



Leave of Absence Policy

Approved by:	Board of Directors	Date: 22/03/2023
Last reviewed:	20/03/2019	
Next review due by:	22/03/2026	

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Leave of absence is not an entitlement to a number of days off per year. The purpose of leave of absence is to ensure that employees are able to manage particular circumstances that may occur in their lives where it is not possible to arrange these during school holiday periods and time off may be required. It is expected that requests will only be made for leave of absence in term time once all other possible alternatives have been considered.
- 1.2 The amount of leave of absence granted and reasons for doing so can differ between teaching and support staff and from one employee to another. It is also important to bear in mind that such entitlements must be considered against the overall working arrangements of the different categories of staff and, in particular, the need for arrangements to be made to cover such absences. [An employee's attendance and disciplinary record may also be taken into consideration where appropriate.]
- 1.3 All periods of leave of absence will be recorded and considered on a rolling 12-month basis.
- 1.4 Any employee who is suspected to have abused the provision for time off may be subject to disciplinary proceedings in line with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.5 This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. We may also vary this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

2 Scope and purpose of this policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees within The Rainbow Multi Academy Trust understand how requests for leave will be considered by Senior Leadership. It will also ensure that staff across the Trust are treated in a fair and consistent way when requesting time away from work.
- 2.2 The procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers.
- 2.3 This procedure is used to deal with requests for absence from work for the reasons contained within this policy. It does not cover requests for flexible working, maternity, paternity, parental or adoption leave.

3 Process for making requests

- 3.1 The Rainbow Multi Academy Trust recognises that it may not always be possible to request certain types of leave in advance, for example, bereavement leave, compassionate leave and leave in emergency situations. Where it is not possible to request leave in advance, employees should contact the Headteacher as soon as possible to tell them the reason for the absence and the number of days leave that they anticipate being absent. The Headteacher will then discuss the situation with you and agree next steps.

- 3.2 Employees should ensure that other than in emergency situations they make their request for leave in advance to enable the Trust to consider the request carefully and to ensure that cover can be implemented where required.
- 3.3 Employees should make a request by completing the Request for Leave of Absence Form and giving it to the Headteacher. The form will be completed and returned to you when a decision has been made. Please note that in all cases the decision to agree to a request will be at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher. Where a request is refused, the form will include written reasons for the refusal and if you are dissatisfied with the decision, you may make a complaint under our Grievance Procedure.
- 3.4 Where it is possible to do so in advance or when you return to work after taking time off under this policy, we might ask you to provide evidence for your reasons for taking the time off.

4 Parental Leave, Parental Bereavement Leave, other bereavement leave and compassionate leave

4.1 Parental Leave

The law recognises and we respect that there will be occasions when working parents wish to take time off work to care for or spend time with their child or children. Employees with at least one year's continuous service to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave in respect of each child. Information on Shared Parental Leave can be found in the Trust's Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental and Shared Leave policy.

Bereavement Leave

- 4.2 Up to 2 weeks parental bereavement leave (PBL) for parents, with parental responsibility, to help them cope with the death of a child under the age of 18 years will be granted. This includes birth parents, adoptive parents, individuals who are fostering to adopt, legal guardians, most foster parents, (excluding short term and emergency foster care), intended parents under a surrogacy arrangement, looks after the child in your home other than a paid carer and have done so for at least 4 weeks and parents who suffer a still birth after 24 weeks or more into pregnancy. There is no minimum service requirement for eligibility to take this leave.

Employees may be entitled to statutory parental bereavement pay (SPBP) or parental bereavement leave if they meet the below criteria:

- Have 26 weeks continuous service with The Rainbow Multi Academy Trust ending on the Saturday before the child died;
- Have normal weekly earnings in the eight weeks up to the week before the child death that are not less than the lower earnings limit for NI contributions

- 4.3 Parental bereavement leave will be granted as a single block of 2 weeks or 2 separate blocks of 1 week at different times. This leave must be taken within 56 weeks of the loss of the child.

