GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

SICKNESS AND ABSENCE POLICY

Scope

This policy and procedure apply to all employees of Gislingham Parish Council. The Parish Council aims to secure the attendance of employees throughout the working week. However, it recognises that a certain level of absence may be necessary due to sickness, through illness or injury, including Covid related illness, and also COPD. It is the Council's policy to offer as far as is possible, security of employment during such periods, subject to operational requirements and the conditions below.

Related policies and procedures

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Council's Health & Safety, Discipline and Grievance Policies.

PROCEDURE

Notification and certification

If an employee is unable to attend work due to sickness, he or she must notify the Council by contacting a member of the Staffing Panel as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the working day on which the absence first occurs. This can be actioned by email, text or telephone. He or she should indicate the reason for the absence and, if possible, when he or she expects to return to work. The employee must complete a self-certification form (*see example at the end of this Policy*) for the first **seven calendar days** of all sickness absences and give it to the Council within **five calendar days.** This form can be completed on the employee's return to work if their absence lasts less than seven calendar days. Otherwise, they must request a copy form and complete and post to a member of the Staffing Panel of the Council as soon as possible.

If the employee is absent by the **eighth day** (including Saturday and Sunday), they must send a fit note, issued by their GP, to a member of the Staffing Panel. Current fit notes must cover subsequent periods of absence. The employee should also keep in touch with the Chair of the Staffing Panel regarding their condition and likely return to work date. If the employee does not follow this procedure, they may be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy. Furthermore, the employee's contractual sick pay and statutory sick pay (SSP) may be withheld.

Return to work

The employee will not be allowed to return to work until their GP deems that they are fit to return. Requests for temporary adjustments to the employee's working conditions will be considered by the Staffing Panel of the Council and will be accommodated wherever possible and if Council's circumstances permit.

In the case of extended periods of absence, the Staffing Panel of the Council may require that the employee's fitness to return is confirmed by a medical practitioner of the Council's choice. Regardless of their length of absence, the employee will be interviewed on their return to work in order to:

- check on the employee's fitness to return
- ensure that all the support the employee needs is in place
- bring the employee up to date on any changes.

Fit notes

An employee's GP might indicate on a fit note that the employee "may be fit for work". If this option is selected the GP will also identify potential amendments that should be made, selecting from:

- phased return to work
- amended duties
- altered hours
- workplace adaptations

If a fit note is received the Staffing Panel of the Council will contact the employee and arrange for a meeting. 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 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.

Medical examination

The Council 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 be examined may lead the Council to take disciplinary action against the employee, up to and including dismissal. (See Disciplinary Procedure).

Access to medical reports

In order to gain as much information about the employee's medical condition as possible, the Staffing Panel of the Council may also request the employee's permission to contact his or her GP and ask for a medical report on the employee's condition. The employee may ask to see this report.

Extended absences

The Council will be sympathetic when an employee is ill, but the employee should appreciate that if they are persistently absent through ill-health or long-term injury or incapacity, it will not be possible for the situation to continue indefinitely, and their employment may be reviewed or terminated.

Termination will not take place without:

- full consultation with the employee
- medical investigation
- a consideration of alternative employment

Where a return to work does prove possible, the Council may require that the employee's fitness to return is confirmed by a practitioner of the Council's choice.

Meetings/home visits

During any absence it is important that the employee keeps in touch so that the Staffing Panel is kept informed of the employee's health and likely return to work date. The employee will therefore be periodically asked to attend meetings for the purpose of providing information and facilitating an effective return to work. If the employee is too unwell or physically unable to leave their home, the Staffing Panel of the Council reserves the right to visit him or her at home.

Disability

If the employee has a condition that means they might be considered disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, the Council will attempt to make reasonable adjustments to their job to accommodate their requirements. The employee will be fully consulted at all times. If reasonable adjustments or alternative employment prove not to be viable options, and there is no likelihood of a return to work in the near future, a decision to dismiss may be the inevitable outcome.

Dismissal and the right to appeal

In the event of a dismissal, the reason for the dismissal and the circumstances leading up to that decision will be documented in writing to the employee. The employee may appeal against their dismissal by writing, within **five working days** of receipt of the dismissal letter, to the Staffing Panel, stating the grounds on which they wish to appeal. The appeal will be heard in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure. This right also applies to 'action short of dismissal' such as alteration of duties.

