

National Modern Languages SCITT

Trainee Attendance and Absence Policy

Important: this document can only be considered valid when viewed on the NML SCITT Intranet or NML 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.

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SCHOOL CENTRED INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

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1. Introduction

This **Attendance and Absence Policy** assists the SCITT Director, Course Leader and Strategic Board of The National Modern Languages (NML) 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 **Cause for Concern Policy**, the **Fitness to Study Policy**, the **Disciplinary Policy**, the **Appeals Policy** and the **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 NML 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 NML SCITT Strategic Board is the SCITT Director's in accordance with the scope of the **NML 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 National Modern Languages SCITT as an ITT Provider must ensure:

'C2.3 That training programmes are designed to provide trainee teachers with sufficient time being trained in schools, early years and/or further education settings to enable them to demonstrate that they have met all the standards for QTS. This means they would typically be structured to include at least the following periods of time to be spent in training in schools...

- **A secondary graduate (non-employment based) programme - 120 days (24 weeks)**'

(Initial teacher training criteria and supporting advice, Mandatory guidance on the criteria that organisations must need to provide initial teacher training (ITT), updated 1st September 2021, DfE, 2012)

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

The NML SCITT will show consideration with regards to absences due to a Covid 19 positive result and / or self-isolation due to Covid 19 in line with Government guidance.

It is the trainee's responsibility to check the NML SCITT training calendar before they begin the course and during the course for all course dates and 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 NML SCITT Administrator 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.

The trainee shall not be permitted to attend placements or lectures without the express permission of the NML 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 NML SCITT and could result in the trainee becoming non-compliant with the requirements of the ITT Criteria and therefore not able to gain QTS. During the course, any recreational activity should be undertaken in the trainee's own time 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, hub lead teacher and NML 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 NML SCITT Assessment Board every term. Please refer to the Absence section in the **NML SCITT Handbook** on the NML SCITT Intranet.

Where a trainee's professional behaviour is being affected by repeated or continual absence, the **NML SCITT Trainee Contract** details the responsibility of the trainee's placement school headteacher and NML 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 **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, you are affected by extenuating circumstances, you must discuss this with your mentor immediately. Extenuating circumstances can include bereavement, physical and mental health issues, and difficulties in your personal life. It is very important that you seek help immediately and retain any documentation to support your circumstances. These documents will be required by the Assessment Board at The NML SCITT and the PGCE provider in order to make decisions about your progress.

If your training programme is interrupted by the unexpected death or onset of serious illness of a close relative, a fixed term of compassionate leave of absence can be negotiated with your placement school and the NML SCITT Course Leader. This will normally be about two weeks to allow you to travel abroad if necessary, but it is essential that you maintain close contact with your school in such circumstances.

If you are unwell and unable to continue your training in school and/or at Day Schools/Pedagogy/PGCE sessions, you should consult your GP who may declare you unfit to continue to train/be in school for a specified number of days and will provide you with a certified Doctor's note which must be emailed to the NML SCITT Administrator. Once you are well enough to return, you must inform the NML SCITT Administrator and your school. The NML SCITT office will retain a copy of any notes for our files. During any period of sick leave, you must keep in contact with the SCITT Administrator, your mentor and your Hub Lead Teacher on a daily basis. You must send notification of your absence to the SCITT Administrator, your mentor and your Hub Lead Teacher on the first day by 8am at the latest and confirm whether you are continuing to be absent or are returning to work on each subsequent day. You should notify your mentor of the current progress of your classes, but you should not be expected to provide detailed cover work after your first day's absence.