- 4.4 If parental bereavement leave is taken straight away and during the first 8 weeks after the child has died, there is no requirement to give advance notice of PBL. However, employees should make contact with the academy to inform of the reason for their absence.
- 4.5 Any parental bereavement leave taken after the initial period will be subject to at least 1 weeks' notice to the employer.
- 4.6 Employees taking parental bereavement will be asked to produce a written declaration to confirm they are entitled to the leave.
- 4.7 Entitlement to maternity leave and pay is not affected if a child has died or been stillborn. Maternity leave can be taken in addition to parental bereavement leave.

Other bereavement leave and compassionate leave

- 4.8 Up to 3 days paid bereavement leave may be granted to help employees cope with the death of a close relative, to deal with necessary arrangements and attend their funeral.
- 4.9 Up to 2 weeks paid compassionate leave may be granted to help employees where they need to deal with necessary arrangements for or assist a close relative who is seriously or critically ill. This does not apply in the case of domestic emergencies, or where normal caring arrangements have been disrupted. We will consider compassionate leave for other traumatic events or difficult personal circumstances on an individual case by case basis.
- 4.10 Bereavement leave and compassionate leave of 2 weeks paid and up to 6 weeks unpaid, may be granted in relation to a spouse, civil partner or partner, stepchild, grandchild, parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, brother or sister, stepbrother or stepsister, or brother or sister-in-law. Children are covered separately in the parental bereavement section above. The Headteacher may exercise their discretion in relation to any other relative or close friend, depending on the circumstances. When agreeing the amount of leave the Academy will take into account the circumstances and relationship of the employee to the deceased/seriously or critically ill.
- 4.11 For terminal illness of a partner, child, near relative or close friend where the employee is the main carer, 2 weeks' paid compassionate leave will be awarded and is to be taken when needed and appropriate. Up to 12 weeks' unpaid leave can also be taken when needed. You should speak to your Head about the appropriate time for this to be taken.

5 Dependants (Time off for)

- 5.1 The law recognises and we respect that there will be occasions when you will need to take time off work to deal with unexpected events involving one of your dependants. All employees have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work when it is necessary to:

- 5.1.1 provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
- 5.1.2 make longer-term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- 5.1.3 take action required in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- 5.1.4 deal with the unexpected disruption, termination or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependant; and/or
- 5.1.5 deal with an unexpected incident involving their child during school hours (or those of another educational establishment).

The Trust will grant 5 days paid leave on a rolling 12 month basis. Part time staff will have a pro rata entitlement based on their contracted hours. This leave may be taken in half or full days depending on individual circumstances,

5.2 A dependant for the purposes of this policy is:

- 5.2.1 an employee's spouse, civil partner, parent or child;
- 5.2.2 a person who lives in the same household as the employee, but who is not their tenant, lodger, boarder or employee; or
- 5.2.3 anyone else who reasonably relies on the employee to provide assistance, make arrangements or take action of the kind referred to in paragraph 5.1.

5.3 Employees are only entitled to take reasonable time off under this policy where there is an immediate crisis and it is necessary to take action in relation to a dependent. This will depend on the nature of the problem, the closeness of the relationship between you, and whether someone else is available to assist. Reasonable time off will not normally be more than 1-2 days. However, we will always consider each set of circumstances on their facts.

5.4 If you know well in advance that a problem might arise or you wish to take time off to care for a dependant yourself, rather than make alternative arrangements, this policy will not apply. You should make other arrangements to deal with such situations.

5.5 You will only be entitled to time off under this policy if, as soon as is reasonably practicable, you tell the Headteacher:

- 5.5.1 the reason for your absence; and
- 5.5.2 how long you expect to be away from work.

5.6 If you fail to notify us as required by paragraph 5.5, you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under our Disciplinary Procedure for taking unauthorised time off.

6 Domestic, Personal and Family Reasons

6.1 Up to 2 days unpaid leave of absence may be granted for domestic reasons (urgent or otherwise). It is expected that those employees who have the option to choose when to take their leave, will use their annual leave entitlement before making a request for domestic reasons.

