

National Specialist SCITTs

National Mathematics and Physics SCITT

National Modern Languages SCITT

Trainee Attendance and Absence Policy

Important: this document can only be considered valid when viewed on the SCITT Intranet or SCITT website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online.

The accredited provider for both the National Mathematics and Physics SCITT and the National Modern Languages SCITT, is Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs.

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1. Introduction

This **Attendance and Absence Policy** assists the SCITT Director, Course Leader and Strategic Board of National Specialist SCITTs, the accredited provider for the National Modern Languages (NML) SCITT and the National Mathematics and Physics (NMAP) SCITT, in making fair and reasonable decisions regarding the attendance of fee-paying trainees and regarding requests for leave of absence from its fee-paying trainees. Salaried or employed trainees are subject to the policies of their employing school or trust and as such are not covered by this policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the **SCITT Cause for Concern Policy**, the **SCITT Fitness to Study Policy**, the **SCITT Disciplinary Policy**, the **Appeals Policy** and the **SCITT Complaints Policy**.

The over-riding consideration will be the impact of any trainee absence on:

- the learning of the children that are taught by the trainee
- the progression of the trainee towards meeting the Teachers' Standards at the career appropriate level in order to be eligible to be awarded QTS; ensuring that the SCITT is compliant with the conditions of the document '[Initial teacher training criteria and supporting advice, Information for accredited initial teacher training providers](#)'
- the professional behaviour of trainees whilst on the course.

However, consideration will also reflect obligations to trainees in terms of legal and contractual requirements and moral obligations.

2. Purpose, Scope & Principles

The responsibility for exercising discretion on behalf of the SCITT Strategic Board is the SCITT Director's in accordance with the scope of the **SCITT Strategic Board terms of reference**. The SCITT Director may delegate certain discretions to the Course Leader. However, any such discretions will be in accordance with the principles and guidelines within this document and within the overall authority of the SCITT Director.

Any dispute or grievance about a request for leave of absence will be dealt with by the SCITT Director in the first instance but referred to the Hub Lead Teachers' Committee for a final decision.

A principal purpose in setting out this policy is to ensure that requests are dealt with fairly and consistently but within a framework of recognising that on certain occasions depending upon the circumstances, discretions will need to be applied by the SCITT Director.

3. Trainee Attendance on a Teacher Training Course

The SCITT as an ITT Provider must ensure:

'C2.3 All accredited ITT providers must ensure that training programmes are designed to provide trainees with...sufficient time being trained in schools in line with the minimum time requirements; and the experience they need to demonstrate all the Teachers' Standards for QTS.'

Accredited ITT providers must design ITT curricula that adhere to the minimum course lengths and time allocation ([Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice, academic year 2024-25 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)).

For this reason, it is not expected that trainees will be absent from the course during the academic year. Absence totalling 10 working days or more may have an effect on a trainee's ability to complete the course and could result in an extension, withdrawal, a break in study or a C4C process.

The SCITT will show consideration with regards to absences due to extenuating circumstances.

It is the trainee's responsibility to check the SCITT training programme and calendar before they begin the course and during the course for all course dates. In addition, trainees are expected to seek information about school holiday dates for the geographical area of the hub where they are hoping to train. The ability to meet the Teachers' Standards and be compliant with ITT criteria will be paramount and, except in emergency circumstances, adequate notice of at least seven days must be given to the SCITT Administrators for any leave of absence requests for events that are scheduled at short notice (e.g. funerals). For events which are usually calendared well in advance (e.g. religious observances, graduations) requests for leave of absence must be submitted by 1st September or as soon as the event dates are known but not later than 2 weeks before the event.

The trainee shall not be permitted to attend placements or lectures without the express permission of the SCITT Director should the trainee fail to make any payment of course fees before its respective due date. Such failure to attend will be counted as absence and may impact on the trainee's ability to gain QTS.

