



# Nailsworth Town Council

## Attendance Policy

### 1. Policy

- 1.1 The Town Council wishes to ensure that it delivers quality services. This can only be achieved if it is possible to provide consistency and ensure that disruption to service provision, due to staff absence, is minimised. In dealing with sickness absence the organisation must balance the needs of the individual employees against the need to provide and manage quality services, and the cost of employing temporary staff to cover absences.
- 1.2 The Town Council recognises that there will be occasions where employees will be absent through sickness or ill health. Policies and procedures are designed to ensure that any such absences are dealt with fairly and consistently, whilst taking into account individual circumstances. The Council is sympathetic where employees have genuine sickness, but extended or recurrent absence that affects the level of service provided by the Council must be addressed.
- 1.3 Where, following discussion with an employee, problems relating to patterns of absence have been identified, and where counselling is considered a way forward in helping to identify and resolve those issues, that shall be the first step taken before any formal action is considered. The Council will also make use of Occupational Health experts where health assessments are appropriate.
- 1.4 The responsibility of managing absence lies with the Town Clerk and individual employees. The provision of management information and advice and guidance on managing absence and employee rights is the responsibility of the ~~Town Council~~ or Personnel Committee.
- 1.5 Absence will not normally be regarded as a disciplinary matter, but if the reasons for absence are considered unsatisfactory or if an employee is in breach of the absence procedures, it may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.
- 1.6 Where an employee's persistent short term absence or long term absence is a cause for concern and/or affecting the services provided, the Town Council may seek to terminate an employee's contract.

### Procedure

#### 2. Reporting Sickness

- 2.1 Employees are required to notify their Line Manager, who will in turn inform the Town Clerk no later than 10am on the first day of the sickness, giving an indication of the likely length of absence. If the employee is unable to contact their Line Manager or the Town Clerk they should leave a message on the Town Council telephone answering service. If an employee's sickness is likely to last longer than originally indicated, the employee must keep in regular contact with their Line Manager about the likely date of return.
- 2.2 Where an employee is absent for more than 7 consecutive days (including weekends)



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they are required to obtain a Medical Certificate (Fit Note)<sup>1</sup> from their Doctor or Hospital. The Fit Note should be sent to their Line Manager or the Town Clerk.

2.3 All employees must complete the Sickness/Return to Work form with their Line Manager or the Town Clerk.

2.4 Where an employee does not submit a Medical Certificate for a period of absence over 7 days they are not entitled to, and will not be paid, sick pay and may be disciplined for unauthorised absence.

#### 3. Probationary Period

3.1 Whilst it is recognised that there may be some genuine absence during the probationary period, prolonged or frequent absence during a probationary period may result in failure to confirm an employee in post or the termination of the contract prior to the completion of the probationary period.

#### 4. Review of Sickness

4.1 The Line Manager shall keep records of sickness absence. Where the pattern or amount of sickness is cause for concern, it is the responsibility of the Line Manager/Town Clerk to raise the sickness record with the employee.

4.2 Where the Line Manager/Town Clerk is concerned about an employee's absence record or length of absence from work, they must meet with the employee to discuss their sickness record. The Line Manager/Town Clerk may require an employee to produce a Medical Certificate for all absences and where there is a continued concern, employees should receive first and final warnings that their absence records could lead to the termination of their contract.

4.3 Examples of absences causing concern include:

- An absence repeated in 3 consecutive months
- Where there are four periods of absence in any six months
- Where there is a long history of intermittent sickness

4.4 Where an employee's persistent short-term absence or long term absence is a cause for concern and/or affecting the services the Town Council provides, it may seek to terminate an employee's contract. This will only be done after:

- Discussion with the employee
- Offering counselling, if appropriate
- Having sought Independent Medical Advice at no cost to the employee
- Offering suitable alternative employment, where appropriate

4.5 Employees have the right to refuse any independent medical examination, and the right to see, or withhold the results of any such examination and the right of appeal against any termination on the grounds of ill-health.

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<sup>1</sup> Fit notes used to be called sick notes. A fit note is an official written statement from a doctor giving their medical opinion on a person's fitness for work. Whether you need a fit note depends on the length of sickness absence.



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4.6 An employee's absence may be for reasons other than ill-health. Where it is clear that this may be the case, the Line Manager/Town Clerk should consider alternative appropriate action to resolve the difficulties facing the employee. In such cases the Town Clerk will advise the Personnel Committee as to options.

#### 5. Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

5.1 Employees are eligible for SSP only after 7 or more days incapacity for work, including weekends and holidays. Employees must complete a Sickness/Return to Work form certifying their absence and if absence is more than 7 days, provide a Fit Note. Employees only receive SSP if their earnings are above the statutory minimum. Employees will not receive SSP if they do not advise the Town Council of their absence or there is good cause to doubt an employee's incapacity for work.

5.2 SSP is not paid where employees are entitled to other benefits e.g. Maternity or Disability Benefits, they are over 65, or they have exceeded the maximum for payment of SSP.

5.3 Refer to individual contracts of employment for details of sick pay.

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