks before the anniversary of the date of commencement of maternity leave.

The trainee should notify the provider as soon as is practicable but not later than 14 weeks (unless there is good cause) before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) that she wishes to be absent for maternity.

Absence on account of illness which is attributable to the pregnancy, including absence on account of miscarriage, and which occurs outside the period of absence for maternity, shall be treated as ordinary sickness absence and shall be subject to the conditions normally governing such leave, provided it is covered by a doctor's statement.

Maternity leave should not normally be taken earlier than 11 weeks before the EWC.

When maternity leave begins, the provider will write to the trainee to formally suspend the trainee's studies, informing the SFE through a COC where required and record the trainee as dormant on the DMS.

The trainee will inform the provider of the date of birth of the child.

The trainee may not return to study less than two weeks after the birth of the child. The trainee will continue to have her studies suspended and SFE informed through a COC. A further COC will be completed when the trainee returns to the course.

For a trainee paying fees through an SFE loan, the fee structure means that the trainee must be present in Term 3 of one of the years in question. If that is not the case, the provider has the right to request 25% of the total tuition fees direct from the trainee.

Thereafter, the trainee should discuss with the provider when she intends to return to study and a timeframe for the completion of the course be agreed.

Where a trainee does not make contact with the provider, the provider may write to the trainee no earlier than 21 days before the anniversary of the commencement of maternity leave, asking her to confirm the date of birth and her intention to return to work. The trainee or her representative must

respond within 14 days of receiving the request. If there is no response, the provider will withdraw the trainee from the course.

If requiring student finance, the trainee will need to apply for finance (as a returning student repeating Year 1) for the second academic year. At the beginning of the first

Paternity leave

The nature of this one-year course means paternity leave as such is not available but the provider will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible to allow a short period of absence within the course structure to enable the trainee to achieve QTS. If the length of absence anticipated is significant, the course is likely to have to be extended into a second year for which there may be financial implications. See compassionate leave below.

Medical appointments

A trainee should inform the provider of any appointments for which he/she needs to take leave, being prepared to offer further evidence if requested. The request should be made via the online form available at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOs4NJHXtiCBokcEfi-C6m3YoYiu2CEIEi_s9RkpkLnO2AnA/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=111983712098764732007. The difficulty of obtaining GP and hospital appointments is acknowledged and these will be honoured wherever possible though a trainee should attempt to ensure follow up appointments do not impact unnecessarily on attendance on the course.

Other routine medical appointments should not be made during the working day.

Leave of absence

Leave of absence for other reasons may be granted by the Accounting Officer acting on behalf of the provider and can be made via the online form at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOs4NJHXtiCBokcEfi-C6m3YoYiu2CEIEi_s9RkpkLnO2AnA/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=111983712098764732007

For absences longer than two consecutive days, or for a cumulative total of more than five days, the request will require the additional approval of the Accounting Officer. It is expected that an application will be made for leave of absence, in writing, using the agreed proforma, at least two working days before the absence occurs.

In the case of absence included in private and personal or compassionate categories, a completed proforma should be submitted to the provider on the return to study.

The following outlines the rationale for decisions relating to common requests for leave of absence. They should not be seen as an exhaustive list, but serve as an indication as to how leave of absence decisions will be expedited.

Graduation ceremonies: Absence of one day to attend a graduation ceremony for a first degree will be granted. Any requests for travelling time associated with this would not be expected to exceed half a day in total.

Interviews: All reasonable requests will be honoured. Decisions relating to absence for interviews abroad or in places involving extra days for travel will be limited to a cumulative maximum of three working days in the year.

Visits to schools before application/interview: Given the open-ended nature of these absences and the significant demands of the course, leave of absence will not be granted for these visits. In refusing the application, the provider will, if requested by the trainee, contact the school in question, informing them both of the trainee's expression of interest in attending, and the rationale for the refusal of the application.

Visits to schools prior to employment: One day will be granted before the end of the final teaching experience. A further day may be granted after this date and before the course ends. Additional days requested by the school employing the trainee after the course may be granted at the discretion of the provider.

Compassionate leave

In the event of such emergencies as bereavement, serious accident or illness of an immediate family member/dependant, up to three working days will be allowed for the death of a father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister and up to five working days leave on the death of a husband, wife or partner.

Requests for additional compassionate leave, or in the case of a cumulative total of more than ten working days, must be referred to the Accounting Officer.

Private and personal

A maximum of two days at any one time will be granted for the purposes of urgent and unforeseen personal business which does not come under the scope of compassionate leave or to fulfil an important and significant personal commitment which cannot be undertaken at any other time.

Statutory Leave of Absence up to a cumulative total of five working days during the course will be allowed. However, given the intense nature of the course, trainees will be advised that membership of bodies requiring such absence should be reviewed.

Holidays: The intensive nature of the course means that holidays, including those booked before commencement of the course, should not be undertaken.

If a provider wishes to allow holiday leave, for example to attend a family wedding, it should be noted that SFE will be informed and an adjustment to any maintenance loans may follow.