Academies Trust

8th Floor, Angel Square,
Manchester, M60 0AG

Special Leave Policy

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 We recognise that colleagues have a life outside of work as individuals, and as part of their family and the wider community, and this sometimes unavoidably places demands on them during normal working hours. This Policy aims to facilitate colleagues in meeting these overlapping calls upon their time, and in doing so help to support their overall wellbeing and engagement.

1.2 This Policy applies to all colleagues employed by our Trust; unless otherwise stated there is no length of service criteria. It sets out the approach to be adopted to deal with requests for time off from work and the circumstances in which paid and unpaid leave may be granted. It aims to ensure fairness and consistency in the way in which requests are dealt with across our Trust, whilst recognising that circumstances will vary between academies.

1.3 Providing a high quality education to our pupils and students is our overriding priority and the nature of many job roles means colleagues are needed in work at set times. All requests for special leave of absence will be considered in this context: whilst a flexible approach is taken, colleagues have a duty to attend work regularly and should not request to take time off unless in exceptional circumstances. Where a number of days is stated in this Policy, it is intended as a guide and not a set entitlement (unless a statutory entitlement) and each case will be looked at individually.

1.4 Teachers and term time only support staff have contracts of employment which provide for annual holidays to be taken during academy closures. There is therefore no contractual entitlement to time off during term time. However, colleagues have an entitlement in law to time off work in certain circumstances, in some cases with pay and this Policy sets out those entitlements.

1.5 It is also recognised that from time to time, our Trust may agree to grant individual colleagues time off (paid, unpaid or "in lieu" where flexible working is possible) during term time, or at any time for full-year colleagues, for a variety of reasons. Such time off may be granted on request and at our Trust's discretion.

1.6 This Policy will be applied with due consideration to our Trust's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and our co-operative values.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for considering requests for time off, although they may choose to delegate responsibility to line managers. The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for ensuring that decisions about time off are made fairly and consistently within their academy, taking into account all the relevant information.

2.2 The Regional Director (or Executive Headteacher, if applicable), in conjunction with the Chair of Governors if appropriate, is responsible for considering requests for time off from the Headteacher/Principal. This responsibility sits with our Trust's CEO for their direct

reports, and with the relevant SLT member for central team members, although they may choose to delegate responsibility to line managers.

2.3 Managers are responsible for communicating any decision regarding time off as soon as possible after the request is made, and in reasonable time prior to the date when the leave is required [unless the request is being made retrospectively].

2.4 Colleagues are responsible for ensuring requests for leave are made as far in advance as possible, via EduPeople Employee Self Service (where this function is available) or on a special leave request form. Requests should be made in accordance with this Policy, requesting absence only for the time needed.

2.5 Where special leave forms are being used, all special leave taken (both paid and unpaid) must be recorded in the EduPeople system. Records of special leave should be updated in EduPeople on at least a weekly basis. Where requests are denied, a record should be maintained on the individual's personal file.

2.6 Line managers are able to review absence records, including special leave taken, via EduPeople Manager Self Service (where this function is available), and should raise any concerns they may have about levels of special leave being taken with the colleague at an early stage.

2.7 Human Resources are responsible for advising management of the requirements of this Policy, and should be consulted when queries arise.

3.0 Principles

3.1 Requests for time off should normally be made in writing on a Special Leave Request Form (Annex 1), although urgent 'on the day' requests may be made by telephone and the form completed retrospectively.

3.2 The person responsible for approving requests may request supporting information / documentation when considering a request for time off; regard should be given to the confidential nature of the information which may be given.

3.3 Time off must be approved in advance before it is taken, unless impractical to do so, for example, in the cases of compassionate leave or domestic emergencies where requests to take leave may have to be made at very short notice, or even after the event.

3.4 The granting of special leave is not an automatic entitlement (unless a statutory entitlement); any decisions on requests for special leave will take account of both the academy's operational requirements and the colleague's own needs.

3.5 Where a number of days in a 12-month period is stated this refers to the academic year, and will be pro-rata for colleagues working fewer than 5 days per week.

3.6 If there are concerns about the use of special leave, this will be discussed with the colleague concerned in the first instance. If there is evidence of the system being abused, then it may be referred for investigation under our Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

3.7 If a colleague considers that a decision has been made unfairly, or not in accordance with this Policy, they may appeal the decision by asking for it to be reviewed. If the decision was made by a line manager, it should be reviewed by the Headteacher. If the decision was made by the Headteacher/Head of School, then the review may be carried out by the Executive Headteacher (if in place) or Regional Director.

