Sick Leave Policy

PRN-130: Sick Leave Policy
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Introduction

CAREHOPES (TC) is committed to supporting staff wellbeing while maintaining safeguarding, operational continuity, and compliance with UK employment law. This Sick Leave Policy outlines:

- sick leave entitlements
- reporting procedures
- certification requirements
- level review processes
- occupational health involvement
- return-to-work expectations
- safeguarding and confidentiality rules

The policy ensures:

- fairness
- transparency
- legal compliance
- protection of vulnerable clients
- organisational stability

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define sick leave procedures
- support staff during illness

- ensure safe return to work
- maintain service continuity
- prevent misuse of sick leave
- comply with UK statutory sick pay (SSP) rules
- protect clients and companions

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- permanent staff
- fixed-term staff
- contract staff
- companions
- volunteers (where applicable)

4. Reporting Sick Leave

4.1. Immediate Notification

Staff must notify their supervisor:

- **as soon as they become unwell**
- **before their shift begins**
- via official TC communication channels

4.2. Daily Updates

While on sick leave, staff must:

- update their supervisor daily **if possible**
- provide expected return-to-work dates (if known)
- communicate changes in condition

4.3. Communication Standards

Staff must:

- communicate professionally
- avoid silence or non-responsiveness
- remain reachable for sick-leave management

Failure to communicate may result in disciplinary action.

5. Sick Leave Certification Requirements

5.1. Self-Certification (Days 1–7)

Staff may self-certify sickness for:

- **up to 7 calendar days**
- including weekends and non-working days

Self-certification must be submitted through TC's official channels.

5.2. GP Certification (Beyond 7 Days)

If sickness extends beyond 7 days:

- staff must obtain a **GP Fit Note**
- Fit Note must specify fitness for work or adjustments
- Fit Note must be submitted promptly

5.3. Repeated Self-Certification

If staff self-certify **more than 3 times in a financial year** (April–March):

- staff automatically qualify for **Level 2 Review**
- occupational health referral may be required

6. Level Review Structure (Mandatory)

TC uses a structured, supportive, legally aligned review system.

6.1. Level 1 Review (Support & Early Intervention)

Triggered when:

- sick leave exceeds 7 days
- GP Fit Note is provided
- supervisor identifies wellbeing concerns

Level 1 Objectives

- support staff wellbeing
- identify workplace adjustments
- explore external support
- prevent long-term sickness

Level 1 Outcome

Supervisor submits a report to the manager.

6.2. Level 2 Review (Escalated Support)

Triggered when:

- more than 3 self-certifications occur in one financial year
- sickness beyond 7 days occurs after Level 1
- occupational health recommends further review

Level 2 Objectives

- deeper wellbeing assessment
- occupational health involvement
- identification of reasonable adjustments
- structured support plan

Level 2 Outcome

Manager reviews documentation and determines next steps.

6.3. Level 3 Review (Governance & Business Impact)

Triggered when:

- sickness continues after Level 2
- occupational health identifies significant limitations
- sickness affects business continuity
- sickness affects other staff wellbeing
- sickness impacts client safety

Level 3 Panel Includes

- HR
- staff member
- union representative (if applicable)
- occupational health (if required)
- manager

Level 3 Objectives

- assess business impact
- evaluate staff capacity
- determine long-term adjustments

- consider flexible working
- consider redeployment
- consider termination (if necessary)

Level 3 Outcome

Recommendations are sent to the **Board**.

7. Board Review & Final Decision

The Board will:

- review Level 1 → Level 3 documentation
- ensure procedures were followed
- ensure fairness and legal compliance
- approve or override recommendations
- request further occupational health input (if needed)

Staff continue to receive sick leave benefits **until the Board issues a final decision**.

8. Equality Act 2010 Protections

8.1. Disability Consideration

Level reviews **do not apply** to staff:

- recovering from surgical operations
- considered disabled under the Equality Act 2010

8.2. Evidence Requirements

Evidence must be provided by:

- GP
- or Occupational Health

If Occupational Health provides evidence:

- staff must obtain GP endorsement

8.3. Reasonable Adjustments

TC will:

- implement reasonable adjustments
- ensure staff can work safely
- avoid discrimination

- comply with UK law

9. Occupational Health Referral

Staff may be referred to occupational health to:

- assess fitness for work
- recommend adjustments
- evaluate long-term conditions
- support wellbeing
- ensure safe return to duties

Occupational health recommendations inform Level 2 and Level 3 decisions.

10. Working While on Sick Leave (STRICT PROHIBITION)

Staff on sick leave must **not**:

- engage in paid work
- engage in unpaid work
- volunteer for other organisations
- perform activities inconsistent with being medically unfit
- work for TC or any other employer

This is:

- **Gross Misconduct**
- a **criminal offence** under UK SSP rules
- grounds for **summary dismissal**
- grounds for **referral to statutory authorities**

11. Return to Work After Sick Leave

11.1. Wellbeing Review

Upon return, staff must undergo a wellbeing review:

- even if self-certified
- even if sickness lasted only a few days

11.2. Purpose

To ensure:

- staff are fit to resume duties

- safeguarding is maintained
- operational readiness
- support needs are identified

11.3. Documentation

Supervisor completes a wellbeing review form.

12. Failure to Follow Sick Leave Procedures

Failure includes:

- not reporting sickness
- not providing certification
- working while sick
- refusing communication
- misrepresenting illness

Penalties may include:

- written warnings
- suspension
- Level 2 or Level 3 review
- termination

13. Resignation During Sick Leave or Investigation

If staff resign while:

- on sick leave
- under investigation
- undergoing level review

TC will:

- continue the investigation
- document all findings
- disclose resignation during investigation in references
- escalate safeguarding concerns (if applicable)
- restrict re-employment eligibility

References will be **factual only**, including:

- dates of employment
- job title
- resignation during investigation
- safeguarding concerns (if legally required)

14. Record-Keeping

TC will:

- maintain accurate sick leave records
- store records securely
- comply with UK GDPR
- restrict access to authorised personnel

15. Amendments to This Policy

TC may update this policy to reflect:

- legal changes
- safeguarding updates
- operational improvements
- governance decisions