



Leave of Absence Policy

Applicable to All Staff
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Together, pursuing life in all its fullness

Version	Date	Author	Changes
V1	June 2021	Camillia Salter, Head of HR	Initial Issue. Policy consulted with Trade Unions. Ratified by JCC – June 2021.
V2	August 2026	Claire Freeman, Head of People	Update for LPGS rule change on unpaid leave

Review Date: On legal change or business need

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1. Objective and Scope

This is a model Leave of Absence Policy to assist the Trust in making decisions about requests for leave in accordance with legal, contractual, and moral obligations.

This policy covers annual leave, family leave and miscellaneous leave. A principal purpose in setting out this policy is to ensure that requests are dealt with fairly and consistently.

The policy applies to all employees. This policy does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

2. Principles

- Annual leave and occupational sick leave will be in accordance with the relevant conditions of service for Teachers and support staff.
- Other leave of absence will normally be on a paid basis, unless otherwise specified as unpaid or discretionary.
- All leave allowances should be applied pro rata to an employee's contracted hours, but considerations will be given to each situation on a case-by-case basis.
- The operational needs of the Trust will be paramount and, except in emergency circumstances, adequate notice of a request for leave of absence must be given.
- The responsibility for exercising discretion on behalf of the Trust is the Headteacher/Line Manager (in accordance with the professional duties defined in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document).
- Informal resolution is always encouraged as the first step to resolving difficulties, but where genuine grounds can be provided, a dispute or grievance about a request for leave of absence or payment during leave of absence may be dealt with through the Grievance Procedure. There is no right of appeal to a leave request being declined within this policy.
- All requests for leave must provide the Trust with reasonable notice.
- It should not be assumed approval has been given until a response has been provided by the Headteacher/Line Manager.
- Where the request for leave concerns the Headteacher requests should be made to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Education.

3. Annual Leave Entitlement for Employees (Support Staff).

For support staff contracted to work for 52 weeks' per year, this leave will normally be taken during the school closure period and must be agreed with the Line Manager or nominated person in reasonable time, prior to the leave being taken. Only in exceptional circumstances and with the express consent of the Line Manager, can leave be taken during term time. The leave year runs from 1 September to the following 31 August.

4. Leave of Absence

Applications for leave of absence should be made within the timescales set out below on the pro-forma in **Appendix 1**. However, in some circumstances, such as an emergency, a written request prior to the absence may not be possible though the employee should report their absence verbally through the normal procedures. In such cases a written request should be submitted as soon as possible after the event.

Type of Leave of Absence	Minimum Notice
CPD events	10 working days
Planned appointments and meetings	5 working days
Emergency events	As soon as possible

A summary guide on the types of leave/pay entitlements is outlined in Tables 1-5 in Appendix 2.

5. Part-time Employees

- a. The entitlements detailed in this policy are based on an employee working full-time. Where an employee works part-time all entitlements are on a pro rata basis, but consideration will be given to situations on a case-by-case basis. Staff working on a term-time only basis will be considered as being full or part-time in relation to their contracted hours per week.
- b. Where a part-time employee attends CPD on their day off or outside their normal working hours they will either be given equivalent Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) or paid on the same basis as a full-time employee. This should be agreed prior to the commencement of the period of absence.

6. Pension Implications

Staff taking leave of absence must be aware of the pension implications resulting from lost pensionable pay due to any unpaid periods of service.

From 1st April 2026, for support staff taking approved unpaid leave of less than 15 days, you and the Trust will both pay the pension contributions that would have been paid if you were at work receiving your normal pay. If you take approved unpaid leave that lasts for 15 days or more, the break will not automatically count for pension purposes. You can choose to pay extra contributions to buy the pension you 'lost' in the unpaid period. If you elect to pay these extra contributions within a year of returning to work, the cost is split between you and your employer. The contributions can be paid by lump sum or regular deductions from your pay. When making your request for unpaid leave, you may wish to request the cost and your payment options.

