

## ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

### **1. Absence Policy**

- 1.1 The Parish Council wishes to ensure that it delivers quality services. This can only be achieved if it is possible to provide consistency and ensure that disruption to service provision, due to staff absence, is minimised. In dealing with sickness absence the organisation must balance the needs of individual employees against the need to provide and manage quality services, and the cost of employing temporary staff to cover absences.
- 1.2 The Parish Council recognises that there will be occasions where employees will be absent through sickness or ill health. Policies and procedures are designed to ensure that any such absences are dealt with fairly and consistently, whilst taking into account individual circumstances. The Parish Council is sympathetic where employees have genuine sickness, but extended or recurrent absence that affects the level of service provided by the Parish Council must be addressed.
- 1.3 Where patterns of absence have been identified, the Parish Council will discuss with the employee to establish the underlying reasons. Where counselling is considered a way forward in helping to identify and resolve those issues, that shall be offered before any formal action is considered. The Parish Council will also make use of Occupational Health experts where health assessments are appropriate.
- 1.4 The responsibility for managing absence lies with the Parish Clerk and individual employees. The provision of management information and advice and guidance on managing absence and employee rights is the responsibility of the Parish Council or staffing committee where there is one.
- 1.5 Absence will not normally be regarded as a disciplinary matter, but if the reasons for absence are considered unsatisfactory or if an employee is in breach of the absence procedures, it may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.
- 1.6 Where an employee's persistent short term absence or long-term absence is a cause for concern and/or affecting the services provided, the Parish Council may seek to terminate an employee's contract.

### **PROCEDURE**

### **2. Reporting Sickness**

- 2.1 Employees are required to notify the Parish Clerk (or in the case of the Parish Clerk's sickness then the Chair should be informed) during the first hour of the first day of sickness, giving an indication of the likely length of absence. If they are unable to contact the Parish Clerk they should leave a message on the Parish Council's telephone answering service. If an employee's sickness is likely to last longer than originally indicated, the employee must keep in regular contact with the Parish Clerk / Chair about the likely date of return.
- 2.2 Where an employee is absent for more than seven consecutive days (including non-working days) they are required to obtain a Medical Certificate ("fit note") from their Doctor or Hospital. The Medical Certificate should be sent to the Parish Council and forwarded to the Parish Council's payroll department in order that sick pay is processed.

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2.3 Where an employee does not submit a Medical Certificate for a period of absence over 7 days they are not entitled to, and will not be paid, sick pay and may be disciplined for unauthorised absence.

1.5 Where an employee returns to work within seven days, the UK Government form SC2 "self certification" must be completed and sent to the Parish Clerk / Chair.

### **3. Probationary Period**

3.1 Whilst it is recognised that there may be some genuine absence during the probationary period, prolonged or frequent absence during a probationary period may result in failure to confirm an employee in post or the termination of the contract prior to the completion of the probationary period.

### **3. Review of Sickness**

3.1 The Parish Clerk / Chair shall keep records of sickness absence. Where an employee's absence level is greater than normal, or where the pattern of sickness is a cause for concern, it is the responsibility of the Parish Council to raise the sickness record with the employee.

3.2 Absence is not normally regarded as a disciplinary matter, but if the reasons for absence are considered unsatisfactory or if an employee is in breach of the absence policies and procedures it may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures

3.3 Where the Parish Council is concerned about an employee's absence record or length of absence from work, they must meet with the employee to discuss their sickness record. The Parish Council may require an employee to produce a Medical Certificate for all absences and where there is continued concern employees should receive first and final warnings that their absence records could lead to the termination of their contract.

3.4 Examples of absences causing concern include :

- an absence repeated in three consecutive months
- where there are four periods of absence in any six months
- where there is a long history of intermittent sickness

3.5 Where an employee's persistent short term absence or long-term absence is a cause for concern and/or affecting the services the Parish Council provides, it may seek to terminate an employee's contract. This will only be done after

- Discussion with the employee
- Offering counselling, if appropriate
- Having sought Independent Medical Advice at no cost to the employee
- Offering suitable alternative employment, where appropriate

3.6 Employees have the right to refuse any independent medical examination, and the right to see, or withhold the results of any such examination and the right of appeal against any termination on the grounds of ill-health.

3.7 An employee's absence may be for reasons other than ill-health. Where it is clear that this may be the case, the Parish Council should consider alternative appropriate action to resolve the difficulties facing the employee. In such cases the Parish Clerk / Chair will advise the Parish Council or staffing committee as to options.

**4.0 Statutory Sick Pay**

- 4.1 Employees are eligible for SSP only after 4 or more days incapacity for work, including non-working days. Employees must complete the SC2 form certifying their absence or provide a Medical Certificate. Employees only receive SSP if their earnings are above a statutory minimum. Employees will not receive SSP if they do not advise the Parish Council of their absence or there is good cause to doubt an employee's incapacity for work.
- 4.2 SSP is not paid where employees are entitled to other benefits e.g. Maternity or Disability Benefits, or they have exceeded the maximum for payment of SSP.
- 4.3 Refer to individual contracts of employment for details of sick pay.