4.0 Maternity, Adoption, Paternity and Parental Leave

4.1 Colleague's legal rights will be honoured in accordance with legislation and relevant conditions of service. Please see the relevant Trust Work & Families policy (e.g. Maternity, Adoption, Paternity & Parental Leave) for further details.

4.2 Time off for ante-natal appointments

Time off will be considered in accordance with the Work and Families policies which can be found on our Trust website:
https://www.coopacademies.co.uk/co-op-academies-trust-policies/

4.3 Birthing partners

Up to two days time off with pay shall be granted to a nominated birthing partner (only if the child's father or the partner of an expectant mother are unavailable) at the time of birth, and within the 5 days (pro rata) specified in section 5.1.

5.0 Emergency & Domestic Leave

5.1 General approach

We will support colleagues who have unavoidable demands placed on them during working time. Paid time off for emergency family & domestic leave for the reasons set out in this section should not normally total more than 5 days in any academic year, and colleagues should remember that this is not an annual entitlement but determined on each occasion according to the case and individual circumstances. In truly exceptional cases, additional paid leave may be granted; Headteachers / Principals are advised to seek advice from their Regional HR Manager.

5.2 Emergencies involving a dependant

Colleagues have the right to unpaid time off work to deal with emergencies involving a dependant.

Academies may go further than the legal entitlement to unpaid time off at the Headteacher / Principal's discretion, and consider granting paid leave in cases of emergencies relating to or illness of the colleague's child or other close relative.

A dependant is a spouse, partner, child or parent of the colleague (or anyone living in the colleague's house as a member of the family but who doesn't pay rent) or someone who reasonably relies on the colleague for help in an emergency situation."Child" for the purposes of this leave is a child under the age of 16 years, or up to the age of 18 years in the case of a disabled child (in receipt of a disability living allowance).

Time off for dependants only applies to emergency situations and not events known in advance, for example:

- a dependant falls ill, is injured or assaulted
- unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements
- a dependant having a baby who goes into labour unplanned
- child involved in an incident at school.

When a colleague needs to take time off for a dependant then they should inform their manager as soon as possible and let them know how long they expect to be absent. It is expected that time off should only last one day in the first instance in order to deal with the initial need and put in place alternative arrangements. There is also an expectation of shared care, where a child has both parents, or where there are a number of siblings in the case of elder-care.

In agreement with the colleague, the Headteacher / Principal can also look flexibly at the alternatives to paid or unpaid leave which might be available depending upon circumstances such as working from home, flexi time, time in lieu, temporary adjustment to hours or annual leave.

5.3 Serious illness of a dependant

In circumstances of serious illness of a child or close relative the number of days paid leave may be increased to 10 in any academic year period. Any request for time off in excess of 10 days will be considered on an individual case-by-case basis subject to the specific circumstances of the request and mindful of consistency & fairness, and where granted this additional time off may be granted without pay. In this event, the Headteacher / Principals are reminded to consider options under our Trust's Flexible Working Policy which may better support the colleague's needs at that time.

"Serious illness" is defined as that which makes it necessary for the colleague to make urgent & special arrangements for the care of a relative (e.g. following discharge from hospital, or where a child is so ill that a parent is required to be in permanent attendance). This provision will only be made when there is no other person/provider/carer available to look after the sick relative. If the outcome of the illness is such that the patient requires long term care, the Headteacher / Principal may grant a reasonable period of unpaid leave.

5.4 Dentist / doctor / hospital appointments for colleague's child

Routine appointments with a dental practitioner / doctor for a colleague's child are expected to be arranged during a colleague's own time wherever possible e.g. outside normal working hours, during annual leave.

Hospital appointments for a colleague's child should be arranged in a colleague's own time wherever possible, or at a time of day that will minimise impact on the academy. However, as appointments are often imposed rather than agreed and therefore out of the control of the colleague, due consideration should be given and discretion applied where that happens. If a colleague's child is allocated a specific, fixed hospital appointment time and the colleague is unable to cover the absence using their own time (e.g. annual leave or flexi time) then reasonable time off with pay will be granted within the 5 days specified above. In extenuating circumstances additional paid leave may be granted at the discretion of the Head/Principal.

5.5 Other emergency & domestic leave

There are no rigid criteria for emergency & domestic leave but reasons for requests may include:

- a personal crisis (e.g. burglary; serious damage to the home due to flood, fire or storm; breakdown of marriage or long term relationship; domestic violence)
- a serious emergency involving a close relative or partner.