Any leave or travel booked before commencement of the course will not be honoured by the SCITT and could result in the trainee becoming non-compliant with the requirements of the ITT Criteria and therefore not being able to gain QTS. During the course, any recreational activity should be undertaken in the trainee's own time, outside calendared course weeks, and/or in the school holidays as published by the local authority the trainee's hub and placement schools are located in.

It is the trainee's responsibility to inform their school, subject mentor and SCITT Administrator by email or phone of any absence from school, training or other activity as required by the course. The monitoring of absences will be reported to the SCITT Assessment Board every term. Please refer to the Absence section in the **SCITT Handbook** on the SCITT Intranet.

Where a trainee's professional behaviour is being affected by repeated or continual absence, the **SCITT Trainee Contract** details the responsibility of the trainee's placement school headteacher and SCITT Hub Lead Teachers' Committee:

*'In the case of the other incidents listed below the decision on whether to exclude rests with the Headteacher in the first instance (these will subsequently be referred to the Strategic Board for a final decision according to the **SCITT Disciplinary Policy**) and it is sensible to assume that exclusion is the likely outcome of such behaviour:*

- *Regular lateness.*
- *Regular unexplained or poorly justified absence.*

4. Extenuating Circumstances

If at any time during the programme, a trainee is affected by extenuating circumstances, they must discuss this with their mentor immediately. Extenuating circumstances can include bereavement, physical and mental health issues, and difficulties in their personal life. It is very important that they seek help immediately and retain any documentation to support their circumstances. These documents will be required by the Assessment Board at the SCITT and the PGCE provider in order to make decisions about the trainee's progress.

If the trainee's training programme is interrupted by an unexpected death or onset of serious illness of a close relative, a fixed term of compassionate leave of absence can be negotiated with their placement school

and the SCITT Course Leader. This will normally be about two weeks to allow for travel abroad if necessary, but it is essential that the trainee maintains close contact with their school in such circumstances.

If the trainee is unwell and unable to continue their training in school and/or on the course, they should consult their GP who may declare them unfit to continue to train/be in school for a specified number of days and will provide them with a certified Doctor's note which must be emailed to the SCITT Administrators. Once the trainee is well enough to return and/or have been declared 'fit for work' after a period of absence, they must inform the SCITT Administrators and their placement school. The SCITT office will retain a copy of any notes in the trainee's file.

During any period of sick leave, the trainee must keep in contact with the SCITT Administrator and their mentor on a daily basis, unless they have been signed off for a set period of time. Trainees must send notification of their absence to the SCITT Administrator and their mentor on the first day by 8am at the latest and confirm whether they are continuing to be absent or are returning to work on each subsequent day by 8am. They should share with their mentor any available information and resources for their classes, but they should not be expected to provide detailed cover work. On hub training days, trainees must inform the SCITT Administrator and their Hub Lead Teacher and on central training days the SCITT Administrator and Course leader of their absence by 8am.

