



BURGESS FARMS

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

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For use by:	All employees of Burgess Farms and its subsidiary Companies		
Purpose:	To ensure standards are maintained across the business for the monitoring and management of absence and that this is carried out in a fair and consistent manner.		
This document supports: <i>Standards and legislation</i>	ACAS Best Practice Guidelines Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 Data Protection Act 1998 Equality Act 2010		
Key related documents:	Employee Handbook Disciplinary Policy & Procedure Annual Leave Policy & Procedure Data Protection Policy Capability Policy and Procedure		
Review date:	Changes to legislation / Changes to Company policy		



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Definitions

"Company" means Burgess Farms

"Subsidiary Companies" means all Companies owned by Burgess Farms

1. Policy statement

This policy exists to demonstrate Burgess Farms Ltd (referred to hereafter as the 'Company') commitment to employees' health, safety and welfare. It is designed to encourage a culture of positive attendance, whilst ensuring that sickness and absence is treated in a pro-active, fair and consistent manner.

2. Key principles

It is in the interests of everyone – customers, employees and the Company - that our employees attend work and engage at the levels we require to meet our business needs. This procedure is designed to help us meet our attendance objectives, which are:

- to deal positively and sympathetically with employees who have medical conditions or injuries which affect their ability to work normally;
- to avoid operational difficulties and maintain effective staffing levels; and
- to deal fairly and reasonably with employees who have either frequent periods or extended periods of absence.

You should familiarise yourself with this procedure so that you know what is expected of you if you become ill, injured or otherwise incapacitated or unable to attend work.

This policy is entirely non-contractual and does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

If the effect or meaning of any part of this policy is unclear you should seek clarification from your HR Representative.

3. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all employees employed by Burgess Farms and its subsidiary companies.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

- Sickness absence – a known absence where the employee has followed the correct reporting procedure and upon returning to work, has provided a self-certificate or medical certificate where appropriate

- Authorised absence – a known absence for which prior permission has been given e.g., bereavement leave
- Unauthorised absence – an absence from work where the Company has not authorised such absence

Where the employee has failed to follow the correct procedure for reporting or requesting absence this will be dealt with as 'conduct' under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

4. Exceptions

Some types of absence will be recorded but excluded from the Absence and Attendance Management Policy unless it is felt that non-attendance at work is reaching unacceptable or unmanageable levels and/or the requisite triggers points for review have been reached. These will include:

- Emergency time off for dependants
- Parental leave
- Maternity/Paternity/Shared parental leave
- Terminal illness
- Any other form of authorised absence

The above list is not exhaustive and is at the Company's discretion. All exceptions will comply with the Equality Act 2010.

5. Notification of absence

5.1 First day of absence

An employee who is absent from work, must follow the Company absence notification procedure set out below (excluding any pre-arranged absence such as holiday or training course attendance).

- Contact the absence line or contact their Line Manager (for Group employees) prior to the start of their shift, stating the reason for absence, and the expected date of return.
- Contact the absence line or their Line Manager on a daily basis within their shift pattern (unless a Statement of Fitness to Work (Fit Note) has been provided for a longer period of time) to provide updates and changes to their condition and any other information that may affect the anticipated length of time they may be absent.

Contacting your line manager by text message, e-mail or online or mobile phone instant messaging is not acceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances. It is also unacceptable for a third party to contact the Company on your behalf to report your sickness absence, other than in exceptional circumstances (for example, where you have been unexpectedly admitted to hospital and you are not able to make the telephone call yourself).

If you have been diagnosed as having contracted an infectious or contagious disease, such as measles or chicken pox, or a pandemic virus, you must inform your line manager as soon as possible after your diagnosis.

5.2 Further days of absence

It is our policy to keep in touch with employees during all unexpected absences, whatever their length; this will enable the Company to ensure that it is being as pro-active and as supportive as possible. It is your responsibility to remain in regular contact with the Company during your absence.

- For all ill health related absences less than seven calendar days employees must, upon return to work, complete an Ill Health Self Certificate with their Line Manager during a Return to Work Interview.
- For absences exceeding seven calendar days a GP Fit Note is required. Employees must send Fit Notes to HR within two working days of receipt from their Doctor or Medical Practitioner.
- Employees should notify their Line Manager of their intended return to work date. If an employee intends to return to work the following day, they should contact their Line Manager by 14:00 the day before.

