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## **Managing Ill Health & Absence Policy**

Moulton Parish Council is committed to improving the health, safety, and wellbeing of its employees and value the contribution our employees make to our success.

### **1. Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the operational efficiency of Moulton Parish Council can be maintained whilst employees are absent from work for sickness or injury related reasons. It also seeks to provide guidance, security and support to employees during periods of ill-health.

This policy explains:

- What we expect from managers when handling absence.
- What we expect from employees who are absent from work due to sickness.
- How we will support employees who are absent from work due to sickness to facilitate an early return, to ensure that such a return is sustained and to reduce levels of absence of employees.

### **2. Legal Responsibility & Policy Support**

Moulton Parish Council recognises its duty of care to its employees and its legal obligation to support ill health under the terms of:

[Employment Rights Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)  
[The Health and Safety at Work Act \(1974\) \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)  
[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations \(1999\) \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)  
[Human Rights Act \(1998\) \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)  
[Data Protection Act \(1998\) \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)  
[Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)  
[Equality Act \(2010\) \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)  
[Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

Please also refer to our related policies outlined in Section 13.

### **3. Sickness Pay**

Sick pay will be paid in accordance with their contract. SSP is paid where applicable at the current rate.

## 4. Procedures

### Employees

Employees who are unable to attend work through sickness, accident or personal circumstances must notify their line manager of the reason for their absence by no later than 10am on the first morning of absence. If your line manager is not in the office, you should make every effort to speak to someone who can be briefed on your workload and any urgent matters that may require attention. If possible, you should give an indication of how long you expect to be absent so that arrangements can be made for cover if required. Should the Executive Officer need to report sickness absence, they should do so to the Chairman of the Council.

If the absence is for a period of less than 7 days, employees should complete a self-certification form (see Executive Officer) on their return to work. For periods over 7 days a medical certificate or 'fit note' from their GP is required.

It is the responsibility of each employee to keep their line manager advised of the circumstances that are preventing them from attending work, of their likely return date, action being taken to mitigate the effect of the illness (e.g. GP visit) and contact details in case of work-related queries.

Employees who are absent from work due to reasons other than sickness/accident are required, wherever possible, to obtain prior permission from their line manager. Where absenteeism appears unreasonable or unwarranted, employees may be liable for disciplinary action for misconduct.

The parish council reserves the right to make welfare visits to the home of employees whilst they are on sick leave.

You should expect a "return to work" meeting with your line manager on your first day in the office after any period of absence, this will be to ensure that you are fit to work and to update you on developments in the department and your workload.

### Managers

#### ***Return to Work Discussions***

- Managers will discuss absences with employees when they return to work to: -
  - Welcome the employee back to work.
  - Enquire as to the nature of their sickness and present state of health.
  - Make the employee aware that they have been missed.
  - Bring the employee up to date with any work issues.
- Ensure that the absence has been correctly certified and recorded.
- Ask whether there is any further support that can be offered to assist in ensuring attendance.
- point out the consequences of any further episodes of sickness absence.

If an employee's GP has advised that they 'may be fit for work' the return-to-work discussion can also be used to agree in detail how their return to work might work best in practice.

If it is not possible to provide the support an employee needs to return to work – for example, by making the necessary workplace adjustments – or an employee feels unable to return then the Statement will be used in the same way as if the GP advised that the employee was 'not fit for work'.

## 5. Process and Intervention Points

Moulton Parish Council uses intervention points to help provide a consistent, fair, and measured approach to managing all forms of sickness absence/ill-health. The purpose of an intervention point is to act as a prompt for management action. However, each case should be considered on its own merits: NB when an intervention point is met or exceeded it is not an automatic reason to commence a formal process.

Absence levels will generally start to be of concern to managers at the following intervention points:

- 3 absences in a 12-week period.
- 10 days intermittent absence over the past 12 months.
- 3 weeks continuously off sick.

## 6. Absence due to Disability

Moulton Parish Council is an inclusive employer and as such does all they reasonably can to support disabled employees, workers and job applicants and protect them from disability discrimination, including harassment and victimisation.

Moulton Parish Council will make reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability and absences relating to the disability of an employee will be kept separate from sickness absence records.

Please see our Dignity at Work Policy and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

## 7. Absence due to Maternity

Moulton Parish Council is a family friendly employer and support all our staff through each stage of life.

Absences relating to the pregnancy of an employee will be kept separate from sickness absence records.

Please see our Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy / Flexible Working Policy.

## 8. Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Moulton Parish Council values its employees and supports their welfare. It will therefore respond to alcohol, drug or substance misuse problems as primarily a health issue, recognising that an employee with a problem can put themselves, their colleagues and the public at risk of harm. It is the Council's intention, as an employer, to respond positively to these issues and to encourage staff with problems to seek help and advice and reasonable time off will be given.

However, employees must not consume alcohol or use substances outside of working hours that may affect their performance or their ability to work safely. Neither must they report for work if they may be under the influence of alcohol or other substances that may affect their performance and if they do, manager will send them home and consider action under the disciplinary procedure.

The consumption of alcohol by employees during working hours is not allowed. The possession, use, production or supplying (selling or giving) of illegal drugs is forbidden and will be reported to the police in line with the Council's statutory responsibility under the [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1971/263).

Serious incapacity due to alcohol, drugs or other substances whilst on duty will be regarded as gross misconduct and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

If the offer of support and treatment is not taken up, or leads to little or no change, and there is little or no evidence showing change, then the Council may deal with the issue under the code of conduct policy.

Please also see our Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for details of support available.

## 9. Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Where periods of absence related to disability, managers need to follow the Managing Ill Health and Sickness Absence Policy but consider the disability.

Under the [Equality Act \(2010\) \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk) employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled employees are not disadvantaged in their work compared to non-disabled employees. This may mean changing the way employment is structured, the removal of physical barriers and/or providing extra support for a disabled worker. Please see our Dignity at Work Policy and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

## 10. Mental Health

Moulton Parish Council is committed to supporting the mental health of our staff and as such mental health first aid training is offered to our staff. Please see our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

The Parish Council recognise that working conditions and environment can have a huge impact on mental health, and, equally, someone's mental health can significantly affect performing well in their job.

Where any employee feels unwell due to mental health issues, it is vital that they contact our trained Mental Health First Aider (see below), Line Manager or Executive Officer, or in the case of the Executive Officer, the Chairman of the council to discuss the issue. Please see our Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

## 11. Related Policies

This policy applies to all employees of Moulton Parish Council and should be read in conjunction with our other policies and procedures. These policies have been written with the needs of the employee at the centre, and the Council recognises that employees who are happy and well at work will perform at their best. Please refer to additional workplace policies:

- Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Bereavement and Special Leave Policy
- Working from Home Policy
- Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct.

**This policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Officer and submitted to the full council for approval.**

**Last Reviewed: January 2024**

**Review Due: January 2025**