

Sickness Absence Policy

Rev 1

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Managing Director - Kevin Hague



AARSLEFF CENTRUM



**CANNON
PILING**
a part of Aarsleff Ground Engineering Limited

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 This policy applies to all companies within Aarsleff Ground Engineering Ltd UK and Avoncross Ltd, including companies trading as Centrum Pile and Cannon Piling (referred to in this statement as 'The Company').

1.2 This policy is non-contractual and the Company reserves the right to amend or withdraw the policy at any time at the Company's discretion.

1.3 The Company take your health and wellbeing very seriously and want to ensure that we create an environment where you feel that you're fully supported and feel enabled and empowered to carry out your role to a high standard.

1.4 We understand that there'll be times when you're unwell and therefore unable to attend work; so we've created this policy to provide clear guidance on what support you can expect to receive from us if you are absent from work. It also sets out what we expect from you in return and our process for managing both short term sickness absence (less than 4 weeks) and long-term sickness absence (4 weeks or more) from work, as we are committed to managing sickness absence in a consistent and fair way.

1.5 This policy applies to all employees regardless of length of service. However, we may depart from this procedure where appropriate (including but not limited to during an employee's probationary period). It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

1.6 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

2. REPORTING YOUR ABSENCE

2.1 If you are unable to attend work due to sickness, It's really important that you report your absence as soon as possible, in line with the local absence reporting procedure. Please refer to the Absence Reporting and Unauthorised Absence (AWOL) policy for further details.

2.2 If you fall ill at work, then please let your manager know straight away so they can make the necessary arrangements if you need to go home and that any outstanding work is picked up. You will then need to follow the normal absence reporting process while you're off. If your absence is more than half a standard working day this will be recorded as one day's sickness absence.

2.3 You must report your absence daily unless previously agreed with your manager or until you have received a fit note (or Statement of Fitness to Work) from your General Practitioner/Doctor/medical professional. Following receipt of a fit note, you must maintain regular contact and your manager may also make a welfare call to ensure you're ok. There may be times when you aren't able to contact your manager regularly, for example if you're in hospital. In this situation, you can nominate another person (for example a friend or family member) who can make contact on your behalf.

2.4 Absences of 7 calendar days or less must be 'self-certified', However, if you're off for more than 7 calendar days, you must provide a fit note from your GP / Medical Professional (this must be provided from the 8th calendar day after 7 calendar days of absence). You should provide the fit note to your line manager as soon as possible. They will take a copy for their records before sending on to HR and Payroll to ensure sick pay is processed correctly. It is acceptable to provide a photocopied or scanned copy of a fit note if you are unable to get the original copy to your manager straight away, however, please note you may be required to provide the original document at a later date

2.5 When you receive a fit note from your GP/ medical professional they will make one of two recommendations:

2.5.1 **Not fit for work:** essentially this means that your GP/ medical professional will sign you off work completely until a specific date.

2.5.2 **May be fit for work:** Your GP/ medical professional may make some recommendations such as a phased return to work or altered hours to help facilitate your return to work more easily and ensure that you are fully supported. A risk assessment and/ or occupational health advice may be sought depending on the nature of the adjustments suggested.

2.6 There may be times when it's not possible for us to accommodate your GP/medical professional's recommendations. If this is the case, your manager/HR will inform you of the reasons why these can't be accommodated. In this situation you will need to remain off work until your current fit note expires or until you return to visit your GP/medical professional and obtain another fit note confirming you're fit for work or it contains new recommendations which your manager can accommodate.

2.7 We may request a fit note for each absence of 7 calendar days or less in the following situations:

2.7.1 You appear unwell

2.7.2 Where we are concerned about the reason for absence

2.7.3 If there have been absences prior to, or immediately after, annual leave, public holidays or seasonal holiday periods;

2.7.4 If there have been sickness absences during peak trading periods where annual leave restrictions are in place;

2.7.5 If you have a history of absenteeism

2.7.6 If you have been requested to provide a 'fit note' by your manager before the 8th calendar day of your absence, your GP/ medical professional may require you to pay a small fee. You should inform your manager if you have been asked to pay for a 'fit note' and submit the GP's invoice. You'll be able to reclaim this cost through expenses

3. SICK PAYMENTS

3.1 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is paid by the company to all colleagues who normally pay National Insurance Contributions (NICs), on earnings above the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL), if they are sick for a period of 4 consecutive days or more but less than 28 weeks. The first 3 days of sickness are called waiting days and are unpaid.

