

Leave of Absence Policy

Greenside School



Greenside School
Learning Achieving Together

Approved by: Resources

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Next review due by: May 2027

Scope

This policy applies to all employees employed directly by the school. It is based on the Hertfordshire model policy, which was subject to consultation with Trade Unions. This version is designed to support the effective operational capacity of Greenside school. It does not form part of anybody's contract of employment and may be varied.

Introduction

We recognise that there will be occasions where employees are faced with emergency situations where they may need to take time off work.

This policy explains the right to take time off work to manage unexpected or sudden problems, personal medical appointments and taking a reasonable amount of time for issues relating to a dependant in order to make any necessary longer-term arrangements.

This policy supports a transparency of reasons for absence. Allowing a clearer framework that is fair to each individual staff member, while being supportive to a school that relies on consistent staffing.

The policy also outlines other circumstances in which a colleague may need to request special leave of absence.

This policy does not include sickness absence as this is outlined in our Health and Attendance Policy.

Roles, responsibilities and procedure

Employees should:

- discuss any application for special leave with their line manager where necessary
- submit special leave requests to the Headteacher using the appropriate documentation (and submit supporting information)
- give at least two weeks' notice before the start of any leave requested as far as possible
- note that the granting of leave is not an automatic entitlement

Governors will:

- Support the Headteacher in decisions that do not clearer fit with the policy and need further discussion

The Head teacher will:

- arrange a meeting with the individual to discuss the request if necessary
- make absence decisions if there is an appeal on a decision made by Office Manager.
- support Office Manager in decisions that do not fit the policy

Office Manager will:

- authorise/unauthorise absence based on the information provided in this policy
- speak to the Headteacher for any clarity of requests that do not fit within this policy
- ensure that requests are dealt with sympathetically, compassionately, confidentially and in accordance with this guidance

The school administration team will:

- Communicate decisions for requests for absence in a timely manner.

- keep a confidential record of leaves on the personal profiles of a employees Arbor account

Overview of system

At Greenside it is accepted that all employees have different needs. Previous policies have been unclear and felt unfair to some, while appearing favourable to others. Due to the impact of absence to the school overall, a system of fairness has been developed.

All staff members may have a maximum of 3 paid authorised absence days an academic year and two further unpaid authorised days of absence (Total of 5 days). The reasons authorised are described below. There are other reasons for absence, which are protected. These are also described below– these would not count towards a employees 5 days.

Days will be calculated based on an employees contracted hours. For a fulltime employee this would be 5 days. If a staff member works 4 days a week, the allowance would be 4 days etc.

Employees will accumulate authorised absence for up to 5 days. This could be, for example, two days dependent care, one day medical appointment etc. This would leave 2 unpaid days for the rest of the academic year. There is flexibility to their use. But a maximum to their number.

Staff who request leave when they reached their 5 days maximum are to be unauthorised. Which would automatically be unpaid and can lead to disciplinary action, as per the school's staff disciplinary policy.

Authorised reason for absence

Dependent leave

Under the Employment Rights Act 1996 employees are entitled to take a 'reasonable' amount of leave during working hours to take 'necessary' action to deal with illness, injury, birth or death of a dependant and to make longer term arrangements.

Where additional leave is required, e.g. if a child/dependent is seriously ill for a longer term, the Head will consider additional leave requests sympathetically and grant unpaid leave or consider other options such as time owing, flexi-time or annual leave where appropriate. Please see below exceptional reasons for absence for more detail.

In the event of an unplanned closure of a child's school (with less than 24 hours' notice) where it is not possible for alternative provision of care to be made, leave will be authorised

Medical appointments and medical treatment (including dental)

Where possible, non-emergency appointments should be arranged during non-working hours.

If a doctor's/hospital appointment has to take place during working hours, reasonable time off will be authorised for the employee or for attendance with their child/dependent. However, every effort should be made to arrange appointments at either the beginning or end of the school day to minimise disruption.

Employees should note that, if a hospital appointment is made during normal working hours, the employee will be asked to provide a copy of the appointment letter/card to confirm the details.

Emergency household / domestic leave

Leave may be requested where circumstances are unforeseen and are unavoidable which require the employee's personal and urgent attention, e.g. securing their property following a burglary or a boiler breakdown in a household with vulnerable people.

