



EAST HANNINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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Sickness and Absence Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures to be followed when an employee is absent from work due to sickness or injury, and clarifies entitlements and expectations as set out in your Contract of Employment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of East Hanningfield Parish Council, including part-time staff. It supports the terms set out in the Employee Handbook and the National Joint Council (NJC) Green Book where applicable.

3. Notification Procedure

- If you are unable to attend work due to illness or injury, you must inform the Chairman (or nominated councillor) **as soon as possible** on the first day of absence, ideally **before your normal start time**.
- You must state:
 - The nature of your illness (if known),
 - The likely duration of your absence,
 - Whether any urgent work needs reallocating.

4. Certification Requirements

- **Up to 7 Calendar Days:** Self-certification is required. A self-certification form must be completed and submitted on your return.
- **Over 7 Calendar Days:** A **Fit Note** (formerly sick note) from a GP must be provided and kept up to date for the entire absence.

5. Sick Pay Entitlement

Sick pay is provided in accordance with Section 6 of your contract:

Length of Service	Full Pay	Half Pay
1st year (after 4 months)	1 month	2 months
2nd year	2 months	2 months
3rd year	4 months	4 months
4th & 5th year	5 months	5 months
After 5 years	6 months	6 months

- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is included in these payments.

- Any sickness absence exceeding these entitlements will be unpaid unless otherwise agreed by the Council.

6. Return to Work

- A **Return to Work Discussion** will be arranged following any period of absence to:
 - Confirm you are fit to return,
 - Identify any support or adjustments needed,
 - Discuss any concerns about attendance if relevant.

7. Absence Monitoring

- Persistent short-term absences or patterns of absence may be reviewed in line with the Council's performance management and disciplinary policies.
- Absence will be recorded and monitored fairly, in compliance with data protection legislation.

8. Medical Examinations

The Council reserves the right to:

- Require you to attend a medical examination with an independent doctor (at the Council's expense),
- Access medical reports in line with your rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988,
- Act on medical advice to determine reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

9. Occupational Health and Support

Where appropriate, the Council may:

- Refer you to Occupational Health for assessment and recommendations,
- Provide counselling or support services,
- Discuss options such as phased returns or alternative duties.

10. Disability and Long-Term Illness

If you are absent due to a disability or long-term condition, the Council will:

- Engage in discussions about reasonable adjustments,
- Comply with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

11. Compassionate and Emergency Dependants' Leave

The Council recognises that employees may face difficult personal circumstances requiring time away from work. The following provisions apply:

a. Emergency Dependants' Leave

Employees may take a reasonable amount of **unpaid leave** to deal with emergencies involving a dependent, including:

- Illness, injury, or assault of a dependent,
- Death of a dependent,
- Unexpected disruption in care arrangements.

Requests should be made as soon as reasonably practicable, ideally on the day the emergency arises.

b. Compassionate Leave

The Council may grant **paid or unpaid compassionate leave** in the event of a bereavement or other serious personal difficulty. This is at the discretion of the Chairman or full Council and will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with regard to:

- The nature of the relationship (e.g. close family),
- The circumstances,
- The employee's needs.

11. Unauthorised Absence

Failure to follow this policy, or unauthorised absence without explanation, may be treated as misconduct and addressed under the disciplinary procedure.