All colleagues can access support and family care advice via Health Assured by calling 0800 028 0199

The Co-op Flexible Benefits package offers discounted family care advice from Grace Consulting. They can assist with finding care or assistance for elderly or dependent family members and can be contacted on 0845 474 8085 or employeebenefits@graceconsulting.co.uk

The colleague must notify the Headteacher/Principal (or their line manager) as soon as possible of the reason for the absence or a need to leave the workplace if they are already at work. The colleague will need to say how much leave they would like to request to take.

The leave may be paid (if within the 5 days stated above), unpaid, or taken as annual leave or time in lieu where the colleague is able to work flexibly. This decision rests with the Headteacher/Principal.

It is expected that the colleague will remain in touch with their Headteacher/Principal during the period of emergency leave, and that any request to extend the amount of leave initially requested should be made at the earliest opportunity.

Where two or more people from the same household are employed by our Trust, only one colleague per household will be granted time off for instances where a presence is required at the property concerned, e.g. house flooded due to burst pipes. Where the colleague is a joint-householder, there is an expectation of shared responsibilities.

6.0 Bereavement Leave

Leave with pay for compassionate reasons will normally be granted for the death of, or attendance at the funeral of, a close family relative or close personal friend.

Bereavement leave will not normally exceed a total of five days in any 12 month academic year period (pro rata for part time colleagues) unless parental bereavement leave applies (see below). In exceptional circumstances (such as multiple bereavements) the Headteacher/Principal, in consultation with the Regional HR Manager, may extend paid leave where unforeseeable problems have arisen in the colleague's arrangements and/or where unpaid leave would cause significant financial hardship.

There is not an automatic entitlement to five days per bereavement, nor to a full day on each occasion, and the amount of paid leave granted will take in to account the closeness of the relationship to the deceased and the level of involvement that the member of staff has in making the funeral arrangements, along with the timing and location of the funeral.

It is not easy to give hard & fast rules on this, and each situation needs to be considered sensitively and on its merits, but by way of guidance:

- a longer period of absence would generally be granted where the deceased is immediate family (partner, parent, sibling, child, or someone else who lives with the colleague) and/or where the colleague is involved in making the funeral arrangements
- a shorter period of absence would generally be granted where the colleague is not involved in making the funeral arrangements and the deceased is a grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin, personal friend, or relative of the colleague's spouse/partner.

6.1 Parental bereavement leave [Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018]

A bereaved parent includes adopters, foster parents and guardians or anyone who is the primary carer for a child in the absence of parents.

Under this legislation bereaved parents have a legal right to time off following the loss of a child (including stillbirth). In these cases, our Trust will support parents (including all primary carers) sympathetically and in line with their right to two weeks' paid leave (on full pay) per child. To clarify, this means that if a colleague lost twins, they would be entitled to four weeks paid leave.

7.0 Time off for hospital, doctor, dental and other medical visits

Colleagues are expected to arrange dental and medical appointments in their own time wherever possible (e.g. before or after work, at weekends, lunch breaks), or to make use of flexi time / time in lieu where this is available.

Where a colleague is unable to ensure that a doctor's or hospital appointment, or emergency dental appointment, is made in their own time, then time off with pay can be granted for an appointment made during working hours at the discretion of the Headteacher / Principal. The colleague must provide a copy of the appointment card / letter.

Whilst initial hospital appointments may be unavoidably within work time, where possible follow-up appointments should be arranged in the colleague's own time. If this also proves difficult, then effort should be made to arrange appointments either at the beginning or the end of the academy day to minimise disruption.

As a "reasonable adjustment" the Headteacher / Principal can grant paid leave of absence where a colleague has an on-going or chronic condition which may qualify as a disability and either long courses of treatment are involved or the colleague is required to see a specialist consultant, and it is difficult for the colleague to make the appointment(s) outside of working hours. Time off may be granted for some or all of the appointments, depending on the circumstances of the case. The Headteacher / Principal may request that advice is given by the occupational health service prior to agreeing this.

All non-elective hospitalisation should be treated as sickness and medical certificates provided in line with normal sickness absence procedures.

If the dental or medical condition requires a longer period of absence from work, the absence will be treated as being due to ill health and normal procedures should be

followed.

8.0 Medical screening, donors & infertility treatment

Paid time off will be given for the purposes of appropriate medical screening, including all cancer screening. This will not be regarded as sickness absence and the Headteacher / Principal should record the absence as authorised special leave. Reasonable time off with pay will be granted for colleagues to attend their own GP's Well Person's clinics where appointments for these cannot be made outside the academy day.

Colleagues may be granted time off with pay to attend blood donor sessions where it is not possible to arrange this outside the academy day. An appointment card / letter should be provided.

A colleague may be granted paid time off up to a maximum of 4 weeks to act as an organ / bone marrow donor; supporting medical documentation will be required. Any time above 4 weeks will normally be without pay. This time should not be counted as sickness absence.

Reasonable paid time off, up to a maximum of 10 days per academic year, will be granted for colleagues who are required to attend medical appointments or who are hospitalised in relation to infertility treatment. However, each case should be considered on an individual basis and colleagues will be required to provide an appointment card or letter to confirm the details. Consideration should be given to requests for extended periods of time off on an unpaid basis.

9.0 Time off for Religious Observance

9.1 Requests for time off to attend religious or cultural tradition should be considered sympathetically and accommodated wherever possible, although extended absences will need to be balanced with the operational needs of the academy.

9.2 Requests should be made with as much notice as possible so that full consideration can be given; where reasonable notice is not given then requests may be declined or given unpaid. It is acknowledged that a specific date is not always known well in advance for Eid, and that the dates for Eid may vary slightly between mosques.

9.3 Up to two days with pay within any 12-month academic year period may be granted where the colleague's religion requires them to attend on a day on which they would normally be in school during term time. Time off in excess of this, and time required for travelling, should be taken as unpaid leave.

9.4 For clarity, one day's paid leave will be granted for Eid al-Fitr ('Small Eid'), and one day's paid leave for Eid al-Adha ('Big Eid'). If 'Big Eid' falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the following Monday may be taken as paid leave if the colleague wishes to request this time off (if it falls on a Bank Holiday Monday, the following Tuesday may be taken).

9.5 Time for preparation for festivals or days which may be used for family or cultural celebrations which are not specified dates for religious events are not included in this provision, but the Headteacher/Principal may agree to unpaid leave.

9.6 Additional guidance on the extended leave needed for Hajj is included at Annex 2. Other requests for substantial religious leave will be considered on the same basis.

10.0 Delayed returns

10.1 If colleagues returning from holiday, or extended leave abroad for religious /cultural reasons, are delayed for unavoidable reasons outside of their control such as transport strikes, delayed flights, accidents, acts of nature, etc. and this delay takes them in to term time (or beyond the end of their authorised annual leave period if full year) it is the colleague's responsibility to maintain communication with their Headteacher / Principal and to keep the delay due to unforeseen circumstances to an absolute minimum.

10.2 If the circumstances are not covered by any other policy (e.g. sick pay, or another category of special leave) then the period of absence will be with pay. The Headteacher / Principal may ask to see evidence of the reasons for the delayed return.

11.0 Members of Reserved Forces

Volunteer reserve forces consist of the Royal Naval Reserves, Royal Marine Reserves, the Territorial Army and the Reserve Air Forces.

Colleagues who serve in a volunteer reserve force should inform their Headteacher / Principal. The Ministry of Defence will also arrange for the employer to be notified and will follow this up annually to ensure the information held by the MoD is accurate.

11.1 Military service

In most cases, time off must be granted to the colleague if they are called up to carry out their military duties. The period of call up can be up to one year in every three years. In exceptional cases, it may be possible to obtain an exemption if the absence of the colleague will cause serious disruption to the academy. Such an application must be made within seven days of the reservist being issued with a mobilisation notice.

Reservists who are called up to serve will receive pay from the Services so our Trust will not pay the colleague during their absence. The academy must ensure Payroll is informed when the colleague commences military service, so that salary payments are stopped.

The period of absence will count for continuous service and the colleague has the right to return to their job on demobilisation, or to be offered suitable alternative work if their old role is not available: see Armed Forces (Safeguard of Employment Act) 1985.

The colleague is entitled to remain in the occupational pension scheme during their

absence and the MoD will pay the employer contributions, provided the colleague continues to pay the colleague contributions.

Employers are also entitled to claim an 'employer's award' in respect of replacement costs incurred during the period of call-out that exceed the reservist's earnings.

11.2 Attendance at training

If a reservist is required to undertake training and it is not possible for the training to take place during the school holidays, the Headteacher / Principal in consultation with the Chair of Governors may authorise paid leave (or a combination of paid & unpaid leave), up to a maximum of two weeks paid leave in any 12-month academic year period.

The colleague should provide the Headteacher / Principal with a minimum of 28 days' notice.

The academy can claim from the MoD the costs associated with the colleague undertaking training. Where loss of earning is paid, the colleague must claim and pay the allowance to the academy.

12.0 Public office & public duties

12.1 Public duties

Academy based staff will be granted reasonable paid leave of absence to serve on public bodies or undertake public duties. Recognised public duties include:

- Justice of the Peace (Magistrate)
- Member of a local authority (local councillor), police or health authority
- Governor of a school, college, or other educational establishment
- Member of any statutory tribunal (for example, an employment tribunal)
- Member of the independent monitoring board for a prison, remand centre and young offender institution
- Member of the Environment Agency, or a Water Customer Consultation Panel

For academy based staff, there is a contractual entitlement to paid time off for these activities as defined in the Burgundy Book and Green Book. Payment will be at full salary minus any payment which the colleague receives in respect of their duties (with the exception of reimbursement of expenses). Colleagues therefore have a duty to inform the Headteacher / Principal of their public duty appointment and of any payment they receive.

Where colleagues are entitled to receive any pay or allowances for performing public duties, any entitlement to pay for time off under this policy will be reduced by any pay or allowances they are entitled to claim. Effectively what the Trust is doing is, at their discretion, advancing money to the colleague and then recovering this advance from the colleague's wages once payment is received by them. Our Trust cannot claim this money directly, so our Policy requests the individual to make the claim, on the understanding this money is then paid back to their Academy.

Any money claimed for expenses incurred by the individual (i.e. for travel, parking or meal expenses, or additional childcare costs) can be kept.

Time off must be agreed in advance with the Headteacher / Principal and the colleague must provide adequate notice.

12.2 Elections

Trust colleagues who serve during an Election as a Presiding Officer or Polling Clerk are granted time off with pay.

This provision does not extend to individuals who assist candidates / parties at elections, who are not expected to take time off during term-time, but may take annual leave or unpaid leave (at Headteacher / Principal discretion) during school holidays if full year.

If a colleague is standing for election as a local councillor or MP themselves, and the election day falls during term time, they may be granted a day's unpaid special leave on election day at the Headteacher / Principal's discretion.

12.3 Search & rescue activities

Colleagues who are called upon at short notice to participate in search & rescue missions as part of the volunteer warden service are allowed special leave with pay for the day(s) in question.

12.4 Other public duties

The Headteacher / Principal has the authority to approve requests from colleagues to take time off to carry out other public duties or attend meetings of professional bodies / associations / committees. Each case will be considered on its merits, taking into account service provision, and may be with or without pay.

12.5 Witness in Court

A colleague receiving a summons or subpoena to appear as a witness must report the fact to their Headteacher / Principal as soon as possible, and will be granted time off with pay. The colleague will provide, on request, documentary evidence in connection with their attendance.

In the event of the colleague not being required on a particular day, the colleague must report for work.

A colleague attending court as a witness should receive from the court forms to claim for loss of earnings; it is expected that colleagues will claim and pay the allowance to the academy. However, if a part-time colleague undertakes witness duty on a day when they would normally not be working, the payment from the court for this day would not need to be paid to the academy.

12.6 Jury Service

A colleague receiving a summons to serve on a jury must report the fact to their Headteacher / Principal as soon as possible.

Paid leave of absence will be granted for jury service. The colleague will provide, on request, documentary evidence in connection with their attendance.

In the event of the colleague not being required to serve on a particular day, the

colleague must report to work.

In all cases, where employees are entitled to receive any pay or allowances for performing public duties, any entitlement to pay for time off under this Policy will be reduced by any pay or allowances they are entitled to claim. Our Trust will normally advance the employee claiming these allowances and if so will then recover this advance from the employee's wages once payment is received. Our Trust may also recover any advance from the employee's wages if employees fail to claim any applicable pay or allowances they are entitled to.

However, if a part-time colleague undertakes jury service on a day when they would normally not be working, the payment from the court for this day would not need to be paid to the academy.

13.0 Special events / functions

Reasonable leave of absence with pay may be granted where a colleague is required to attend a specific function or event either as a participant or in support of others, such as:

- If requested to attend a particular function or event by a Government Department
- If the colleague may be receiving some form of honour
- If the colleague is required to attend a national or international event as either a competitor, or in support of those competing. This does not include sporting events which a colleague elects to participate in, such as cycle sportives, local football club tours, and so on. It is aimed at 'high level' events, such as representing one's country.

Time off should not normally total more than 2 days paid leave in any academic year, and will be determined on each occasion according to the case and individual circumstances.

Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings, the colleague must claim and pay the allowance to the academy.

14.0 Time off to attend interviews

We wish to support colleagues who want to progress their career within our Trust. Colleagues who are shortlisted to attend an interview for a job at their own academy or elsewhere in our Trust will be released to attend the interview and paid as usual. Reasonable travel expenses to attend the interview will be paid by the colleague's academy in line with our Trust's General Expenses Policy. If the interview falls outside of the colleague's usual working hours, overtime will not be paid to attend the interview, but travelling expenses may still be claimed.

At the discretion of the Headteacher / Principal, paid time off may be granted for attending job interviews with schools outside our Trust, usually up to a maximum of three days per academic year (unless the colleague is covered by specific provisions due to the need to make staff reductions within an academy). This time may be given in half-days. Requests in excess of this with pay, may be granted by exception depending on the circumstances (e.g. where long distance travel is involved, or senior leadership recruitment taking place over several days).

Time off in excess of that set out above, or for attending interviews with other prospective employers outside of the education sector, may be granted without pay (or the colleague may be asked to make the time up / be granted time off in lieu, or to take annual leave if full-year, this is possible).

The Headteacher/Principal may request to see evidence of the interview. The amount of time off should be agreed locally, taking into account the time of the interview, the length of attendance required at the interview, the location of the interview relative to the academy and the colleague's home, the colleague's role, and so on. There is not an automatic entitlement to a full day off.

Visits to other schools prior to applying for a post should, wherever possible, be arranged in the colleague's own time. If the other school is unable to accommodate this, then reasonable time may be allowed within the 3 days specified above.

Visits to schools after being offered a new job (or educational training providers where a colleague is commencing a teacher training programme) should, wherever possible, be arranged in the colleague's own time. If the other school / training provider is unable to accommodate this, a visit is necessary, and it is operationally possible, the colleague may be released unpaid, or may be paid at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal if it is within the three days specified above.

Visits to future employers which are not schools (or other employers covered by the Redundancy Modification Order) should be arranged in the colleague's own time; any release in working time is at the Headteacher's discretion and will be unpaid (unless annual leave is taken, or time in lieu is agreed).

15.0 Time off to attend a graduation or wedding

At the discretion of the Headteacher / Principal, one day's paid time off may be granted for attending the wedding of a close relative (colleague's or colleague's partner's immediate family, e.g. parent, child, sibling), or the graduation ceremony of an colleague's child or partner (up to a maximum of two days per annum) where these fall in term time. Unavoidable travelling time in excess of this will be considered without pay. Where it is possible for annual leave or time in lieu to be used, the Headteacher/Principal may request this as an alternative to paid leave.

Time off to attend the wedding of someone other than a close relative is discretionary, and one day without pay may be granted.

Each request will be looked at individually and it is at the discretion of the Headteacher / Principal to approve any further time off for a wedding required for cultural / religious reasons, and whether this is paid or unpaid.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a colleague's own wedding during term time.

16.0 Time off to move house

At the discretion of the Headteacher / Principal, paid time off may be granted for the purposes of moving house where the day of the move unavoidably falls on a weekday in term time, up to a maximum of one day. Where it is possible for annual leave or time in lieu to be used, the Headteacher/Principal may request this as an alternative to paid leave.

17.0 Time off for driving tests

Colleagues are expected to arrange driving tests outside of academy hours where possible. When this is unavoidable unpaid special leave can be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher / Principal. This time may be given in half-days.

The Headteacher/Principal may request to see evidence of the driving test. The amount of time off should be agreed locally, taking into account the time of the driving test, the length of attendance required at the test, the location of the test relative to the academy and the colleague's home and so on.

18.0 Leave for study / examinations

We wish to support colleagues' professional development and time off to sit an examination that would enhance a colleague's role specific professional development will be granted with pay. One half-day's paid study leave for each such examination will also be granted.

19.0 Inability to get to normal place of work / severe weather / emergency school closure

19.1 In exceptional circumstances, such as heavy snow, where an academy is closed and colleagues have been informed that they are not required to attend, they will be paid their normal salary for the duration of the disturbance. Where possible, colleagues should continue to work from home. Colleagues already on leave (annual, maternity, sickness etc) will not be entitled to additional paid leave if their workplace is closed. Colleagues are not entitled to additional pay if the closure falls on a non-working day.

19.2 Where the academy is unexpectedly closed for some other reason (e.g. flooding, fire, breakdown of essential equipment), colleagues may be asked to work from another reasonable location, or will be expected to work from home where the job role allows. Where this is not considered possible colleagues will be granted leave with pay for the duration of the disturbance or until alternative arrangements are put in place.

19.3 In the event of disruption to normal travel to work arrangements, for example, because of exceptionally poor weather conditions or public transport strikes, colleagues should make every effort to get to work where it is safe to do so. This includes in circumstances where the academy may be closed to pupils/students, unless the Headteacher / Principal has made a determination that colleagues are not required to attend.

