



COGGESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Sickness and absence

Introduction

Coggeshall 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 organisation 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:

- 1 Sickness Leave
- 2 Unauthorised absence & Lateness
- 3 Annual Leave
- 4 Compassionate Leave
- 5 Family Support/Emergency Leave
- 6 Time Off in Lieu (TOIL)
- 7 Dentist/Doctor/Hospital Appointments
- 8 Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Parental Leave

1. 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 by phone, or in person; text or email is not acceptable. They must give their reason, the likely duration and expected date of return. This must be as soon as practical on the first day of absence, or within 1 hour of starting their shift, so that service levels can be maintained. Only in exceptional circumstances will CPC accept notification of absence from a third party. Regular contact must be maintained with their Manager during a period of absence.

Short-term Self-Certificated Sickness

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

All sickness absence will be recorded. Where 3 periods of sickness in 3 consecutive months occur, if periods of absence due to short-term self-certificated sickness reach unacceptable levels or if patterns emerge, the Clerk will investigate and assess whether further action is necessary

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 Clerk 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. HPC 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. This is to ensure that HPC 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.

2. Unauthorised absence and lateness

Unauthorised absence occurs when an employee fails to attend work and has not made arrangements with their Manager. Where an employee has returned from any 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.

There may be occasions when it is unavoidable to be late for work. The employee should contact their Manager to explain the reason for the delay. The employee will be expected to make up any time lost at work due to lateness.

3. 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 Line Manager with consideration of the operational requirements of HPC, including staffing provision for events in the Council calendar.

4. Compassionate leave

Compassionate leave is at the overall discretion of the Clerk or 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) or son or daughter, up to three days paid leave (reduced pro-rata for part time working) will be granted.

The Clerk will consider the individual circumstances, taking account of such matters as the need to organise funeral arrangements.

5. 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 Clerk 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.

6. 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 the month it was accrued, but time not exceeding one third of a standard week's working hours may be carried over with the consent of their Manager. Any hours in addition to this will be removed. Prior approval from the employee's Manager must be obtained before taking TOIL.

7. Dentist/doctor/hospital appointments

Employees will not usually be allowed time off work for attending routine dentist, doctor or optician appointments. Where possible, hospital out-patient appointment should be scheduled either early morning or late afternoon, in order to minimize the 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. Appointment cards should be seen by the line manager.

8. Maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave

An employee's entitlement to maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave is set out in the relevant legislation.