In LGPS, an arrangement to buy pension 'lost' in a period of unpaid leave that started 1 April 2026 or later is known as a Qualifying Additional Pension Arrangement or QAPA.

Should an employee wish to buy 'lost' pension for authorised unpaid leave of absence or unpaid maternity leave they should receive a letter from their employer as soon as they return to work explaining their right to make an Additional Pension Contribution (APC). If you make an application within 1 year of returning to work the employer will pay half of the cost of the lost pension. Employees wishing to make this additional pension payment should contact their Academy Business Partner or the People Team via hr@covmat.org to request costs.

For All Teaching Staff

- Please note that if a member of staff is a member of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), pension contributions cannot be paid for periods of unpaid leave.

- Further advice can be sought from the TPS by following the links at www.teacherspensions.co.uk or by calling 0845 606 6166.

This may also affect other benefits such as National Insurance and tax contributions. Further advice should be sought from the HR Department.

7. Personal Leave of Absence

The Trusts policy is:

7.1 Time off for a sick child or dependant (Table 1) – Employees have a statutory entitlement for unpaid time off in unplanned/emergency situations to care for a sick child or dependant.

In this Trust, personal leave for unplanned/emergency situations will be paid for up to five days with further days discretionary with the Line Manager's authorisation.

7.2 Compassionate (including Bereavement) or Exceptional Leave (Table 1) - Noting the provision set out in 7.1, emergency leave enables employees to take time off work to deal with an unexpected or sudden emergency involving a dependent. The leave is to deal with the immediate issues and to sort out long term arrangements if necessary.

The circumstances that enable employees to take Compassionate or Exceptional leave are:

- Providing assistance where a dependent falls seriously ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted.
- Making arrangements for the care of the dependent who is seriously ill or injured.
- The death of a dependent.
- The care of the dependent has unexpectedly been disrupted or terminated.
- There is an unexpected incident involving the child of an employee whilst at Trust.

A dependent is a spouse, child, foster child, child in law, parent (next of kin or parent-in-law), relative or partner living in the same household as the employee (it excludes tenants, lodgers, or boarders of the employee). A dependent also includes any person who reasonably relies on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of their care.

An employee must notify their Line Manager as soon as practically possible in the event of an emergency.

The Line Manager may approve up to five days' paid leave per leave year with further days discretionary (pro rata for part timers but consideration will be given to situations on a case-by-case basis) for Compassionate, Emergency or Exceptional leave for a close relative (is defined as a husband, wife, partner, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister, parent-in-law or next of kin).

For most cases, up to two days leave is reasonable to deal with a domestic/emergency problem. The time off is to enable an employee to cope with a crisis, to deal with the immediate care and where necessary to make longer term care arrangements for the dependent.

See Table 1 for details of entitlements for time off for dependents, bereavement, compassionate and exceptional/domestic/emergency leave.

7.3 Other personal reasons (Table 5) - Exceptionally, there may be other personal reasons for requesting leave of absence. Usually these will be 'one off' events affecting family. An example might be attendance at a child's or one's own graduation ceremony, friends' weddings, child in a school nativity play etc. Such leave, where granted, will normally be one day and paid subject to adequate notice so that replacement staff can be employed if necessary.

Holidays to celebrate anniversaries, birthdays etc. are not considered to be 'one off'.

7.4 Career Break/Extended Leave of Absence - Requests for longer periods of leave will be considered on a discretionary basis, for example, in the case of a lengthy period of caring for a chronically sick, disabled, or terminally ill, dependant relative. Extended leave can be for up to three months in duration but may be longer at the Line Manager's discretion. Sufficient notice that allows the appointment of a replacement should be given wherever possible. Further guidance on Career Breaks is set out in **Appendix 3**.

7.5 Moving House (Table 5) - Up to two days' paid leave may be granted for staff moving house in connection with taking up employment within the Trust.

Other staff may be granted 1 day's paid leave at the discretion of the Line Manager.

7.6 Volunteer Reserve Forces Leave (Table 4) - Reservists are required to inform their Line Manager that they are a member of the Reserve Forces. Reservist employees will also be required to grant permission for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to write to the Line Manager to make sure the Trust are aware and provide details of mobilisation obligations and rights as an employee reservist.

Reservist training normally takes place during evenings and weekends. Line Managers may however grant up to fourteen days leave (normally paid) at their discretion where training falls within an employee's normal working hours.

Leave may be refused if it would have a detrimental impact on the running of the Trust. In any case Teachers and other classroom-based staff will only be granted paid leave if the force's unit cannot arrange exercises during school closure periods.

7.7 Mobilisation - Mobilisation is the process of calling Reservists into full-time service to serve alongside the Regular Armed Forces on operations. The Ministry of Defence aims to give as much notice as possible of mobilisation (but at least twenty-eight days). In circumstances where a reservist employee is mobilised they will not be paid by the Trust and should be placed on a Career Break for payroll purposes to ensure their continuous service is not broken. On return, the employee will return to their substantive role.

If an employee who is mobilised wishes to remain in the LGPS the Trust's payroll provider should be informed who will calculate the contributions that the employee and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) must pay. For Teachers the relevant form must be completed, available online at www.teacherspension.co.uk

For further information on mobilisation, please refer to the SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers) website: www.sabre.mod.uk

8. Carry-over of Annual Leave

The Trust expects employees who work 52-week contracts and are covered by Green Book (support staff) terms and conditions of employment to take their full entitlement of leave in each leave year, which runs from September.

9. Religious Observance (Table 5)

Where staff can show that they are bona fide adherents of any organised religion and that they require leave for the purpose of an official holy day or religious observance, the Trust will allow up to 2 days' paid leave with further time as required for the length of observance. Equality and Diversity advice should be sought if required. Arrangements for taking such leave will be a matter for the discretion of the Trust and may include staff being asked to make up this time at a later date or if this

is not possible any leave granted should be with pay.

10. Sporting Events

Where staff can show they are representing their country (or competing/refereeing nationally at a high level or at a prestigious event) they should write to the Line Manager so that arrangements can be made for paid or unpaid leave. Careful consideration will be given to this on a case-by-case basis.

11. Public Service and Duties Leave (Table 4)

Subject to the needs of the Trust, employees are entitled to reasonable time off in order to carry out the following public duties and activities (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- A Justice of the Peace
- Jury Service
- A court witness/McKenzie Friend
- A Member of the Magistrates Courts Committee
- A Member of a Family Practitioner Committee
- A Member of a Local Authority
- Serving on such other local or regional public bodies as the Trust may authorise
- Campaigning as an official candidate for a General/Local Election

Under s.50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 employees who hold certain public positions have a right to reasonable unpaid time off during working hours. This may, for example, involve being a magistrate, school governor or member of a public body. There is no definition in law as to how much time off is reasonable for the purpose of public duties.

For a full-time employee carrying out the above activities, the amount of time off will be reasonable for the purpose of the public duty with pay. Time off for part-timers will be calculated proportionately by reference to the working hours and working weeks but consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis. Leave will normally be granted where this can be reconciled with the operational needs of the Trust/Service.

Jury Service – Employees will be notified of a requirement to carry out Jury Service by letter from the courts. A copy of this letter should be given to their Line Manager and a request made for the absence from work.

Unless the absence would have a serious impact on the business then the Trust recognises that it must approve the time off.

Employees will receive normal pay during the period of Jury Service on the condition that any payments received from the court for loss of earnings are paid back to the Trust. The court will normally provide individuals with a 'Loss of Earnings' form which should be sent to the Academy and subsequently to the Trust's payroll provider who will complete and return to the individual to submit to the court.

Once the court confirm how much they will pay for loss of earnings (normally on a Remittance Advice slip) a copy should be sent to the HR Department to be passed to the payroll provider who will deduct the relevant amount from the next monthly pay. Failure to return the Remittance Advice slip will be investigated and could be considered Gross Misconduct under the Disciplinary procedure.