19.4 In severe weather conditions, if colleagues are going to be late arriving they should telephone the academy to report the circumstances but should not suffer a loss of pay unless taking into account section 19.5 below. Similarly, if colleagues are released early they should not suffer loss of pay.

Where the academy remains open the Headteacher / Principal should consider if the colleague has made reasonable attempts to get to work. If a reasonable attempt has been made, having considered the extent to which most means of transportation cease or are seriously disrupted, then the absence should be with pay. Where possible, colleagues should continue to work from home or make enquiries about reporting to an academy nearer their home address (if relevant).

19.5 If the Headteacher / Principal does not consider that reasonable attempts to attend work have been made, they may ask the colleague to make up the time (or take annual leave if full-year colleagues), or alternatively the period of absence will be without pay.

19.6 If a colleague is ill on the day(s) when there are severe weather conditions or the academy is closed for some other reason, the academy's normal sickness reporting and recording procedures will apply.

19.7 Colleagues who are due to be working off site (e.g. attending a training course or meeting) but who are unable to attend the training / meeting venue should, if possible, report to their usual workplace. If they are unable to attend their usual workplace then the above will apply.

19.8 Absences caused by the urgent need to care for children, elderly or other close relatives whose normal care arrangements have been closed or broken down due to severe weather conditions will be considered under "time off for dependents" (section 5). There is an expectation that colleagues will make reasonable attempts to organise alternative arrangements and/or share the responsibility of care with a partner / other relative if appropriate.

19.9 Consideration should be taken when applying this to a colleague who has mobility problems or a medical/health condition which may be exacerbated by adverse weather conditions, please see section 20 below.

20.0 Impairment related leave

Impairment related absences may occur when disabled colleagues have to take leave due to external circumstances which affect their ability to attend work such as:

- Breakdown of usual arrangements at work (sickness of personal assistant, unavailability or malfunction of aid or adaptation, lifts, toilets, car parking, etc) where no suitable alternative arrangement or work can be found (e.g. at home or another site)
- Breakdown of usual arrangements which make it unreasonably difficult to get to work, including unfavourable weather conditions which put colleague at risk (over and above 'severe weather conditions' in section 21) and alternative arrangements cannot be made
- Time off for impairment related medical visits (if not already covered under hospital / medical appointments)

When an absence is unavoidable and is related to a disability, but is not due to illness/sickness, reasonable impairment related leave may be granted with pay.

Absence will still need to be managed in a proactive way, with support offered to disabled colleagues, in order to minimise the number of absences where appropriate. The Headteacher / Principal and the colleague should discuss reasonable ways of overcoming any issues and try to reduce the need to take impairment related leave through flexible working and the use of technology

21.0 Other requests for leave of absence without pay / sabbaticals

In addition to the provisions outlined in this document, the Headteacher / Principal also has the discretion to grant unpaid leave of absence in other circumstances which they consider to be appropriate. This may include sabbaticals for long term care of a close relative, a full time course of study to enhance an individual's career development, or another personal reason which might otherwise result in the colleague having to resign their employment in circumstances in which our Trust would prefer to retain their services.

Requests which have neither educational nor compassionate grounds will not normally be considered.

Each case should be considered on its individual merits, with regard to equalities legislation, fairness and consistency, and with consideration to the needs of the academy and its pupils/students, and our Trust as a whole. In making a determination, a Headteacher / Principal should seek advice from their Regional HR Manager and to consider the approach taken by other Trust academies in similar circumstances.

A leave of absence / sabbatical request should not be approved for the purpose of work / financial gain e.g. short term contract with another employer or consultancy work.

The terms & conditions of the leave of absence / sabbatical should be discussed and fully documented, including: reason for absence, expected duration, right of return to the same role, impact on pay & pension, and any other conditions of service.

22.0 Trade Union activities and duties

Colleagues requiring time away from work to participate in trade union activities and duties should refer to our Trust's Trade Union Recognition and Facility Agreement which can be found on our Trust website.

23.0 Unauthorised absence

Where a colleague fails to adhere to the notification requirements set out in this Policy and/or takes leave without seeking prior authorisation, or is identified as not utilising the leave for the purpose it was requested, this may be classed as unauthorised absence unless there is reasonable explanation.

Any absence that is regarded as unauthorised, after appropriate investigation, will be

without pay and may be addressed under our Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

Appeals against salary deductions for unauthorised absence, if not resolved through the review mechanism at para 3.7, may be raised under the Grievance Procedure.