5. Religious Festivals

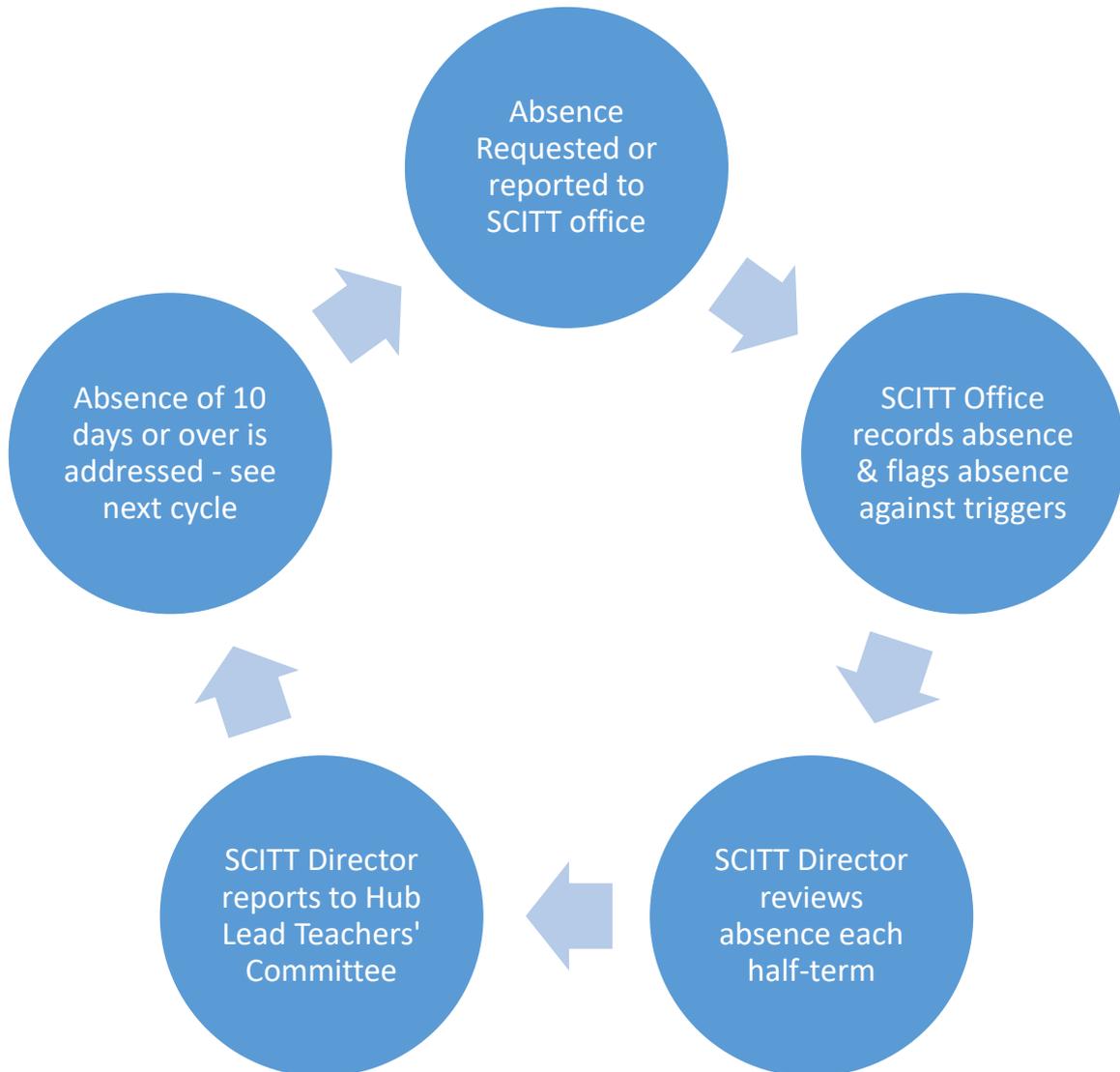
Approved absence for religious festivals: Your school will give appropriate and sympathetic consideration to requests for leave if you wish to participate in a religious festival not covered by UK public holidays. Where it impacts on your attendance at school, you will need to abide by the school's policy. 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 your absence;
- Trainers/ Lead Teachers must be able to ensure you are able to complete your training successfully.

