

Sample Absence Policy:

Introduction

While we recognise that sometimes absence is unavoidable within the workplace, attendance at work remains an essential condition of the contract of employment. The overall aim of this policy is to promote expected standards of attendance within the workplace and to provide a framework for the management of employee absence, using a fair and consistent approach.

Definitions:

Absence is defined as any period of non-attendance within the workplace that falls outside the normal leave entitlements of the employee. This may include non-attendance for reasons of sickness, injury or personal circumstances.

Policy Scope:

The policy applies to all employees of (Company Name).

Notification Requirements:

Any period of unplanned absence must be communicated to (Name/Job Title) by (Time) on the first day of your absence. Absences should be notified by means of a phone-call. It is not acceptable to send a text message or an email. If you are unable to reach (Name/Job Title) you should leave a voicemail and request that they return your call.

During your period of absence you will be expected to remain in frequent contact with the company. You must phone daily until we have received a medical certificate from you and weekly thereafter unless otherwise agreed.

Medical Certificate

You must submit the original medical certificate to (Name/Job Title), on the third day of your absence and weekly thereafter or as agreed in writing with (Name/Job Title).

Unauthorised absence:

Should you fail to correctly notify the company as to the reason for your absence, or at any stage over the course of your absence, fail to provide an appropriate medical certificate, your absence will be classed as unauthorised.

During a period of unauthorised absence (Name/Job Title) will attempt to contact you via telephone. If we are unable to contact you in this manner we will write to you requesting you

to contact us within 3 days. If you fail to contact us by that time (3 days) we will write to you again requesting you to attend a disciplinary investigation meeting. If you fail to attend this investigation meeting you will be sent an invitation to a disciplinary hearing. Should you fail to attend this disciplinary hearing, it will be held in your absence and the decision will be communicated to you in writing, as per company disciplinary procedures.

Failing to contact or maintain contact during a period of absence is considered a gross misconduct offence and will be treated as such.

Sick Pay Entitlements:

The company does not operate a sick pay scheme.

You may be entitled to claim Illness Benefit from the Department of Social Protection. You must apply for Illness Benefit within 7 days of becoming ill. The Department of Social Protection do not make any payment for the first 6 days of illness.

OR:

The Company operates an occupational sick pay scheme. To be eligible to receive payment under the scheme you must have completed ____ months continuous service with the company prior to the first date of your illness. You must comply fully with the notification requirements set out above, and must submit relevant medical certificates in line with company policy. Backdated or amended medical certificates will not be accepted. No payment will be made for the first _____ days of absence. You will be entitled to receive _____ **(include details of sick pay entitlements here-e.g. 5 days sick pay per year)**. During the period of paid absence you will be required to return any Illness Benefit cheques to the company. The company reserves the right to withdraw payment at any time from any employee who is found to be abusing the scheme or who fails to comply with the eligibility requirements set out above.

Unacceptable levels of absence:

Absence will be monitored on an ongoing basis. High levels of absence present operational difficulties for the company and in turn your colleagues. Where absence levels are deemed to be excessive it may be necessary to take further action to encourage and assist you in attaining the expected standard of attendance.

Trigger levels* will be used to identify absence records that give rise to concern, details of which are contained below. However, while trigger levels will be the primary method by which absence records will be assessed the company reserves the right to take action whereby (your Line Manager/the Chief Executive) deems your absence levels to be unacceptable. For example, this could include where patterns of absence are evident.

Trigger levels which will normally give rise to a disciplinary investigation are as follows:

1. Where an employee is absent on _____ occasions within a 12 month rolling period
(Potential Outcome-Verbal Warning)
2. Where the same employee has ___ further absence(s) within the timescale of the Verbal Warning
(Potential Outcome-Written Warning)
3. Where the same employee has another _____/further absence(s) within the timescale of the Written Warning
(Potential Outcome-Final Written warning)
4. Where the same employee has another _____/further absence(s) within the timescale of the Final Written Warning
(Potential Outcome-Dismissal)

***The use of Trigger Levels is an option that you may or may not wish to utilise within your absence policy. It is included to give you an example of how you can consistently manage absence issues and proceed through the disciplinary process**

An investigation meeting does not automatically give rise to a disciplinary warning. A full investigation will take place and you will be afforded every opportunity to have your say. During the investigation meeting the reasons for the absence will be discussed and any mitigating circumstances will be given full consideration. Where required, additional support may be identified and considered to help you to improve your attendance record.

Following on from the disciplinary investigation meeting you will be advised as to the outcome which will be confirmed to you in writing. (Normal disciplinary procedures apply)

Absence Management:

To enable us to manage absence successfully we require the support and co-operation of all employees.

Employees will be expected to follow the notification and medical certificate requirements as detailed above during all periods of absence.

Employees will also be expected to maintain reasonable contact with the company over the course of their absence.

If a period of absence becomes prolonged, a pattern of absence emerges, or the company becomes aware of an underlying medical issue the company reserves the right to request you to attend a company appointed medical specialist. Where the medical specialist details specific rehabilitation measures that could allow you to return to work you will be expected to give these measures reasonable consideration.

Where the medical specialist indicates that you are fit to return to work you must do so with immediate effect. Where there is a conflict of medical opinion a final opinion will be sought from an independent medical third party.

Returning to Work:

You must give 1 day's notice of your intention to return to work following a period of absence to enable the company to plan for your return. If you are unable to give a full day's notice please inform (your line manager/the Chief Executive) as early as possible before your normal start time.

Upon your return to work you must report to (your line manager/the Chief executive) to allow for a Return to Work discussion to take place. The purpose of the Return to Work discussion is to ensure you are fit to return to work, to discuss any concerns you or the company may have and to advise you of any developments from within the company that you need to be aware of. It also ensures an accurate record is kept of the absence.

Depending on the reason and/or length of your absence you may be requested to provide a Fit for Work cert prior to returning. If you plan to return to work before the expiry of your current medical certificate you will be asked to provide medical evidence of your fitness for work from your GP. The company reserves the right to decline your request to return until such evidence/certification has been provided. This is for health and safety reasons and your co-operation in this regard is essential.

Policy Breaches:

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the normal company disciplinary procedure. Where the company is given any reason to suspect that an absence may not be genuine a full investigation will take place and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken.