

Absence Policy

1. About this Policy

- 1.1. This policy sets out our arrangements for sick pay, reporting, and managing sickness absences.
- 1.2. Abuse of sickness absence, including failing to report an absence or falsely claiming sick pay, will be treated as misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.3. This policy does not form part of any employee's employment contract, and we may amend it at any time.

2. Sponsored Workers and the Absence Policy

- 2.1. If you are a Sponsored Worker employed under a work visa, we will:
 - 2.1.1. We will keep a record of your absence (including sickness absence, annual leave, maternity leave, parental leave, adoption leave, research leave, and attending conferences).
 - 2.1.2. We will report unauthorized absences of more than ten working days to the appropriate US visa and immigration department U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs).
- 2.2. This does not include monitoring attendance during recognized vacation periods.

3. Reporting When the employee Are Sick

- 3.1. If the employee cannot attend work because the employee is sick or injured, the employee should telephone or email the employee's manager as early as possible, ideally within the first few hours of your expected start time.
- 3.2. You'll need to give them:
 - 3.2.1. an indication of your illness, and
 - 3.2.2. a likely return date.
- 3.3. If you don't feel you can discuss medical problems with your manager, please speak to someone you feel comfortable with.

4. Evidence of Incapacity

- 4.1. The employee may be required to submit a physician's note or other medical certification for sickness absence of up to seven calendar days.

- 4.2. For the absence of more than a week, the employee must obtain medical documentation from the employee's doctor stating that the employee is not fit for work, giving the reason. If absence continues beyond the expiry of medical documentation, further medical documentation must be provided.
- 4.3. If the employee's doctor provides medical documentation stating that the employee "may be fit for work," the employee must immediately inform the employee's manager. We will hold a discussion with the employee about how to facilitate the employee's return to work, taking into account the employee's doctor's advice. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, the employee will remain on sick leave, and we will set a date for review.

5. Company Sick Pay

- 5.1. The employee will qualify for company sick pay provided the employee complies with this policy and any further requirements set out in the employee's contract. **No Company sick pay will be paid for the first three consecutive days of absence.**
- 5.2. Company sick pay is equal to the employee's full basic salary for **up to 2 weeks' absence.**
- 5.3. When this entitlement is exhausted, the employee will not qualify for Company sick pay until the employee has returned to work and worked for a total of 8 weeks.
- 5.4. Company sick pay is paid at our discretion, and we may amend or withdraw the plan at any time.

6. Partial "fit for work" Release

- 6.1. Your doctor may give you instructions and documentation that you 'may be fit for work'.
 - 6.1.1. Your doctor will give details of the level of work they think you're able to do.
- 6.2. Your manager will work with the doctor's advice and agree on ways of helping you return to work. For example, we might consider a phased return to work or different duties.
- 6.3. It may be that we can't provide the support you need by making the necessary workplace adjustments, or you may not feel able to return. If so, we'll use the fit note in the same way as if your doctor advised you were 'not fit for work'.

7. Return-to-work Interviews

- 7.1. After a period of sick leave, the employee's manager, at their discretion, may hold a return-to-work interview with the employee. The purposes may include:

- 7.1.1. checking on the employee's welfare;
- 7.1.2. ensuring the employee is fit for work and agreeing on any actions necessary to facilitate the employee's return;
- 7.1.3. confirming the employee has submitted the necessary medical documentation;
- 7.1.4. updating the employee on anything that may have happened during the employee's absence;
- 7.1.5. raising any other concerns regarding the employee's absence record or return to work.

8. Managing Long-term or Persistent Absence

- 8.1. This section of the policy is our procedure for dealing with long-term absences or where the employee's level or frequency of short-term absences has given us cause for concern. The purpose of the process is to investigate and discuss the reasons for the employee's absence, whether it is likely to continue or recur, and whether any measures could improve the employee's health or attendance. We may decide that medical evidence, or further medical evidence, is required before deciding on a course of action.
- 8.2. We will notify the employee in writing of the time, date, and place of any meeting and why it is being held. We will usually give the employee a week's notice of the meeting.
- 8.3. The employee's direct supervisor will conduct meetings.
- 8.4. The employee may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. The employee's companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague, who will be allowed reasonable paid time off from duties to act as the employee's companion.
- 8.5. If the employee cannot attend at the time specified, the employee should let us know as soon as possible, and we will try, within reason, to agree on an alternative time.
- 8.6. If the employee has a disability, we will consider whether reasonable adjustments may need to be made to the sickness absence meetings procedure or to the employee's role or working arrangements.

9. Medical Examinations

- 9.1. We may ask the employee to consent to a medical examination by a doctor or occupational health professional or other specialist nominated by us (at our expense).

- 9.2. The employee will be asked to agree that any medical report produced may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with the specialist and with our advisers. All medical reports will be kept confidential.

10. Long-term Absence Meeting

- 10.1. The purposes of a sickness absence meeting or meetings will be to discuss the reasons for the employee's absence, how long it is likely to continue, whether it is likely to recur, whether to obtain a medical report, and whether any measures could improve the employee's health or attendance.
- 10.2. A Long-Term Absence Meeting may be triggered if your absences become disruptive to our operations.
- 10.3. In cases of long-term absence, we may seek to agree on a return-to-work program, possibly on a phased basis.
- 10.4. In short-term, intermittent absence cases, we may set a target for improved attendance within a specific timescale.
- 10.5. If Matters Do Not Improve
 - 10.5.1. If, after a reasonable time, the employee has not been able to return to work or if the employee's attendance has not improved within the agreed timescale, we will hold a further meeting or meetings. We will seek to establish whether the situation is likely to change and may consider redeployment opportunities at that stage. If it is deemed unlikely that the employee will return to work or that the employee's attendance will improve within a short time, we may give the employee a written warning that they are at risk of dismissal. We may also set a further date for review.
- 10.6. Final Sickness Absence Meeting
 - 10.6.1. When the employee has been warned that the employee is at risk of dismissal and the situation has not changed significantly, we will hold a meeting to consider the possible termination of the employee's employment. However, before we make a decision, we will consider any matters the employee wishes to raise and whether there have been any changes since the last meeting.
- 10.7. Appeals
 - 10.7.1. the employee may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure. If the employee wishes to appeal, the employee should set out the employee's appeal in writing to a member of the Senior Management

Team, stating the employee's grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to the employee.

- 10.7.2. If the employee is appealing against a decision to dismiss the employee, we will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially and, where possible, by a more senior manager who has not previously been involved in the case.
- 10.7.3. We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. Accordingly, there is no further right of appeal.
- 10.7.4. The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.