24.0 Monitoring & Review

It is expected that each academy will monitor the use of this Policy at a local level, and maintain records of special leave taken with and without pay, and any leave requested but declined, so that proper use of the Policy can be monitored. The outcomes of the policy will be monitored in line with equalities legislation, as far as it is reasonable to do so within current constraints of recording.

This Policy will be reviewed at least every three years or as a result of changes to legislation.

Annex 1 - Special Leave Request Form

Part A - request for special leave, to be completed by the colleague

Name:		Pay no.:	
Date for requested time off		From	To
Times of absence (if part day leave)		From	To
Actual number of working days (or hours) absent		days / hours* (*delete as applicable)	
Tick if applicable	Reason for absence	Other information required (please use box below)	
	Time off for dependents, or other domestic emergency	*Relationship, age (if under 18) and nature of illness / problem*	
	Bereavement / funeral	*Relationship, and location & date of funeral, or other explanation as appropriate*	
	Hospital, doctor, dental or other medical appointment; medical screening, donor or infertility treatment	*Appointment card / letter to confirm date, time and place of appointment*	
	Religious observance	*Date and reason*	
	Public office / duties, including school governor, witness duty and jury service	*Date, time and location. Appointment letter where appropriate (witness / jury)*	
	Attending an interview / new job induction	*Date, time (start & finish) & location*	
	Graduation or wedding	*Relationship, date & location*	
	Moving house	*Date*	
	Driving test	*Date, time (start & finish) & location*	
	Study or exam	*Date, location and details of course studied*	
	Impairment related	*To be discussed with Headteacher / Principal*	
	Delayed returns	*Dates, reasons for delay (evidence may be requested)*	
	Reserved Forces	*Please see details in Policy*	
	Special event / function	*Date & details of event / function, including location*	
	Inability to get to work	*Please see details in Policy*	
	Trade union activities	*Please see Trade Union Recognition & Facility Agreement*	

	Other unpaid leave	*Please see details in Policy*
Please use this space to give further details:		
Signed:		Date:

Please pass this form for approval, in accordance with your local academy procedure.

(continued over)

Part B - approval of special leave, to be completed by the manager

Days / Hours	Request approved with pay *(inform colleague, and update local records)*
Days / Hours	Request approved without pay *(inform colleague that time off is approved without pay, and that monies will be deducted from pay in full at the earliest opportunity. Inform payroll, and update local records)*
Tick if applicable	Request declined *(inform colleague why the request has been declined, and update local records)*

Name (block capitals):	Signature:
Date:	

Annex 2 - Guidance on Hajj

Any request made for a substantial period of leave in order to carry out religious obligations for members of any religion will be considered on the same basis as set out in this guidance.

The purpose of this guidance is to set a framework for the Headteacher/Principal to manage and administer requests from Muslim colleagues wishing to perform the obligatory pilgrimage of Hajj.

Our Trust recognises the difficulty which results from the academic year following the Gregorian and not the Hijri calendar, which means that Hajj can fall during times when the academy is in session. We respect that Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and is an obligation upon Muslims once in their lifetime, financial/health conditions permitting. We are committed to providing high quality education whilst having a balanced approach to the religious needs of its colleagues. Requests for leave for Hajj will be considered according to the following criteria:

- In order to minimise any possible disruption to colleagues and pupils/students, colleagues wishing to apply for the obligatory Hajj leave will notify their Headteacher/Principal in writing by the end of Ramadan for the following Hajj.

- A Special Leave Request Form (Annex 1) should be completed

- Colleagues wishing to perform the obligatory Hajj may apply for a maximum of three weeks unpaid leave.

- In order to balance the needs of pupils/students and the need for colleagues to make the obligatory Hajj pilgrimage, Muslim colleagues will be granted Hajj leave subject to the Academy's ability to release them without an adverse impact on service delivery.

- All Muslim colleagues will be considered with fairness irrespective of their professional status within the Academy. Applications will normally only be considered for the obligatory (first) Hajj.

- Permissions / requests for Umrah or non-obligatory Hajj will not be considered during school term time except on exceptional compassionate grounds.

- When making a request to undertake Hajj colleagues are asked to consider the effect their absence might have on the pupils/students with whom they work.

- In accordance with our Trust's overall guidance on special leave, colleagues should not book tickets etc before the Hajj leave has been approved.

- Overstaying an approved absence may be considered as unauthorised absence (unless there are substantial grounds for having done so) and could lead to disciplinary action. In this situation colleagues should keep in contact with their academy, and retain any evidence to support the reasons for their delayed return.