

Walberswick Parish Council Holiday Leave and Absence Policy

Adopted March 2021. Updated April 2024. A GDPR impact assessment was carried out on this policy in April 2024 and no further action was required

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 This Holiday Leave and Absence Policy sets out our procedures for reporting both Holiday Leave and sickness absence and for the management of absence in a fair and consistent way.

1.2 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. All employee contracts contain details of their Holiday Leave and Sickness Absence benefits. We may also vary the procedures set out in this policy, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

1.3 The Holiday Leave year in all cases shall run from 1st April – 30th March. Any employee joining or leaving during the Holiday Leave year shall have their Holiday Leave allowance pro-rata for that year.

2. WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY?

2.1 This policy covers all employees at all levels and grades.

2.2 Allowances in this policy refer to a full-time employee. For part-time employees, Holiday Leave and other relevant benefits shall be pro-rata

3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS POLICY

3.1 The Chair has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework.

4. HOLIDAY LEAVE RECORDING PROCEDURE

4.1 All Holiday Leave must be authorised in advance by the Chair and recorded as such in a format which shall be accessible to the Clerk and Chair

4.2 Up to 5 days of Holiday Leave, if agreed in advance with the Chair, may be carried over into the next year. Any other untaken leave at the end of a financial year will be lost.

4.3 Leave may not be “pulled forward” from the next financial year into the current one without the express written agreement of the Chair in advance.

5. DISABILITIES

5.1 We are aware that sickness absence may result from a disability. At any absence meeting (as set out later in this policy), particular consideration will be given to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of a job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist a return to work.

5.2 If you consider that you are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects your ability to undertake your work, you should inform the Chair.

6. SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE

6.1 If you cannot attend work because you are ill you should **contact** the Chair as early as possible. The following details should be provided:

- (a) The nature of your illness.
- (b) The expected length of your absence from work.
- (c) Contact details.
- (d) Any outstanding or urgent work that requires attention.

6.2 The Chair should ensure that:

- (a) Any sickness absence that is notified to them is recorded in the Sickness Absence log
- (b) All other councillors are promptly made aware of the absence
- (c) Arrangements are made, where necessary, to cover work and to inform colleagues and clients (while maintaining confidentiality).
- (d) Upon return, a sickness form is filled out by the employee and recorded

6.3 If you expect to be absent for more than seven consecutive days you may be asked to obtain a medical certificate from your GP covering the period of your absence and stating the reason(s) for your absence. This should be forwarded to the Chair as soon as possible.

6.4 If your absence continues, further medical certificates may need to be obtained and submitted to cover the whole period.

6.5 In cases of suspected abuse or where there is a concern about the level of or reason for absence, you may be required to provide a medical certificate for each absence regardless of duration. In such circumstances, we will cover any costs incurred in obtaining such medical certificates, for absences of less than seven consecutive days, on production of a GP's invoice.

7. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

7.1 Absence that has not been notified according to the relevant reporting procedure will be treated as unauthorised absence.

7.2 If you do not report for work and have not **contacted** the Chair to explain the reason for your absence, the Chair will make every reasonable effort to contact you, by telephone and in writing. This should not be treated as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

8. SICK PAY

8.1 You should refer to your contract for details of the sick pay to which you are entitled.

9. KEEPING IN CONTACT DURING SICKNESS ABSENCE

9.1 If you are absent on sick leave you should expect to be contacted from time to time by the Chair in order to discuss your wellbeing, expected length of continued absence from work and any of your work that requires attention. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a minimum in view of the needs of the council.

9.2 In the event that you have any concerns while absent on sick leave, whether about the reason for your absence or your ability to return to work, you should feel free to contact the Chair at any time.

10. RETURN-TO-WORK INTERVIEWS

10.1 If you have been absent on sick leave we may arrange for you to have a return-to-work interview with the Chair and/or one or more members if the Employment **Committee**

11. ABSENCE MEETINGS PROCEDURE

11.1 We may apply this procedure whenever we consider it necessary, including, for example, if you have:

- (a) Been absent due to illness on a number of occasions;
- (b) Discussed matters at a return to work interview that require investigation; and/or
- (c) Been absent for an extended period
- (d) Appeared not to have followed the terms of this policy

11.2 Unless it is impractical to do so, we will give you 5 days written notice of the date, time and place of an Absence Meeting and the meeting will be conducted by the Chair

11.3 You must take all reasonable steps to attend an Absence Meeting. Failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If you or your companion are unable to attend at the time specified you should immediately inform the Chair who will seek to agree an alternative time.

11.4 Confirmation of any decision made at a meeting, the reasons for it, and any right of appeal will be given to you in writing within 10 days of an Absence Meeting (unless this time scale is not practicable, in which case it will be provided as soon as is practicable).

12. RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED AT MEETINGS

12.1 You may bring a companion to any meeting under this procedure. Their identity must be confirmed to the person conducting the meeting, in good time before it takes place.

12.2 Some companions may not be allowed; for example, anyone who may have a conflict of interest, or whose presence may prejudice a meeting.

12.3 A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up your position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during a meeting.

13. ABSENCE MEETING

13.1 The agenda of an absence meeting may include:

- (a) Discussing the reasons for absence.
- (b) Where you are on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last.
- (c) Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences.
- (d) Considering whether medical advice is required.
- (e) Considering what, if any, measures might improve your health and/or attendance.
- (f) Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a time-scale for review and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure

13.2 Further meetings may take place until any outstanding issues are fully resolved