



St Mark's Church Preschool

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*A step in the
right direction*

St Mark's Church Preschool - Staff Sickness and Absence Policy

Policy Statement

St Mark's Church is sympathetic about the welfare of all of our staff and we understand that we all get ill or need to be absent from work from time to time. We also understand that our preschool teachers are conscientious and they know that absence affects not only colleagues but also the children in our care. This policy seeks to give clarity of how we will manage sickness and absence and ensure that all staff are treated sensitively, fairly, confidentially and consistently. Please read this policy and ensure that you know what to do when you are sick or need to be absent.

Absence: whether due to illness or any other circumstances is defined (for the purpose of this document) as the non-attendance of workers when they are contracted to attend.

**This does not cover occasions when you ask to swap sessions
and these are agreed with the Preschool Manager**

Reporting Sickness or Absence

Any sickness or absence must be reported to the Preschool Manager (Helen Harpin) as soon as possible and before preschool opening at 8.00am. The call should be made to Helen Harpin on Telephone number 01234 312634

If Helen is unavailable for any reason then you should contact the Vicar (Charles Royden) on 07973 113861. The call should be made by the member of staff themselves and only in exceptional circumstances should this be done by somebody else on their behalf. We will ask you the nature of the illness/absence and a likely return date. You should ensure that by 5.30pm you update the Preschool Manager and advise us whether you will return to work on the following day. All records relating to staff absence or sickness will be stored confidentially and securely.

- **If you are sick for less than seven days.** You should complete a 'Self Certificate' available from any Doctor's Surgery or downloadable from www.direct.gov.uk. The certificate will be signed by the preschool manager and kept on file.
- **If you are sick for longer than seven days.** You must obtain a Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note) from your GP. The Fit Note advises us whether you are 'unfit for work' or 'may be fit for some work'. You must supply us with consecutive doctors' medical certificates to cover the whole of your absence. If you fail to provide a 'Fit Note' then this would become a matter for disciplinary action.



Please note : When you are sick for a period of time we will keep in regular contact and offer support. We may also ask you to see a doctor or occupational health specialist at our expense and referral will be made to Bedford Borough Council who manage our staff employment.

Repeated Sickness

More than four periods of sickness in any 12 month period would be considered a repeated absence. Repeated absences may be treated as a conduct issue and lead to disciplinary action and ultimately dismissal if they are unexplained or considered unreasonable.

Returning to work after sickness

We will do all we can to facilitate a return to work. This might involve reduced hours or another form of support to enable a gradual move to normal hours.

When you return to work we will conduct a 'Return to Work Discussion.' All staff will meet with the Vicar after any period of sickness or absence. This is to welcome you back to work and establish the reason for and cause of the absence in order to -

- Ensure that you are fit to return to work
- To consider whether there is anything which we can do to help your return, such as a referral to a doctor or occupational health professional at our expense
- Recognise and discuss any repeated absences
- Advise you of any changes relating to the preschool

Sick Pay

When you are absent from work due to sickness for more than four consecutive days then you are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). We require a copy of your medical certificate from your doctor without delay. SSP is treated in the normal way that you are paid and is subject to deductions.

Employees who have worked at St Mark's Church for at least 6 months will be entitled to Enhanced Sick Pay (ESP). St Mark's Church will provide full pay for any two periods of sickness for up to a total of 14 days in any twelve month period. Enhanced Sick Pay includes Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or other benefits to which the employee may be entitled.

Absences form work for reasons other than sickness - Paid

Statutory Maternity Leave

Eligible employees can take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave. The first 26 weeks is known as 'Ordinary Maternity Leave', the last 26 weeks as 'Additional Maternity Leave'. The earliest that leave can be taken is 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth, unless the baby is born early. Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for eligible employees can be paid for up to 39 weeks, usually as follows: Employees are entitled to reasonable time-off with pay, to attend antenatal clinics. Staff should endeavour to make appointments outside of work time where possible.

Jury Service

Employee are entitled to time off if they're called up to serve on a jury. Jury service usually lasts up to 10 days, but can be longer. You will receive full pay.

Absences form work for reasons other than sickness - Unpaid

Requested absence for family and dependants

In emergencies involving family or dependants you can request leave to organise appropriate care from the Preschool Manager. This will be treated sympathetically and will be unpaid.

Compassionate Leave

All employees are eligible to apply for unpaid compassionate leave. Leave will be granted in the event of a bereavement or serious illness and to attend funerals of an employee's immediate relative. Each case will be judged on its own merits.

Absence for medical appointments

We prefer you to make appointments with your doctor, dentist or hospital outside working hours or at the beginning or the end of the working day. Where this is not possible, please speak to the Preschool Manager to agree a mutually convenient time and give at least 48 hours notice. You will not be paid during any absence from work for doctor, dentist or hospital appointments.

Please Note

Disability

Absence relating to disability will be recorded separately from sickness records. We work within the framework of the 'Equality Act 2010' to ensure an inclusive and anti-discriminatory approach.

Swapped Sessions

We wish to work flexibly where possible and it may be possible to arrange to swap agreed sessions with the permission of the Preschool Manager. This is not classed as absence

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time. For further guidance on all matters relating to sickness and absence, including your rights as an employee and the relative legislation please refer to guidance found at www.acas.org.uk and/or www.direct.gov.uk.

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