



ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT AND SICK LEAVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy Summary

Park Academy's Managing Attendance & Sick Leave Policy demonstrates the company's commitment to employees' health and welfare at work, specifically outlining the company's managing attendance and sick leave policy in this regard. This policy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of employees, Centre Managers and Human Resources in the effective management of attendance. It clearly sets out the functions of the Employee Assistance Programme in assisting the company to support staff wellbeing. Practical guidance is provided for Centre Managers on promoting a positive culture of attendance in the workplace and managing sickness absence.

Responsibilities for Notification Requirements

If you cannot attend work due to illness or any other reason, you must inform your manager no later than 7:30am on the day of absence, where possible by 4pm the day before, giving the reason for your non-attendance and when you are likely to be available for work. In exceptional circumstances you are permitted to arrange for someone else to notify your manager. Please note text messages are not acceptable. If your manager is not available, you should inform another appropriate manager in the Company. If you are absent because of sickness or injury for more than 2 working days, you must obtain a Medical Certificate from your doctor and submit/send it to your manager as soon as practicable thereafter. You should also contact your manager if you have been absent from work for more than three days.

In the case of prolonged illness, weekly sick certificates should be submitted. It is vitally important that the employee keeps in regular contact with his/her manager to keep the Company fully updated about their situation. You should be aware that a poor record of attendance may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Absenteeism/Punctuality

Regular attendance and good timekeeping are an essential part of the smooth and effective running of the Company. An employee's Centre manager will monitor attendance and timekeeping. All absences from work should be authorised by the Company. Where absence is due to illness, procedures as outlined above for sick leave will apply.

It is the policy of HR to advise on the absence records of all employees, where known. Where an employee is absent for a continuous, ongoing period, it is considered appropriate to refer the employee to the Company Doctor for professional advice on the employee's fitness to work. This is done in the best interests of the employee member concerned.

Purpose of Policy

Effective attendance management is essential to the effective organisation of a high quality and cost-effective company. The purpose of this policy is to set out TPAC's commitment to supporting

employee wellbeing and welfare as part of its overall managing attendance policy; with a view to assisting employee members to fulfil their contractual obligations and to render regular and efficient service, leading to the achievement of company goals in line with TPAC's Strategic Plan. TPAC is committed to maintaining the safety, health, and welfare of staff while at work and doing all that is reasonably practicable to assist employee members who are absent from work due to injury or ill-health to return to work as soon as possible.

Centre Managers have a key role in managing attendance and their responsibilities include communicating the importance of regular attendance to all employees; addressing issues which may be adversely affecting employee's motivation to attend work; managing health and safety; monitoring attendance; ensuring compliance with the sick leave arrangements and dealing with employees whose attendance record is unsatisfactory in a fair and consistent manner.

The objectives of this policy are as follows

- To provide practical guidance to Centre Managers on promoting a positive culture of attendance in the workplace and managing sickness absence
- To clarify the role and functions of the Company Doctor and the Employee Assistance Programme
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of employees, Centre Managers and Human Resources in the effective implementation of this policy

Scope of the Policy

This policy is applicable to all permanent and temporary employees in TPAC.

Roles & Responsibilities

Regular attendance of staff is essential to deliver an efficient and high-quality service. It is very important therefore that employees and management ensure high standards of attendance at work. This section clarifies the roles and responsibilities of employees, Centre Managers and Human Resources in the effective management of attendance; and sets out the functions of service providers.

Role of the Employee

- To provide regular and efficient service
- To minimise absences arising from accidents and ill health at work by taking reasonable care of their own safety and that of others
- To comply with all provisions of the Managing Attendance & Sick Leave Policy which include:
- To notify the appropriate Centre Manager directly or in accordance with local arrangements as soon as possible before normal/scheduled starting time
- To maintain regular contact during extended periods of absence to keep the Centre Manager advised of progress and likely date of return
- To submit medical certificates to the Centre Manager as and when required. The duration of the medical certificate must be specified and follow up medical certificates submitted on a weekly basis unless otherwise advised
- To participate in a return to work follow up with their Centre Manager following each episode of sick leave absence
- To co-operate fully with rehabilitative measures to facilitate his/her return to work as soon as he/she can do so.

Role of the Centre Manager

- To promote a positive attendance culture in the workplace by communicating the importance of regular attendance, fostering teamwork and fostering a dignity at work environment for all employees
- To communicate HR policies (such as Dignity at Work and the Grievance Procedure) and deal promptly with issues which may affect an employee's motivation to attend work e.g., alleged bullying/harassment, grievances
- To familiarise themselves with best practice management guidelines in relation to managing attendance
- To manage health and safety in the workplace
- To ensure that staff are familiar with the sick leave procedure
- To ensure compliance with the notification and certification requirements
- To maintain accurate attendance records in accordance with standard procedures
- To identify patterns and trends of sickness absence, particularly frequent and persistent short-term absences which may or may not be related to health reasons
- To maintain contact with the employee during extended periods of absence
- To liaise with HR in relation to the services provided by the company doctor and EAP where it is believed that health related matters are affecting the employee's work or work is affecting the employee's health
- To carry out a dedicated management follow up with the employee after every episode of absence
- To carry out informal discussions where the employee's attendance record is giving cause for concern with and advise him/her of the required improvements
- To invoke the disciplinary procedure where appropriate

Role of Human Resources

- To provide advice and support to Centre Managers in the monitoring and management of sickness absence.
- To help monitor the effectiveness of the Managing Attendance & Sick Leave Policy and ensure that it is being applied consistently throughout the organisation
- To work with centre managers to help assist in identifying where improvements can be made

Role of Employee Assistance Programme

- To provide a confidential and professional support and advisory service to assist employees who are experiencing personal difficulties or need information on the range of services available
- To refer employees to sources of specialist advice or support where appropriate.