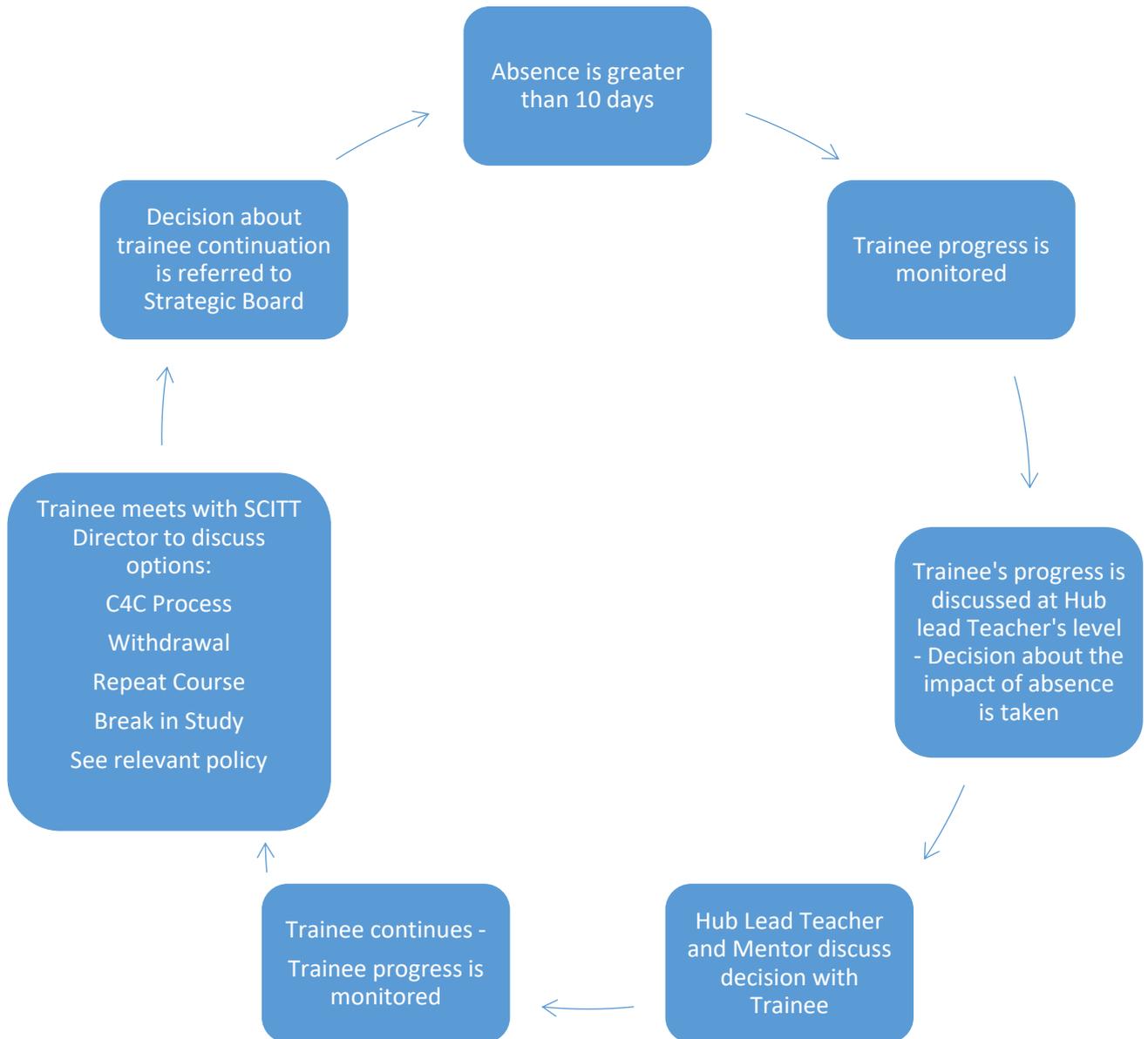
It is important that you tell us well in advance of the festival so that we can arrange for your absence. Requests for leave of absence must be submitted at the beginning of the training year or as soon as the event dates are known but not later than 2 weeks before the event.