5. Religious Festivals

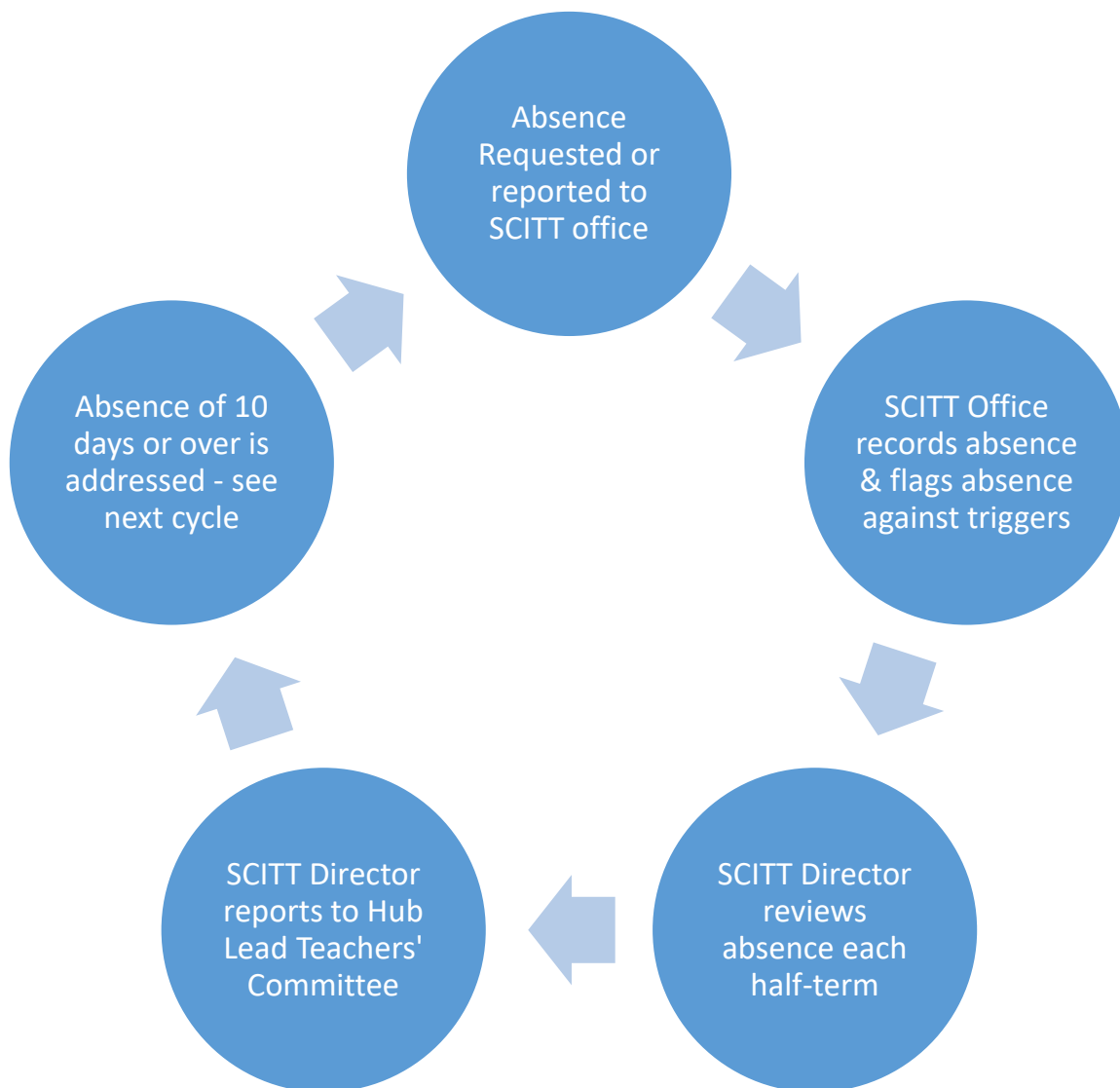
Approved absence for religious festivals: The SCITT and the placement school will give appropriate and sympathetic consideration to requests for leave if trainees wish to participate in a religious festival not covered by UK public holidays. Where it impacts on their attendance at school, they will need to abide by the school's policy. Whilst requests to be absent to attend a religious festival will not be refused unreasonably and without adequate explanation, it must be appreciated that:

- schools must always ensure adequate coverage for a trainee's absence.
- Trainers/ Lead Teachers must be able to ensure the trainee is able to complete their training successfully.