Payment arrangements

Statutory sick pay (SSP)

The employee's SSP qualifying days are either Monday to Friday or, in the case of part-time employees, those days that he or she normally works. If the employee is eligible for the payment of SSP, it will be subject to the deduction of tax and National Insurance contributions.

Contractual sick pay

The Council operates a council sick pay scheme. Information relating to the scale of payment is in the employee's contract of employment. Provided that you comply with the Council's Sickness Absence Policy, you will receive sick pay when you are absent from work due to sickness but not beyond the sick pay allowance per year as specified in the employee's contract.

Return of the Council's equipment

If the employee is off sick for **seven days** or more the Council may require them to return Council equipment (Laptop, Cell (Mobile) phone, together with all passwords and cheque books and Internet Banking log on details, if applicable, until they are well enough to return to work. If the employee does not return to work following a period of more than 14 days of sickness absence, they will be required to return all outstanding Council equipment on the date of termination of his or her employment.

Absences for reasons other than sickness

Requests for time off for reasons other than sickness will be considered by the Council in the light of the individual's circumstances, legal requirements, and operational needs.

Unauthorised absences will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

Abuse of this policy

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

Alterations and amendments to this policy

This policy and procedure do not form part of the employees' contractual rights. The Council reserves the right to revise the contents of this policy and procedure from time to time or withdraw it at its absolute discretion, in accordance with the needs of the Council. The Staffing Panel will review this policy annually.

Additional information

For further information, please contact the Chair of the Staffing Panel.

Signed: *CFell* **Chair**

Approved by Gislingham Parish Council on 20th July 2026

Date of next review July 2028

Strictly Confidential – Gislingham Parish Council
Employee Self-Certification Form

To be completed by all members of staff absent for a half day or more and returned to the colleague in the department/section responsible for maintaining sickness records. If anyone would like this form in a different format, they should contact the Staffing Panel.

1. Confidentiality

Sickness absence information is held electronically and will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations. The data will be used for statistical analysis in an anonymous form and made available to your Head of School/Department to help meet the University's obligation to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all colleagues.

2. Last Name ..... **First names** .....

Section/Department .....**Staff Payroll No** …….....

3. Length of Absence:

First day of Sickness .....**day** ..... **date** .....**time**

Last day of Sickness .....**day** ....**date** ….....**time**

Total number of working days absent .....

4. Reasons for Absence (please select from the list overleaf with any appropriate additional detail)

.....

.....

Did you receive medical treatment during your absence? YES/NO

If so, please state where and when .....

.....

Do you believe that your illness is as a result of an occupational injury/disease? YES/NO

Declaration

I declare that I have not worked during the period of sickness and that the above statement is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that to give false or misleading information can result in disciplinary proceedings which may lead to dismissal, and that a false declaration can be an offence under statute and common law.

Employee's Signature ..... **Date** .....

Supervisor's/Line Manager's Signature

……..... **Date** .....

Employee Self-Certification Form

Reasons for Absence

Allergies, Hay Fever
Anaemia
Anxiety, Depression, Nervous Illness
Asthma
Back, Neck and Spinal disorders
Blood Pressure disorders
Cancer, Chemotherapy
Chest conditions
Cough, Cold,Tonsillitis etc.
COVID
Dental disorders
Diabetes
Disability- related conditions
Ear conditions including Vertigo
Epilepsy
Exhaustion, Fatigue
Eye conditions
Face and Mouth disorders
Gynaecological disorders
Head Injury, Concussion
Headache, Migraine
Heart conditions
Hernia
Hospital Visit
Infectious Diseases eg. Measles
Influenza/Swine Flu
Joint pain eg. Arthritis
Kidney and Bladder disorders
Lower limb injury
Operation
Post-operative recovery
Pregnancy-related conditions
Skin conditions
Stomach disorders
Stress-related illness
Upper limb injury
Wounds or Burns

Where none of the above reasons is appropriate, use “Other” and give details.

A reason should be given in all but exceptional circumstances which should be discussed with the Staffing Panel.