



SARRATT PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: SICKNESS & ABSENCE

Sarratt 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.

By managing sickness and absence, Sarratt Parish Council aims to provide a high quality service to the public and employees.

The council recognises the need to support employees through any periods of absence and subsequent return to work. An effective policy will enable the Council to identify any potential unsafe working practices, any issues affecting employee morale and any other underlying problems an employee may be facing.

This Policy covers:

- Sickness Leave
- Sickness Pay
- Long Term Absence.
- Unauthorised absence & lateness
- Annual Leave
- Compassionate Leave
- Family Support / Emergency Leave
- Time Off in Lieu (TOIL)
- Dentist / Doctor / Hospital Appointments
- Maternity / Paternity / Adoption / Parental Leave
- Other Absence

SICKNESS LEAVE AND PAYMENTS

Sarratt Parish 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 Line Manager, or in their absence his/her deputy, giving the 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 Sarratt Parish Council accept notification of absence from a third party. Regular contact must be maintained with the Line Manager during a period of absence.

Certification Sickness

For absence of seven days or less employees are required to complete the self-certification documentation which is available from the Line Manager.

For all absences which exceed a seven day period a 'Statement of Fitness for Work' is required which can be obtained from the employee's General Practitioner, or doctor who treated them in hospital stating the reason for the absence and thereafter the employee shall provide a consecutive medical certificate to cover any subsequent period of absence.

The Council reserves the right to require an employees at any time to submit to a medical examination by a medical practitioner nominated by the 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 Council.

Employees who are frequently absent could be suffering from poor health which may require medical investigation through the Council's nominated Occupational Health Advisor to enable the employer to assist the employee return to full fitness, if possible.

All sickness absence will be recorded. Sarratt Parish Council 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.

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

An employee will be subject to disciplinary procedures where they fail to provide good reasons for failing to comply with notification and certification requirements or make or produce any misleading or untrue statement or document concerning their fitness to work.

Long-term and Persistent 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 may also treat as long term absence any series of unconnected short term illnesses.

Sarratt Parish Council will take a sympathetic view about genuine ill health problems and will provide a supportive approach to employees in these circumstances.

Employees who are absent from work due to sickness are expected to maintain regular contact with their Line Manager who in the case of a long term absence will arrange to conduct a Return to Work Interview. This is to ensure that Sarratt Parish 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.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE AND LATENESS

Unauthorised absence occurs when an employee fails to attend work and has not made arrangements with their Line 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 any 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 Line Manager to explain the reason for the delay. The employee will be expected to make up any time lost at work due to lateness.

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 Sarratt Parish Council, including staffing provision for events in the Council calendar and Council / Committee meetings.

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

Compassionate leave is at the overall discretion of the Parish Council. However, in order to achieve consistency in general paid leave will normally be granted as follows:

- 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 will be granted.
- The Parish Council will consider the individual circumstances, including consideration to whether the individual has to organise funeral arrangements, in which case a further two days may be granted for this purpose.
- One day of paid leave will be granted, in addition, for attendance at the funeral of a close family member.

FAMILY SUPPORT / EMERGENCY LEAVE

Examples of when emergency leave will be appropriate are set out below:-

- To provide assistance or make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- On the occasion of an unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant.
- To deal with an incident which 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 Parish Council 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.

TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL)

The standard working week is defined in the employee's contract. For employees with a provision in their contract for TOIL to cover duties worked over and above the standard week, a maximum of 50% of weekly hours defined in the employee's contract may be carried over from one month to the next. Any hours in addition to this will be removed. Prior approval from the employee's Line Manager must be obtained before taking TOIL.

DENTIST/DOCTOR/HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS

Employees will be allowed time off work for attending necessary dentist, doctor or hospital out-patient appointments. These appointments should be scheduled either early morning or late afternoon if possible, in order to minimize the disruption to the working day. In-patient appointments or procedures taking the whole day will be treated as per sick leave above.

MATERNITY / PATERNITY / ADOPTION / PARENTAL LEAVE

An employee's entitlement to maternity / paternity / adoption / parental leave is set out in their contract and/or as per the relevant legislation.

OTHER ABSENCE

An employee called for Jury Service shall inform their line manager as soon as possible. Employees will receive full pay for their period of Jury Service less any allowances, other than travel or accommodation costs paid by the court.

Any employee uncertain about any other type of absence shall seek advice from their Line Manager.

Other types of absence may be set out in an employee's contract or may be covered by alternative Council policies or procedures and or statutory rights.

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