

## **Springboard Opportunity Group Managing Staff Leave and Other Absences Policy**

### **Background**

Springboard is a busy and dynamic organisation where our staff are essential to the services we provide. We aim to minimise staff absences in order to provide effective services and to avoid additional stress to other team members.

Springboard is committed to supporting the physical and mental well-being of all its employees.

We are a signatory to the Mindful Employer Charter for Employers who are positive about mental health. This gives all staff access to a confidential 24-hour helpline as well as access to professional workplace mental health training, information and advice.

We will arrange and fund an Occupational Health assessment when necessary to support staff well-being.

### **Annual Leave**

Staff annual leave entitlement is set out in the Contract of Employment.

Entitlements for the various categories of staff are set out below:

- Guaranteed hourly paid and salaried term time only staff are entitled to the full time equivalent of 28 days holiday per annum, in addition to bank holidays, to be taken outside of term time.
- Term time only employees are paid their holiday entitlement as an increment as stated in the letter of appointment.
- In exceptional circumstances, up to two weeks holiday may be taken during term time by arrangement with the line manager or Trustees. Such holiday will be unpaid or the hours made up in agreement with the manager.
- Holiday entitlement will be calculated on a pro-rata basis for part time employees and for employees commencing or terminating their employment part way through a holiday year.
- Bank staff: Holiday pay is shown in the rate of pay as stated in the letter of appointment.
- Salaried all year: are entitled to the full-time equivalent of 28 days paid holiday per annum plus bank holidays.
- Normally the notice period for annual leave should be at least twice the period of leave to be taken.

To ensure the smooth and effective running of our services, Springboard may decide to:

- Shut down for certain periods when staff have to use their annual entitlement.
- Nominate particular dates as days of closure when staff are expected to take annual leave.

- Determine the maximum period of leave that can be taken on any one occasion and also the periods when leave may be taken.
- Determine the number of workers who can be off at any one time.
  - Operational factors will be taken into account in order to not prejudice the running of the organisation.
- The maximum amount of annual leave that may be taken at any one time will normally be two weeks. Requests for longer periods of annual leave should be made to the CEO.
- Time off in Lieu (TOIL): it is recognised that salaried staff may work irregular hours and will work more than their contracted hours in any particular week.
  - It is the responsibility of each member of staff to track their hours and to ensure that over a period of four weeks, they do not work more than their contracted hours.
- TOIL cannot normally be built up to add to periods of annual leave.

### **Statutory Leave**

Staff may be entitled to other, statutory leave e.g. Maternity, Adoption, and Dependents in accordance with Government guidelines. In these circumstances, this should be discussed with the Line Manager in the first instance.

### **Other Absences**

Springboard aims to manage absences and attendance problems by reflecting on and tackling possible causes of absence, such as working patterns, job design and employment relations. This can also include addressing discipline problems like lateness and poor time keeping.

If such issues should arise, they will be dealt with informally by the line manager in the first instance.

We also aim to minimise absences through methods including the quality of management, working relationships, job design, employment relations, communication of information and flexible working arrangements. Staff should be aware that absence will be logged and noted, and further action will be taken if necessary.

### **Sickness**

Springboard values all our staff and endeavours to make the workplace as healthy, safe and supportive as possible. If necessary to achieve this, an Occupational Health assessment will be sought.

Employees will be paid Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) in accordance with Government guidelines. Notification of absence from work due to illness or any other cause must be made on the first day of absence from work.

It is each member of staff's responsibility to:

- inform their line manager or Centre Administrator as soon as possible if they are unable to attend work
- provide a reason for all absences and if possible, the anticipated length of absence and details of any work which needs to be urgently covered
- keep their line manager or Centre Administrator informed of progress and likely date of return
- comply with health and safety requirements
- comply with certification arrangements:
  - for sickness of 4 to 7 days (including weekends, Bank Holidays and non-working days) complete a self-certification on the first day of their return to work
  - for sickness beyond 7 days (including weekends, Bank Holidays and non-working days, provide a doctor's medical certificate/fit note promptly and continue to provide these promptly if the period of sickness continues
- give as much notice as possible of the date and time of their return

If staff fail to follow the sickness reporting procedure, disciplinary action may be taken.

Inclusion Early Years Practitioners who cannot attend their pre-school must inform the Centre Administrator who will inform the Inclusion Co-ordinator and Inclusion setting.

Sick leave is monitored. If an employee has frequent short-term absences the Line Manager may require the employee to attend a meeting to discuss the reasons for absence.

The Line Manager will keep in contact with staff particularly if their absence is for longer than 7 days. This will be undertaken sensitively in order to provide them with support and allow Springboard to be updated about their progress. A record of such contact will be maintained.

### **Other paid or unpaid leave**

Other circumstances may arise e.g. family illness or bereavement. This should be discussed with the Line Manager who will consider this sympathetically and work with the member of staff with the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement.

This may include the awarding of unpaid, or in exceptional circumstances, paid leave. Paid leave will be awarded to staff for the attendance of a funeral of a partner, parent, grandparent, sibling or child. Other requests will be considered.

### **Return to Work**

Springboard is committed to helping employees return to work after a period of sickness or other extended absence as in the policy and will work to implement reasonable adjustments to enable them to return to a safe, healthy and supportive work place and will ensure they are treated fairly, equally and consistently.

## Procedures

A return to work meeting will be held with their Line Manager and brief notes of this and any subsequent discussions will be made and retained on their personal file.

It will normally be held on their return to work but when absence has been for an extended period, it may be held before this as part of the process of supporting their return. If a return to work plan is required, any changes or adaptations will be discussed and an implementation and review schedule will be agreed.

This will be set out in a written format and signed by staff member and their line manager. A copy will be kept on their personal file.

The meeting is for them and their line manager to confirm the accuracy of their sickness absence and discuss any remaining health concerns that may affect their work. Any adjustments, adaptations or amendments that might be necessary to ensure they can continue to work safely and effectively will be discussed, including a phased return to work if appropriate.

The meeting will be held in private but they may choose to be accompanied by a Trade Union or other employee representative.

If there are longer term concerns about the reasons for and impact of their sickness absences at work that might affect their terms of employment, their Line Manager will arrange a meeting with them to discuss this with a view to initiating possible disciplinary procedures.

Before such a meeting they will receive a letter setting out Springboard's concerns and reasons for taking formal action which may include terminating their contract.

They should take all reasonable steps to attend such a meeting and may be accompanied by a colleague, friend, or Trade Union representative.

During this process, it will take the following factors into consideration:

- The medical advice including prognosis and any recommendations and whether further advice is required.
- The effect the medical condition and / or the absences are having on the employee's performance in their current role.
- The effect the employee's absences are having on the organisation.
- The reasonable adjustments that could be made to enable return to work.

Examples of action that could result from such a meeting are:

- Making reasonable adjustments to working conditions of the employee's current job.
- Implementing an appropriate rehabilitation plan.
- Finding alternative employment within the organisation.

- Terminating the employment on the grounds of medical incapacity.

Termination of employment will only occur on the grounds of medical incapacity if reasonable adjustments cannot be made to the working environment or if suitable alternative employment cannot be found within a reasonable period.

The Line Manager will inform the employee of the decision in writing. Depending on the outcome of the meeting further formal meetings may need to be arranged. The employee has the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Springboard Opportunity Group's Board of Trustees	
Held on	6.10.2020
Date to be reviewed	Summer 2023
Signed on behalf of the Trustees	
Name of signatory	
Role of signatory	