Whilst absent from work due to illness, you must remain available for contact at your home address and should be available to attend meetings if requested during your normal working hours unless mutually agreed with the Company. This does not mean that you cannot leave your house. However, if you intend to be away from your home address for more than one day you must inform your HR Representative to avoid any unnecessary confusion.

5.3 Working from home during sickness

Where an employee is ill/sick but feels well enough to work, they may be permitted to work from home if their job role allows them to. Employees should follow the correct absence reporting procedure and any working from home arrangements is always at the discretion of management.

5.4 Sickness as holiday

When an employee has followed the correct absence reporting procedure then they could be eligible for sickness paid as holiday. This absence will be logged under a different code to ordinary holiday, but it will still be deducted from the employee's overall holiday entitlement. Your eligibility for sickness paid as holiday will depend on the following criteria:

- Only employees who have accrued the holiday can be considered for sickness paid as holiday.
- If a day has previously been requested as holiday and refused, the sickness as holiday would not be permitted.
- Employees are only permitted to take up to seven days sickness paid as holiday in relation to one period of absence.
- Employees can take no more than 10 days in a 12-month rolling period.

Employees with a poor absence record or who are currently being managed through the absence management policy may not be eligible for sickness paid as holiday. Any absences authorised as sickness paid as holiday is always at the discretion of management.

6. Unauthorised absence

If you fail to contact the Company on your first day of absence, this will be classed as unauthorised absence. In instances of unauthorised absence, management reserve the right to withhold Company Sick Pay and Statutory Sick Pay pending further investigations into the reason for any such absence or failure to follow procedure.

Where misconduct is alleged, this will be dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

Continued unauthorised absence (AWOL) may result in dismissal as per the Company's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

7. Authorised absence

Any requests for authorised absence must be made in writing to your line manager. These requests will be dealt with, in accordance with the Company's Policies. The Company reserves the right to decline requests for authorised absence when requested post absence.

7.1 Medical appointments

You should wherever possible arrange any hospital, doctors, dentist and similar appointments outside working hours.

If you have to attend an appointment in working hours you must get permission from your manager on each occasion. You must ask your manager as soon as the appointment is made, and your manager may ask to see your appointment card. Requisite time off will be granted provided the timing of the appointment causes as little disruption as possible, i.e., is scheduled at the beginning or end of the working day.

Your manager will confirm to you when you may leave, and when you are expected back at work. You may be asked to make up time lost on appointments and the absence will not be paid. If you make up time on overtime, it will be paid at basic time rates.

If you have to attend regular appointments for continuing treatment, you should talk to your manager and outline the circumstances.

8. Certification

You must provide a self-certification form covering any sickness absence of seven or less calendar days (including weekends and public holidays), after the first three days of absence and, by the latest, on the day that you return to work. The forms are available from the HR Department or can be obtained from HMRC (SC2 Form downloaded from the Internet) and should be handed to your site HR Representative for processing.

If you are absent for eight days or more, the form covering the first seven days must be submitted to us immediately, addressed to the site HR Department.

If your absence lasts for eight days or more, you must provide a Statement of Fitness for Work form (also known as a "fit note") to cover any absence from the eighth day onwards. You must send this

to the Company immediately, addressed to the HR Department. These may not be backdated. Alternatively, you may submit a fit note covering your entire absence.

If you cannot return to work when your statement of fitness for work expires, you must obtain another one to cover any further absence; this must be forwarded to the HR Department no later than the end of the calendar week in respect of which the statement applies. Each subsequent statement of fitness for work must be forwarded in the same manner.

The Company reserves the right to request a statement of fitness for work for any period of sickness absence even though this may be less than eight calendar days. If you incur costs in relation to obtaining a statement of fitness for work, the Company will reimburse those costs upon the production of a receipt.

A fit note is always required if you intend to postpone a period of holiday due to sickness (see Sickness Absence and Holidays section below).

Where a statement of fitness for work indicates that you may be fit for work and the doctor has suggested ways of helping you get back to work, such as a phased return to work, altered hours, amended duties or workplace adaptations, the Company will discuss the advice on the statement of fitness for work with you and will consider any functional comments made by the doctor, any of the return to work tick boxes and any other action that could help you return to work despite your illness.