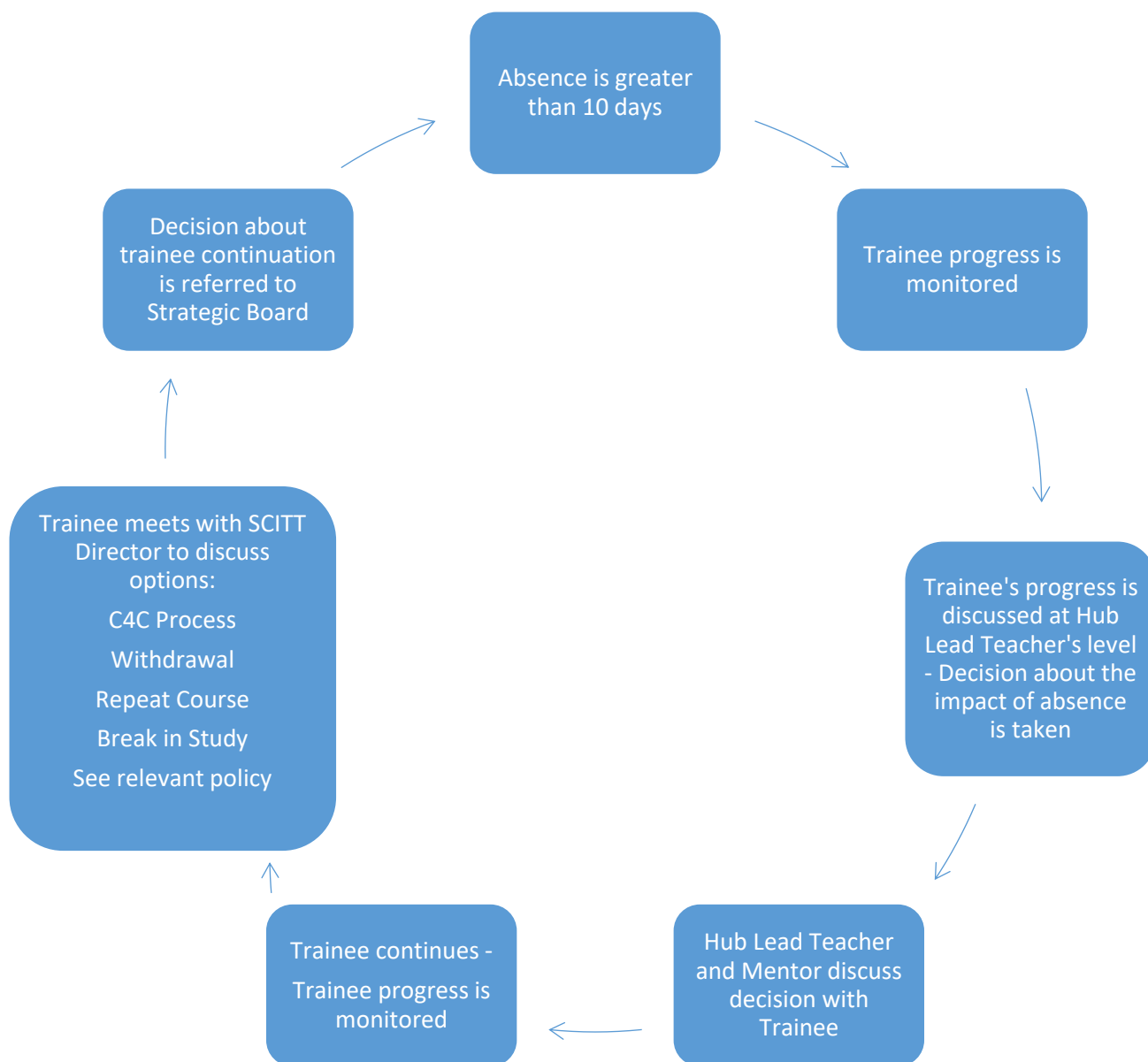
It is important that trainees inform the SCITT well in advance of the festival so that they can consider the request. Requests for leave of absence must be submitted at the beginning of the training year or as soon as the event dates are known but not later than 2 weeks before the event.

6. Absence Procedure Flow Charts

6.1 Absence monitoring process



6.2 Process for managing absence of 10 days or more



7. Procedure for the Management of Leave of Absence

This policy is applicable to all trainees enrolled with the SCITT. Trainees must complete the **Leave of Absence Request form** (available to download from SCITT intranet) and submit this **in word format** to the SCITT Administrator at least seven days in advance for events that are scheduled at short notice (e.g., funerals). For events which are usually calendared well in advance (e.g., religious observances, graduations) requests for leave of absence must be submitted by 1st September or as soon as the event dates are known. but not later than 2 weeks before the event. In the case of any emergency, the trainee must submit the form as soon as possible to the SCITT Administrator.

