

Staff Leave Policy

Staff leave policy: document provenance

Approver	School and college trust leaders
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Policy owner	School and college trust leader: People
Policy authors	Head of HR Centre of Excellence
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Summary of changes in this review	• Minor updates to terminology and wording throughout • Confirmation that normally only one day of leave will be granted per religious festival where there isn't a planned closure day at the academy for that festival
Related policies and documents	• Staff absence monitoring policy • Green book • Burgundy book • Working flexibly policy • Family leave policy • School teacher pay and conditions document (STPCD) • Trust standard terms of employment

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, the policy will be reviewed as per the review cycle. Should no substantive change be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

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1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 The increasing burdens of work placed on those working in the education sector, both teachers and non-teaching staff, have for a considerable time been linked to an increasing rate of attrition and problems retaining teachers and leaders. Whilst other sectors have found ways to offer greater flexibility to workers, there is a feeling that the education sector needs to look again at the work environment (workload, terms of service, hard and soft benefits, and pay and reward) to offer maximum flexibility not just as part of any retention strategy but to ensure the best environment for teachers and leaders to provide high quality teaching to the students and communities we serve.
- 1.2 For these reasons we require our leaders to accommodate requests for flexibility in working arrangements positively, and to initially approach all reasonable requests with an assumption that they can be accommodated rather than the reverse; only declining requests where this would have a detrimental impact on our ability to meet the challenges of our mission to challenge educational and social disadvantage in the North, educational attainment, and the ability to deliver high quality services through our academies and central teams.

2.0 Scope and purpose

- 2.1 We recognise that working in the education sector can, at times involve coping with a high workload and a need to deliver high-quality teaching with limited resources and time. This policy aims to set out a range of ways that, where appropriate, we can be flexible in the way our people work, whilst allowing all our staff to deliver on our mission to challenge educational and social disadvantage in the North.
- 2.2 The principles of this policy apply equally to all members of staff across our trust regardless of length of service, type of contract, full-time or part time; however, we recognise that not every option will work for every person. The needs of our academies and business services teams to ensure a well-staffed, high-quality environment for our students must always take priority but our managers and leaders are encouraged to be innovative and accept requests to be flexible where this is possible.

3.0 Annual leave

- 3.1 Annual leave is important as it provides essential time for employees to rest, recharge, and maintain work-life harmony. It reduces stress, enhances overall well-being, boosts productivity, and helps with talent retention. Time away from work, as well as being a statutory entitlement, is crucial for maintaining a healthy and motivated workforce. An employee's annual leave entitlement is specified in their contract of employment, our standard arrangements are described below but, depending on various factors (e.g. if an individual joined our trust under TUPE regulations or the market norm for a role differs from our standard contract) this may be slightly different for a small number of individuals

3.2 Teaching staff

- 3.3 There is no provision for annual leave entitlement for teachers. The School Teacher's Pay and Conditions Document (STCPD) and our standard trust terms and conditions of employment, for those not employed in line with STCPD, require a teacher to be available for work for no more than 195 days a year, this leaves 65 weekdays which are in excess of the minimum required annual leave entitlement (including public holidays).
- 3.4 With the exception of requests for leave of absence covered in the table at **Appendix 1**, managers should not normally receive any requests from teaching staff to take annual leave outside of school closure periods and should agree to any requests received only by exception; if the leave is granted, it would normally be unpaid.

3.5 Associate staff employed on a 'term time only' basis

- 3.6 Where staff work on an 'term time only' basis, a period of leave, calculated pro-rata to those staff working all year round, will be added to the number of weeks worked when calculating the total salary due; given that the number of non-working days during school closure periods exceeds the maximum amount of leave due, members of staff will be deemed to have taken their leave during school closure periods.
- 3.7 Where, exceptionally, staff are unable to take their leave during closure periods (e.g. as a result of long-term sickness, maternity leave etc) then arrangements should be made for the leave to be taken during term time, principals or functional leads should seek advice from our trust HR team in these circumstances to ensure that members of staff receive the correct amounts of leave.
- 3.8 Managers should not normally receive any requests from term time only staff to take holiday outside of school closure periods and should agree to any requests received only by exception; if the leave is granted, it would normally be unpaid.
- 3.9 Staff employed on a term-time only basis can work anything from 38 – 43 weeks of the year, depending on the needs of their individual post and the academy at which they are based. They accrue an entitlement to annual leave in the same way as an 'all year round' worker, this is calculated in proportion to the number of weeks in a year they work and must be taken during the publicised school closure periods. The combination of the weeks worked, and annual leave entitlement gives a total 'working weeks' which is entered into our HR and payroll management software, it is also used to calculate the



appropriate salary for the role, which is paid in twelve equal instalments, regardless of the number of weeks actually worked.

- 3.10 The table below shows how holiday entitlement and total 'working weeks' are calculated for term time only (TTO) staff, based on the number of weeks worked.