The various options will be discussed with you and if a return to work is possible, the Company will agree with you a return to work date, any temporary adaptations or adjustments that are to be made, for how long and will set a date for review. If you disagree with the Company's proposals to support your return to work, you will be asked to confirm why you believe you cannot return to work despite your doctor's suggestions and the Company reserves the right to obtain further medical evidence as necessary, such as a medical report. If the Company is not able to make any adaptations or adjustments to help you return to work, it will explain the reasons for this to you and will set a date for review. You may then use the statement of fitness for work as if the doctor had advised 'not fit for work'.

Certificates (self-certificate and/or fit notes) are required to cover the total length of your absence. For any day where you have not complied with any of your obligations under this procedure on notifying us of your absence, keeping in touch or providing medical certificates, it will be treated as a day of unauthorised absence under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure. The dates concerned will also be added to your absence record as unauthorised absence and will be taken into account as your overall attendance record.

Similarly, if you delay telling us that your GP has ticked on your medical certificate that you 'may be fit for work', we reserve the right to treat the absence as unauthorised, and/or deal with this under the Company Disciplinary Procedure.

It is Company policy that any employee in receipt of sick pay (including SSP) is prohibited from undertaking any form of paid alternative employment or self-employment. Depending on the circumstances of the case, any breach of this rule may be regarded as gross misconduct under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure and may result in summary dismissal.

9. Company notification of holiday during sickness absence

If you have exhausted your entitlement to sick pay, and it is clear to us that you are unlikely to return to work before the end of the Company's holiday year, we may nominate days of your sickness absence from your outstanding holiday entitlement.

If we choose to do this, we will give you advance written notice of at least twice the number of days of holiday we are nominating (e.g. two weeks' notice for a one-week period of holiday). If you do not wish to take the period of holiday at the nominated time, you should let us know immediately.

10. Further medical information

For long-term sickness absence or frequent periods of sickness absence, the Company may request a medical report from your GP or consultant or alternatively request that you visit a doctor or Occupational Health specialist selected by the Company to undergo a medical examination.

You will be asked for your consent to authorise the medical practitioner responsible for the medical examination to prepare a medical report detailing the results of the examination. The cost of any such examination will be met by the Company, and you are required to co-operate in the disclosure of all results and reports to the Company. The Company will only request such an examination where reasonable to do so.

The Company believes that proactive occupational health and wellbeing is not only beneficial for the Company but can aid the health and welfare of the employee. Therefore, should you fail to co-operate with the Company, such as failure to attend Occupational Health or other Medical Professional appointments, or fail to reasonably assist the Company in managing your absence (this list is not exhaustive), the Company reserves the right to withhold Company or SSP, where it applies, and/or consider action under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

Throughout the absence management process, the Company will ensure that they communicate with you (usually via letter, email or telephone), to ensure you are fully aware of the management of your case. During these situations, due to the confidentiality of some cases, the Company will wherever possible act sensitively.

11. Access to medical records / reports

You have certain rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 which include:

- withholding consent to the medical evidence being obtained; and
- requesting to see the report prior to it being forwarded to the Company.

If you indicate that you wish to see the report in advance, we will inform you when the Doctor/Consultant/Specialist is written to and inform them that you wish to see the report first. You then have twenty-one days to contact the Doctor/Consultant/Specialist regarding arrangements to see the report.

Should you indicate that you do not wish to see the report prior to the Company, you can write to the Doctor/Consultant/Specialist within 21 days of the report having been received to gain access.

We will send you a copy of the report in any event prior to a meeting being arranged to discuss the content.

You have the right to ask the Doctor/Consultant/Specialist for a copy of the report for up to six months after it has been supplied (there may be a charge for this). The Doctor/Consultant/Specialist cannot submit the report to us without your consent.

You may ask the Doctor/Consultant/Specialist to amend any part of the report which is considered by you to be incorrect or misleading. If the Doctor/Consultant/Specialist is not in agreement, you may attach a statement of your own views with the report. If the Doctor/Consultant/Specialist thinks you or others would be harmed by the report, or any part of the report, it can be withheld from you.

Where we wish to obtain medical evidence, you will be asked for your written consent.

