



Special Leave Policy and Procedure Version 7.5

<p>Important: This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the Trust website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online.</p> <p>Name and Title of Author:</p>	<p>Lisa Longstaff, Director of HR and Governance</p>
<p>Name of Responsible Committee/Individual:</p>	<p>Trust Board</p>
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<p>Target Audience:</p>	<p>All employees, with the exception of casual workers</p>
<p>References:</p>	<p>Employment Rights Act 1996 Employment Relations Act 1999 Equality Act 2010 Family Leave Policy Health and Wellbeing Policy Bereavement Leave Policy</p>

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POLICY STATEMENT

We are here to make great schools and happier, stronger communities so that people have better lives. We do this by:

- Always doing what is right
- Trusting in each other and standing shoulder to shoulder
- Doing what we know makes the difference

Doing what is right means always acting with integrity, in the interests of others and being honest, open and transparent.

We recognise that balancing work and home commitments can be challenging, and whilst we expect personal arrangements requiring time off will be made outside normal school session times, we also recognise that employees will from time to time, face exceptional circumstances which require time off. We will deal with all requests respectfully, discreetly and swiftly.

1. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff employed by the Trust, with the exception of casual workers.

This policy should not be used for Covid 19 related absence requests, as they are managed separately. Staff requiring time off for Covid 19 reasons should notify the Cover Officer within their school, and if they require advice they should contact their HR team.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Trust Board and the CEO** are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, ensuring there is a consistent approach to requesting and approving special leave.

The **Headteachers** are responsible for ensuring that staff and managers adhere to this procedure.

The **Human Resources Department** is responsible for ensuring that employees have access to this procedure and that managers and employees apply it fairly and consistently.

Managers and staff with supervisory or leadership responsibilities must ensure they implement this policy fairly and equitably, seeking guidance, clarification and support as and when required.

Employees are encouraged to read this procedure, adhere to the processes detailed and seek clarity from either their manager or the HR Department if they have any queries.

3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Education Alliance is committed to:

- Promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines
- Delivering high quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its student population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged

4. PRINCIPLES

We recognise that our staff are hardworking and committed. Our leaders do everything they can to ensure staff are supported effectively to reduce levels of stress and anxiety at work, and we start from

an assumption of professional trust and the belief that everyone seeks to do a good job. Our culture is one of openness, honesty and kindness and we are here to make the lives of students and staff better.

1265 hours are not a “target” to direct teaching staff up to, so where a colleague is not required to attend a particular directed event for a reason such as not teaching a particular year group, they should not be given directed work to “make up” for that time. Indeed, they should be trusted and allowed to use that time, however they choose, either in school or at home.

We acknowledge the diverse range of staff we employ provides us with opportunities to assess leave requests against the circumstances, rather than applying the same rules for all, regardless of their suitability. We will try to support leave requests where operationally feasible. This will involve managers making difficult decisions, balancing the needs of the schools with the needs of individuals. For example, where a member of staff wishes to attend special events at their child’s school, and they can make that time up, they may agree with their line manager to work those hours on an alternative and mutually agreeable date. Similarly, where a teacher has a free period and wishes to attend their child’s school event, or make a GP or dental appointment, they should be able to arrange to do this without making a special leave request.

A maximum of 5 days paid special leave and 10 days unpaid special leave can be granted within a rolling 12-month period (it is recognised that exceptional circumstances may be considered by Headteacher or CEO). Hospital, GP or emergency dental appointments will not be counted.

Staff can apply for special leave in the usual way (via e-days) for the following circumstances:

Circumstances	Possible Leave Per Request
Dependants	
To care for a dependant if they fall ill or are injured and there are no alternative arrangements that can be accessed at short notice.	Staff may require time to care for a dependent, and/or make arrangements for the future care of a dependent. Up to 3 days may be approved, with pay, depending on the circumstances.
To deal with an unexpected emergency incident that involves a dependant	It is expected that in such circumstances alternative arrangements are made where care is required, therefore up to 3 days paid special leave may be granted.
To make arrangements for the care of a dependant when arrangements are unexpectedly disrupted or terminated.	It is expected that in such circumstances alternative arrangements are made where care is required, therefore up to 3 days paid special leave may be granted.
Hospital/Dental/GP Appointments	
Hospital appointments.	Paid special leave will be granted.
Whilst it is expected that staff will arrange dental/GP appointments outside working hours, there may be occasions where this is not possible and it is therefore expected that should the need arise, such appointments are booked for either free periods, or at the end of the day, to minimise the impact on students and service delivery.	Staff should make every effort to make arrangements outside normal working hours, however, where this is not possible, and an appointment has been made near the start or end of the working day. Paid special leave will be granted.

