



OWLS Academy Trust

Leave of Absence Policy

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Next Review Due	

Policy developed by



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This policy sets out the approach all schools within the OWLS Academy Trust will take when dealing with requests for leave of absence. It does not form part of employee's terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of the Governing Body.

In the interests of fairness and consistency, the granting of leave of absence within the Academy Trust will be made within the framework of this policy, which adheres to specific legislation and relevant conditions of services. For teachers these can be found in the Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales (Burgundy Book) and for support staff in the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services (Green Book).

Leave of absence will normally be granted on the basis of a twelve month period: For teachers this will be 1 April to 31 March, as specified in the Burgundy Book; for support staff this is a rolling twelve month period.

This policy applies to all staff employed by The OWLS Academy Trust. Throughout this policy, unless indicated otherwise, all references to 'Head Teacher' include the Executive Head Teacher.



Procedure

The Academy Trust has delegated the authority to grant leave of absence to the Head Teacher / Local Governing Body depending on the circumstances of the request.

Employees requesting leave of absence must complete the Leave Request Form and submit it in advance of the proposed absence date(s) to the Head Teacher, giving as much notice as possible and stating the reason for the request and the date(s). Where it is not possible to submit the request in advance, due to its urgent nature, the employee must follow the normal reporting procedures as apply for the first day of sickness absence. The Leave Request Form must then be submitted for consideration retrospectively.

Appeals against a decision about leave of absence must be made in accordance with the Appeals Procedure of the OWLS Academy Trust.

If, following the refusal of a request for leave of absence, an employee is subsequently absent (for any reason) the absence will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action being taken if appropriate.



Emergency & Compassionate Leave

Employees are entitled by law to take reasonable unpaid time off work to deal with unexpected or sudden emergencies involving dependents, arising in circumstances such as death, sudden illness, injury or assault of a dependent, or the sudden disruption of dependents care arrangements.

Leave to deal with the immediate demands of the emergency will be granted. This will normally be 1, and no more than 2 days. Situations that qualify for additional leave will be considered as compassionate leave.

The Head Teacher may grant up to a further 3 days as compassionate leave (making a maximum of 5 days leave in total). Such additional leave will normally be confined to cases of bereavement or extreme dependent care situations that require the employee's personal attention.

A maximum of 5 day(s) emergency and compassionate leave will be paid leave. Leave granted in excess of 5 days will be unpaid.



Domestic Reasons for Leave of Absence

Employees should normally make arrangements for domestic matters outside normal working days. Where this is not practicable paid leave of absence of up to 1 day may be granted for domestic reasons (urgent or otherwise). Examples of leave under this provision may include moving house and special events to attend a close relative's wedding or civil partnership, or graduation.

Other requests for leave of absence (for example for holidays) during term times will not normally be granted, but may be considered in exceptional circumstances. The leave request form must be submitted and agreement received before the employee makes arrangements to take the leave. Any leave granted will be unpaid.



Leave of Absence for Training & Study

Where an employee undertakes study which directly relates to their role in the Academy, furthers their professional development, and/or is funded by the Academy, paid leave may be granted for examination attendance.



Medical & Welfare Appointments

It is expected that medical appointments will be arranged outside of working hours where practicable. For example, visits to a doctor, dentist, optician, clinic and hospital. Where it is not possible to obtain appointments outside of working hours, paid leave of absence may be granted. Proof of the appointment will be required.



Statutory Leave

This section identifies circumstances where there is a requirement to grant leave to an employee. Unless otherwise stated, whether the leave is paid or unpaid is at the discretion of the Governing Body.

Redundancy – Support for Job Seeking

Employees who are selected for compulsory redundancy will be granted reasonable time off work with pay during their notice period to look for new employment or to make arrangements for training for future employment. (See Organisational Change Policy for details)

Jury Service / Formal Attendance at a Court Hearing

Paid leave will be granted to employees undertaking jury service or required to attend court, or a Tribunal, as a witness on behalf of the Crown, Police or Defence, or for either side in a civil case. Employees must claim the attendance allowance or loss of earnings paid by the Court. The amount received will be deducted from the employee's full pay.

Public Service Duties

Employees undertaking a combination of public service duties may be allowed an aggregate total of up to 10 days paid or unpaid leave of absence for public service duties. The amount of time, and the decision regarding pay will be at the discretion of the Head Teacher / Governing Body, based on how long the duties might take, the amount of time the employee may already have had for public service duties, the nature of the public service duty and how the time off might affect the Academy.

Where paid leave is granted, and where applicable, employees must claim any financial loss allowance directly and the amount received will be deducted from the employee's full pay.

Where unpaid leave is granted, and where applicable, employees may claim the financial loss allowance directly.

Magisterial Duties (Justice of the Peace)

Employees who undertake magisterial duties will be granted unpaid leave of absence up to a maximum of 13 days or 26 half days a year.

Employees may claim the financial loss allowance directly.

Trade Union Duties

Leave in connection with recognised union duties is covered by ACAS guidance and the Academy Trust's Trade Union and Recognition Facilities Agreement.

Reserve Forces

It is recognised that some employees will wish to volunteer to serve in Britain's Reserve Forces. The Academy will consider Leave of Absence for the reserve forces with reference to the Leicestershire County Council guidance.

Religious Observance and Beliefs

Any requests for annual leave or working additional hours during the school day or school closure periods, or unpaid leave for the purpose of religious observance, will be granted, unless there are exceptional circumstances which make it impossible for the employee to be released.



Other Leave

Any other requests for leave which are not referred to in this policy should be referred to the Head Teacher in the first instance. Where applicable these will be considered with reference to the relevant conditions of service for teaching or support staff.