

## Sickness Absence Policy

### Policy Statement

Little Hearts Preschool Cranleigh aims to secure the attendance of all employees throughout the working week. However, it recognises that a certain level of absence may be necessary due to sickness. It is the organisation's policy to manage such absence to balance the genuine needs of the employee with organisational needs.

This policy incorporates the Statement of Fitness for work (or "fit notes") that GPs have issued from April 2010.

### Procedure

1. Employees who are absent from work due to sickness or accident must conform to the following procedure.
  - a. If they return to work after no more than seven days' absence, they must complete a self-certificate in the presence of Natasha . This certificate is available by clicking on the following link [RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW](#).
  - b. If their absence lasts for longer than seven days, they must forward medical certificates to Natasha Dhall. Please note that the seven days includes days on which the employee normally does not work, eg weekends and bank holidays.
2. If the employee has been absent for more than seven days (including weekends and public holidays), he or she must bring a Statement ("fit note") from his or her doctor. This will either say that the employee is unfit for work, or explain the nature of the employee's condition and confirm that he or she is fit for work with some support from the employer. In the latter case Natasha Dhall will discuss the measures suggested by the doctor at a return to work interview. If the appropriate measures cannot be taken, the employee will remain on sick leave and a new date will be set to review the situation.
3. Where an employee's attendance record is significantly worse than those of comparable employees, or where it creates a particular operational difficulty, or it has gone on for a considerable length of time, the following procedure will be operated.
4. Where appropriate, and after initial assessment of the employee's absence, Natasha Dhall will have an informal meeting with the employee to explore the reason(s) for

his or her periods of absence. The employee may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official if he or she wishes.

- a. If the absence involves frequent and persistent short term periods of absence, the manager conducting the interview will aim to:
    - i. identify the frequency and reason for the absences and ensure that the employee is aware that the absence record is giving cause for concern
    - ii. advise the employee to seek proper medical attention if there is an underlying medical problem. A medical report will be requested, if appropriate
    - iii. inform the employee that persistent short-term absences are unacceptable
    - iv. give consideration to any personal problems the employee may have and possible ways of helping the employee resolve them
    - v. agree a reasonable period of time over which the employee's attendance can be assessed
    - vi. indicate that if absenteeism persists, Little Hearts Preschool Cranleigh may have to invoke the disciplinary procedure. A letter will be drafted confirming the facts, the action to be taken and specifying what will happen if attendance is not improved. This will be handed to the employee.
  - b. If the issues involve long-term ill health, the manager conducting the interview (if appropriate) will:
    - i. seek to establish the reasons for the employee's absence and its likely duration
    - ii. inform the employee that long-term absence due to ill health may put the employee's employment at risk, bearing in mind the needs of the organisation at that time
5. If the employee's attendance record does not improve and the employer has no reasonable grounds to believe that there will be an improvement in the foreseeable future, the organisation may embark on a procedure to dismiss the employee. In this case, the dismissal and disciplinary procedure will comply with the ACAS Code. The employer will first write to the employee stating the circumstances (ie why dismissal on grounds of lack of capability is being contemplated) and calling the employee to a formal meeting. The employer will also notify the employee of the right to be accompanied at the meeting. The employee must make every reasonable effort to attend the meeting. At the meeting itself, the employer should give the

employee a full opportunity to make representations. The employer must also give the employee the right to appeal, if it is subsequently decided to dismiss the employee.

6. In cases where the employee appears to be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, the manager conducting the interview will:
  - a. consider making reasonable adjustments to the particular job to accommodate the employee's short-term or long-term requirements;
  - b. consider offering alternative employment or a shorter working week or such other adjustments to the employee's job as may be reasonable in the circumstances.

In the event that steps (b) and (c) are impracticable or inappropriate or unreasonable, the employer will advise the employee that long-term absence due to ill health may put the employment at risk (bearing in mind the needs of the organisation at that time) and set a date at which point dismissal will be considered if the employee is still unable to return to work. A letter will normally be drafted confirming the facts and the action to be taken. The letter will be handed to the employee where possible or sent by recorded delivery. In some cases it may be necessary to have a number of interviews with the employee before a final decision can be made.

7. An employee who fails to comply with notification or certification procedures or who otherwise abuses the organisation's rules on sickness absence will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.