



Tedburn St Mary Parish Council Absence and Sickness Policy

This document sets out Tedburn St Mary Parish Council's approved and agreed practices. Any deviation must be made by resolution of the full Council and recorded below.

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This absence policy explains:

- what we expect from councillors and employee/s handling absence
- This policy has been adapted from the ACAS website as a guide.

Key Principles

Tedburn St Mary's Parish Council's absence policy is based on the following principles:

1. As a responsible employer we undertake to provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness, as laid out in the contract of employment.
2. Regular, punctual attendance is an implied term of every employee's contract of employment - we ask each employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.

3. We will support employees who have genuine grounds for absence for whatever reason; this support includes:-
 - a. 'special leave' for necessary absences not caused by sickness
 - b. a flexible approach to the taking of annual leave
 - c. access to counsellors where necessary
 - d. rehabilitation programmes in cases of long-term sickness absence
4. We will consider any advice given by the employee's GP on the 'Statement of Fitness for Work'. If the GP advises that the employee 'may be fit for work' we will discuss with the employee how we can help them get back to work - for example on flexible hours, or altered duties.
5. Tedburn St Mary Parish Council's disciplinary procedures will be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is not thought to be satisfactory.
6. We respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with all data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

Notification of Absence

If an employee is going to be absent they should inform the Chair or Vice Chair within an hour of their normal start time. They should also:

- give a clear indication of their illness
- and a likely return date

Evidence of Incapacity

Employees can use the arrangements as laid out in the contract of employment for the first 7 days absence. Thereafter a 'Statement of Fitness for Work' is required to cover every subsequent day.

If absence is likely to be protracted, i.e. more than 4 weeks continuously, there is a shared responsibility for the Council and the employee to maintain contact at agreed intervals.

'May be Fit for Some Work'

If the GP advises on the Statement of Fitness for Work that an employee 'may be fit for work' we will discuss with the employee ways of helping them get back to work. This might mean talking about a phased return to work or amended duties. 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'.

Return to Work Discussions

Managers will discuss absences with employees when they return to work to establish:

- the reason for, and cause of absence
- anything the manager or Council can do to help
- that the employee is fit to return to work
- If any 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.

A more formal review will be triggered by:

- frequent short-term absences
- long-term absence

This review will look at any further action required to improve the employee's attendance and well-being.

Absence due to disability/maternity

Absences relating to the disability of an employee or to pregnancy will be kept separate from sickness absence records. These will be referred to the Equal Opportunities Policy.