

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy aims to provide clear guidelines to all the Chester Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) staff in managing attendance and the responsibilities of the employee and employer.

The Chester Diocesan Board of Finance will operate a fair and consistent approach when managing absence. However the DBF acknowledges the importance of the consideration of individual circumstances and, where appropriate, recognising the need for support in the event of illness.

Absence relating to unpaid leave, parental, maternity, paternity and adoption leave is not within the bounds of this policy.

TYPES OF ABSENCE

Self Certified Absence

Short-term periods of time away from work due to illness can be self certified by completing the DBF's Self Certification Form on return to work. Short term periods of absence last no more than seven days.

Certified Absence

Any periods of absence away from work due to illness lasting more than seven days will require a Doctor's certificate.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE PROCEDURE

Employees are required to notify the DBF of their absence in accordance with the procedure detailed below.

The employee must contact his / her line manager or the Diocesan Secretary as soon as possible on the first day of absence, by 10-00am at the latest. The reason for absence and the expected length of absence should be given. This will enable the line manager to make any necessary arrangements for cover.

DOCUMENTATION

The employee will be required to complete the DBF's Self Certification Form on returning to work after any periods of absence lasting up to seven calendar days.

Absences lasting more than seven days will require a medical certificate completed by the employee's Doctor. If the absence continues and medical certificates are repeatedly issued, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that there are no breaks in the dates of the issuing of the medical certificates.

Where the absence occurs within 8 weeks of a previous absence, the DBF will require a medical certificate, irrespective of the length of the absences.

The DBF reserves the right, at any stage of absence, to require the employee to undergo a medical examination by a medical practitioner of their choice and / or to request a medical report from the employee's GP, specialist or the diocese's Occupational Health provider.

RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW

The Return to Work Interview must take place as soon as is reasonably practicable (and usually within 48 hours) following the employee's return from sick leave after every period of absence, regardless of the duration of the absence.

The interview will be conducted by the employee's line manager, supervisor or member of the HR department and will be recorded on the Return to Work interview form. Should it not be practicable for the employee's line manager to conduct the interview, it should be delegated to an appropriate deputy. It should be performed in a suitable environment with full consideration given to confidentiality.

The Return to Work interview is designed to:

- establish and record the reasons for absence
- provide an opportunity to provide assistance and support to the employee which may prevent further absence
- provide an appropriate forum to discuss the employee's health (and whether they are indeed well enough to return to the workplace)
- provide an appropriate forum to review the employee's attendance record
- provide an appropriate forum to discuss any issues that may affect the employee's health.

The Return to Work interview form should be signed by the employee and their line manager and will be filed on the employee's personnel file.

SICKNESS RECORD

A sickness record will be held for every employee recording the details of the employee's sickness absence during the calendar year. These records will be kept up to date by the line manager informing the HR and Finance departments of absence. This information will be used for the purpose of managing attendance.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Any periods of sickness absence which are not covered by a Self Certification Form or Doctor's Certificate, or where the notification procedure has not been followed, will be considered as unauthorised absence. Such periods of absence will be unpaid and the Disciplinary procedure will usually be invoked.