Expectant mothers attending antenatal appointments (e.g. doctors, midwives and hospital appointments).	Reasonable time off from work, with pay, will be granted.
Partners accompanying an expectant mother to antenatal appointments (e.g. doctors, midwives and hospital appointments).	Staff should make efforts to make arrangements outside normal working hours, wherever possible, or at times which result in the least disruption for students, and paid special leave will be granted.
Adoption appointments / meetings as part of the Adoption process	Reasonable time off from work, with pay, will be granted.
Miscellaneous	
It is recognised that employees will, from time to time, experience acute domestic distress due to genuine emergencies at home, such as flood, fire or burglary, requiring an employee to take reasonable time off work to deal with the emergency. Special leave does not apply to planned events, such as domestic repairs, building work, installations, deliveries, and holidays.	Paid special leave may be granted whilst the immediate emergency is dealt with (usually 1 day may be granted with a maximum of 2 days per request).
When an employee is moving house, they can request special leave for the actual day they move.	A maximum of 1 day's paid special leave may be granted.
If an employee is suffering from domestic abuse, they may require time off to seek advice, counselling and support, including legal advice and police intervention. They may also require time off for relocation.	Paid leave will be granted, and employees are encouraged to arrange appointments at the start or finish of the day, wherever possible. Requests will be managed discreetly, sensitively and supportively.
Attendance at interviews.	Normally a maximum of 1 day's paid special leave may be granted, although it is recognised that there may be occasions where up to 2 days may be required (e.g. SLT recruitment).
Teachers may request up to 1 day for an induction into their new school.	Up to 1 day's paid special leave may be granted.
Employee's graduation ceremony.	A maximum of 1 day's paid special leave may be granted.
Son/daughter/partner's graduation ceremony.	A maximum of 1 day's paid special leave may be granted.

The legal definition for a dependant is 'spouse, child, parent or person living in the same household' under the Employment Relations Act 1999. This does not include an employee, tenant, lodger or boarder.

'Child' for the purpose of special leave, is a child under the age 16, unless she/he has a disability, in which case there is no age restriction.

5. REQUESTING SPECIAL LEAVE

Employees should initially discuss their request with their line manager (wherever possible) and submit a special leave request to their HR Department. It is helpful for the employee to detail as much

as they can on the booking request as a decision will be made on the information submitted. However, if the issue is highly sensitive, the employee may wish to discuss the matter with their HR Department or the Trust Director of HR and Governance. A special leave request must be completed in all circumstances, and it should be submitted prior to the leave being taken, to enable the special leave request to be considered and for a decision to be made. It is acknowledged that a serious emergency issue may result in a retrospective request being submitted. The employee must follow the normal processes for notification of absence as a minimum prior to taking special leave.

Special leave is discretionary; therefore, it is vital that employees do not assume that their request will be approved or paid.

Special leave requests will be dealt with fairly, consistently and promptly and once a decision is made the employee, their line manager and the Cover Officer will be notified.

6. CONDUCT

If an employee is found to have deliberately misused this policy, the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

7. WITHDRAWING A REQUEST

If an employee wishes to withdraw their request, they should speak to their line manager and the HR Department to withdraw their request.

8. APPEALS

If an employee believes they have been unfairly treated, they may wish to appeal against the decision regarding their special leave request. The employee must submit their appeal to the Director of HR and Governance within 5 working days of receipt of the decision, clearly stating the grounds for their appeal.

If the Headteacher has not been involved in the initial decision, they can review the original documentation and decision alongside any additional information submitted and will either make a decision and write to the employee or will arrange an appeal meeting. If the Headteacher has been involved in the initial decision, the appeal may be escalated to another senior leader as appropriate.

The outcome of the appeal is final.

9. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICY

Effectiveness and compliance of this procedure will be monitored on an annual basis by the HR Department.

10. REVIEW

This Procedure will be reviewed within 2 years of the date of implementation with trade unions via the JCC.