3.2 Company Sick Pay (CSP) for salaried staff is a discretionary benefit to all colleagues. CSP is paid in addition to any SSP that you may be entitled to.

3.3 Industry Sick Pay (ISP) Under existing legislation there is an entitlement to statutory sick pay. Any payment under this rule shall be increased by an amount equivalent to any statutory sick pay that may be payable in respect of the same day of incapacity for work under the regulations made under that act. The aggregate amount of SSP plus Industry Sick Pay shall not exceed a normal weeks pay in accordance with WR.1. of the Construction Industry Joint Council entitlement to Basic Rates of Pay. For further qualifying conditions of payment, please refer to the Working Rule Agreement for the Construction Industry.

4. SHORT TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

4.1 When you're ready to return to work from short term sickness absence (less than 4 weeks) Please contact your manager – they may require you, in appropriate circumstances, to supply a fit note from your GP/ medical professional confirming you are fit for work, before allowing you to resume your normal duties. This will be the case where your illness might impact your ability to work or may pose a health and safety risk to yourself or others.

4.2 Your manager will arrange a return to work interview, the purpose of which is to ensure that your manager is aware of any issues which may affect your attendance at work and your state of health so that appropriate support and action may be taken. Your manager will discuss the following with you:

4.2.1 The reason for your sickness absence

4.2.2 If you're well enough to return to work

4.2.3 If you've received medical advice or are still undergoing medical treatment

4.2.4 Any reasonable adjustments that are needed to help support your return to work

4.2.5 If there is any additional support we can provide you with

4.2.6 To update you with what has happened in your team or the wider business while you have been off work

4.2.7 Your overall sickness absence record

4.2.8 Whether you've reached a sickness absence trigger and whether you'll be referred to a stage absence meeting

4.3 If you feel that you need any additional support, please contact our Employee Assistance Programme, Wisdom AI, where a 24-hour helpline is available to support you through any of life's issues, this is a completely confidential service and your details will not be shared with the Company, this service can be accessed directly via phone on 0800 047 4097 or via the website at [Wisdom \(healthassured.org\)](http://Wisdom(healthassured.org))

5. TRIGGER LEVELS AND POTENTIAL WARNINGS FOR UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

5.1 We need to ensure that we operate as efficiently as possible in order to meet the demands of our customers. We have set standards or triggers, above which it is necessary for your manager to take action

5.2 If you reach the sickness absence triggers set out below, you'll normally be referred to a stage absence meeting. The meeting will usually be conducted by your manager. It is not necessary for your manager to conduct a separate meeting, however they will have already discussed your absences with you in previous return to work meetings and advised you of the consequences of further absences

5.3 The initial trigger will be 3 separate instances of sickness absence; and/ or a total of a further 10 working days or more within any 12 month period

5.4 If the trigger levels are hit you could be issued with a stage one absence warning, which will be considered live for 6 months from date of issue.

5.5 During the 6 month period following the date of issue of the stage one absence warning a further 3 separate instances of sickness absence; and/ or a total of a further 10 working days or more could result in being issued with a stage two absence warning which will be considered live for 12 months from the date of issue

5.6 During the 12 month period of a stage two absence warning, a further 3 separate instances of sickness absence; and/or a total of a further 10 working days or more, could lead to you being dismissed, with notice or payment in lieu of notice, due to a failure to achieve an acceptable level of attendance. Where your job role is adversely affecting your health and contributing to your sickness absence redeployment may be considered as an alternative to dismissal. Redeployment will only be implemented with your agreement.