A Court Witness/McKenzie Friend (an unpaid advocate usually in family courts) – If an employee attends Court as a witness for their employer, then this is part of their duties and they will be paid as if attending work. In other cases, where an employee is subpoenaed or subject to a witness summons order to attend Court, special leave with pay will be granted.

However, as with Jury Service, the employee must pay back the loss of earnings allowance. Where the employee is not eligible to claim the above allowance then special leave would not be appropriate, and the employee would need to take annual leave instead.

12. Study/Examination Leave (Table 3)

For employees who are studying a course relevant to their current post or career (providing the Trust is paying the fees) will be able to take up to three days for study leave to prepare for examinations with further time discretionary (dependent on level of qualification and time required) with pay.

A half day to one day's leave per examination will be granted and paid for courses that are relevant to employment. For other courses, leave and pay will be at the Line Manager's discretion.

13. GCSE Duties & Activities

For Teachers who are engaged in activities for examining groups, please refer to appendix II of the Burgundy Book, Memorandum of Agreement for the Release of Teachers.

14. Time Off for Trade Union Duties (Table 5)

The Trust recognises the legal requirement for employers to allow reasonable time off work for the Trust's elected representatives of recognised Trade Unions to carry out their duties in the workplace in which they are elected. Duties that warrant time off with pay include:

- consultation on terms and conditions of employment or the physical conditions of work;
- consultation on recruitment and selection policies, redundancy and dismissal arrangements;
- meetings with Academy management or Trust officers on matters of joint concern;
- representing a Trade Union member at a grievance or disciplinary hearing;
- attendance at relevant training courses organised by the Trade Union.
- Attendance at AGM/EGM

There is no legal definition of reasonable time off. It is important for Trade Union Representatives and the Trust to be balanced and flexible in how these requests for time off are addressed with the Representative providing as much notice as possible, giving details of the reason for taking time off and how much time off is required.

The Trust may need to take into account factors such as the:

- nature of the work undertaken;
- need to do the work;
- needs of the Line Manager and impact on immediate work colleagues;
- importance of health and safety at work;
- amount of time off already taken for Trade Union duties and activities.

It is recommended that in the event of a refusal to grant paid time off for a Workplace Representative that this is communicated to the appropriate Local Branch/Association Secretary of the relevant Trade Union.

15. Bad Weather Conditions/Flight Interruptions (Table 5)

There may be circumstances when the employee is unable to attend work due to bad weather or flight interruptions, but the Trust remains open as usual. All reasonable effort should be made to attend work. Alternative arrangements may be agreed with the Line Manager, e.g., working from home or at

a different location. Where this is not possible, non-attendance will normally be treated as paid or unpaid leave depending on the situation on a discretionary basis.

16. Time Off for Medical/Dental Appointments (Table 2)

The Trust will allow up to three days paid time-off with further days discretionary for employees to attend medical and dental appointments, which are unable to be arranged out of working hours. Before arranging non-urgent doctor's medical appointments, employees should seek the approval of their Line Manager if it is necessary to take time off work.

Employees should make every attempt to make these appointments at the beginning or end of the day or during lunch breaks to minimise the time they have to be absent from work.

Routine doctors or dentists' appointments e.g., check-ups should not be taken during term time or working time for those working in school closure periods.

Elective cosmetic procedures should be arranged during holiday periods and will usually be unpaid.

17. Maternity, Paternity, Adoption Carers Leave, Antenatal Care, Parental Leave & Fertility

Details for leave arrangements for maternity, paternity, adoption, carer's leave, fertility and antenatal care can be found in the Family Friendly Policy.

18. Interviews (Table 5)

The Trust recognises the need for prospective employers to occasionally require interviewees to attend for more than one day, especially for Academy management posts.

This is where there might be a requirement for prospective candidates to undertake a preliminary visit before the formal interviews.

In order to maintain a fair balance between the operational needs of the Trust and to minimise the burden on other staff, and to be fair to employees who will be seeking to further their career in the education sector.

