

Excepted Items - Suspensions Policy

Introduction

Suspension is when an employer decides to temporarily remove a member of staff from their duties, although their contract of employment and their entitlement to pay remains in place. Suspension of a member of staff is a neutral act and should only be considered in certain situations. Schools are entitled to request a certain amount of funding from the Local Authority, for a limited period, for the cost of providing **cover** for a member of staff who has been suspended. Schools' Personnel Service administers the claiming of this funding on behalf of the Local Authority. Schools may claim the suspension cover as reimbursement, under 'Excepted Items': Please note **only** schools that have opted into the scheme at the beginning of the financial year will be entitled to claim reimbursement through the Excepted Items Scheme.

Process

If you are considering suspending a member of staff for any reason, you must contact the Consultancy Team at Schools Personnel Service (SPS) and obtain prior approval for any future claim. Contact details are:-

SPS Kings Hill Office – Carol Steele:

Phone: 03000 412357

Email: carol.steele@kent.gov.uk

SPS Brook House Office – Amy Cottrell:

Phone: 01227 598752

Email: amy.cottrell@kent.gov.uk

Schools using other personnel providers will need to submit appropriate Case Notes to SPS so that a decision can be taken about whether reimbursement will be granted.

Please note that SPS reserves the right to decline reimbursement, where suspensions have not received prior agreement from SPS.

The Suspensions Flowchart (*Fig 1*) given at the end of this document shows clearly the steps that **all** schools need to take to ensure that claims are dealt with correctly.

The 'Authorised Period'

Standard Reimbursement Period

Suspension cover is reimbursable for a period of up to 30 working days. Cases completed within this period would, typically, include Medical Suspensions and Disciplinary issues that may be resolved internally.

Exceptional Reimbursement Period

Some Suspensions may be eligible for reimbursement beyond 30 working days: These would, generally, be for procedures outside the school's control, such as a Child Protection issue, or other legal proceedings which may have to go to court.

What is covered

- Only schools that have opted into the Excepted Items Scheme effective 1st April of the current financial year will be entitled to claim reimbursement.
- Reimbursement of cover will **not** be provided during School Holidays, Weekends or Staff Development Days, apart from for the following:
 1. Head Teacher and other Teachers on the Leadership 'Spine'
 2. Non-Teaching staff contractually required to work during these periods.

Please note that (apart from the aforementioned exceptions); should a Fixed Term contract be awarded to the person providing cover, reimbursement will only be made for Term-time, working days. The same criteria will apply to Permanent Staff carrying out additional hours to cover a suspended colleague.

Reimbursement will be for 'reasonable' costs; i.e. the person providing cover, should not be, where possible, of a higher Grade than the person suspended. The hours covered should not exceed the contracted hours of the person suspended.

How to claim reimbursement

Please submit an Excepted Items Claim Form, together with appropriate Cost of Cover evidence. Appropriate evidence will be either copies of invoices from Supply Agencies, or copies of Employers' Payroll Costs reports (i.e. PTFs for Schools using 'Capita').

Where cover is provided 'in-house', please ensure additional hours and contracted hours of the person providing cover are clearly marked on the Employers' Costs Report. When submitting your claim, please state total amount sought, on the Excepted Items Claim Form. A new form will need to be submitted for each claim, specifying the period the claim relates to.

Deadlines for claims

Claims for reimbursement of Cost of Cover for Suspended employees, must be submitted to SPS within the same Financial Year the Suspension has been completed. Failure to submit claims within the same financial year unfortunately will result in non reimbursement of the claim.

Suspensions completed during February and March in any given financial year will be accepted up until 31 May of the following Financial Year. SPS will not accept any claims beyond this date.

In order that the above deadlines are adhered to, please ensure the following procedures are maintained:

Where Suspensions are completed within 30 working days, please submit final claims as soon as possible, after completion of the period of Suspension.

In exceptional circumstances, SPS may authorise reimbursement for longer periods of Suspension. In this instance please submit claims on a regular monthly basis until the end of the 'authorised period'.

SPS will endeavour to process claims as soon as practicably possible and without unnecessary delay. If you have any particular circumstances that need to be considered regarding the payment of claims you should contact SPS to discuss these at the outset.

For further information on claiming Reimbursement of Suspensions Cover, please contact the **Excepted Items Team** at:-

Phone : 03000 411108

Email : excepteditems@kent.gov.uk

Suspensions Flow Chart for Schools