5.6.1 If you're currently working part-time, the number of days of sickness absence before you reach a trigger point will be pro-rated depending on the number of hours you're contracted to work. The number of instances will not be pro-rated.

5.6.2 For example, if you work 3 full days per week, your initial trigger point will be reduced. Instead of using the calculation of 10 days in 6 months, you would use 6 days in 6 months. This is calculated by taking 10 days, dividing it by 5 (standard working days in a week) and multiplying this by 3, the number of days the colleague actually works a week ($10 / 5 \times 3 = 6$).

5.7 If you're referred to a stage absence meeting, we'll write to you to confirm when the meeting will take place. You will be given at least 48 hours' notice of the meeting. You'll also be provided with any supporting documents that will be used as part of the stage absence meeting (e.g. return to work forms, fit notes etc.). HR and an independent note taker will also be present.

5.8 You should make every effort to attend the stage absence meeting so that you can put forward your case and respond to any questions. If you're unable to attend the meeting, you should always contact the manager conducting the meeting in good time, where possible, before the meeting takes place to let them know and your reasons why you're unable to attend. You should suggest an alternative date for the meeting which is no more than five working days after the original date scheduled for the meeting. You'll be given one further opportunity to attend the meeting and if you're unable to attend again, a decision may be made in your absence.

5.9 You have the right to be accompanied at the stage absence meeting

5.10 If you've been notified of a stage absence meeting and subsequently go off sick, we reserve the right to withhold company sick pay (in these cases, we'll pay you statutory sick pay only for the duration of your sick leave)

5.11 After the stage absence meeting, the manager will confirm their decision in writing to you. If you do not agree with their outcome, you'll be given an opportunity to appeal against the decision.

6. MOVING FROM SHORT TERM TO LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

6.1 If you're absent for 4 weeks or more, your absence will be classified as long term sick.

6.2 When you are long term sick, we will aim to do everything we can to ensure that you feel supported. We aim to work with you to help facilitate your return to work. In order to do this we'll keep in touch over the phone, and meet with you regularly (normally every four to six weeks) as part of the absence review meeting process to discuss how you are and work towards a potential return to work date. We'll also seek to gain further medical advice to help support you as much as possible from Occupational Health (OH)

6.3 If you fail to maintain contact with us, your absence may be considered to be unauthorised and may result in your absence being unpaid and in disciplinary action being taken.

7. ABSENCE REVIEW MEETINGS

7.1 Your line manager will contact you to arrange a suitable time and location for your first and follow up absence review meetings. If the absence review process progresses to the final absence review meeting stage, you will be provided with 48 hours' written notice of the meeting taking place.

7.2 You should make every effort to attend any meetings. If you're unable to attend the meeting, you should always contact your manager in good time (giving at least 24 hours' notice) to let them know and give your reasons why you're unable to attend. You should suggest an alternative date for the meeting which is no more than five working days after the original date scheduled for the meeting.

7.3 You should inform your line manager if you need any additional support that will enable you to fully participate in the meeting.

7.4 During the first absence review meeting, your manager will ask you whether there's been any improvement in your health and also discuss potential return to work dates and what support can be given to help you return to work. Absence review meetings will normally be held in your usual place of work or another agreed company location. In exceptional circumstances, where your health renders this impossible, your manager will seek to agree a mutually suitable alternative location with you. Your manager will keep notes of the meeting.

7.5 The support your manager can offer you in facilitating your return to work may include an occupational health referral and any reasonable adjustments that may help with your specific health issues. Where your absence is expected to continue, your manager will also discuss how best to maintain contact with you and how often, when and how you will submit your fit notes. If your absence continues, there will be a series of absence review meetings, ideally spaced every 4-6 weeks in frequency and potentially a final absence review meeting, the dates of which will be agreed with your manager.

7.6 During your absence your manager will also provide you with business updates or changes within your team/department and agree how you would like to be kept informed of these.

7.7 If you continue to be off your manager will arrange a follow-up absence review meeting with you. They will again explore how you are feeling and if there has been any improvement to your medical condition or changes to your situation since you last met and what further support they can provide.