The Line Manager is empowered to approve up to five days paid leave of absence for interviews, to cover both formal and informal stages of the process, during any one academic year.

Line Managers may exercise their discretion to grant further paid leave for employees to attend interviews and selection processes. Consideration should be given to:

- whether the employment is within the education sector (this will normally count as a factor in favour of granting paid leave).
- the frequency of such requests.
- whether the employee is facing redundancy or otherwise has an uncertain future in their current post (in which case paid leave should be granted – if in doubt seek advice from the HR Department.)

For support staff any days beyond the initial five days could be made up during school closure periods, provided that their work can be carried out during school closure.

19. Unauthorised Absence

If an employee takes leave of absence without the prior consent of the Line Manager, the reason for the absence will be ascertained. If, in the Line Manager's judgement, the reason for absence merits investigation, this will trigger an investigation which could be considered as an allegation of misconduct or gross misconduct under the Disciplinary Policy.

20. Other Leave of Absence requests

Other Leave of Absence requests will be looked at on a case-by-case basis with careful consideration of the needs of the individual and the situation if they do not come under the categories of leave referenced in this policy. Other categories of leave are also covered in the Family Friendly Policy and Enabling Attendance Policy.

21. Review and Monitoring

The Trust will monitor all applications and decisions relating to requests for leave of absence under this policy to ensure that a fair and consistent approach is taken for all staff.

The procedure will be monitored to ensure consistency of application and adherence to equalities legislation, to ensure that the policy operates in accordance with the duties to promote equality, to eliminate discrimination and to promote good relations between staff with protected characteristics as required under the Equality Act 2010.

When carrying out any reviews or monitoring, the Trust will ensure that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with GDPR. Records will be treated as confidential.

This policy will be reviewed every four years in consultation with recognised Trade Unions.

Appendix 1 – Application for Leave of Absence

This form must be used when an employee requires time off work under the Leave of Absence Policy. This form should **not** be used for cover requests when the employee is at work but undertaking alternative duties.

All requests approved are subject to cover arrangements and, on occasion, it may be necessary to withdraw approval to ensure academy activities are appropriately supervised.

Name		Job Title	
Reason for request – if the request relates to time off to support a dependent or attend a funeral, please state the person's relationship to you.			
Date from		Date to	
Time from if part-day leave		Time to	
Cover required (<i>continue overleaf if necessary</i>):			
Date	Period and Class	Details/Notes	
Employee's Signature			Date
Line Manager's Comments			
Line Manager's Signature			Date

Decision

<u>Paid</u> leave of absence is <u>approved</u> for these dates:	From	To
<u>Unpaid</u> leave of absence is <u>approved</u>	From	To
Request for leave of absence is <u>declined</u>	From	To
Reason request is declined:		
Signed		Date

Completed forms should be returned to the Line Manager.

Appendix 2 – Leave of Absence Summary

Discretionary: Each Leave of Absence request will be looked at on a case-by-case basis with careful consideration of the needs of the individual and the situation.

Table 1 – Personal Leave *only staff with a floating leave entitlement i.e., 52 week all year-round support staff					
Type of Leave	Description	Maximum no. of Days	*Counts against leave	Paid or Unpaid	Counts against pay entitlement
Dependent	This leave may be requested to allow an employee to deal with an immediate crisis or set up alternative care arrangements when normal arrangements break down. The leave is intended to enable an employee to deal with an emergency situation and not to provide the care themselves. Leave can also be requested to attend medical appointments with dependents.	Up to 5 days with further days discretionary	Yes	Paid	Yes
Compassionate Leave	Sympathetic consideration will be given in the case of serious or life-threatening illnesses of a dependent. A dependent is defined, as the employee's parent, wife, husband or partner child, or someone who lives as part of the family, but not the employee's tenant, lodger, or boarder. It also includes someone for whom the employee is the main carer.	Up to 5 days with further days discretionary	No	Paid	No
Bereavement <i>Close relative</i>	A close relative is defined as a husband, wife, partner, son, daughter, father, mother, brother, or sister.	Up to 5 days with further days discretionary	No	Paid	No
Bereavement <i>Other relatives</i>	Leave will usually be granted for the employee to attend the funeral. However, at the Line Manager's discretion consideration will be given to requests for additional leave where the employee is the primary person making funeral arrangements.	Up to 1 day with further days discretionary	No	Paid	No
Bereavement <i>Close friends</i>	Leave may be granted for attendance at the funeral of a close friend. Additional leave may be granted if travelling to the funeral and it necessitates a longer period of absence at the Headteacher's discretion.	1 day	No	Paid	No
Domestic crisis Emergency leave	The Trust recognised that circumstances may make it necessary and unavoidable for an employee to be absent due to a domestic crisis (including damage or disruption to property e.g., flood, burst pipes, house fire).	Up to 2 days	Yes	Paid	Yes