Other authorised reasons

Leave with may be authorised for other circumstances, including:

- visit to a solicitor
- car breakdown
- travel problems due to snow
- travel problems due to industrial action
- school of employee's child is closed due to snow
- illness of child minder
- graduation ceremony of a child or partner
- to attend a royal garden party
- to represent a sport at county or national/international level
- to watch a child participate in a national or international music or sporting event
- to assist an elderly dependant move residence.
- Attending assemblies, sports days and other school based events

Reasons for absence outside of 5 days

The following reasons are separate to the 5 days and the time given is dependent on the reason and time needed. Each situation is decided independently of other decisions at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Leave for employees experiencing domestic abuse

Paid leave of ten days will be offered to any employee experiencing domestic abuse in addition to other leave provisions. This will assist with having to take time off for any relevant appointments. Further leave of absence will be considered for counselling, recovery or respite from the perpetrator

Unpaid carer's Leave

Employees are entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a dependent who had:

- A physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
- A disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- Care needs because of their old age
- The dependent does not have to be a family member. It can be anyone who relies on them for care

Employees can take up to one week (A week means the length of time they usually work over 7 days). They can either take a whole week off or take individual days or half days throughout the year

Attending a job interview

Employees will be allowed reasonable paid time off to attend job interviews. If the interview is in the afternoon, the employee will be required to attend work as normal in the morning where this is reasonably possible.

If part of the interview process requires the teacher to visit the school, leave with pay will be granted.

Accompanying a colleague to a disciplinary or grievance hearing

Reasonable paid time off will be granted to accompany a fellow employee to their disciplinary or grievance hearing.

Driving test

Paid time off for half a day on one occasion will be authorised.

Moving house

Employees are encouraged to make arrangements for moving house at the weekend or during a school holiday. Where this is not possible, one day paid leave of absence will be granted in order to move to a new house (No more than 2 separate days within a 12 month period).

Volunteer members of the British armed forces

Employees who are volunteer members of the armed forces will be granted up to two weeks' paid leave of absence in any school year to attend summer camp if it is not possible to arrange this during a normal school holiday

Leave for religious observance / festivals

If the timing of an employee's religious festival falls during a normal school day, reasonable time off for religious festivals will be granted.

Employees should give as much notice as possible to enable cover arrangements to be made.

Career break

Greenside School recognises that from time to time employees may benefit from a longer period of absence from work. All employees with six months' service will be eligible to apply for a career break which can be used for:

- childcare
- caring for an elderly person
- extended study leave
- career development
- travel
- any other reasonable purposes agreed with the Headteacher.

Employees should put their request in writing to the Headteacher, setting out clear reasons for the break, specify the length of the absence, why it would be beneficial to them and what benefit there is to the school.

Where a career break is approved for one year or less, the employee will return to their previous job as far as is reasonable. Where a career break is approved for more than a year, the employee will return to either the same job or a similar job on the same terms and conditions. The date of return from the career break should be agreed as part of the application process.

The employee and Headteacher should meet a month before the end of the career break (three months if the break is more than a year) to discuss and confirm arrangements to return to work.

If an employee wants to return to work earlier than agreed, they should give eight weeks' notice and arrange to meet the Headteacher. Where an employee decides not to return at the end of their career break, they should inform the Headteacher as soon as possible.

Public duties

Paid leave of absence of 5 days in a school year may be approved to undertake public duties and necessary training, including: as a magistrate, JP, school or college governor.

Trade Union Duties

Trade union reps and members will be entitled to 3 days paid time off for trade union duties.

Jury Service

Jury service/attendance at court/employment tribunal

Employees called for jury service should inform the Headteacher, in writing, as soon as possible in order for cover arrangements to be made in time.

Employees should check with the Headteacher if they will be able to return to work if released from jury service for part days, for full days or early if they are not required for the full two weeks.

If a case is likely to last for more than two weeks, the juror will be asked whether this is likely to cause them any difficulties. Employees should check with the Headteacher if possible before responding to that question.

Employees will be paid their normal salary during their time in jury service. They are, however, required to claim the maximum loss of earnings allowance from the Jury Central Summoning Bureau and submit the payment to HR/payroll.

Employees who are required to attend court as a witness will be allowed paid leave of absence.

Election Duties

Employees will be authorised one day's leave of absence for taking part in election duties as presiding officers, counting assistants or poll clerks in parliamentary, county or district council elections.

Leave of exceptional nature

This can include death of family member, or a member who is seriously ill. The employee recovering from a significant health challenge, for example Cancer.

Exceptional Nature (Compassionate Leave) Pay

Greenside staff can have up to 5 days paid leave authorised for other reasons. This is compassionate leave. Time off after 5 days will be granted for those with authorised reasons but will be unpaid.

Depending on the role in the school. Staff could work flexibly during times of absence. For example if a role allows to work from home. This can be discussed with the Headteacher.