

# **LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE & TROPICAL MEDICINE**

## **POLICY ON TRAVEL DISRUPTION**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The School recognises that staff may from time to time have difficulty attending work during periods of severe weather, or when there are disruptions to public transport or air travel.

1.2 Whilst the School is committed to protecting the health and safety of all its employees, it must ensure that disruption to the services it provides is minimised.

1.3 The purpose of this policy is to set out the arrangements for treatment of staff who cannot attend work during periods of severe weather conditions or disruptions to public transport and/or air travel. It also sets out the responsibilities of employees on attendance in these circumstances.

### **2. SCOPE**

2.1 The policy is intended to apply to a broad range of disruption, including severe weather such as heavy snow, disruption to public transport due to a variety of reasons including industrial action and special events such as the 2012 Olympics, and disruption to air travel for reasons such as industrial action and other factors, such as the volcanic ash cloud in 2010.

2.2 However, it is recognised that the policy cannot anticipate or address every potential event that might have a widespread impact on the ability of staff to attend or remain at work.

2.3 The policy is not intended to deal with sickness absence or carer responsibilities, which fall under the School's Policy and Procedure on Sickness Absence Management, and Carer Leave Policy and Procedure Document respectively.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITY OF EMPLOYEES**

3.1 In the event of travel disruption, staff should make every effort to attend work as normal. However, they should not put themselves at unnecessary or inordinate risk in trying to do so.

### **4. ABSENCES**

4.1 Where staff have been unable to attend work due to disruption to public transport or air travel (including, but not limited to, the examples given in paragraph 2) the following arrangements will apply:

- i. Staff who find themselves in such a situation should inform their line manager/Faculty Office as soon as possible, either by telephone or email. This should include information about the likely return date (if known) and any urgent work, meetings or classes that need to be covered or postponed while they are away.
- ii. Staff should agree with their line manager, Head of Department or Head of Faculty (or equivalent) (hereafter collectively called 'the line manager') one or a combination of the following options:

- Temporary Flexible Working Arrangements

Temporary flexible working arrangements may be adopted by staff during times of ongoing travel disruption, by agreement with an individual's line manager. This would be to help accommodate increased journey times to and from work. If any time is lost as a result of using temporary flexible working arrangements it should be made up as soon as possible and before the end of the School leave year.

- Home and/or Remote Working

Where authorised to do so by the line manager, and where suitable facilities exist to allow this, staff may work at home/remotely during the period of absence. In such instances, it may be appropriate to agree specific work outputs for the period concerned. Staff would be paid as normal.

- Time Off in Lieu

Alternatively, individuals may, with their line manager's agreement, choose to take the absence as time off in lieu, and make up any lost time on days/dates as agreed with their line manager. The lost time should be made up if possible before the end of the School leave year.

- Authorised Unpaid Leave

As an alternative to the above, individuals may, with their line manager's agreement, elect to take any days when they were unable to attend for work as authorised unpaid leave. In such instances, the line manager should notify the Personnel & Payroll Office, and an appropriate deduction will be made from normal salary the following month.

- Annual Leave

Staff may cover any absence from their existing annual leave entitlement. Where such entitlements have already been used for the year, up to five days leave may be brought forward from the following year's entitlement to cover the absence, at the discretion of the line manager. It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that such arrangements are recorded so that leave entitlement is not exceeded for the following year.

4.2 All or any of these arrangements must be agreed with the individual's line manager, and notified to Personnel & Payroll as appropriate.

## **5. SEVERE CONDITIONS OR DISRUPTIONS OCCURRING DURING THE COURSE OF THE WORKING DAY**

5.1 Line managers should normally decide on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate for staff to leave work early. In taking the decision, they should take appropriate account of the individual's circumstances (eg distance to travel, mode of transport), issues of health and safety and business needs.

## **6. CLOSURE OF THE SCHOOL**

6.1 In extreme circumstances the Director, or other designated representative, may decide to close the School. In this event, following efforts to notify managers, a message will be sent to staff by email and placed on the home pages of the School's website. If the closure occurs during the working day, it will specify the time at which most staff would be expected to leave the premises in order to ensure an orderly closedown. Managers of staff who do not have access to email or the internet should notify them of the decision.

6.2 Updates about the planned reopening of the School will also be placed on the home page of the website.

6.3 Most staff will be paid as normal for the closure. Some staff engaged in what are deemed to be essential services (eg security, some laboratory areas) may be required to work during the closure.

6.4 Staff who are able to work remotely will be encouraged to do so during any closure.

## **7. STAFF STRANDED OVERSEAS DUE TO AIR TRAVEL DISRUPTION**

### **- Staff stranded following a holiday**

7.1 Members of staff stranded overseas due to air travel disruption who cannot return to work on the expected date should make every effort to notify their line manager at the earliest possible opportunity. They should also make every reasonable effort to return to the UK at the earliest opportunity. The normal arrangements for dealing with an additional period of absence in such circumstances would be for the member of staff to:

- take the time as annual leave;
- make up the lost time at a later date;
- take unpaid leave, or
- work remotely (including checking and dealing with email).

7.2 The precise arrangements will be decided by the individual's line manager after consultation with the member of staff, and taking into account their views and preferences. It may be possible to offer a combination of options.

### **- Staff stranded following a business trip**

7.3 The School will attempt to advise and/or assist members of staff who are unable to return to the UK after a visit overseas on School business. This may include advice on and/or assistance with accommodation and alternative transport.

7.4 Such staff will be able to claim reasonable expenses associated with their late departure, in the first instance from the airline or, where this has not proved possible, from the School's insurers. This would cover reasonable expenditure on accommodation and/or alternative means of travel. Further information is available from the Finance Office.

7.5 Staff affected will not be expected to take the period of delay as annual leave, and will continue to be paid as normal.

7.6 Staff will be encouraged to undertake any duties that it is possible for them to perform remotely (eg checking and responding to email).

## **8. REVIEW**

8.1 This policy will be reviewed after any major incident which affects staff attendance, in order to consider its effectiveness. Such reviews will be conducted by the Personnel Office in liaison with senior colleagues and with recognised trade unions.