7.8 In addition to the above, your manager will discuss the following in your follow-up meetings:

7.8.1 The actions agreed at the previous meeting, key points from any occupational health report and any medical advice received. If you don't agree to an OH referral we'll have to manage the case on the information we have available.

7.8.2 The next steps in the process and what the potential outcomes are if your long term absence continues and you remain unable to return to work.

7.9 During your absence you and your manager will have been having regular conversations about your absence and your potential return to work. You'll have also discussed the possibility that if you're unable to return to work within a reasonable period of time, this may result in the termination of your employment on the grounds of ill health. If, following the first and follow-up absence review meetings you are unable to return to work, your manager will schedule a final absence review meeting with you. You have the right to be accompanied at the final absence review meeting.

7.10 In the final absence review meeting you and your manager will focus on the following areas:

7.10.1 Consideration of whether there have been any changes since the last meeting;

7.10.2 What actions have already been put into place by both parties and what support has already been provided or offered to you;

7.10.3 Discussion of the possibility of a return to work/redeployment and the date on which this might happen (where applicable);

7.10.4 Any other matters you want us to consider before we make our decision as to your continued employment.

7.11 Consideration of your dismissal will take place at this meeting. Before giving you their final decision, your manager will consider all the options.

7.12 If the decision to dismiss is reached, notice will be paid. This will be either Statutory Notice (1 Week of pay for each full year worked, up to a maximum of 12 weeks) or Contractual Notice, whichever is greater.

8. RETURN TO WORK

8.1 Where you return to work from sickness absence, your line manager will undertake a return to work meeting with you and complete a return to work form

8.2 Where you return back to work following a long-term sickness, you may return with reasonable adjustments – this is when your medical condition qualifies as a disability and you're unable to return back to your normal duties

8.3 When there is a clear indication of when you'll be able to return to work, but your medical condition is such that you may not be able to return to your normal duties, your manager will consider whether there are any "reasonable adjustments" that can be made to support your return to work. For example:

8.3.1 Changes to your working environment e.g. changing your desk, chair or general working area

8.3.2 Making temporary (e.g. a phased return to work) or permanent changes to your hours

8.3.3 Offering you alternative roles or duties (if available)

8.4 Your manager will work with you to agree your return to work plan, including actions such as the examples below:

8.4.1 Attendance on a refresher training course e.g. where compliance training is critical in relation to your job role

8.4.2 Appointing a buddy or mentor for a fixed period of time to help you settle back into your role/team

8.4.3 Any other areas of additional support as appropriate

8.5 Where you are unable to return to your current role and a suitable alternative vacancy exists and is acceptable to you. You would be issued with a new contract to reflect the changes for your new role

9. PHASED RETURN TO WORK

9.1 Most people do not need a phased return to work, especially where they have made a complete recovery and feel fully fit. It may therefore be appropriate for you to resume work without the need for a phased return – it will depend upon your personal circumstances and you and your line manager will discuss this as part of your regular meetings in the build up to your return to work.

9.2 Where a phased return is needed, it can allow you to adjust back into work more gradually, allowing you to build up to your normal contracted hours over an agreed period.

9.3 A phased return to work will normally last for 4 weeks up to a maximum of 8 weeks (to be reviewed case by case). The period for which we can accommodate a phased return to work will depend on the nature of your illness/medical condition and the requirements of the role you work in. The phased return to work will be agreed with you.

9.4 Any phased return or temporary adjustment will be reviewed regularly between you and your manager and further adjustments made if necessary. You'll be paid for the actual hours that you work during your phased return. When the phased return ends, you'll be expected to return to your normal duties and contracted hours.

9.5 The phased return to work will usually arise following medical advice, which could be a GP/medical professional's letter, occupational health or other medical report recommending a phased return to work (e.g. as one of the options on a "fit note"). Please be aware that even if we get a return to work plan from your GP/medical professional, we may still refer you to our occupational health service to obtain a medical report from them to facilitate your return to work.