6.2 Leave to be granted under this provision may include the following, but the Headteacher will consider each set of circumstances on the facts, including the nature of the request, the relationship of the employee to the person the request relates to where applicable and whether the event or incident is an exceptional circumstance that could not be arranged outside of normal working hours:

6.2.1 Moving house

Employees should normally make arrangements for moving house outside normal working days. Where this is not possible, up to a day's leave may be granted by the Trust.

6.2.2 Wedding or civil partnership ceremony

Employees should make their own wedding/civil partnership arrangements outside normal working days. Leave may be granted by the Trust to enable employees to attend a close relative's or close friend's wedding or civil partnership ceremony where this is held during normal working hours.

6.2.3 Other special events

The Trust recognises that in exceptional circumstances there will be special events in an employee's family life that cannot be arranged outside normal working days e.g. graduation ceremonies, school productions, sports day. The Academy will consider requests for time off for these purposes.

6.2.4 Urgent domestic business

This would enable school staff to deal with emergencies of a domestic nature e.g. flooding, structural damage, burglary etc.

6.3 Special absence for other personal or family reasons, e.g. to visit relatives who live abroad or to nurse a sick person may also be considered in exceptional circumstances, A holiday will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

6.4 Plans or arrangements for the time off should not be made by the employee until they have received a decision in relation to their request and their request is granted, if appropriate.

7 Health and Welfare

7.1 Employees are expected to make routine medical appointments on their non-working days/outside working hours. Where it can be demonstrated that it is not possible to obtain appointments outside of working hours the Trust may grant paid or unpaid

leave on a case-by-case basis for time off for reasons of the personal health and welfare of an employee. For example, visits to a doctor, dentist, optician, clinic and hospital. The Trust will expect employees to provide evidence of their requirement to attend any medical appointments.

- 7.2 All employees are encouraged to attend medical appointments for preventative screening, such as smear tests, mammograms, prostate examinations. These appointments are covered by this policy.
- 7.3 Employees who donate blood or other medical tissue are encouraged to do this outside of working hours. Where this is not possible requests for time off to attend these appointments will be considered under this policy.
- 7.4 Requests for time off for medical appointments in relation to adoption, pregnancy or a disability will be considered under the Trust's policy that covers these circumstances.
- 7.5 Employees who are planning to undergo a course of fertility treatment or are planning to become a surrogate should discuss with the Headteacher, their treatment plan and requirements for time off. The Trust will consider these cases based on the individual circumstances.

8 Interviews

- 8.1 The Trust accepts that employees will have little or no control over when an interview will take place and therefore may grant days off for interviews with pay but will review on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.2 Employees must inform their Headteacher of the time, date and duration of the interview as soon as they have this information so that the request can be considered promptly to avoid disappointment. The Trust can ask employees to provide evidence of interview.

9 Time off for public duties

- 9.1 The Trust supports employees to perform certain public duties that they may be committed to undertake and will give them time off to do so where it does not conflict with the operational needs of the Trust. The Trust is not obliged to grant employees paid leave for these purposes. The circumstances in which we are prepared to do so are set out below.

Jury service

- 9.2 Employees should tell the Headteacher as soon as they are summoned for jury service and provide a copy of the summons if requested.
- 9.3 Depending on the demands of the Trust, we may request that the employee applies to be excused from or have the jury service deferred.
- 9.4 The Trust is not required to pay employees while they are absent on jury service. You will be advised at court of the expenses and loss of earnings that you can claim. We

pay basic pay to employees who are doing jury service [less any amounts you can claim from the court for lost earnings] for up to 5 working days. Payment for time off beyond 5 working days may be paid at our discretion.