Table 2 – Health Related Leave *only staff with a floating leave entitlement i.e., 52 week all year-round support staff					
Type of Leave	Description	Maximum no. of Days	*Counts against leave	Paid or Unpaid	Counts against pay entitlement
Dental treatment	Emergency appointments only where it has not been possible to arrange them outside normal working hours. See Section 16 for further guidance.	Up to 3 days with further days discretionary	Yes	Paid	Yes
Medical appointments and treatment	Emergency appointments or where it is not possible to arrange outside normal working hours e.g., hospital appointments. See Section 16 for further guidance.	Up to 3 days with further days discretionary	Yes	Paid	Yes

Table 3 – Training Related Leave *only staff with a floating leave entitlement i.e., 52 week all year-round support staff					
Type of Leave	Description	Maximum no. of Days	*Counts against leave	Paid or Unpaid	Counts against pay entitlement
Time off to Train	Employees have a statutory right to request leave to undertake training which they believe will improve their effectiveness in their role and overall performance of the trust.	Discretionary – depending on the course requirements	No	Paid	No
Study leave and time off for examinations	Leave may be requested for periods of study to prepare for examinations relevant to their employment.	Up to 3 days with further time discretionary (dependent on level of qualification and time required)	Yes	Paid	Yes
	Leave may be requested for time off to sit examination. Paid leave will only be granted if the exam is relevant to the individual's employment.	½ day up to 1 day per examination	Yes	Paid where relevant to employment otherwise discretionary	Yes
Graduation	Leave may be requested for the employee to attend their own graduation.	1 day with time off for travel if necessary	Yes	Paid	Yes
	Leave may be requested for the employee to attend the graduation of family members.	1 day with Pay	Yes	Paid	Yes
Requests for CPD	Leave may be requested to attend CPD events. Usually, CPD requirements are determined through the appraisal process.	As required	No	Paid	No

Table 4 – Public Service and Duties Leave *only staff with a floating leave entitlement i.e., 52 week all year-round support staff					
Type of Leave	Description	Maximum no. of Days	*Counts against leave	Paid or Unpaid	Counts against pay entitlement
Court Appearances	Where the employee is called to court to act as a witness or as the accused.	The period of the court session and necessary travelling time	Yes	Paid See section 11.	Yes
Jury Service	Employees are entitled under national conditions of service to receive paid leave of absence for jury service. Employees may be required to request a postponement when the service falls on key academic dates	Duration of service	No	Paid, less the loss of earning entitlement under the juror's allowance regulations	No
Elections candidates	Employees standing as a candidate at local or central government elections. If employees are planning to stand for election they are required to discuss with their Line Manager, the ongoing impact on their employment should they be elected and how this can be accommodated.	Reasonable for the purpose of Public Duty	Yes	Paid	Yes
Volunteer Reserve Forces	Teachers – leave of absence is at the discretion of the Line Manager and due to conditions of service will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Support Staff – leave of absence for training or voluntary service is at the discretion of the Line Manager.	Discretionary	No	Discretionary (normally paid) See section 7.6	No