Payment of sick pay

Since the 1st of January 2023, you are entitled to 3 days' sick pay a year. This is called 'Statutory Sick Pay' (that means the legal minimum). Sick pay will be paid by your employer at 70% of your normal pay up to a minimum of €110 a day.

To qualify for statutory sick pay you must:

- Be an employee
- Have worked for your employer for at least 13 continuous weeks before you are sick
- Be certified by a GP as unable to work

When an employee is with the company less than 12 months, there will be no payment of 'Company sick pay'. However, the Company reserve the right to pay this at their absolute discretion.

Once the employee reaches the one-year anniversary of their start date with Park Academy, has passed their probation and is on a permanent contract, they will be entitled to 2 days sick leave paid, these 2 days will renew each year on the employee's anniversary of start date. This benefit does not apply during an employee's notice period. These paid sick days are extra to the Statutory Sick Pay.

It is the employees' managers responsibility to ensure that they are managing the employee sick leave pay entitlement.

A claim for Illness Benefit should be made to the Department of Social & Family Affairs <http://www.welfare.ie> after the 3rd day of sickness. (The first 3 days of illness are known as waiting days and no payment will be made by social welfare for these days.) It is entirely up to the employee to claim this benefit. To submit an illness, benefit claim, the employee should complete a Social Welfare Medical Certificate which will be given to them by their Doctor/Hospital. Social welfare medical certificates are not available on-line or from any office of the Department.

Medical Examination

In the case of prolonged or persistent absences due to sickness or injury, the Company may require an additional medical opinion from its own or an independent advisor, to assess an employee's ability to continue their duties. The results of any such examination will of course be confidential and the Company will meet any cost. If an appointment is arranged for an employee with a Company designated medical professional for assessment while absent from work due to illness, the employee is required to make themselves available for such assessment. The employee agrees to co-operate with the Company designated medical professional and to furnish any other medical or other relevant records reasonably requested by the Company or the medical professional in connection with their absence. The Doctor may be asked to provide The Park Academy with an on-going assessment of the employee's condition thereafter on a discretionary basis to maintain an up-to-date picture of their rehabilitation and the employee will be obliged to co-operate in full. If the employee is frequently absent from work for short periods due to illness, their manager may refer them to a nominated Doctor for review.

Return to Work procedure

Upon return from all, certified or uncertified, Sick Leave, the employee and Manager should sit down to complete a return-to-work interview and form, the employee should submit any outstanding doctor's certificates. Under no circumstances will back dated certificates be acceptable.

Employees on sick leave for more than 2 weeks may be asked to produce a "Fit for work" cert, if needed the employer may provide a copy of your job description for your medical practitioner, the employee will not be able to return to work until we have received this cert. The Manager must meet with the employee immediately upon return to work to update them on vital information regarding the crèche and their roles, this meeting should take place either on the day of their return or the week before, records of this conversation should be kept and placed on the discussion record on TMS, it is also in this meeting that a Return-to-Work form be completed.

Disciplinary action based on poor attendance

Attendance at work is a contractual obligation of all our team members. Frequent short-term absence causes a burden on the business and fellow team members and has the potential to lead to a reduction in the standard of care given to the Children. Whilst the Company accepts that there will be occasions where team members are genuinely unwell, it is necessary to monitor absence records of all team members in accordance with this Attendance Management Procedure. A poor attendance record may result in disciplinary action so it's important to be aware of this information.

If you have any queries in relation to this procedure you should speak to your Crèche Manager.

As per our current arrangement, applying to all Employees in the Company, if you are away from work due to sickness or accident you must comply with the calling in procedure as outlined in your handbook

STAGE ONE:

If you have 3 separate spells of absence during any 6 months your Crèche Manager will interview you. This is called a 'Make you Aware' meeting. The aim is to:

1. *Identify the frequency and reason for the absences and ensure that you are aware that your absence record is giving cause for concern;*
2. *Advise you to seek proper medical attention if there is an underlying medical problem and identify the need for referral to the company doctor or occupational health practitioner;*
3. *Give consideration to any mitigation (explanation you may have for your poor attendance), including any personal problems and possibly ways of helping you resolve them.*
4. *Remind you that the persistent short-term absences place a continuing burden on the business and put continued employment at risk;*

You should be made aware that you are now engaged in the Attendance Management Procedure and advised that the next stage in the procedure may be a disciplinary meeting and possible warning if your attendance does not improve.

STAGE TWO:

If attendance does not improve the next step is the formal disciplinary procedure, please refer to this procedure for more detail.