Working weeks	Number of days annual leave			
	Four years or less		Five years or more	
	Annual leave	Total weeks	Annual leave	Total weeks
38	6.86	44.86	6.92	44.92
39 (TTO)	6.89	45.89	7.10	46.10
40 (TTO + 5)	7.03	47.03	7.28	47.28
41 (TTO + 10)	7.23	48.23	7.46	48.46
42 (TTO + 15)	7.38	49.38	7.65	49.65
43 (TTO + 20)	7.58	50.58	7.83	50.83
52.143 (AYR)	7.80	Not applicable	8.60	Not applicable

3.11 Associate staff employed 'all year round'

- 3.12 Leave is accrued based on length of continuous service with our trust on 1 September each year, and our standard entitlement is:

Length of service	Number of days annual leave
Four years or less	31
Five years or more	35

- 3.13 Our trust closes completely during the period 25 December to 1 January (inclusive) therefore staff will not be required to take annual leave to cover this closure period. However, our trust may direct that some days during the year are taken as annual leave, up to a maximum of three days per year. It may be necessary for some of our employees to work during this closure period, in this case additional annual leave will be released to be taken at another time.
- 3.14 To ensure that the needs of our academies and students can be met during term-time, associate staff working on an all-year-round basis should not normally take leave of more than one week in any single block, or more than two weeks in any leave year during term time. Line managers wanting to exercise discretion in approving leave outside of these limits, must speak with the relevant principal, functional lead or school and college trust leader before doing so.
- 3.15 Associate staff should request annual leave through our employee self-service portal, giving at least two weeks' notice. Line managers will not unreasonably refuse requests for annual leave and are expected to respond to the request within at least five working days. It is understood that on rare occasions two weeks' notice of a need to take annual leave cannot always be given and managers should consider the reason for requesting leave in these circumstances before declining a request on the basis that not enough notice has been given.
- 3.16 To enable flexibility, members of staff can request the facility to carry forward up to one week's annual leave, they should make the request by email to their line manager and, if approved, the manager should inform our trust HR service delivery team so that the relevant leave balances can be updated.

4.0 Leave of absence

- 4.1 We recognise that there are times when our people need to take time away from work, in addition to any annual leave and school closure periods. Managers should view such requests positively but before approving them should ensure that the request will not have a significant impact on teaching in an academy or on our ability to deliver safe and efficient workplaces. A table setting out the various types of leave that may be requested is at **Appendix 1**. It is understood that every situation is unique and, in keeping with our values managers are encouraged to use their discretion when approving leave. If approving leave above the entitlement in **Appendix 1**, managers should also use their discretion when deciding if such leave should be paid.
- 4.2 The absence types described in **Appendix 1** are designed to support our commitment to working flexibly and are not intended to be used as an absolute yearly entitlement (e.g. in the case of personal days, the intention is not to provide an additional two days for all teaching and term time only members of staff but to give flexibility in attending significant life



events and experiences that would otherwise be inaccessible due to term-time working commitment).

- 4.3 Entitlements to various types of leave designed to support the family commitments of members of staff (e.g. maternity, paternity, parental, shared parental leave) are described in our family leave policy.
- 4.4 Employees should normally seek approval for any leave of absence requests before taking the leave; in exceptional circumstances, it is permissible for managers to approve leave retrospectively.
- 4.5 Where a request for leave of absence is declined, the member of staff making the request can make an appeal to the line manager of the individual who declined the request, asking for the request to be reconsidered.

5.0 Review

- 5.1 This policy has, at its formation, been subject to consultation with recognised trade unions. Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed every year; this will include consultation on any changes with recognised trade unions. Should no substantive change be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

Appendix 1: Leave of absence schedule

Reason for absence	Approved maximum per period of absence in any academic year ¹ (school days)	Pay arrangements	
		Teachers and term time only associate staff	All year round associate staff
Death of an immediate family member ²	Three days ³	With pay	
Wedding of a family member	One day	With pay	Annual leave request
Jury service	As required by the court summons	With pay ⁴	
Attendance at interviews	At manager's discretion	With pay	Annual leave request
Attendance at courses of training or examiners meetings related to current post / duties	At manager's discretion	With pay ⁵	
Attendance at a religious ceremony or observation of a religious festival	Two days ⁶	With pay	
Partaking in a religious pilgrimage, undertaken as an obligation of an individual's faith	At manager's discretion	With pay	
Moving home	One day	With pay	
Illness of a member of immediate family	Two days ⁷	With pay	
Hospital attendance of self or immediate family member ⁸	At manager's discretion	With pay	
Attendance at own, or immediate family members, graduation ceremonies	One day	With pay	
Urgent family business or emergencies at home	One day	With pay	
Personal leave to attend significant life events and experiences that would otherwise be inaccessible due to term-time working commitment	Two days	With pay	Annual leave request

¹ Where managers feel that paid leave in addition to the maximums stated above is appropriate, they should seek the approval of the relevant principal, functional lead or school and college trust leader for their agreement.

² For the purpose of this policy immediate family includes: husband, wife, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, step-father, step-mother, partner, civil partner, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step-brother, step-sister, son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, step son, step daughter, grandfather, grandmother, grandchild, guardian, ward.

³ Up to an additional three days can be granted, depending on the distance to be travelled.

⁴ The member of staff should claim an allowance from the court which should be offset against normal pay.

⁵ Unless the member of staff is receiving remuneration from the organiser / examining board, if this is the case leave will be without pay.

⁶ Where an academy has planned a closure day(s) in respect of a particular religious ceremony or festival, due to operational constraints additional days will not normally be granted, and normally only one day will be granted per religious festival, where there isn't a planned closure day.

⁷ This is in addition to any other forms of appropriate family leave.⁸ Excludes grandchildren / grandparents.