Voluntary public service

- 9.5 Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to carry out certain public duties.
- 9.6 Public service duties include service as a:
 - 9.6.1 Tribunal member
 - 9.6.2 Magistrate
 - 9.6.3 Local councillor
 - 9.6.4 Member of an NHS Trust
 - 9.6.5 Prison visitor
 - 9.6.6 Lay visitor to police stations
 - 9.6.7 School/Academy/Trust governor
- 9.7 If you are unsure whether a public service that you perform is covered by this policy you should speak to the Headteacher.
- 9.8 As soon as you are aware that you will require time off for performance of a public service you should notify the Headteacher in writing, providing full details of the time off that is being requested and the reasons for your request.
- 9.9 The Trust will agree to requests for time off to undertake public duties wherever reasonably possible [having regard to the criteria set out in this policy]. If it is not possible to accept a request you will be given written reasons for our decision.
- 9.10 Each request for time off will be considered on its merits, in the circumstances in which it is made including:
 - 9.10.1 Whether the activity is reasonable in relation to your employment.
 - 9.10.2 How much time off is reasonably required for the duty in question.
 - 9.10.3 How much time off you have already taken for the public duty in question.
 - 9.10.4 How your absence will affect the Trust.

Reserve forces duties

- 9.11 We are aware that employees who are members of the Reserve Forces (the Territorial Army, Royal Navy Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve or Royal Auxiliary Air Force) may be

called-up at any time to be used on full-time operations and will be expected to attend regular training.

- 9.12 Employees who need time off for reservist commitments are expected to use existing holiday entitlement. In exceptional circumstances we may grant additional unpaid leave in order for these commitments to be met.
- 9.13 Whilst we will do everything possible to meet your request for leave it may not always be possible for operational reasons. If we receive notice that you have been called-up there may be occasions when we need to apply to an adjudication officer for the notice to be deferred or revoked if your absence would cause serious harm to the Trust (which could not be prevented by the grant of financial assistance).
- 9.14 Once your military service has ended you may submit a written application for reinstatement to your employment. This should be made by the third Monday following the end of your military service and you should notify us of the date on which you will be available to restart work.
- 9.15 If it is not reasonable and practicable to reinstate you into your former employment, we will offer you the most favourable occupation on the most favourable terms and conditions which are reasonable and practicable.

10 Professional Examination Duties

- 10.1 The Trust will authorise leave for teachers to undertake professional duties in connection with GCSE, GCE A Level and other public examinations in line with the provisions of the Burgundy Book (Section 6). This also gives details of how the school may be reimbursed when a teacher has to be released.

11 Redundancy – support for job seeking

- 11.1 Employees who have been identified by the Trust as redundant will be allowed reasonable time off during working hours to support them with securing alternative employment or to arrange training for future employment. The amount of time-off is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Each case will be considered on its merits.

12 Religious Festivals

- 12.1 Employees whose religious beliefs require the observance of festivals which fall on days upon which they would normally work, may be granted up to 4 days a year unpaid.
- 12.2 Employees must inform the Headteacher at the start of each academic year of any dates that they may need to request time off for. Where this is not possible employees should provide this information as soon as they are able to and no later than 10 working days before the date of the requested leave.

13 Sabbaticals

- 13.1 Sabbaticals should be applied for in writing giving one terms' notice. All sabbaticals should be for a fixed period and will have a review meeting prior to the end of the fixed term. It may be extended at the discretion of the Head/ CEO/Board of Directors. If a sabbatical is

granted, this would be unpaid and the contract of employment will be suspended for the period of the sabbatical. No holidays may be accrued during this time.

14 Time off for trade union duties and activities

- 14.1 The Trust wishes to support employees with time off for trade union activities.
- 14.2 Trade union representatives are entitled to reasonable paid time off to carry out trade union duties and activities, to undergo training and to accompany a worker to a grievance or disciplinary hearing. A trade union representative means an officer of the union or an employee elected or appointed in accordance with the union's rules to be a representative of union members in the workplace.
- 14.3 Union learning representatives have a right to reasonable paid time off to perform their duties and undergo training.
- 14.4 Union members have a right to reasonable unpaid time off when taking part in trade union activities.
- 14.5 Employees should be aware that there will be occasions where, for operational reasons, or where the Trust believe the time off to not be reasonable, requests can be declined. Each application for time off will be assessed on its merits and the determination will ultimately depend on the needs of the Trust at the time of the request and consideration will be given to:
 - 14.5.1 the nature and timing of the request;
 - 14.5.2 the amount of time off previously granted or planned for the future;
 - 14.5.3 the number of representatives or members seeking time off within a given period; and
 - 14.5.4 the legitimate need of the union representative or union learning representative to discharge their functions.
- 14.6 If a union representative, union learning representative or union member is aggrieved by a decision to refuse time off to undertake their duties, training or activities, they should raise the matter in accordance with Trust's grievance procedure.

