

HEADCORN PARISH COUNCIL

Sickness Absence Policy

Introduction

The Parish Council, as a responsible employer, is committed to maintaining the health, well-being and attendance of all its employees. We value the contribution our staff make to our operational efficiency and we miss that contribution when any employee is unable to work. The overall aim of the policy is to strike an effective balance between the needs of the Parish Council and the needs for the employee to be given time to recover from illness.

The policy sets out

- What employees can expect from the Parish Council in an effort to support employees during periods of sickness and absence, and
- What responsibility employees have in relation to their attendance at work.

Notification of Incapacity for Work

Staff must notify the Council by telephone on the first day of incapacity at the earliest possible opportunity and by no later than one hour before the start of their shift. Other than in exceptional circumstances notification should be made personally, to the Chair of the Staffing Committee and the Chair of the Parish Council.

You should try to give some indication of your expected return date and notify us as soon as possible if this date changes. The notification procedures should be followed on each day of absence unless you are covered by a doctor's medical certificate.

If the incapacity extends to more than seven days then staff are required to notify the Council of the continued incapacity once a week thereafter, unless otherwise agreed.

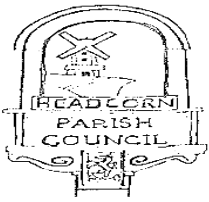
Evidence of Incapacity

Doctors' certificates are not issued for short term incapacity. In these cases of incapacity, up to and including seven calendar days, staff must sign a self-certification absence form on their return to work.

If the period of sickness has been for longer than 7 days, whether or not they are working days, staff should see their doctor and make sure he/she issues a medical certificate and forward this to the Council without delay. Subsequently staff must supply consecutive doctors' medical certificates to cover the whole period of the absence.

Payments

Staff are entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP) if they are absent for four or more consecutive days because of sickness or injury provided they meet the statutory qualifying conditions. SSP is treated like wages and is subject to normal deductions.



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Qualifying days are the only days for which staff are entitled to SSP. These days are normally working days unless otherwise notified. The first three qualifying days of absence are waiting days for which SSP is not payable. Where a second or subsequent period of incapacity, of four days or more, occurs within 56 days of a previous period of incapacity waiting days are not served again.

Any contractual sickness/injury payments are shown in the individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.

Any days of contractual sickness/injury payments which qualify for SSP will be offset against SSP on a day to day basis. A deduction will be made for any other state benefits received if the individual is excluded or transferred from SSP.

If staff are entitled to any payments in excess of SSP and the entitlement expires, full or part payment may be allowed at the Councils discretion where it is considered that there are special circumstances warranting it.

Where the circumstances of the incapacity are such that the individual receives or are awarded any sum by way of compensation or damages in respect of the incapacity from a third party, then any payments which may have been paid to the individual because of the absence shall be repaid by the individual to the Council up to an amount not exceeding the amount of the compensation or damages paid by the third party and up to, but not exceeding, any amount paid by the Council.

Return to Work

The individual should notify the Chair of the Staffing Committee as soon as they know which day they will be returning to work, if this differs from a date of return previously notified.

If the individual has been suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis they must not report for work without clearance from their doctor.

On return to work after any period of sickness/injury absence the individual is required to complete a self-certification absence form and hand this to the Chair of Staffing Committee.

Upon returning to work after any period of sickness/injury absence, the individual may be required to attend a "return to work" interview to discuss the state of their health and fitness for work. Information arising from such an interview will be treated with strictest confidence.

General

Submission of a medical certificate or sickness self-certification absence form, although giving the Council the reason for the absence may not always be regarded as sufficient justification for accepting the individuals' absence. Sickness is just one of several reasons for absence and although it is understandable that if an individual is sick, they may need time off, continual, or repeated absence through sickness may not be acceptable to the Council.



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In deciding whether the absence is acceptable or not the Council will consider the reasons and extent of all absences, including any absence caused by sickness/injury. The Council cannot operate with an excessive level of absence as all absence, for whatever the reason, reduces efficiency.

The Council will take a serious view if the individual take sickness/injury leave which is not genuine, and it will result in disciplinary action being taken.

If the Council consider it necessary, they may ask the individuals permission to contact their doctor and/or for the individual to be independently medically examined by the Councils Occupational Health Specialists, Health Assure Limited.

Time off for Appointments, Emergencies and Personal Commitments

You should try and make hospital and doctor's appointments during your own time however where this is not possible, reasonable time off will be allowed for said appointments and for emergencies and personal commitments.

All absences must be discussed with the Chair of Staffing or the Chair of the Council

Stefan Christodoulou
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