

Greater Dandenong Policy

Keep In Touch Options

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1. Purpose

The City of Greater Dandenong have developed Keep-In-Touch (KIT) options in order to ensure that employees on extended leave are able to keep in touch with Council and be kept up to date with news from their department and across Council.

2. Background

Council recognises that employees take extended leave for a variety of reasons. Planning to maintain contact with employees during extended absences can assist to keep communication lines open and support a smooth return to the workplace.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all City of Greater Dandenong employees who take extended leave from the workplace. This includes Long Service Leave, Parental Leave, approved Sick Leave or Leave without Pay (LWOP) for extended periods. For staff who are on Workcover, special procedures apply in addition to options outlined in this policy.

4. References

- Greater Dandenong City Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
- Flexible Work Options Policy
- Leave Guidelines
- Mobile Device Policy

5. Definitions

Extended Leave - any period of leave greater than 3 months (e.g. Long Service Leave (LSL), Parental Leave, approved Sick Leave or Leave without Pay (LWOP)).

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6. Keep In Touch Options

Employees should in the first instance discuss the expected length of their upcoming leave with their manager. This should include their desire and ability to maintain communication with and receive information from the workplace.

Planning Leave

At the time leave is first identified or announced, the employee and manager should immediately consider whether the KIT options can play a role in supporting the employee during the period of leave being proposed and in conjunction with Organisational Development, discuss what can be arranged.

What to consider

KIT options are entirely voluntary and where an employee expresses that they do not wish to be contacted, this wish shall be respected.

Wherever possible employees will be asked prior to going on extended leave if or how they would like Council and their department to Keep-In-Touch with them, including for the period of their scheduled or expected leave. This will depend as much upon the nature of the leave being taken as the particular circumstances of individuals going on leave. Taking these factors into account should ensure that they are kept up to date with news and developments and can be aware of changes that may affect their role when they return to the workplace.

Where it has not been possible for the employee to organise a set of KIT options prior to commencing leave, the consultation process about a set of KIT options should then be commenced as soon as practicable.

How to develop Keep-In-Touch Options

The employee and manager should first identify which period of the extended leave KIT options could be beneficial.

The employee should then discuss and agree with their manager and other relevant team members or departments which components of the type and frequency of communication will meet their needs. After working through some suggested methods and frequency of KIT options as outlined below, document the agreed arrangements for future reference, including the expected date for return from extended leave. These details can be incorporated into a formal Leave without Pay arrangement at the time of drafting, documented in a letter confirming other forms of leave, or, for less complex KIT options, set out in an email between the parties involved.

Types of Communication

The suitability of each of the following types of communication for specific matters or needs should be assessed by the employee and discussed with their manager and any other staff who may be involved in maintaining these arrangements. This should also include the Information Services department where access to emails through remote access systems is appropriate and has been approved. Further, the employee should also consider what information / communication they wish to receive from Organisational Development in addition to that provided through their manager / team members / other colleagues.

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Communication typically organised for the employee may include:

- phone calls
- emails
- letters / newsletters / professional circulars / industry updates
- staff meetings (where appropriate)
- SMS / text messages

Corporate Keep in Touch options employees may access:

- **MyApps** [use if your account is not disabled during extended leave]

If you hold a current CGD network user ID and Password;

1. type – 'myapps.cgd.vic.gov.au' into your internet browser
2. login using your current CGD Network user ID and Password

Most of the applications are available to staff although some applications are restricted to users with the appropriate licenses, based on current permissions.

- **In Touch Website** [use if your account is disabled during extended leave]

1. type – 'intouch.cgd.vic.gov.au' into your internet browser
2. login with the username 'intouch' and the password 'withcgd'

Through this website staff can access a wide range of information including Webstar News as well as a direct link to the full HR Connection section of Webstar, providing valuable information and resources such as; Internal Job vacancies, Employee Support, HR Policies & Guidelines, and Payroll.

Frequency of Contact

Regular Communication

The frequency of regular communication for the specific matters or needs identified should also be assessed by the employee and discussed with their manager and any other staff who may be involved in maintaining these arrangements. Accordingly regular communication can vary across the following intervals:

- monthly
- quarterly
- half yearly
- annually

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Irregular Communication

In addition to regular communication, *irregular* communication may occur on an as needs basis to ensure the specific matters or needs identified and agreed are delivered throughout the extended absence.

Preparing to go on Leave

Shortly before going on leave the employee and manager should review the draft KIT options to ensure they are still appropriate for the period of leave proposed, including any questions or concerns, as these are best dealt with prior to commencing leave.

7. Related Documents

- Fair Work Act