



## ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR THE VIABLES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Viabes Community Association aims to be an organisation that values, recognises, and responds to the diverse needs of members and those we serve. We adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate against any person or other organisation with particular reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

### 1. Purpose and Scope

Viabes Community Association, (hereafter, VCA or The Association), is committed to the health and wellbeing of its employees. This policy sets out the steps which are to be taken when employees are absent for short or long-term sickness, unusual or unauthorised absences. Our aim is to reduce these types of absence. Please note, this policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Short term absence** – periods of up to four weeks' absence from work due to sickness.
- 2.2 **Long term absence** – periods of more than four weeks' continuous absence from work due to sickness
- 2.3 **Unauthorised absence** – periods of absence from work during which the employee has not complied with the Association's sickness absence reporting procedures or; where such absence does not genuinely relate to sickness or injury and where no other prior authorisation for the absence has been given.
- 2.4 **Carer's Duties** – absence for emergencies concerning the care of children or close relatives.
- 2.5 **Compassionate Leave** – absence for emergency situations concerning dependants. For example, sudden illness of a partner or child, unexpected incident concerning a child at school, death of a dependent etc.
- 2.6 **Jury service** – absence to serve on a jury following receipt of a 'jury summons'.
- 2.7 **Maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave** – absence for mothers, fathers, and primary adopters.
- 2.8 **Public Duties** – absence for the following services: Justice of the Peace, a member of a Local Authority, a member of a Statutory Tribunal, a member of a Regional Health Authority or Patient Forum, a member of the managing and governing body of an educational establishment maintained by the Local Education Authority.

### 3. Absence reporting

Contact  
Office/Manager

Absence > 1 day  
stay in contact.

Absence > 7 days, requires  
Doctor's Fit Note if off work  
due to ill-health

Return to  
work

- 3.1 You must contact VCA before the start of during normal working hours, as soon as you know you are unable to attend work.
- 3.2 You must contact your manager stating the nature of your absence, your expected date of return and to discuss your workload in order to minimise the impact of your absence. The Association expects you to give notification within one hour of your normal starting time.
- 3.3 You should make contact yourself unless you are unable to due to the nature of your illness. If you are unable to make contact yourself, you should ask someone else to do so on your behalf.
- 3.4 If you do not notify VCA of the reason for your absence; your doctor's Statement of Fitness to Work (also known as a 'fit note' or previously as a 'sick note') has expired or if the organisation has reasonable grounds to suspect your leave is unapproved, the unauthorised absence process will be followed.
- 3.5 If your absence is going to last more than one day, you must maintain contact within timeframes agreed with your manager and confirm a likely date of return as soon as it is known.
- 3.6 If your absence has been for 7 days or less, you must complete a self-certification form (see attachment 1). This should be signed by you and given to your manager on the first day you return to work. It is the manager's responsibility to log the form with the VCA Trustee responsible for Payroll so that all absence can be recorded.
- 3.7 All absences of more than seven consecutive days require you to provide a doctor's Statement of Fitness for Work to cover the period exceeding seven days of absence, irrespective of whether you were scheduled to work.
- 3.8 Doctors' fit notes should be given to your manager within seven days of the date the fit note became due.
- 3.9 Your manager may request a return to work discussion for all sickness or unauthorised absences upon your return to work. This discussion should cover the following items: ascertain whether the employee is fit to return to work, agree any actions required to facilitate their return to work, ensure the proper certificates have been completed / obtained in respect of the entire period of absence; the manager will provide a departmental update and ensure that any agreed adjustments to work have been made.

#### 4. Long term absence

Each case of long-term absence is likely to be different and will be reviewed on an individual basis.

**The following guidelines will be followed:**

- 4.1 You should maintain regular contact within timeframes agreed with your manager, until a return-to-work date is agreed.
- 4.2 The Association may request that you sign a medical consent form if more information regarding your condition is required. This form authorises VCA to obtain a medical report from your doctor (see attachment 2). In some cases, you may be asked to attend a medical examination with an independent specialist.
- 4.3 If appropriate, VCA will request a home visit with you to understand your situation more fully and answer any questions that you may have.
- 4.4 Your manager will advise you of your sick pay entitlement prior to the expiry of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) (see section 7).

Every effort will be made to assist with your return to work, as soon as is reasonably practicable, recognising any potential limitations.

Reasonable adjustments to accommodate your return to work will be discussed with you. Once agreed, this will be confirmed to you in writing.

If you are unable to return to work within a reasonable period of time, a formal meeting will be held between your manager and yourself, to investigate and discuss the next course of action.

## 5. Unauthorised absence

If you fail to follow the correct absence reporting procedures on your first day of absence, your manager will attempt to contact you to discuss your reasons for the absence and a return to work date.

If you do not notify your absence by the end of your normal working hours or cannot provide a doctor's fit note for that period, you may not qualify for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

Unauthorised absence may result in disciplinary action.

## 6. Absence Monitoring and Management

All absence will be monitored considering the duration, pattern, and frequency, taking into account personal circumstances with each individual case. Absence records are to be maintained confidentially by the Centre Manager and/or VCA Trustee responsible for Payroll. You may be asked to meet with the manager or the Trustees if the pattern or frequency of absence causes concern. In certain circumstances, this may lead to disciplinary action.

## 7. Sick Pay and Benefits

We will pay the appropriate entitlement to SSP for an employee who is off for 4 or more consecutive days (including non-working days.)

The weekly rate for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is £99.35 for up to 28 weeks. We will pay:

- for the days an employee normally works - called 'qualifying days'
- in the same way as wages, for example on the normal payday, deducting tax and National insurance

SSP is paid when the employee is sick for at least 4 days in a row (including non-working days). If an employee has worked even for a minute before the go home sick, this will not be counted as a sick day.

SSP will not be paid for the first three days of sickness. We will pay this as normal pay, unless an employee has received SSP within the last 8 weeks, and that already included a 3-day waiting period before it was paid.

Our Terms and Conditions Of Employment contains further information on Statutory Sick Pay and other types of leave.

## 8. Other absence

**Carer's Duties:** At the discretion of the Association, employees may be allowed to take time from their annual leave allowance at short notice for emergencies concerning the care of children or close relatives. Longer periods of absence for care, taken without pay, may also be considered.

**Compassionate Leave:** At the discretion of the Association, employees may be allowed to take time from their annual leave allowance for emergency situations concerning dependants. In the case of a

death of an immediate family member (parent, child, sibling) the Association may use their discretion to agree paid leave for a determined period.

**Jury Service:** Any employee called for jury service should inform their manager as soon as possible to discuss potential redistribution of workload. Employees will receive full pay for the full period of jury service, less any allowances available from the Court.

**Maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave:** These are all covered in separate policy documents available from your manager.

**Public Duties:** The Association will permit time off work to be taken for public duties as set out under the Employment Rights Act. This applies to an employee who is a Justice of the Peace, a member of a Local Authority, a member of a Statutory Tribunal, a member of a Regional Health Authority or Patient Forum, a member of the managing and governing body of an educational establishment maintained by the Local Education Authority.

## **9. Monitoring and review**

The centre manager, with adequate consultation of the Board of Trustees, will regularly review the operation of this policy.

Date reviewed: March 2023

To be reviewed: March 2024