**Trainee Attendance and Absence Policy**



The BEC Teacher Training programme is a highly intensive one-year course. Any absence may result in missed learning opportunities, potentially impacting on a trainee’s ability to successfully demonstrate achievement against the Teachers’ Standards and achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). **Consistent attendance and punctuality are also central to teachers’ professional conduct.** This policy therefore aims to ensure that trainees are able to benefit fully from all aspects of the training, whilst making reasonable allowance for those situations where absence is unavoidable. Trainees should be aware that punctual attendance at all centre-run training sessions and school experience is mandatory, unless covered by one of the sections below.

This policy covers these areas:

1. **Notification of absence**
2. **Monitoring of attendance**
3. **Sickness absence**
4. **Medical appointments**
5. **Maternity leave**
6. **Paternity leave**
7. **Adoption Leave**
8. **Holidays**
9. **Authorised absence**
10. **Compassionate leave**
11. **Unexplained absence**
12. **Withdrawal from course**

# 1 Notification of absence

* 1. Punctual attendance at all centre-run training sessions and school experience is mandatory. Failure to attend may result in failure to achieve Qualified Teacher Status at the end of the course.
	2. If absence is unavoidable, trainees must email the BECTT office by 8am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence. A reason for absence must be given. Trainees should email:

leigh@billericayscitt.com (secondary) or

louise@billericayscitt.com (primary)

* 1. Trainees who will be unavoidably absent from school placement must also inform the placement school by 8am on the first and all subsequent days of absence using the school absence reporting system.
	2. If a trainee does not notify BECTT office of the reason for their absence by 9am on the first day of absence, BECTT will endeavour to contact the trainee. Should this not be possible, BECTT will contact the named emergency contact (see section 11).
	3. If, after 10 working days, BECTT has not been able to contact the trainee or the trainee’s named emergency contact, a suspension of studies will be invoked. BECTT will inform Student Finance England (SFE) through a Change of Circumstances (CoC) submission. This may have an impact on any maintenance loans and bursaries the trainee receives. If there is no contact in the following 10 working days, the trainee will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course and all relevant authorities will be informed.

# Monitoring of Attendance

* 1. Trainee attendance at centre-run and school-based training will be monitored by the BECTT office
	2. The following circumstances will trigger a meeting with the trainee’s Course Director:
* 3 episodes of sickness absence
* Self-certificated sickness absence of more than 7 days in total across the year
* 5 consecutive days of absence
* A pattern of recurring short-term absence
* Absence for all reasons that adds up to 10 days in total

# Sickness Absence (See Appendix 1)

* 1. Trainees must self-certify for sickness absence of up to 7 days duration using the BECTT self-certification form, submitting the signed form to the BECTT office
	2. For sickness absence which extends beyond 7 days (including non-working days), trainees must obtain a doctor’s certificate (Fit for Work Certificate), submitting it to the BECTT office.
	3. If sickness continues beyond the period covered by the Fit for Work Certificate, a new certificate must be obtained and submitted to the BECTT office
	4. A trainee whose absence is due to an ongoing illness may be invited to meet the Course Director to discuss the impact of the illness on the trainee’s studies.
	5. If sickness absence continues, or is expected to continue, for more than 15 days, BECTT may choose to deem that the trainee’s period of study has been interrupted. BECTT will inform the trainee in writing that the trainee’s period of study is suspended. If the trainee is in receipt of finance from SFE, a CoC form will be submitted suspending studies on medical grounds.
	6. Trainees returning after sickness absence will have a return-to-work interview with a member of the BECTT team.
	7. Although the nature of the course does not allow for light duties during convalescence, where appropriate, adjustments will be discussed during the return-to-work interview to ensure trainees are not disadvantaged in assessments.
	8. A trainee returning to the course after an extended period of sickness absence may be required to complete a further medical questionnaire for Occupational Health to determine whether a staged return is appropriate.

# Medical appointments

* 1. Trainees seeking authorisation should inform BECTT of any appointments for which they need to take leave, being prepared to offer further evidence if requested. 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 of the course.
	2. Routine medical appointments, e.g. routine dentist and optician appointments should **not** be made during the working day.

# Maternity Leave

* 1. The nature of the course means that maternity leave as such is not available. However, BECTT will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible within the course structure to enable the trainee to be recommended for QTS.
	2. The length of maternity absence will normally mean that the course will be extended into a second year, provided that there is no change in requirements for QTS
	3. 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
	4. Any trainee requesting maternity leave must complete the course within 6 terms, one of which should normally be the final term of an academic year. The preferred arrangement is for the trainee to return in the second year two weeks before the anniversary of the beginning of maternity leave.
	5. Trainees should note that bursaries from the DfE are not payable during maternity leave and that a new application to SFE will be required if the course is extended into the second year. Trainees should clarify their individual financial situation with the BECTT office and SFE before taking maternity leave.
	6. The trainee should notify BECTT as soon as is practicable but not later than 15 weeks before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) of the intention to take maternity leave. If this is not possible, the trainee must notify BECTT as soon as possible.
	7. Once a trainee has notified BECTT of a pregnancy, a member of the BECTT team will meet the trainee to carry out any relevant risk assessment and to draw up a provisional plan for maternity leave and return to studies.
	8. Maternity leave should not normally be taken more than 11 weeks before the EWC
	9. When maternity leave begins, BECTT will write to confirm the formal suspension of the trainee’s studies, inform SFE through a CoC form and record the trainee as dormant on the Register of Trainee Teachers.
	10. The trainee should inform BECTT of the date of the child’s birth. A trainee may not return to the course less than two weeks after the birth.
	11. The trainee should contact BECTT after the birth to confirm the provisional plan for return to studies or to discuss any changes that may need to be made.
	12. If the trainee fails to make contact during the period of maternity leave, BECTT will write to the trainee no earlier than 21 days before the anniversary of the beginning of maternity leave, asking for confirmation of intention to return to the course. If BECTT receives no response with 14 days, BECTT will withdraw the trainee from the course.
	13. Absence on account of illness which is attributable to the pregnancy, including miscarriage, and which occurs outside the period of absence for maternity, will be treated as sickness absence and subject to the conditions governing sickness absence.

