

**Special absence management
procedures for all staff during a
developing Swine Flu outbreak**

**This arrangement will come into effect from
12th August 2009 until further notice.**



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1. Introduction

In addition to normal reporting of sickness absence, the following arrangements are to be used for cases of flu or those suffering with flu-like symptoms. If the impact of an outbreak worsens these instructions may be updated to provide the best possible working environment for staff and students.

The instructions and guidance in this procedure are important for the College and all staff and line managers are expected to comply with the provisions. Please note that all absences not related to flu or flu-like symptoms will continue to be reported and managed in the usual way.

2. Staff responsibilities – start of sickness absence

a. All staff are encouraged to stay at home if feeling unwell with flu-like symptoms and follow government guidelines for treatment and obtaining medical services. It is important that all such absences are reported by telephone to line manager at the earliest reasonable opportunity. If line managers are not contactable then HR can be informed on 01896 662502 or via email to hr@borderscollege.ac.uk. This should be done by 9am on the first day of absence.

b. If a member of staff becomes unwell at work with flu-like symptoms they must inform their line manager and immediately return home safely. The line manager will then inform HR.

3. Staff Responsibilities – during sickness absence

a. Staff or a supporting relative or friend should maintain contact with line managers during any sickness absence but particularly so in relation to flu absence. This should include details of what work is to be carried out during the absence of the staff member. It is important that Line Managers are informed:

- In every case when H1N1 is suspected by medical experts;
- Where an absence of longer than 7 days is expected;
- When a return to work date is to be agreed;
- When staff actually return to work;

b. Medical Certificates (Doctor's sicknote).

If a member of staff is absent due to illness for more than 7 days a medical sickness certificate is required from a GP or Doctor. If staff have any problems obtaining a medical certificate, line managers must be informed so that the issue can be considered once the individual has recovered and returned to work.

Staff must note that the College may insist on a medical certificate being produced for absences over 7 days and should be prepared to take reasonable steps to obtain one.

4. Return to Work

Staff should not return to work until they are fully fit to do so. As early as possible on the first day of return the line manager must meet with the individual to ensure their fitness to return.

5. Caring for dependants

Where time off is required to care for dependants suffering from suspected swine flu, line managers will endeavour to be flexible with working arrangements where possible. Line managers will closely monitor these arrangements through regular contact with affected staff.

5. Health guidance

If a member of staff is unable to attend work due to sickness, there is detailed guidance available from these following sources amongst others:

- DirectGov: www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu
- Health Protection Agency: www.hpa.org.uk
- NHS Information Line: 0800 1513513.