Other Public Duties	Employees who hold certain public offices have a right to 'reasonable' time off to perform their duties. This could include acting as a Magistrate, Justice of the Peace, a local councilor, or member of a tribunal, serving on an NHS Trust, school governing body, policy authority, environmental agency, etc.	Reasonable for the purpose of Public Duty	No	Paid	No
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Table 5 – Other Leave

***only staff with a floating leave entitlement i.e., 52 week all year-round support staff**

Type of Leave	Description	Maximum no. of Days	*Counts against leave	Paid or Unpaid	Counts against pay entitlement
Moving house	Employees should make all efforts to move outside of their normal working hours. Where this is not possible or where an employee is moving to take up his/her post at the trust, sympathetic consideration will be given to granting leave of absence.	2 days where job related	No	Paid	No
		1 day (subject to impact on running of Trust)	Yes	Paid	Yes
Religious observance	The Trust recognises the importance of religious observance and will attempt to accommodate the needs of the employee.	Discretionary up to 2 days with further days as required for length of observance	No	Paid	No
Job-seeking and retraining in a redundancy situation	An employee who is 'at risk' of redundancy can take reasonable time off with pay to look for another job or arrange training	As required	No	Paid	No
Secondments	A temporary transfer of an employee to another associated organisation for operational, developmental or project purposes. The secondment will be governed by an agreement between all parties involved.	Normally up to 12 months	No	Paid by employer to which seconded	No
Adverse Weather conditions	Where severe weather conditions prevail, employees are expected to make every effort to attend work, using alternative modes of transport where possible. Employees who are genuinely unable to attend work should where possible and with agreement of the Line Manager work from home.	Discretionary	No	Discretionary depending on situation	No

Attendance at Interview	Leave of absence can be requested to attend interviews.	Up to 5 days with further days discretionary	Yes	Paid	Yes
Visits to new employers before commencement	Leave of absence can be requested to visit a new employer's workplace prior to the employee's commencement with them.	1 day with further days discretionary	Yes	Discretionary (normally paid)	No
Unpaid leave e.g., sabbaticals, voluntary service overseas, etc.	An extended period of absence from work, after which the employee intends to return to work. To be eligible the employee must have: At least 2 years' service with the Trust Satisfactory performance in all aspects of work A satisfactory attendance and conduct record	Discretionary	No	Unpaid	n/a
Trade Union activities/duties (including Health and Safety representatives)	Subject to operational requirements reasonable paid time off will be granted to recognised TU representatives for the purposes of representing members in the trust, TU training, attending official TU meetings, attending meetings arranged by the trust to which representatives are invited and undertaking union learning activities.	As reasonable and agreed	No	Paid	No
Wedding <i>Friends and relatives</i>	For leave to attend own wedding, this will be covered by compassionate leave.	1 day with further days discretionary	Yes	Discretionary (normally paid)	n/a
Sporting Events	Where staff can show they are representing their country (or competing/refereeing nationally at a high level or at a prestigious event)	Discretionary	Yes	Discretionary	Yes

Other matters not covered by provisions	The Headteacher has the discretion to consider requests for leave of absence for any reason other than those detailed above. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its individual merits e.g., Examiner/Moderation/ Standardisation meetings which is at the discretion of the Line Managers. Exam boards normally pay for release and if this is not given will also be at the Line Managers discretion.	Discretionary	Yes	Discretionary	Yes
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Appendix 3 - Career Breaks

It is recognised that during an employee's working life there will be times when personal commitments may take priority over work e.g., bringing up children, longer term care for sick or dependant relatives, or pursuing a course of further education. The Trust may be able to accommodate such personal commitments, where operationally practicable, through career breaks. Employees should also give consideration to flexible working requests depending on their individual needs.

Career breaks enable employees to take an unpaid break from work for personal reasons whilst maintaining continuity of service with the Trust. The employee should try to give as much notice as possible to commence a career break (ideally 3 months) but a shorter notice can be accepted at the Line Manager's discretion for example where a dependant needs care at short notice.