The following is covered in this policy:

- Compassionate Leave
- Dependants Leave
- Parental Leave
- Paternity/maternity Leave
- Medical Reasons
- Public Duties
- Miscellaneous

7.1 Compassionate Leave

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
Serious illness of close family member or dependant or other 'urgent domestic distress'	Up to 3 days	Trainee informs SCITT Administrator of their return to the course
Bereavement of a close family member or dependant	Up to 3 days plus an extra 2 for travel if required	Trainee speaks to Hub Lead Teacher, Mentor, and Course Leader if they need support with difficult circumstances.
Attendance at funerals for family other than close family members	Up to 1 day	
Attendance at funerals for close friend or close family friend	Up to 1 day	
Parental bereavement leave	Up to 2 weeks	
<p>Note: Refer also to dependants leave. In such circumstances, trainees are encouraged to discuss their personal circumstances with the Course Leader.</p> <p>A 'close family member' is normally defined as a partner, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, or sister; however, this definition is not exclusive.</p>		

There may be occasions when a trainee may request to attend the funeral of a close friend or family friend as opposed to the person being a direct relative. When such a request is made, consideration will be given for granting time off for the funeral e.g., half a day.

Trainees who lose a child under the age of 18 or suffer a stillbirth from the 24th week of pregnancy, have the right to two weeks' leave. The leave can be taken as one block or as two one-week blocks.

7.2 Dependants' Leave

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
<p>Time off for urgent reasons relating to a trainee's dependant e.g., child, partner, or parent.</p> <p>To attend to the care of a dependant where no other care is immediately available and to make arrangements for alternative care.</p>	As agreed	Trainee informs SCITT Administrator of their return to the course.
Carer's Leave – Time off to care or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need.	Up to 1 week	
<p>Note:</p> <p>Other Leave of Absence provisions may also be applicable e.g., compassionate leave.</p> <p>Child Illness:</p> <p>The SCITT recognises that there will be times when a trainee's child becomes ill and that may impact on their attendance at school, training or other activities. Where such emergencies occur, then the SCITT will grant leave for that particular day.</p> <p>However, a distinction does need to be made between what constitutes an emergency and non-emergency situation. For example, a child with 'a cold' does not constitute an emergency and the SCITT will hold an expectation that normal childcare provisions will ensure that the trainee is still able to attend the placement or training event. Where a pattern of absence for emergency childcare emerges, this will require further discussions with the SCITT Director.</p> <p>Where more serious longer term care arrangements are required the SCITT in line with the <i>Fitness to Study Policy</i> will look to provide support for the trainee by advising them on their options to take a break in study or other suitable arrangement, please note that fees for the course are required to be paid pro-rata according to the <i>Trainee Contract</i> despite absence or break in study being agreed. Such circumstances will be supported following personal and private discussions with the SCITT Director.</p>		

7.3 Parental Leave

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
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Time off to care for a child under 5 (or under 18 if a disabled child)	Up to 10 days	Discussion with SCITT Course Leader and Director about the future of the trainee on the course.
<p>Note:</p> <p>UK employment law states a maximum entitlement of 18 weeks, however, this is superseded by the ITT criteria which stipulate minimum time allocations and course weeks. Refer to SCITT Fitness to Study Policy for full details.</p>		

7.4 Paternity Leave/Maternity Support Leave

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
Time off for fathers or other individual directly involved in parenting a child (e.g., same sex partner)	10 days (pro rata) (normally to be taken within 5 weeks of the birth)	Trainee informs mentor, Hub Lead Teacher and the SCITT Administrator on their return to the course.
<p>Note:</p> <p>Both weeks should be taken consecutively, however, the Director can exercise their discretion. A request for 2 weeks leave where the weeks are not consecutive should be made in writing to the Director at least 4 weeks in advance of the intended start date.</p> <p>Adoption leave is the same as a paternity/maternity leave.</p>		

