Sickness and Absence Policy

Tree of Life Educational and Therapeutic Input Ltd

Review date 11/9/2025

At Tree of Life Educational and Therapeutic Input Ltd, we understand that there may be occasions where staff are unfit to work due to illness or another substantial reason. Staff are expected to follow this policy, and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

1. Notifying Your Manager

If you are absent due to sickness on a normal working day, you must notify **Catherine Widdrington or Laura Frain**:

- By telephone, **no later than 7:30am** on the first day of sickness.

- Stating the **reason** for your absence.

- Providing the **expected duration** of your absence, where known.

If you do not contact your manager within one hour of your normal start time, they may attempt to contact you at home.

If you are unable to call yourself, someone else may do so on your behalf. You must, however, speak with your manager later the same day or as soon as practicable.

For absences longer than one day, you must contact your manager **every day**, either verbally or via message, by 3pm for the following day, unless you have a doctor's fit note. If you have a fit note, you must provide it promptly and advise your manager of the return date or provide a subsequent fit note if required.

2. Certification for Sickness Absence

Days 1–7

For the first 7 calendar days of continuous sickness absence, you **do not need a GP note**. Notify your manager with the reason for your absence. Your manager will record this and inform HR.

If you leave work due to sickness before completing 2 hours of work (pro rata for part-time staff), it will be recorded as a full day's absence.

Sickness Absence Exceeding 7 Days

For absences exceeding 7 calendar days, you must provide a **Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note / Med 3)** from your GP.

- You are responsible for ensuring your fit notes reach your manager promptly.

- Periods not covered by a fit note may affect eligibility for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), though cases will be considered individually.

- If your GP indicates you may be fit for work, notify your manager as soon as possible.

- Fit notes will be logged electronically and passed to payroll for processing.

3. Fit Note Guidance

Your GP may confirm you are unfit for work or may suggest you **return to work with adjustments**, including:

- **Amended duties** – modification of tasks to accommodate health needs.

- **Workplace adaptations** – changes to equipment or environment to support return.

- **Phased return** – initially reduced hours, increasing gradually to full-time.

- **Altered hours** – flexible work patterns to accommodate medical treatment or recovery.

Occupational health advice may be sought if recommended.

4. Returning to Work

- If no further assessment is required, your **return date** is the next normal working day after the sickness period ends.

- All absences must be covered by a fit note if required.

5. Managing Absence

To manage sickness absence consistently and effectively, we use:

- Return to work discussions/interviews

- Keeping in touch during absence

- Monitoring and recording absence

- Sickness review meetings

- Providing management support

- Seeking medical or occupational health advice

- Following procedures detailed here or via the disciplinary process if necessary

6. Return to Work Discussions

All staff will have a return to work discussion with their manager, normally on the first day back. For remote or out-of-hours work, this may be by phone or email.

Purpose:

- Ensure the manager is aware of health or personal issues affecting attendance.

- Identify support needs, such as:

  o Underlying medical conditions

  o Adjustments for disabilities

  o Stress-related issues

  o Personal matters impacting attendance

Notes from return to work discussions are filed confidentially. If staff prefer, they may speak with another manager.

7. Confidentiality

Sickness information is treated as sensitive data under the Data Protection Act and will be shared only with authorised personnel as necessary.

8. Bradford Factor

Used to monitor and manage absence consistently over a 12-month rolling period:

Formula:
S x S x D = Bradford Factor Score

- **S** = number of absence spells

- **D** = total days absent

Examples:

- 7 days off in one spell: (1 x 1) x 7 = 7

- 7 days off across 3 spells: (3 x 3) x 7 = 63

- 7 days off across 6 spells: (6 x 6) x 7 = 252

Triggers for Action

- 49–120 points: Consider verbal warning

- 121–249 points: Consider written warning

- 250–450 points: Consider final written warning

- 450+ points: Consider dismissal

Triggers are guidelines; managers retain discretion based on individual circumstances.

9. Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

Eligibility for SSP is determined by statutory conditions. Further information can be found here: HMRC SSP Overview

This policy ensures **consistent, fair, and supportive management of staff absence** while maintaining statutory obligations and workplace safety.