



MORETONHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY



The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the operational efficiency of Moretonhampstead Parish Council (“MPC”) can be maintained whilst employees are absent from work for sickness or injury related reasons.

This policy also seeks to provide guidance, security and support to employees during periods of ill-health.

MPC values the contribution its employees make to the successful running of the Council and greatly misses that contribution when an employee is unable to work for whatever reason.

This policy should be read in conjunction with MPC’s Health and Safety, Disciplinary and Grievance policies and also the employee’s Contract of Employment.

KEY PRINCIPLES

MPC will support employees who have genuine grounds for absence. Each employee is asked and expected to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.

MPC respects 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.

PROCEDURE

Employees who are unable to attend work through sickness, accident or personal circumstances must inform the Chairman/Vice-chairman by phone or in person of the reason for their absence by no later than 10am on the first morning that they are unable to attend work. The employee should indicate the reason for absence and, if possible, how long they expect to be absent.

If the absence is for a period of less than seven days, employees should complete a self-certification form (available from the MPC office and set out in Appendix 1) on their return to work.

For an absence of more than seven days a fit notes issued by a doctor or any other medical professional covering the entire period of absence will be required.

Where absenteeism appears unreasonable or unwarranted, employees may be liable for disciplinary action for misconduct.

Employees are expected to mitigate their absence due to sickness or injury by not taking part in activities or events that are likely to hinder a return to work.

SICKNESS PAY

This will be paid in accordance with the contract of employment.

Employees should see their Contract of Employment for their own entitlements to sick pay.

POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS BEFORE RETURN TO WORK

An employee's doctor might indicate on a fit note that the employee "may be fit for work". If this option is selected the doctor will also identify potential amendments that should be made, selecting from: phased return to work; amended duties; altered hours; and workplace adaptations .

If a fit note suggesting amendments for a return to work is received MPC will contact the employee and arrange for a meeting with the employee. At this meeting the suggested amendments will be discussed with the aim of facilitating the employee's return to work. If the suggested amendments are not possible the employee will remain on sick leave.

If the suggested amendments are possible the employee will return to work, but regular reviews will be carried out to ensure that the amendments are adequate.

It should be noted that any amendments are not to be viewed as a permanent change to the contract of employment.

RETURN TO WORK

Employees should expect a "return to work" meeting with the Chairman/Vice Chairman on their first day in the office after any period of absence, to ensure that the employee is fit to work, that all the support the employee needs is in place and to update the employee on developments and their workload.

Requests for temporary adjustments to the employee's working conditions will be considered by MPC and will be accommodated wherever possible and if MPC's circumstances permit.

If the employee is experiencing frequent periods of absence the Chairman will explore with the employee whether there is any underlying reason for the frequency of the absences and whether further support is necessary.

NECESSARY MEDICAL INFORMATION

MPC may request a fit note issued by a doctor or other medical professional for frequent periods of absence of seven days or less or where there appears to be an unacceptable pattern of absence. In such circumstances MPC will reimburse the doctor's/medical professional's costs for providing the fit note.

Where an employee has frequent absences or there is a long-term absence MPC will need to gain as much information about the employee's medical condition as possible,

In these circumstances MPC may request the employee's permission to contact their GP and ask for a medical report on the employee's condition. The employee may ask their GP to show them a copy of this report.

MPC may also request the employee to see an occupational health adviser to advise the employee and MPC on the best way to support the employee

MPC reserves the right to require the employee to be examined by a practitioner of its choice in order to seek a medical opinion.

A refusal to grant permission for contact with a GP or to cooperate with an occupational health adviser will prevent MPC from gaining a proper understanding of the reason for the employee's

absences. The employee will need to be aware that as a result MPC will not be able to properly take into account any medical condition in any formal review under the Absence Management Policy.

DISABILITY AND CAPABILITY

If the employee has a condition that means they might be considered disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, MPC will attempt to make reasonable adjustments to their job to accommodate their requirements. The employee will be fully consulted at all times.

RETURN OF COUNCIL'S EQUIPMENT

If the employee is off sick for an extended period of time (e.g. one month or more) MPC may require them to return MPC equipment until they are well enough to return to work.

If the employee does not return to work following a period of sickness absence, the employee will be required to return all outstanding MPC equipment on the date of termination of their employment.

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

In the event of the employee having frequent short term absences which are affecting their work or an employee having an extended ill health absence MPC will institute the appropriate absence management policy in consultation with the employee. (see attached appendix)

ABSENCE DUE TO DISABILITY / MATERNITY

Where absences are in relation to disability of an employee or to pregnancy then MPC will record this reason for absence and will take this into account in any informal consideration of frequent absences. This Sickness Absence policy does not apply to absences relating to maternity, paternity and adoption. In connection with this Sickness Absence policy and its employees, MPC is also committed to its Equal Opportunities Policy and Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

ABUSE OF THIS POLICY

Any abuse in the application of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with MPC's Disciplinary Policy and may possibly result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal.

Review Process

MPC will review its Sickness Absence Policy on an annual basis. Changes in legislation and good practices may necessitate an earlier review, when appropriate.

This version: May 2022

Due for review: May 2023