Time off for union representatives - duties

- 14.7 Employees who are representatives of an independent trade union recognised by the Trust for collective bargaining are permitted reasonable paid time off to:
 - 14.7.1 carry out their duties in connection with:
 - (a) negotiations in relation to collective bargaining
 - (b) the performance of other permitted functions related to collective bargaining;

- (c) information and consultation over collective redundancies or TUPE transfers; and
 - (d) agreeing new terms for the workforce following a TUPE transfer in an insolvency situation;
- 14.7.2 undergo training in aspects of industrial relations relevant to those duties which has been approved by the Trades Union Congress or by the trade union;
- 14.7.3 accompany a fellow worker to a disciplinary or grievance hearing.

Time off for union members - activities and learning

- 14.8 An employee who is a member of an independent trade union recognised by the Trust in relation to their position is permitted reasonable unpaid time off to take part in a trade union activity or to consult a union learning representative. Examples of trade union activities include voting in union elections and attending relevant workplace union meetings, but not participating in industrial action.

Time off for union learning representatives

- 14.9 Employees who are members of an independent trade union recognised by the Trust can take reasonable time off to perform duties as a union learning representative, providing that the union has given the Trust notice in writing that the employee is a learning representative of the trade union and that the representative is, or will be, sufficiently trained to carry out the learning representative duties. The purpose of a learning representative includes arranging training, promoting the value of training and analysing training needs.

Requesting time off - trade union representatives and learning representatives

- 14.10 Employees that are trade union representatives or trade union learning representatives should ensure that their trade union has provided written confirmation of this to the Trust.
- 14.11 The Headteacher will meet with the employee to discuss their union role and the amount of time and facilities that the Trust believes to be reasonable to enable the employee to carry out their union duties.
- 14.12 When making a request for time off the employee should provide as much notice as possible and give further details, such as the location, timing, duration and purpose of the time off. The Headteacher will look at each request and the circumstances before deciding what is reasonable.
- 14.13 Both parties accept the need to be flexible within this process and recognise their duties and obligations to the Trust. The parties will seek to agree a mutually convenient time for the duties or activities, with minimum disruption to teaching and learning. Where possible, the recognised trade union(s) will arrange workplace meetings towards the end of the working day or near break times.

Requesting time off - trade union members

- 14.14 Employees who want to request time off for trade union activities during working hours should make a request to the Headteacher, giving as much notice as possible and provide further details, such as the location, timing, duration and purpose of the time off. The Headteacher will look at each request and the circumstances before deciding what is reasonable.

15 Retention and data protection

- 15.1 Through the application of this policy, the Trust may collect, process and store personal data in accordance with our data protection policy. We will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Legislation (being (i) the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (unless and until the GDPR is no longer directly applicable in the UK) and any national implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998, including the Data Protection Act 2018). Records will be kept in accordance with our [Workforce Privacy Notice], our [Retention and Destruction Policy] and in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Legislation.

16 Review of policy

- 16.1 This policy is reviewed every 3 years by the Board of Directors



Request for Leave

Please return this form to the Head. A copy will be kept in school and a copy will be sent to HR.

Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside of your working hours.

Please attach any appointment cards/letters and documentation that support your request.

Name:	Date/s of requested leave:
Reason for request:	
Cover arrangements if relevant:	
Number of days leave of absence already granted in the 12-month period:	
Head's approval <input type="checkbox"/> This request has been authorised <input type="checkbox"/> The leave is unpaid <input type="checkbox"/> The leave is paid <input type="checkbox"/> You are required to make up the hours <input type="checkbox"/> This request has not been authorised due to the following reason: Signed..... Date.....	