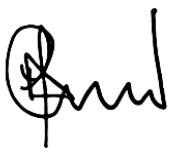


Auxo Group

Absence Policy

This document is approved and authorised for application within Auxo Group and all associated subsidiary companies.



Ford Garrard, CEO

Last Review Date: October 2024

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Purpose

The Auxo Group aims to encourage all its employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work for short periods due to sickness. This policy relates to both short-term sickness absences and long-term sickness absence from work.

Short-term sickness absences are defined as those lasting up to one working week.

With regards to long-term sickness absences, it is recognised that a certain level of sickness absence is inevitable. It is the organisation's policy to support employees who are genuinely sick and unable to come to work.

Responsibilities

Line managers

- Ensure the policy is applied correctly and adhered to in their area
- Ensure that employees are aware of and understand the standards expected of them
- Managers responsible for staff are expected to manage and control their employees' attendance and absence
- Ensure, as a matter of routine, the corresponding actions are taken each time an employee has been absent from work, in a timely manner
- Ensure that a Self-Certification (for all length of absences) has been completed and a Return to work interview is carried out
- Ensure both completed and signed documents are sent to HR in a timely manner
- Ensure HR is notified of all absences

Employees

- Have an awareness and understanding of the policy
- Ensure that their attendance meets the requirements of the company
- Contribute actively to actions required following a period of absence
- Ensure that they make their line managers aware of any mitigating circumstances that could affect their attendance

HR

- Monitor the policy and provide advice and guidance to managers and employees
- Monitor absence patterns
- Notify payroll of any SSP payments to be made
- Publish and review the policy

Short term sickness absence policy

Medical and Dental Appointments

Employees are requested to arrange any medical or dental appointments outside working hours. Where this is not possible, employees must obtain permission from management before taking any time off and appointments should be arranged for first thing in the morning or the end of the work day where possible to minimise any disruptions to the company.

Appointments should be booked on Cascade and allocated either to AM or PM, employees may be required to either book the time as holiday or at the discretion of the manager, the employee may be required to make up the time taken depending on the length of time of the appointment.

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If employees do not have sufficient holidays or if applicable, are unable to make the time up the absence will be classed as unpaid leave.

Line managers will be responsible in ensuring that the correct procedures are followed by staff at that any absence is reported accurately on Cascade.

The company reserves the right to make relevant deductions from salary if the time taken is not accounted for and the employee may face disciplinary action if caught abusing the procedure.

Statement of pay

Employees who are absent from work because of sickness will normally be entitled to receive the following Sick Pay which will be paid at the normal basic rate of pay exclusive of overtime/allowances from the Company and providing they meet the relevant criteria stated below:

Continuous Service	Maximum Payment in any 12-month period
Less than 12 month's service	SSP Only
12 months' but less than 2 years' service	1 working week
2 years+	2 working weeks

Payment is, however, conditional upon an employee complying with the organisation procedure for notifying his/her manager of the absence prior to their start time on the first day of absence, attending an interview with his/her manager on request to discuss the absence, providing a Doctor's note, if applicable, completing a self-certification form on return to work and agreeing to attend an interview/examination with a nominated doctor at the request of the organisation where required.

Frequent absences

While the Auxo Group understands that there will inevitably be some short-term sickness absence among employees, it must also pay due regard to its business needs. If an employee is frequently and persistently absent from work, this can damage efficiency and productivity, and place an additional burden of work on the employee's colleagues.

Absences from work will be regarded as frequent if, during any period of 12 consecutive months, an employee is absent from work for 5 or more working days, or on three separate occasions.

By implementing this policy, the organisation aims to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of its business needs and the genuine needs of employees to take occasional short periods of time off work because of sickness.

Guidelines for managers

Managers responsible for staff are expected to manage and control their employees' attendance and absence. They should, as a matter of routine, take the following actions each time an employee has been absent from work for a short period (i.e., a period of up to one working week):

Records

Make a record on Cascade whenever an employee phones in to report that he/she is unable to come to work due to sickness. Alongside this, record when the call was made, the stated reason for the absence and how long the employee expects to be absent.

Return to work interviews

Conduct routine "return-to-work interview" using Return to Work Interview Form. Each time an employee returns to work following a short-term absence, his/her manager should speak to the employee about the absence and the reason for it in a fair and factual way. This approach will alert the employee to the fact that the situation is being monitored and will potentially deter casual absences. The manager should be supportive towards the employee and, where appropriate, seek to identify ways in which to assist the employee to improve his/her attendance in the future.

Self-certification form

Require the employee (on return to work) to complete Self-certification of Absence Form. This should be signed in front of the manager, who should then countersign it and pass it to the HR department so that it may be placed in the employee's personal file.

Patterns of absence

Be alert to patterns, for example the persistent Monday or Friday absentee. If a pattern is identified, the manager should put his/her observations to the employee directly so that the employee has the opportunity to provide an explanation. The manager should, however, remain open minded and not jump to any hasty conclusions about the employee's absences.

Try to establish, through investigation and discussion with the employee, the underlying reasons for frequent absences. Until the underlying cause is identified, an appropriate and effective remedy will be impossible to identify. Check whether or not absences are in part because of personal or family problems. If this is the case, a reasonable degree of tolerance and sympathy should be shown towards the employee, as the problems may be unavoidable. The manager should be supportive, while at the same time explaining clearly to the employee that continuing frequent absences from work are unacceptable. Check whether the employee's absences are in any way work related, for example as a result of workplace stress. If the problem is work related, the manager should take prompt steps to remove or reduce the factor that is causing the employee's problem.

Seek medical advice, if appropriate, to determine whether there is any underlying medical cause for the employee's frequent absences.

Set reasonable targets and time-limits for improvement in attendance and ensure that the employee is committed to achieving them. Advice is available from the HR department. Warn the employee of the consequences of continuing unsatisfactory attendance, i.e. that he/she may eventually be dismissed.

Keep confidential records of all absences, discussions and medical certificates and make sure that the records clearly identify the reasons for an employee's various absences. Schedule a follow-up meeting at an agreed time to monitor the on-going situation.

Before taking any formal action in respect of an employee who has had frequent absences from work, the manager should take the following action:

- Check the employee's absence record to gain an accurate assessment of the number of days' absence that he/she has had the number of separate occasions that he/she has been absent and whether or not his/her record is tangibly worse than that of other employees in the organisation
- Check with the HR department, which will advise on the appropriate action to take in line with the organisation's procedures

Guidelines for employees

An employee who needs to be absent from work providing a Doctor's note, if applicable.

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If you are entitled to any payments in excess of SSP and your entitlement expires, full or part payment may be allowed at our discretion where it is considered that there are special circumstances warranting it.

Where the circumstances of your incapacity are such that you receive, or are awarded any sum by way of compensation or damages in respect of the incapacity from a third party, then any payments which we may have made to you because of the absence (including SSP) shall be repaid by you to us up to an amount not exceeding the amount of the compensation or damages paid by the third party and up to, but not exceeding, any amount paid by us.

Termination of the employment contract

The Auxo Group will review the situation periodically and ultimately it may become necessary from a business perspective to consider termination of employment. In these circumstances, the organisation will:

- review the employee's absence record to assess whether or not it is sufficient to justify dismissal
- consult the employee
- obtain up-to-date medical advice
- advise the employee in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility
- meet with the employee to discuss the options and consider the employee's views on continuing employment
- review if there are any other jobs that the employee could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss
- allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss the employee on grounds of long-term ill health
- arrange a further meeting with the employee to determine any appeal

Following this meeting, the Auxo Group will inform the employee of its final decision and act reasonably towards the employee at all times.

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