7.5 Leave for Medical Reasons

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
Illness	<p>As necessary.</p> <p>Up to five working days can be self-certified using the self-certification form (available on the SCITT intranet).</p> <p>For any absence beyond five working days, the trainee must produce evidence from their doctor in the form of a Doctor's note which will stipulate the nature of the illness and the length of time they will be unfit for work.</p>	<p>Trainee completes the self-certification form and emails it to the SCITT Administrator on their return to the course.</p> <p>The SCITT Director will monitor absences and consider the impact of an absence of 10 days or more on the trainee's ability to continue on the course. A discussion with the trainee will be arranged where concerns arise.</p>
<p>Note:</p> <p>There is no need to complete a <i>Leave of Absence Request form</i> for illness. The trainee must consult their doctor as soon as possible and keep all evidence of medical help including appointment cards, doctor's notes, and/or letters from medical staff.</p>		
Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period

Emergency / Non-routine Dental/ Medical Appointments (including investigations and treatments)	As necessary	Return to course
<p>Note:</p> <p>The SCITT holds an expectation that all routine dental and medical appointments will take place outside working hours. Where it is not possible to arrange a routine appointment outside of working hours, trainees may be granted a leave of absence subject to discussion with the Course Leader.</p>		
Blood donation, cervical smears, breast screening, prostate checks, IVF treatment, pregnancy loss, menopause	Where possible to be booked outside of placement and training hours As necessary	Return to course
<p>Note:</p> <p>Other treatments e.g. complementary therapy, cosmetic treatments, should be arranged outside normal working hours. Where it is not possible trainees may be granted leave of absence.</p> <p>The SCITT Administrator will monitor overall absence from the course and present this information to the SCITT Course leader and SCITT Director.</p> <p>Should all absences total more than 10 days then a review of the trainee's progress will be undertaken, and a decision will be taken about how to proceed on a case-by-case basis bearing in mind the Initial teacher training criteria and supporting advice.</p>		

7.6 Leave for Public Duties

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
Magisterial duties	Up to 18 days per Year (in full or half days)	Discuss impact of this absence and continuation on course with SCITT Director and Course Leader
Witness in court	As required	
Jury Service	As required	
Service in non-regular forces e.g. Territorial Army	Up to 2 weeks to attend summer camp Up to 3 days for short periods of training N.B Other provisions apply in the event of a trainee being called up for active service	
School Governing Body duties	As necessary	Return to course
<p>Note:</p> <p>Leave for Magisterial Duties, Public Duties and School Governing Body Duties is subject to agreement of the SCITT Director and Strategic Board.</p>		

The SCITT Administrator will monitor overall absence from the course and present this information to the SCITT Course leader and SCITT Director.

Should all absences total more than 10 days then a review of the trainee's progress will be undertaken, and a decision will be taken about how to proceed on a case-by-case basis bearing in mind the **Initial teacher training criteria and supporting advice** requirements for 120 days in general school placements.

7.7 Miscellaneous

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
Maternity/Paternity Leave	As necessary (see 7.4)	See note
Adoption Leave	As necessary (see 7.4)	
<p>Note:</p> <p>Maternity/Paternity leave and adoption leave are mandatory for employees; however, trainee teachers are not employees and therefore need to discuss the impact of this leave on their ability to complete the course. The SCITT Director will discuss how to support individual trainees in the case of maternity/paternity or adoption leave including discussing a break in study or temporary withdrawal.</p> <p>If the trainee is in receipt of a bursary to train to teach there are financial implications to taking this type of leave. The SCITT Director will discuss these with the individual trainee on a case-by-case basis.</p>		
Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
Student Union/Trade Union Leave	As necessary but subject to overall attendance being above 90% and no C4C process in place.	Return to course
Time off for religious observance	As necessary up to four days per academic year. Certain religious observance will fall within school holidays	Return to course
Adverse Weather	Refer to the placement school’s and the training centre’s adverse weather policy and procedures.	Return to course
<p>Note:</p> <p>Generally, it is expected that trainees will endeavour to attend school, training days, training events and other activities as long as it is reasonably possible to do so. The SCITT will use the status of public transport as a guide to what is ‘reasonably possible’.</p>		

