



## **NOAK BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL SICKNESS AND ABSENCE POLICY**

### **1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Noak Bridge Parish Council is committed to the care and well-being of its employees. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all members of staff have access to information relating to sickness and absence and are aware of the steps that they must follow when absent from work. Employees are required to keep their manager informed about planned and unplanned absence and it is essential to the good management of the Council that they do so. In the first instance, the Clerk will report absence to the Chairman.

By managing sickness and absence, the Council aims to provide a high quality service to the public. This policy covers:

- Sickness Leave
- Unauthorised Absence & Lateness
- Annual Leave
- Compassionate Leave
- Family Support/Emergency Leave
- Time off in Lieu (TOIL)
- Dentist/Doctor/Hospital Appointments/Other Medical Appointments
- Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Parental Leave

The policy also seeks to provide guidance, security and support to employees during periods of ill-health.

### **2 SICKNESS LEAVE**

The Council recognises that there will be occasions when staff are unable to attend work due to sickness. The Council provides a sick pay scheme for its employees in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) Terms and Conditions. Details of sick pay are included in the employee's contract.

#### **Notification of absence due to sickness**

If an employee is unable to attend work due to sickness, they must inform their manager/Chairman by phone, in person, by text or e-mail. They must give their reason, the likely duration and expected date of return and action being taken to mitigate the effect of the illness (e.g. GP visit). This must be as soon as practical on the first day of

absence, so that service levels can be maintained. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council accept notification of absence from a third party. Regular contact must be maintained with the manager/Chairman during a period of absence.

### **Short-term Self-Certificated Sickness**

For an absence of seven days or less, employees are required to complete a self-certification documentation. For all absences which exceed a seven day period, a medical Statement of Fitness for Work is required.

All sickness absence will be recorded. The Chairman will investigate and assess whether further action is necessary if periods of absence due to short-term self-certificated sickness reach unacceptable levels, or if patterns emerge.

The Council wishes to support its staff, and recognises that employees who are frequently absent may be experiencing problems that could be better managed through other means than sickness absence. In the first instance, the Chairman will interview the employee to decide the most appropriate course of action. If necessary, referral to an Occupational Health specialist will precede any action by the Council.

### **Long-term Absence**

Long-term absence occurs when an employee suffers from a prolonged illness, injury or disability that means that they will be away from work for an extended period. This type of absence refers to sickness over a period of more than two calendar weeks. The Council takes a sympathetic view about genuine ill-health problems and will provide a supportive approach to employees in these circumstances. If necessary, referral to an Occupational Health specialist will precede any action by the Council.

Employees who are absent from work due to sickness are expected to maintain regular contact with their manager/Chairman. This is to ensure Council is able to offer maximum support and that adequate steps are in place to prepare for their return to work. The following options may be considered for the employee's return to work:

- Lighter duties
- Flexible working
- Provision of specialist equipment
- Alternative work

### **Return to work interview**

Where an employee has returned from any period of sickness, a return to work interview will be conducted.

### **Medical information**

In cases where an employee's absence reaches excessive levels, or there is a lack of information about the circumstances of the sickness absence, the Council may request medical information about their condition from their GP. Any expenses incurred, i.e. paying for an examination, or Medical Certificate will be covered by the Council.

### **3 UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE AND LATENESS**

Unauthorised absence occurs when an employee fails to attend work and has not made arrangements with their manager/Chairman, when relevant. Employees who are absent from work due to reasons other than sickness/accident are required, wherever possible, to obtain prior permission from their manager/Chairman. The Council will consider each case of absenteeism on its merits and written evidence may be required. Where an employee has returned from a period of unauthorised absence, a return to work interview will be conducted. The employee will be expected to take an unauthorised absence from their annual leave entitlement. Unauthorised absence may result in disciplinary action for misconduct.

There may be occasions when it is unavoidable to be late for work. The employee should contact their manager/Chairman to explain the reason for the delay.

### **4 ANNUAL LEAVE**

Details of annual leave are included in an employee's contract.

It should be noted that all requests for annual leave are at the discretion of the manager/Chairman with consideration for the operational requirements of the Council, including staffing provision for events in the Council calendar.

### **5 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE**

Compassionate leave is at the overall discretion of the Chairman. However, to achieve consistency in general paid leave will be granted for the death of a close family relative, i.e. spouse, civil partner, father, mother (or equivalent in-laws) son or daughter; up to three days paid leave (reduced to pro-rata for part-time working) will be granted.

The Chairman will consider the individual circumstances, taking account of such matters as the need to organise funeral arrangements, in which case a further two days will be granted for this purpose.

One day of paid leave will be granted for attendance at the funeral of a close family member.

### **6 FAMILY SUPPORT AND EMERGENCY LEAVE**

For example,

- To provide assistance or make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- When there has been an unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant.
- To deal with an incident that involves a child of the employee.

Employees should be aware that for the circumstances listed above, the Council would expect employees to use their annual leave entitlement, subject to the usual approval process, to offset the need to take unpaid leave. The Chairman has overall discretion concerning additional leave allowance in exceptional circumstances, giving consideration to the needs of the individual member of staff at the time of the request

and the ongoing operational efficiency of the Council.

The right to time off for dependants is contained in s.57A of the Employment Rights Act 1996.

## **7 TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL)**

Time off in lieu is based on the employee's contracted working hours and is calculated weekly. An employee with a provision in their contract for TOIL will be expected to take the time within a reasonable timescale in consultation with their manager. Prior approval from the employee's manager must be obtained before taking TOIL.

## **8 DENTIST/DOCTOR/HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS/OTHER MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Employees will be allowed time off work for attending necessary dentist, doctor or hospital out-patient appointments. Time off for attending other medical appointments will be at the discretion of the manager/Chairman. However, all appointments should be scheduled either early morning or late afternoon, if possible, to minimise disruption to the working day. In-patient appointments or procedures taking the whole day will be treated as being on sick leave for that day. Medical appointment cards/letters should be obtained and made available to the manager/Chairman on request.

## **9 MATERNITY/PATERNITY/ADOPTION/PARENTAL LEAVE**

Under the provision of the Employment Act 1996 (as amended by the Employment Act 2002 and regulations there under), employees will be entitled to apply for Maternity/Paternity/Adoption leave.