As a condition for eligibility for Company sick pay or SSP, you are required to cooperate with requests for a medical report or other measure for assisting with your absence.

12. Injury at work

All accidents and any injury however slight which occur whilst on Company premises or on authorised Company business must be reported as soon as possible to your line manager via the Company's Accident Investigation Policy HSMS-A02-P001.

In the unfortunate event that you have had an accident at work, this will be dealt with in line with the Company's absence procedure in terms of managing your health.

You may be requested to see an Occupational Health Specialist or another Medical Professional sooner than normal.

13. Return to work interview

For all periods of sickness absence, your line manager will require you to attend a 'return to work' interview on your return to work to discuss the reason for your absence and whether it was work-related. At the interview, you will be advised that your absence record is monitored and recorded for the Company to manage performance, to identify any problem areas and to offer support where appropriate. The ultimate immediate priority being your health and wellbeing and for the Company to ensure it is fully aware of what is preventing you attending work and supporting you where it can.

You will be asked to explain the reasons for your absence and whether you consulted a doctor or attended hospital and you will be requested to complete a self-certification form for the period of your absence. In the case of frequent or repeated absences, the Company will explore with you whether there are any underlying reasons for the regular absences (and, in particular, whether they are in any way work-related). The Company will also discuss with you if there is any apparent pattern of absence. You may be set reasonable targets and time limits for improvement in your attendance and advised that a failure to improve may result in disciplinary action as identified below. The Company hopes that it never has cause to go down this route with you and that it can work with you to avoid future absences from work or find a way forward to support you.

Where a return-to-work interview is required, under no circumstance must you enter your department without fully completing this process with your line manager. This way, we can ensure that the correct discussions have been held with you to ensure your safety and wellbeing on your immediate return to work.

We recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances where you would prefer not to discuss the reason for your absence with your line manager. If this is the case, you can discuss it instead with your site HR representative (and hand them your self-certificate or medical certificate(s)). You should contact the HR Department when you return to work (or before you return, if that is possible) to make the alternative arrangements.

If you have been suffering from an infectious or contagious disease, or a pandemic virus, you must not report for work until you are medically fit to do so. Anyone suffering from an infectious illness must inform a member of the management team immediately. Infectious diseases include food poisoning of any kind (or any illness that causes vomiting and/or diarrhoea). In the case of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, you must be 48 hours clear of any signs of illness prior to returning to work. This is to prevent spread of the disease in the workplace.

Please refer to PWGPOL 7.3 Infectious Disease Reporting and PWGPOL 7.4 Personal Hygiene Policy for further information.

14. Management of short-term absence

The Company recognises that employees are sometimes too unwell to attend work and need time off to recover properly. However, there are limits to the amount of absence that the business and colleagues can sustain. Therefore, we monitor all absence and, where there is cause for concern, we will normally in the first instance, hold an informal attendance review meeting with you.

Within this meeting we will discuss your attendance record with you and set targets for improvement. If there are further concerns following the initial informal meeting this may lead to formal action to bring about an improvement. This procedure is set out below.

If you have a long-lasting illness, we will normally manage it in the way set out in the 'Management of longer-term conditions or injuries' section below. However, at our entire discretion we may deal with any kind of absence under either section below, or both where appropriate.

Please note we may, at our discretion, start the procedure set out below at any stage where, in our view, an employee has an unacceptable pattern of absence.

14.1 Attendance review procedure

Our procedure has the following stages:

- Informal stage
- Formal Stage 1
- Formal Stage 2
- Formal Stage 3

Before taking any formal action under this procedure we will carry out the following steps:

- Hold an attendance review meeting
- Before the review meeting, we will send you a letter setting out your absence record and informing you of the possible outcomes of the meeting (which will depend on the stage of the procedure that is being applied)
- The letter will also advise you that you have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a co-worker or certified trade union official
- We will give you, together with any permitted person that you may choose as a companion, reasonable time to consider the information we give you. You will therefore be given at least 48 hours' notice to attend the attendance review meeting depending on the severity of the case.
- At the meeting we will discuss your absence record and the impact it is having on the business. You will be given the opportunity to explain the reason for the absence.

