

OLD PARISH COUNCIL 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 Council and the Parish Clerk. The provision of management information and advice and guidance on managing absence and employee rights is the responsibility of the Parish Council.

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 will 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 by 10 o'clock the Chair / Vice Chair of the Parish Council of the first day of sickness, giving an indication of the likely length of absence. If an employee's sickness is likely to last longer than originally indicated, the employee must keep in regular contact with the Chair/ Vice Chair about the likely date of return. Consideration must be given to the current workload and urgent tasks or correspondence must be discussed with the Chair / Vice Chair.

2.2. Where an employee returns to work after four days but within seven days, the UK Government form SC2 “self-certification” must be completed and sent to the Parish Council and be kept on file.

2.3. Where an employee is absent for more than seven consecutive days they are required to obtain a Medical Certificate (“fit note”) from their Doctor or Hospital. The Medical Certificate should be sent to the Chair / Vice Chair and be kept on file.

2.4. If a 'fit note' is issued and advises that changes to the employee’s duties or work environment is recommended (such as light duties, adaptations to office equipment, phased return to work) this must be notified to the Parish Council as soon as possible.

2.5. 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.

2.6. The employee is expected to mitigate their absence due to sickness or injury by not taking part in activities or events that are likely to hinder a return to work.

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.

4. Review of Sickness

4.1. The Parish Clerk and/or the Chair / Vice Chair shall keep records of sickness absence. Where an employee’s absence level is greater than normal (see 4.4), or where the pattern of sickness is a cause for concern, it is the responsibility of the Chair / Vice Chair to raise the sickness record with the employee.

4.2. 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.

4.3. 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.

4.4. 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

4.5. 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

4.6. 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.

4.7. 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 Chair / Vice Chair will advise the Parish Council (where necessary) as to options.

5. Statutory Sick Pay

5.1. Employees are paid at the agreed basic remuneration in line with the scale of payment for any one year that runs from 1 April to 31st March. The Parish Council will be responsible for reclaiming the Statutory Sick Pay element from HM Revenue & Customs. Entitlement to payment is subject to notification of absence and production of medical certificates as required above.

5.2. SSP is not paid where employees are entitled to other benefits e.g. Maternity or Disability Benefits, they are over 65, or they have exceeded the maximum for payment of SSP.

5.3. The Parish Council reserves the right to require that an employee at any time to submit to a medical examination by a medical practitioner nominated by the Parish Council, subject to the provisions of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 where applicable. Any costs associated with the examination will be met by the Parish Council.

5.4. Whilst on absence due to sickness or incapacity the employee is not permitted to undertake any paid work for another employer or for any business established by them without express permission from the Parish Council.