

## Unauthorised Absence Policy

The Bristol Methodist District. (Charity Number 1134873)

First Issued	January 2025
Last review	January 2025

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy on unauthorised absence applies to all employees.
- 1.2 It applies if an employee fails to comply with the organisation's sickness absence reporting procedure (or provide the necessary evidence within the required time period), fails to attend work, or return from holiday, or is absent from work for any other reason without permission.
- 1.3 If an employee is absent from work without good cause or fails properly and effectively to notify the organisation of their absence, this may be treated as a serious disciplinary offence, potentially constituting gross misconduct.

### 2 Action on first day of absence

- 2.1 On the first day of the employee's absence, their Line Manager will attempt to contact them, making a note of the means used and keeping a record of the time.
- 2.2 If the employee does not answer the telephone, their Line Manager will attempt to leave a voicemail asking them to return the call. They can also try any other methods to contact the employee, including text message and, if appropriate, arrange a remote call by Teams or Zoom.
- 2.3 If the Line Manager is unable to contact the employee, they may attempt to contact the employee's next of kin or listed emergency contact.

### 3 Action on second day of absence

- 3.1 On the second day of absence, if nothing has been heard from the employee and the Line Manager has again been unable to contact them and has not received a satisfactory explanation from the employee's next of kin or emergency contact, they will write to the employee detailing their absence and the attempts to make contact.
- 3.2 The letter will say that no satisfactory explanation for the absence has been received and will require that the employee contact the Line Manager as soon as possible, but no later than three days after the date of the letter.
- 3.3 The letter will warn the employee that, if they fail to make contact by the deadline, the organisation may take serious disciplinary action.

### 4 Further action

- 4.1 If, following the deadline, the employee has still not contacted their Line Manager, the Line Manager will send the employee a letter inviting them to attend a disciplinary hearing to explain their absence.
- 4.2 The letter should warn the employee that the lack of an adequate explanation could result in summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

### 5 Disciplinary action

- 5.1 If the Line Manager contacts the employee and they return to work, the Line Manager should conduct an investigation into the reasons for their absence and their lack of contact with the organisation.

- 5.2 If the employee can give adequate explanations for their absence and lack of contact, the Line Manager can conduct a return-to-work interview.
- 5.3 If the employee is unable to provide an adequate explanation for their absence and lack of contact, the organisation may treat the failure to follow reporting procedure as a disciplinary matter.
- 5.3 If the employee claims to have been sick (to the extent that this also precluded contacting the organisation), the Line Manager can ask for reasonable evidence of this.
- 5.4 If the employee is unable to provide sufficient evidence, the organisation may consider whether or not the claimed sickness absence was genuine.
- 5.5 If the Line Manager considers the employee's failure to attend work to be potential gross misconduct, the organisation will conduct any disciplinary hearing in accordance with its disciplinary procedure.

## **6 Unauthorised annual leave**

- 6.1 If an employee has been refused a request for annual leave but declares they intend to take the time off anyway, the employee's Line Manager should write to the employee instructing them to attend work.
- 6.2 The letter should confirm that:
- 6.2.1 the leave request (for the specific dates) was legitimately declined;
  - 6.2.2 the employee is expected to attend work as usual; and
  - 6.2.3 failure to do so will be unauthorised absence, be unpaid and may result in disciplinary action, which could result in summary dismissal for gross misconduct.
- 6.3 The letter should invite the employee to reconsider their expressed intention to be absent.
- 6.4 If, having sent this letter, the employee fails to attend work, the Line Manager should treat the absence as unauthorised.
- 6.5 If an employee has been refused a request for annual leave but fails to attend work (either by saying that they are sick or by making no contact), the organisation will investigate this as a potential unauthorised absence.

## **7 Records**

- 7.1 Records of unauthorised absence will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

## **8 Review**

- 8.1 This policy may be reviewed at any time at the request of any member of staff, but it will be automatically reviewed two years after initial approval and thereafter on a biennial basis unless organisational changes, legislations, guidance, or non-compliance prompt an earlier review.

## **9 Definitions**

- 9.1 The Bristol Methodist District ("we", "us", "our")
- 9.2 The Employee ("you", "your")

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