14.2 Trigger levels for formal action

We have set 'trigger levels' to help us identify unacceptable standards of attendance. It is important that you understand that a trigger level is not an entitlement to sickness (or other unauthorised absence) and you may be called to account for any level of absence. We reserve the right to change the trigger levels at any time.

- three or more occasions of absence during a rolling period of six consecutive months; or
- an unacceptable pattern of absence.

14.3 Informal stage

If your attendance record reaches the first trigger level, three occasions of absence, you will be asked to a review meeting to discuss your absence record and the reasons for it. You would not be entitled to representation at the informal stage of this procedure. If appropriate you will be notified that you are required to make a substantial and lasting improvement in your attendance. The outcome of the counselling meeting will be followed up in writing to you and will be held on your personal file.

14.4 Formal Stage 1

If your absence does not improve, in particular, if you:

- are absent again for one or more occasion within six months; or
- have an otherwise unacceptable pattern of absence

Your Line Manager will hold a Stage 1 Absence review meeting with you to discuss your absence record and the reasons for it. If appropriate in the circumstances, you will be given a first written warning. You will be informed that, unless your absence record improves and is maintained at an acceptable level, then a final written warning may follow. If there is a substantial and lasting improvement in your attendance, the written warning will lapse after a period of twelve months.

14.5 Formal Stage 2

If your absence does not improve, in particular, if you:

- are absent again for one or more occasions within six months; or
- have an otherwise unacceptable pattern of absence

Your Line Manager will hold a Stage 2 Absence review meeting with you to discuss your absence record and the reasons for it. If appropriate in the circumstances, you will be given a final written warning. You will be informed that, unless your absence record improves and is maintained at an acceptable level, dismissal may follow. If there is a substantial and lasting improvement in your attendance, the final written warning will lapse after a period of twelve months.

14.6 Formal Stage 3

If you have previously been issued with a final written warning which is still 'live', and your absence does not improve, in particular, if you:

- are absent again for one or more occasions within six months; or
- have an otherwise unacceptable pattern of absence

We will write to you asking you to attend a Stage 3 absence review meeting. You should be aware that, if you reach this stage, and your further attendance cannot be reasonably upheld, an outcome of this meeting could be that you are dismissed with notice.

Should you fail to attend a review hearing under this section of the policy and/or fail to make contact with the Company to make alternative arrangements, you will be given one final opportunity to attend a further re-scheduled meeting. Failure to attend this re-scheduled meeting may result in the Company making decisions relating to your employment in your absence.

Should you make contact with the Company to re-arrange an alternative date, and subsequently fail to attend the meeting, a decision will be taken in your absence. Failure to attend the meetings may also be regarded as a failure to comply with a reasonable management instruction. This may amount to gross misconduct under the Company Disciplinary Procedure.

15. Right to be accompanied in formal hearings

In any formal hearing under this procedure, including appeal, you have a statutory right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official of your choice. Your companion may address the hearing to put your case, sum up your case or respond on your behalf to any view expressed at the hearing. He or she may confer with you during the hearing but does not have the right to answer questions on your behalf or address the hearing if you do not want him or her to do so, or prevent anyone, including you, from making his or her contribution to the hearing.

16. Appeal

All employees have the right to appeal against any outcome under this procedure. If they wish to avail themselves of that right they will do so in writing, detailing the grounds of the appeal, within seven working days of the date of the outcome letter. The grounds for appeal will be directed to

the Chairperson of the Absence Review Meeting.

16.1 Appeal panel members

Appeal hearings are where possible carried out by the next level of authority above the disciplining manager or from another area of the business and will be arranged without unreasonable delay. You will be notified in writing of the date of the appeal hearing.

16.2 Note taking

An independent person either from HR or other function will be note taker at the appeal hearing.

16.3 Appeal procedure

An employee will be invited to an appeal meeting in writing with reasonable and fair notice in accordance with statutory requirements, the letter will include;

- when and where your appeal meeting will take place;
- who will be present
- your right to be accompanied

During the appeal meeting;

- The Chairperson will confirm with the employee the grounds on which the appeal is being made. The employee will outline their reasons, in full, for the appeal.
- The Chairperson may ask questions as may be appropriate after the employee has stated their case for appeal.
- The Chairperson will re-outline the management case and may call witnesses.
- The employee may ask questions of the management case and/or bring their own witnesses.
- The Chairperson will clarify any issues raised.
- The Chairperson will summarise the management case.
- The employee or their representative may summarise the employee's case.
- Where applicable further investigation may need to take place, in this case an adjournment will be made, and the meeting will reconvene as soon as reasonably possible
- The Chairperson will bring the meeting to a close and will then consider the facts, before reaching their decision.

