

Staff Sickness and Absence Policy

We are committed to improving the health, well-being and attendance of all employees. We value the contribution our employees make to our success, so, when any employee is unable to be at work for any reason, we miss that contribution. This absence policy explains:

- what is expected from managers and from the employees when handling absence
- how we will work to reduce levels of absence to no more than 5 days per employee per year

Key principles

The organisation's absence policy is based on the following principles:

1. As a responsible employer we undertake to support staff and allow staff to make up days so not to lose any payment through a reduction of wages due to illness, these hours will be made up at the discretion of the management on a need only basis. After 3 consecutive days of sickness, the Statutory Sick Pay scheme will apply and any payments will be dependent on the employee's level of NI payments.
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.
In special circumstances employees may apply for unpaid leave to be with a dependant (i.e. Hospital operations etc.) The request should be made in writing and need to be approved by the management before it can be authorised.
 - b) In the case of an emergency (e.g. a phone call to collect a child from school) employees are entitled to "reasonable" time off to collect a dependant and organise long-term care arrangements. Reasonable time off is considered to be one day. Employees should have a contingency plan for when these situations arise.
 - c) Compassionate leave. Although there is no legal right to compassionate leave, Clever Cloggs are keen to be fair in this area. We understand there may be times that employees need time away from work due to the death of a direct relative (parent or child) and sometimes the immediate time leading up to this. Compassionate leave will be paid for up to 2 weeks during this time. Any further time off will need to be in negotiation with the management and will be unpaid. This absence is not to be confused with special leave which is unpaid.
4. The pre-schools disciplinary procedures will be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is not thought to be satisfactory.
5. 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. All personal absence records kept in individual employees files will be retained for a period of 2 years.

Notification of absence

If an employee is going to be absent from work they should speak to their manager as early as possible and by 8am on the first morning of sickness. This should be done in person (where possible) by telephone. Messages by text are not acceptable as messages may not be picked by manager.

They should also:

- Give a clear indication of the nature of the illness.
- Give a likely return date.

The manager will check with employees if there is any information they need about their current work. If the employee does not contact their manager by the required time the manager will attempt to contact the employee at home.

Evidence of incapacity

Employees can self-certify for the first seven days absence. Thereafter a doctor's certificate is required to cover every subsequent day. Absence is calculated in calendar days including Saturday and Sunday.

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

Return to work discussions

Managers will discuss absences with employees, (that occur for more than 5 working days) when they return to work to establish:

- The reason for, and cause of absence.
- If there is any action the manager or the company can take to help.
- If the employee is fit to return to work.

This discussion will be recorded on the "back to work" sheet and kept on the employee's individual file.

A more formal review will be triggered by:

- Frequent short-term absences (more than 5 individual sickness absences in an academic year)
- Patterns in absence (continuous re-occurring patterns in days or months)
- Long-term absence.

This review will look at any further action required to improve the employee's attendance and well-being. The trigger points set are stated above.

Absence due to disability/maternity

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

This policy will be reviewed yearly and will be adjusted to incorporate any new legislation and the changing needs of the pre-school and its line of business.