With the exception of continuity of service all other terms of the employment contract with the trust will be suspended (i.e., unpaid, no reckonable service – unless LGPS members buyback lost membership). On return, at an agreed date following the career break, the employee will be able to return to the same or similar post within the Trust without competitive selection.

A career break may be considered appropriate for example:

- To extend a period of maternity/adoption leave
- To care for dependants
- To enter full time education
- Extended foreign travel

These reasons are not all inclusive and others may be considered, with the exception of taking up other full time paid employment. Employees who are on a career break may in exceptional circumstances take up a part time role for example to support a university course or extended travel. Permission must be sought from the Trust before taking this up. Staff should agree with the Trust the best way of keeping in touch throughout the career break in terms of where to send key updates and information and availability for possible meetings.

Eligibility

All permanent employees with at least two years' continuous service with the Trust regardless of the number of hours worked are eligible to apply for a career break.

Length of Career Break

The minimum length of break is 3 months, for teaching and classroom-based staff the expectation would be for this to equate to a term, and the maximum is 1 year. There is no limit to the number of careers breaks an employee can take, providing they return to work at the Trust for a minimum of 2 years between each break.

Restructuring and/or Reductions in staffing

Consideration of planned organisational change should be taken before a career break is authorised particularly where there is potential for a reduction in posts.

If an employee is on a career break when a restructure is being considered, every effort should be made to contact them in order for them to have input into any consultations or feedback processes. Employees may be given the opportunity to return to work early if they wish to if the temporary cover can be ended at no additional cost.

Employees on a career break must be included in selection processes even if the Line Manager is unable to make contact with them.

Extending the Career Break

If the employee wishes to extend their career break, if the break taken was to be less than one year, they must do so in writing normally giving as much notice as possible. The Line Manager will give consideration to the extension along the same lines as the original request and may grant up to 1 year in total.

Cutting Short the Career Break

There will be no automatic right to cut short a career break, but the Trust will consider such requests from an employee if they can be accommodated.

If the Employee Does Not Return From the Career Break

If an employee does not wish to return from a career break, they should confirm this in writing **at least 4 weeks'** prior to their expected return date, for those employed under School Teachers Pay and Conditions of Service the appropriate notice must be given in accordance with those terms. If, on the Trust writing to the employee to confirm the return date, the employee does not respond, their contract will be terminated on that expected return date.

Conduct During a Career Break

Employees should be aware that they remain employees of the Trust during a career break. Whilst an employee's off duty hours are their personal concern, they should not put themselves in a position where their duties and private interests conflict. The standards of the Code of Conduct should be maintained during a career break and any breach could result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.



Appendix 4 - Letter to LGPS Staff Taking Unpaid Leave [appendix 4 letter]

Dear,

I am writing to you in line with the LGPS requirements for leave taken after 1st April 2026 to notify you within 30 days of returning to work from unpaid leave that any period of authorised unpaid leave of 15 days or more e.g., additional maternity, paternity or adoption leave will not count for pension purposes unless you elect to pay Qualifying Additional Pay Arrangement (QAPA) to purchase the amount of pension lost during that period of unpaid absence.

If you are granted unpaid leave of absence of 15 days or more, including jury service and parental leave etc, the period will not count for pension purposes unless you elect to pay a Qualifying Additional Pay Arrangement (QAPA) to purchase the amount of pension lost during that period of absence.

If you wish to purchase the amount of lost pension and you make the election within one year of returning to work, then the cost of the QAPA is split between you and the trust. You will pay half of the cost and the trust will pay the other half. You can pay these additional contributions in a one-off lump sum or through regular payments from your wages. The maximum period of absence you can elect to buy back by a QAPA is a period of 3 years.

If you have membership of the LGPS before 1 April 2014 you will have built up benefits in the final salary scheme. If you choose to pay for the lost pension in the scheme the amount you pay will go towards covering the protections associated with the pre 1 April 2014 membership.

To find out more visit: <https://warwickshirepensionfund.org.uk/> or West Midlands Pension Fund website: <https://www.wmpfonline.com/members/paying-in>.