16.4 Decision

The decision will usually follow an adjournment from the appeal meeting. The Chairperson's decision will normally be given verbally, together with their reasoning, a copy of which will be supplied to the employee in writing within five working days of the appeal. There is only one stage of internal appeal and that decision will be final.

17. Management of longer-term conditions or injuries

This section normally applies where you have an underlying medical condition or injury that is preventing you from working normally, perhaps causing you to have persistent short-term absences or a single lengthy absence.

Where it is appropriate, we aim to help you overcome the problems you may have which are preventing you from working normally. In practice this means we will:

- keep your absence under continuous review;
- maintain frequent contact with you, as and when appropriate, which may include periodic case review meetings, either at work or home, to help you keep us informed of your progress. (We can also let you know what has been happening at work in your absence);
- ask your permission to obtain medical reports from your own GP/Consultant/Specialist, which may also involve you attending an appointment with your own GP/Consultant/Specialist or one or more medical examinations with a doctor or other health professional appointed by us;
- ask you permission to obtain advice from Occupational Health Consultants which may involve you attending an appointment
- where appropriate, identify and consider with you and/or a medical advisor measures which might help you return to work earlier than might otherwise be possible including, where applicable, taking into account any comments made by your GP/Consultant/Specialist on your medical certificate, under the Fit for Work Scheme, or by any health professional appointed by us; and
- keep any measures we have put in place under review.

Research shows that the longer an employee is off sick, the less likely they are to return to work. The steps set out in this section are designed to help us prevent that happening and are therefore designed to be in everyone's interests. As such we expect you to co-operate fully with us in managing this kind of absence. If, in our view, you do not co-operate fully then your prospects of continued employment will be affected, and your eligibility for SSP may be lost.

Regrettably, circumstances may arise where, because of your continuing absence, it becomes necessary to consider whether your employment should be terminated. Where it is possible, we will meet with you formally before a decision is made to consider all the circumstances, your past and probable future pattern of absence taking into account any medical advice, and the likely success of any adjustments that could reasonably be made. We will also take account of the needs of the business. A decision to dismiss you will only be taken once all avenues have been explored. You will be informed of your right to appeal should this be the case.

Should you fail to attend any case review meeting under this section of the policy and / or fail to make contact with the Company to make alternative arrangements, you will be given up to one additional opportunity to attend a further re-scheduled meeting. Failure to attend any re-scheduled meeting may result in the Company making decisions relating to your employment in your absence.

Should you make contact with the Company to re-arrange an alternative date, and subsequently fail to attend the meeting a decision will be taken in your absence. Failure to attend the meetings may also be regarded as a failure to comply with a reasonable management instruction. This will be regarded as gross misconduct under the Company Disciplinary Procedure.

18. Company sick pay (and any other health and sickness-related benefits)

You will find details of Company sickness-related benefits applicable to you in your Statement of Terms and Conditions.

19. Elective surgery

Elective surgery is defined as any type of non-essential medical procedure that the employee chooses to have.

See the Company Family Friendly Policy for further details.

20. Data protection and confidentiality

When processing information in connection with any investigation or subsequent stages of the Absence Management Policy, the Company will process any personal data in accordance with its Data Protection Policy and any internal privacy notices in force at the relevant time. Inappropriate access or disclosure of this data will constitute a data breach and should be reported immediately to the Company's Data Protection Officer or a Manager of the Company.

All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with absence investigation or management. Any data breach or breach of confidentiality may also lead to an investigation and potential sanctions under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

21. Management discretion

In all situations, the Company reserves the right to apply discretion.

In terms of the Absence Management Policy, discretion will include the authority to skip levels of formal action, to not proceed to the next stage, an extension to the current warning or the re-issue of the previous level of warning.

The Company reserves the right to trigger formal action, if there are reasonable grounds.

The Company reserves the right to alter, amend or remove this policy at any time in line with changing Company or legislative requirements.