



Teachers Managing Absence (F8) Toolkit
TMA 03:
Conducting a Return-to-Work Discussion
(Version: 1.0)



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Section 1	Conducting a Return-to-Work Discussion
Section 2	Return to Work Discussion Form

Version Number	Effective Date	Details of Last Revision
1.0	11 th August 2025	

Section 1: Conducting a Return-to-Work Discussion

In accordance with section 2.5 of the Teachers Managing Absence Policy (F8), after each period of sickness absence the Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher must carry out a return-to-work discussion. This should normally be undertaken the day the Teacher/Associated Professional returns to work. If, for practical operational reasons, a face-to-face return to work discussion is not appropriate then arrangements should be made for this to be undertaken by telephone or video call.

A return-to-work form must be completed for every Teacher/Associated Professional, every time they are off work.

The Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher should also reinforce the importance of good attendance and raise the profile of the Teachers Managing Absence Policy (F8).

The discussion will also provide the Teacher/Associated Professional with an opportunity to discuss any underlying problems which may or may not be causing absence that could be resolved by counselling or other management action.

In preparation for the RTW discussion, the Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher as a minimum should have a copy of the teacher's sickness absence record over the last 12 months and any other relevant attendance information such as patterns of absence, previous absence paperwork.

The return-to-work discussion provides the Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher with an opportunity to discuss the following if applicable:

- welcome the teacher back to work.
- check on the fitness of the employee to return to work.
- enable the employee to provide further clarification when the reason for the absence is unclear or appears to be unacceptable.
- establish if there were any non-medical reasons, such as personal, domestic issues or reasons relating to the job or working conditions or relationships which were the cause of the absence.
- discuss whether any additional support is required to help the employee remain at work.
- discuss the teacher's attendance record and address any concerns generated by the absence or patterns of absence and decide, in terms of the policy, what further action is necessary, if any.
- confirm all notification and certification procedures were followed.
- demonstrate the Council's commitment to addressing sickness absence as a management issue.
- update the teacher on any work issues.

Head Teachers/Depute Head Teachers should seek advice from the Employment & Policy Team where the Teacher/Associated Professional declares a disability or where the Teacher/Associated Professional has indicated they have an underlying health problem that is attributing to their attendance.

A Return-to-Work Discussion Form (TMA (F8) 03(a) is attached below. If the absence was due to an accident at work, this must be recorded on the form which may be used as evidence in any future proceedings.

Section 2: TMA (F8) 03 (a) - Return to Work Discussion Form

TMA (F8) 03 (a) - Return to Work Discussion Form					
This form must be completed after every sickness absence					
Section 1. Teacher/Associated Professional Details					
Name:		Employee No:			
Location/Unit:		Job Title:			
Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher Name:					
Section 2. Absence Details					
Day/Date of Interview: (the return-to-work meeting should normally be undertaken the day the Teacher/Associated Professional returns to work)					
Method of discussion:		Face to Face	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day/Date absence commenced:					
Return to Work Date:		No. of Workdays absent:			
Did the Teacher/Associated Professional comply with the notification & certification procedures: (If no, discuss with them and remind them of their responsibilities and consequences of not complying in future)		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Has the Teacher's/Associated Professional's absence been ended on iTrent? (they should be reminded to do this through MySelf) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Reason for Absence: (If the reason given for the absence differs from the original reason given, please ensure this is discussed and iTrent amended accordingly) Was the Absence Work Related? (If, yes please ensure this is recorded correctly on iTrent and discuss whether any additional support is required as outlined at Section 3) If either party considers the absence was due to an industrial injury, please refer to Section 6.5 of TMA Policy (F8) for guidance on how this should be dealt with		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Fitness for Work: (Ensure the Teacher /Associated Professional is fit to RTW and discuss whether any additional support is required and provide detail at Section 3)					
Section 3. Additional Support					
Occupational Health Referral		Details of any other support offered to the Teacher/			

Individual Stress Risk Assessment	Associated Professional to help them remain at work i.e. phased return, adjustment to duties, training etc.		
Employee Counselling			
Physiotherapy			
Other e.g. referral to other support service			
Any other matters that either party wishes to discuss in relation to the absence? (if there were any non-medical reasons, such as personal, domestic issues or reasons relating to the job or working conditions or relationships which were the cause of the absence this should be addressed).			
Has the Teacher/Associated Professional been updated on any work issues that occurred during their absence?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/> (n/a)
Section 4. Management Action			
As a result of this absence has the Teacher/Associated Professional met a trigger in accordance with the MA Policy (F8) (if yes please select appropriate trigger/s) Discuss absences in last rolling 6 or 12-month period (depending on trigger met): (copy of absence record should be attached)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> /	3 occasions of sickness absence in a rolling 6-month cycle	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	8 days or more cumulative absence in a rolling 12-month cycle	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If no, proceed to end of form and sign / date	2 weeks continuous absence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss any other concerns about the Teacher's/Associated Professional's attendance? i.e. patterns of absence, time keeping, reasons for absence			
If applicable has the Teacher/Associated Professional been advised that they are required to attend a Formal Attendance Review Meeting?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (If, yes, refer to Section 2.7 of TMA Policy (F8) and Managers Toolkit for guidance on next steps) No <input type="checkbox"/> (if no provide reason i.e. discretion request to be made, see Section 2.9 of TMA Policy (F8))		
Has the Teacher/Associated Professional been made aware of future actions that may be taken in accordance with the TMA Policy (F8) if their attendance levels were to deteriorate in the near future? i.e. further formal attendance reviews, dismissal	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
The information in this form will be used for the purposes of recording, monitoring and reviewing the Teacher's / Associated Professional's attendance levels and may be referred to if any formal action is taken in relation to attendance levels.			
Signed Teacher/Associated Professional:		Date:	
Signed Head Teacher/Depute Head Teacher:		Date:	