9.6 When your phased return to work has been planned, you will be given a copy of what has been agreed with you. If your manager needs further medical advice before agreeing a return to work plan with you, they may need to defer your return to work date and discuss with you further once they have all the information they need.

9.7 If a phased return to work or other adjustment has been recommended via a fit note or occupational health and this cannot be reasonably accommodated, your manager will note down what has been agreed and what remains outstanding. Your manager will hold a further long term sickness absence review meeting as a follow-up to discuss any outstanding issues with you and agree a review period. If you return and then go off sick again, we would have to start the process from the stage we had reached, before you started your phased return to work.

10. DISMISSAL FOR ILL HEALTH

10.1 When you are unable to come back to work within a reasonable timeframe or there is no other available role or where you have rejected redeployment.

10.2 You will normally be paid in lieu of your contractual notice period and outstanding accrued holiday entitlement.

10.3 Your manager will confirm the outcome of the meeting to you verbally at the end of the meeting. Following the meeting an outcome letter confirming the decision will be sent to you. If you do not agree with their outcome, you'll be given an opportunity to appeal against the decision. Please refer to the 'Appeals' section for further details.

11. ACCOMPANIED AT MEETINGS

11.1 You have the right to be accompanied at all stages of the stage absence process (short term) and at the final absence review meeting only (long term). Your companion can be a work colleague or a Trade Union representative.

11.2 We do not normally allow relatives to accompany you to the meeting and we do not allow legal representatives to attend. You must advise us of who your chosen companion is ahead of the meeting, by contacting the person named in your invite letter.

11.3 Your companion can comment and ask questions during the meeting, but they may not answer any questions on your behalf. They can talk with you during the meeting, ask for an adjournment on your behalf and can take notes on your behalf. There will still be an official note taker present at the meeting.

11.4 When selecting a companion, please bear in mind practicalities. For instance, you may want to choose a suitable companion who is available on site rather than someone at a geographically remote location.

11.5 If your chosen companion cannot attend the meeting, you should inform your manager as soon as possible. Any requests to reschedule the meeting should include a list of suitable times and dates where you can both attend no more than five working days after the original scheduled meeting. If your chosen companion is unable to attend, you should find an alternative person to accompany you as we will not normally re-schedule the meeting beyond five working days.

12. APPEALS

12.1 If you disagree with the decision, you can appeal the decision to dismiss. You should submit your appeal in writing to HR within 5 working days of receiving your outcome letter.

12.2 Your appeal should clearly state the reasons why you wish to challenge the decision and you should provide as much detail as possible. Your letter should include:

12.2.1 Specific grounds for appeal.

12.2.2 Additional evidence that you have supplied.

12.2.3 If your appeal were to be successful, what you would like to happen.

12.3 An appropriate independent manager who has not previously been involved in the sickness absence review process will conduct the appeal meeting. HR and a note taker will also be present. You may be accompanied at the appeal meeting by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

12.4 Following the appeal hearing, the appeal manager will confirm their decision to you in writing. As this is the final stage of the process, their decision will be final.

12.5 If the outcome of your stage absence meeting/ final absence review meeting was dismissal and your appeal against dismissal is not upheld, your original date of dismissal will remain the same.

FAQ's

1. When would we use Occupational Health?

1.1 You may be referred to the occupational health service where we need medical advice on how best to support you in respect of your health. Referrals are made on a case-by-case basis. Reasons for referral could be (this is not an exhaustive list):

1.1.1 In long term sickness absence cases, to understand how long you are likely to be absent from work and to know what, if anything, can be done to support your early return to work.

1.1.2 A concern that you may have work-related health problems or that your existing health problems are being aggravated by the duties of your role or your working environment.

1.1.3 To seek advice and better understanding of your health problem or disability. For example, advice on working patterns, modifications to equipment or additional assistance at work.

1.1.4 To obtain advice on any restrictions or job modifications required either in the short or long term, or where there is no clear indication of a likely return to work.

1.1.5 If you have a drug or alcohol problem

1.2 Where appropriate, following a prolonged period of sickness absence or hospitalisation, occupational health can advise your manager on rehabilitation to facilitate your return back to work.