Interview for first teaching post	1 day per interview – Leave of Absence Request form must be completed as soon as date is known and must include the invitation to interview from the school where the interview is taking place.	Return to course The SCITT Administrator and Course Leader will monitor the number of interview days and initiate a discussion with the trainee if this is impacting on the trainee's progress.
Preparatory visit following appointment to first teaching post	This must be arranged for a date <u>after course completion date</u>	N/A
Attending graduation ceremony of oneself, or a close family member	1 day	Return to course
Wedding of a close family member	1 day	Return to course
<p>Note:</p> <p>It is not expected that a trainee plans their own wedding in course time. A 'close family member' is normally defined as partner, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, or sister, however, this definition is not exclusive. If the trainee requires to travel to the wedding this will be considered on a case-by-case basis but should not exceed five days.</p>		
Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
House move	1 day - Leave of Absence Request form must be completed as soon as date is known.	Return to course
National team events e.g., Olympics	May be approved	Discuss impact of this absence and continuation on course with SCITT Director and Course Leader
Other circumstances e.g., 'once in a lifetime'	Would require withdrawal from the course or a break in study.	Discuss impact of this absence and continuation on course with SCITT Director and Course Leader.

7.8 Unauthorised Absence

If a trainee takes leave of absence without the prior consent of the SCITT Director or fails to follow the correct **absence procedures** (sick or otherwise) this will warrant an investigation under **SCITT Disciplinary Policy and Procedures**.

If a trainee believes that they are being treated unfairly or leave has been refused unreasonably, the issue should be raised in accordance with the **Complaints Procedure**.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SCITT Strategic Board in accordance with changes to legislation or terms and conditions, and its application will be monitored to ensure consistency and fair application.

8. Publishing this Policy

This policy is available through the SCITT website and our SCITT Intranet. A copy can also be requested via our SCITT office.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs, and the accredited provider for the National Modern Languages (NML) SCITT and the National Mathematics and Physics (NMAP) SCITT, is a member of this scheme. If a trainee teacher is unhappy with decisions made by the SCITT regarding this Attendance and Absence Policy, they may be able to ask the OIA to review this decision. More information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong can be found here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

Appendix One – Leave of Absence Request

Name of Trainee			
Name of Hub			
Name of Placement School			
Date(s)			
Reason for Absence	Personal <input type="checkbox"/> Job Interview <input type="checkbox"/> Medical <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Full day	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Half day	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
If none of the above, please let us know the number of hours you require			
Details of absence			
Number of lessons to be missed	KS3:	KS4:	KS5:
Mentor Progress Meeting missed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Evidence attached	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Hub Lead Teacher informed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Mentor informed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Signed by trainee			
Date			

Please note this form is in line with the **SCITT Attendance and Absence Policy** and should be emailed to the SCITT Admin inbox. This **information will be treated as confidential**.

Your request will be considered by the SCITT Director, and you will be informed in writing of the decision.

Number of days absent to date		
Leave of Absence Request Approved	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Reason(s) for non-approval		
SCITT Administrator	Signature:	Date:
SCITT Director	Signature:	Date:

Appendix Two – Self-certification for short term absence

Name of Trainee	
Name of Hub	
Name of Placement School	

This certificate must be completed for absences of up to 5 days (inclusive) from placement/training days. This certificate must be completed either **on the first day of return** following sickness or on day 6 when a doctor's note must be submitted in addition.

I certify that I was absent from work (state <u>day</u>, <u>date</u> and <u>time</u> if appropriate)	
From (1st day of absence):	To (last day of absence):
The reason for my absence was:	
If you were ill, did you consult a doctor? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you require any support/adjustments? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Please give details if you wish and the Director or Course Leader will be in touch to discuss.	
Signed by trainee	
Date	

Please note this form is in line with the **SCITT Attendance and Absence Policy** and should be emailed to the SCITT Admin inbox. **This information will be treated as confidential.**