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 NML SCITT. Please complete the **Leave of Absence request form** (available to download from NML 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. In the case of any emergency, please 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	Please inform SCITT Administrator of your return to the course
Bereavement of a close family member or dependant	Up to 3 days plus an extra 2 for travel if required	Please speak to your Hub Lead Teacher, Mentor, and Course Leader if you need support with difficult circumstances.
Attendance at funerals for family other than close family members	Up to 1 day	
<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> <p>There may be occasions when a trainee may request to attend the funeral of a close 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.</p>		

7.2 Dependants' Leave

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
Time off for urgent reasons relating to a trainee's dependant e.g. child, partner, or parent.	As agreed.	Please inform SCITT Administrator of your return to the course.
<p>Note: Other Leave of Absence provisions may also be applicable e.g. compassionate leave.</p> <p>Child Illness: The NML SCITT recognises that there will be times when a trainee's child becomes ill and that may impact on their attendance at Day Schools, school, training or other activity. Where such emergencies occur, then the NML 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 NML 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 NML 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
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: UK employment law states a maximum entitlement of 18 week, however, this is superseded by the ITT criteria which stipulates a minimum attendance in placement of 120 days. Refer to <i>Fitness to Study Policy</i> 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)	Please inform your mentor, Hub Lead Teacher and the SCITT Administrator on your return to the course.

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 NML SCITT intranet).</p> <p>For any absence beyond five working days, you must produce evidence from your doctor in the form of a doctor's note which will stipulate the nature of your illness and the length of time you will be unfit for work.</p>	<p>Please complete the self-certification form and email it to the SCITT Administrator on your return to the course.</p> <p>We may need to discuss the impact of an absence of 10 days or more on your ability to continue on the course.</p>
<p>Note: There is no need to complete a Leave of Absence form for illness. Please consult your 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>		
Emergency / Non-routine Dental/ Medical Appointments (including investigations and treatments)	As necessary	Return to course
<p>Note: The NML 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, pregnancy loss, menopause	As necessary	Return to course
<p>Note:</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.

The NML SCITT will monitor overall absence from the course and present this information to the SCITT Strategic Board. 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 of training.

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: Leave for Magisterial Duties, Public Duties and School Governing Body Duties is subject to agreement of the NML SCITT Director and Strategic Board. NML will monitor overall absence from the course and present this information to NML Strategic Board. 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 of training.</p>		

7.7 Miscellaneous

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
Maternity Leave	As necessary	See note
Adoption Leave	As necessary	
<p>Note: Maternity 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.</p>		

The SCITT Director will discuss how to support individual trainees in the case of maternity or adoption leave including discussing a break in study or temporary withdrawal.

If you are 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.

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 placement school's adverse weather policy and procedures.	Return to course
<p>Note: Generally, it is expected that trainees will endeavour to attend school, Day Schools, training events and other activity as long as it is reasonably possible to do so. The NML 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 form must be completed as soon as date is known and must include the name of the school where the interview is taking place.	Return to course
Preparatory visit following appointment to first teaching post	Not approved until after course completion date	N/A
Attending graduation ceremony of oneself, or close family member	1 day	Return to course
Wedding	1 day	Return to course

Note:

Attending your own wedding is not subject to leave of absence and is not expected to be planned 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 you require to travel to the wedding this will be considered on a case-by-case basis but should not exceed five days.

Reason for absence	Period of absence	Action after this period
House move	1 day - leave of absence form must be completed as soon as date is known.	Return to course
National team events e.g. Olympics	As 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 NML SCITT *Disciplinary Policy and Procedures*.

If a trainee believes that they are not being unfairly treated 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 NML 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 NML SCITT website and our NML SCITT Intranet. A copy can also be requested via our NML SCITT office.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. The National Modern Languages (NML) SCITT is a member of this scheme. If a trainee is unhappy with decisions made by the NML 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>.