# Paternity Leave

* 1. The nature of this one-year course means paternity leave as such is not available but we will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible to allow a short period of absence within the course structure which will still enable the trainee to achieve QTS. If the period of paternity leave required is significant the course is likely to have to be extended into a second year.
1. **Adoption Leave**
	1. The nature of the course means that adoption leave as such is not available. However, BECTT will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible within the course structure to enable the trainee to be recommended for QTS.
	2. The length of adoption leave may mean that the course will need to be extended into a second year, provided that there is no change in requirements for QTS
	3. Any trainee who anticipates a need to apply for adoption leave should notify BECTT as soon as is practicable
	4. Once a trainee has notified BECTT of the intention to apply for adoption leave, a member of the BECTT team will meet the trainee to draw up a provisional plan for adoption leave and return to studies.
	5. Any trainee requesting adoption leave must complete the course within 6 terms, one of which should normally be the final term of an academic year. The preferred arrangement is for the trainee to return in the second year two weeks before the anniversary of the beginning of adoption leave.
	6. The trainee should contact BECTT after the adoption to confirm the provisional plan for return to studies or to discuss any changes that may need to be made.
	7. If the trainee fails to make contact during the period of adoption leave, BECTT will write to the trainee no earlier than 21 days before the agreed date of return, asking for confirmation of intention to return to the course. If BECTT receives no response with 14 days, BECTT will withdraw the trainee from the course.
2. **Holidays**
	1. Holidays may not be taken during term time
	2. Trainees planning to take holidays out of term time must check the dates of the school holidays at their placement school and the dates of centre-run sessions to ensure their proposed holiday dates do not run into term time.
3. **Authorised absence**
	1. Authorisation may be sought for absence due to specific circumstances not covered above. Trainees should apply to the BECTT office **at least 2 weeks in advance** using the form in Appendix 2 emailed to louise@billericayscitt.com (primary) or leigh@billericayscitt.com (secondary)
	2. Absence may be authorised by the Course Director or Executive Director in the following circumstances. This list is indicative, not exhaustive.
* **Interviews**: All reasonable requests will be granted.
* **Visits to schools before application/interview:** Given the open-ended nature of these absences and the significant demands of the course, whilst leave of absence will normally be granted, discretion should be used by the trainee when organising these visits.
* **Visits to schools prior to employment:** One day will be granted before the end of the final teaching practice.
* **Religious Observance:** Requests will normally be granted
* **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.
* **Wedding ceremonies:** Absence of one day to attend a wedding will be granted, but only if the person(s) getting married are close relatives or the trainee is a key member of the wedding ceremony.
* **Family emergency (including minor illness of dependents):** a maximum of one day may be granted to allow alternative arrangements to be put in place
	1. Absence will not normally be authorised in the following circumstances. The list is indicative, not exhaustive.
* Family emergency exceeding one day (including minor illness of dependents)
* Repeated family emergency (including repeated minor illness of dependents)
* Attendance at a child’s activities eg Nativity Play

# Compassionate Leave

* 1. In the event of emergencies such as bereavement, serious accident, hospitalisation or serious illness of an immediate family member/dependant, compassionate leave will be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director.
	2. The form in Appendix 2 should be completed and submitted to the Executive Director on return to study
1. **Unexplained Absence**
	1. Trainees will be asked at the beginning of the course to give the contact details of a **Named Emergency Contact**
	2. If a trainee is absent without explanation and the BECTT office is unable to contact the trainee, the BECTT office will attempt to contact the Named Emergency Contact
	3. If a trainee is absent without authorisation at any time the trainee will be asked to attend a meeting with the Course Director
	4. Should the trainee fail to attend the meeting as requested, BECTT will inform the trainee in writing that their studies have been suspended and inform SFE accordingly.

# 12. Withdrawal from Course

* 1. If, after consultation with the Executive Director and the school, a trainee decides to withdraw from the course, the trainee must:
* Submit a letter of withdrawal quoting the date of formal withdrawal and giving a reason
* Attend an exit interview as requested
* Pay any fees owed to BECTT (see trainee contract)
* Return their ID badge and any other resources
* Inform SFE of their withdrawal

# Updated August 202

**Appendix 1**

**Application for Leave of Absence**

I ……..…………………………………………………… (name of trainee)

# at ………..…………………………………………………….. (name of placement school)

wish to request leave of absence for the following circumstance:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|    | **Provide full details**  | **Dates of absence**  |
| Interview   |   |   |
| Graduation ceremony   |   |   |
| Compassionate reasons  |   |   |
| Other       |   |   |

I confirm that I have had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ days of absence during this academic year

Signed: ………… …………………………………… (trainee)

Date: ……………………………

# Approved by: ……………………………………………… Course Director / Executive Director

**Appendix 2**

**Sickness Reporting**