

LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS DURING A PANDEMIC POLICY

PURPOSE

To determine the conditions for payment to employees who are absent from work during a pandemic.

OBJECTIVE

It is acknowledged that during a Pandemic there are likely to be 'waves' of infection and it is reasonable to anticipate that high numbers of employees may need to take extended periods of leave due to personal ill health or in order to care for vulnerable¹ family members.

This practice identifies requirements for employees attending work, entitlements for employees who are absent from work due to ill health or caring responsibilities. Also identified are possible options to address extenuating circumstances where leave entitlements have been exhausted and where leave without pay would result in hardship.

POLICY

Under its general duty of care, the Shire is required to ensure that all employees attending work are fit to undertake the duties and responsibilities of their position. Managers may require an employee to leave the workplace if they believe the employee is not fit for work and/or to obtain a medical certificate to confirm fitness to return to work following a period of ill health or absence to care for family members (to avoid transmission of infection).

Employees who are absent due to ill health or caring responsibilities will be paid in accordance with the relevant industrial instrument and Shire Policy, Practice or Procedure. These options include:

- a. Personal (Sick or Carer's) leave entitlements.
- b. Accrued annual or long service leave entitlements.
- c. Additional hours accrued in lieu of overtime or through flexible working arrangements.
- d. Pro-rata annual leave (up to four weeks' maximum, pro-rata for part time employees).
- e. Leave without pay (Sickness Benefits may be available via Centrelink).
- f. Work from home in accordance with Shire Procedures (subject to review at the end of two weeks).

When all leave entitlements have been exhausted and/or working from home arrangements are not reasonable or practical, the employee may be granted leave without pay. Alternatively, where the employee can demonstrate that taking unpaid leave will result in hardship, other (discretionary) options may be considered.

In relation to discretionary options, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or a person appointed by the CEO, will determine applications on a case by case basis.

Discretionary options may include:

- a. Taking annual or sick leave in advance (up to a maximum of two weeks, pro-rata for part time employees) to be deducted from future accrual until repaid or deducted from the termination pay where the employee ceases employment prior to accruing sufficient entitlements.
- b. Other arrangements as determined by the CEO or a person appointed by the CEO.

GUIDELINES

¹ A vulnerable family member may include pre-school or school age children, or family members who are frail or aged or have a disability.

Where flexible working arrangements are in place, the maximum number of allowable debit hours will be determined by the Executive Manager and the CEO on a case by case basis.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

OSH Act 1984

Local Government Industry Award 2010

National Employment Standards

Record of Policy Review					
Version	Author	Council Adoption	Resolution	Reason for Review	Review Date
01	Graeme Fardon	26 March 2020	136-19/20	New Policy	
02	Graeme Fardon	17 December 2020	97-20/21	Biennial Policy Review	December 2020