1.3 Following your attendance at an occupational health referral, you will receive a copy of the occupational health report and you will then meet with your manager to discuss this

2. Can I take time off for medical appointments?

2.1 From time to time, you may need to take time off work to attend medical and dental appointments. Where possible, you're expected to make appointments in your own time, however we understand that this will not always be possible.

2.2 If you're not able to make appointments within your own time, appointments should be made at the beginning or end of your working day to cause as little disruption as possible.

2.3 It is also expected that you should give your manager as much notice as is practical and you may be asked to provide confirmation of your appointment.

2.4 Absences due to medical appointments must be recorded on the system or by your manager using the appropriate sickness absence recording procedure. We may request that you make the time up at an agreed time.

3. What happens to my annual leave whilst off sick?

3.1 If you fall sick or are injured whilst on annual leave, we will allow you to transfer to sick leave and take replacement annual leave at a later time subject to the following conditions:

3.1.1 The total period of incapacity must be fully certificated by a qualified medical practitioner where it exceeds 7 days (or self-certificated for less than 7 days).

3.1.2 You must contact your manager by telephone as soon as you know that there will be a period of incapacity during your annual leave.

3.1.3 You must submit a written request no later than 10 days after returning to work setting out how much of the annual leave period was affected by sickness and the amount of leave that you wish to take at another time.

3.1.4 If you are overseas when you fall ill or are injured you must provide evidence of your illness by way of either a medical certificate, which should be translated if the original is not in English or proof of claim on an insurance policy for medical treatment received at the overseas location.

3.2 If you fulfil all of the above conditions, we'll grant you the same number of days' replacement annual leave as the number of annual leave days lost due to sickness or injury.

3.3 If you fall sick or are injured before the start of a period of planned annual leave, and consequently are unable to take the annual leave, we'll agree to you postponing the annual leave dates to another mutually agreed time with your manager. Any period of sickness absence will then be treated in accordance with the company's normal policy on sickness absence.

3.4 You must submit a written request to postpone the planned annual leave and this must be accompanied by a letter from your GP/ medical professional confirming that you are unfit. Where it is agreed with your manager that you can take replacement annual leave at a later time, you should nominate replacement annual leave dates as soon as possible, with the dates being subject to the agreement of your manager in the usual way.

3.5 If you're on long term sick, you'll continue to accrue annual leave entitlement. Where you are long term sick. and unable to use your leave entitlement due to continued sickness, you may be permitted to carry forward unused statutory annual leave (20 days per annum, pro rata for part time colleagues), not your full entitlement, into the next leave year. You must use this within the first six months of your new leave year.

3.6 You may take annual leave whilst off sick. For the period of annual leave, sick pay entitlement will cease, and you'll receive your normal pay. You'll be required to get approval of all annual leave dates in accordance with the normal procedures. If your employment is terminated before you return from sick leave, you'll receive payment in lieu of any accrued but untaken annual leave within that leave year.

4. What is expected of me if I fall ill whilst abroad?

4.1 As far as reporting your sickness absence is concerned you are under the same obligations as if you are within the UK. You are still expected to keep in regular contact with your Manager and provide him/her with update on your health status including emailing appropriate medical certificates for country that you may be in. Your manager will consider the medical evidence you have provided and may require you to give additional information relating to your incapacity.

4.2 Your failure to contact your manager in the first instance and/or cease to contact after an initial update, including not forwarding medical information will be treated as unauthorised absence. Should this happen, you will be subject to an investigation on return to the UK and we may also withdraw all future payment to you until the matter has been fully investigated.

5. What additional support can I get?

5.1 If you feel that you need any additional support, please contact our Employee Assistance Programme, Wisdom AI, where a 24-hour helpline is available to support you through any of life's issues, this is a completely confidential service and your details will not be shared with the Company, this service can be accessed directly via phone on 0800 047 4097 or via the website at [Wisdom \(healthassured.org\)](http://Wisdom(healthassured.org))