



Policy for Discretionary Leave of Absence

Rookery School

September 2025

Approved by	Date
Next review date :September 2026	

1. Introduction.

- 1.1 The Board of Trustees recognises that the success of the Academy depends upon the contribution of all staff and gives full acknowledgement that a fair and effective policy on Discretionary Leave of Absence contributes to the maintenance of staff morale and thereby our success.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the Discretionary Leave of Absence provisions to make sure requests for leave of absence are dealt with in a fair and consistent way. The operational needs of the Academy are the priority and therefore there will be times when the Headteacher has to refuse a request for leave. The examples of discretionary leave given are non-exhaustive and where circumstances arise which are not identified in this policy the Headteacher has authority to make the decision on whether or not leave is granted, and whether it is with or without pay. If the Headteacher requests extended leave of the Headteacher must inform the Chair of the Board of Trustees .
- 1.3 This policy also sets out what a staff member must do if you have to take leave of absence because you have a personal emergency.
- 1.4 The statutory (required by law) leave of absence provisions are generally outside the scope of this policy though they are noted where they bear a relationship to discretionary leave of absence. If a staff member needs clarification on whether the leave of absence that they want to take is statutory or discretionary then they must speak to the HR officer.
- 1.5 This policy does not cover leave which is included in the policies and procedures listed below:
 - Annual leave
 - Maternity/Paternity/Parental/adoption leave
 - Flexible working
 - Sickness absence
 - Redundancy
 - Training and Study leave
 - Trade Union and Facilities time
- 1.6 This policy applies to all teaching and support staff. This policy is non-contractual and may be amended at any time.

2. Procedure and Decision Making

- 2.1 Except in emergencies, authorisation to take leave of absence must be requested from the Headteacher as soon as the need for the leave is known using the form at 3 1. Where the leave of absence request is made

by the Head Teacher, the request should be made to the Chair of the Board of Trustees .

- 2.2 Requests for leave of absence and approval/refusal of such will be dealt with in a fair and consistent manner, having regard to the nature of the request, statutory obligations, pupil/student educational provision, service needs, eligibility, any previous requests and the degree of flexibility that you already have in your current working arrangements. Non-emergency leave of absence must not be taken unless and until it has been approved on the form at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Where an **emergency** arises the member of staff must notify the Headteacher by telephone and also confirmed in writing as soon as is reasonably practicable, giving the reason for the absence and how long you expect to be absent from work to deal personally with the emergency which cannot be dealt with by anyone else.
- 2.4 Where a leave of absence request is refused there is right of appeal. Any appeal must be made on the form at Appendix 1 within 5 days of receipt of the leave of absence decision. The appeal will be considered by the Headteacher whose decision is final.
- 2.5 A confidential record of requests for leave of absence and whether or not the request was granted will be maintained. Members of the LGPS scheme will be informed about the impact of taking unpaid leave on their pensionable service.

3. Discretionary Leave of Absence

- 3.1 Examples of discretionary time off work that may be granted **with pay**:

Summary non exhaustive examples of leave normally granted with pay	Days Per Annum - Rolling 12 month period
<u>compassionate leave</u> illness or injury of a significant other person giving rise to serious domestic difficulties. Including illness of husband; wife; parent; child; brother or sister.	period reasonably necessary but not normally more than 5 days.
<u>bereavement leave</u> death (including funeral) of a significant other person. (significant other person - parent; husband; wife; brother; sister; child; grandparent;	period reasonably necessary but not normally more than 5 days

grandchild; parent-in-law; daughter in-law; son in-law)	
moving house where it cannot be arranged for a non-working time	1 day
<u>personal events or emergencies</u> i.e. an event which, if response were to be delayed, would result in significant personal loss to the employee such as fire or flood	1 day
<u>accepted impossible</u> travel because of weather or other public crisis.	period reasonably necessary but not normally more than 2 days
<u>dependent care leave</u>: employees may only take paid time off to provide personal care for a dependent where there is an immediate crisis. (there is a statutory right to take unpaid leave see 6.1below). Dependent is defined as spouse; child; parent or person living in the same household as the employee (other than a tenant, lodger, employee etc.)	In normal circumstances not more than 1day on each occasion. Up to 3 days.
Funeral of a close friend University graduation ceremony of Teacher or of Teachers immediate family	Up to 1 day 1 Day
Study and Exam Leave: Open university degree Part-time degree or degree equivalent Other professionally relevant examinations	Up to 10 days in any 3 year period plus the days of the examination. Up to 10 days over the normal period of the course, plus the days of the examination. Days of the examinations

3.2 Examples of discretionary leave that may be granted **without pay**:

Summary non exhaustive examples of absence normally granted without pay	Days Per Annum - All Staff
Any personal reason other than those above which it was not possible to schedule for a non-working day or time or within annual leave e.g. emergency appointments (dentist, optician, medical appointment), driving test, important one-off family occasions. Routine appointments with doctor/dentist or for other medical purposes than, as far as possible, it is reasonable to expect these to be arranged at a time outside of school hours. See 3.2.1.	maximum of 3 days
Attendance as witness either on subpoena or other direction from a court or at the direction of the police, or voluntary attendance at an inquest as witness not representing the school. See 3.2.2.	period of attendance necessary.
<i>Leave of absence for religious observance</i> See 3.1.1	<i>reasonable time off – up to 2 days in an academic year</i>

3.1.1 Leave of absence for religious observance - up to 2 days per academic year paid

You may request paid time off work to attend religious festivals, pilgrimages, time off for prayer or may request an adjustment to your working time to accommodate periods of fasting or requirements to cease work by a particular time using the form at Appendix 1. Requests for time off will be considered sympathetically and on a case by case basis, taking into account the needs of the Academy pupils and surrounding circumstances. You should request time off at the beginning of the Academy year if possible, otherwise as soon as possible, so that plans for covering your absence can be made in good time.

3.2.1 Medical appointments:

Upon production of a medical appointment letter/card up to half a day paid leave may be granted to attend an appointment at hospital (to include medical screening and blood donation but excluding any appointment associated with elective surgery) where it has proved impractical to attend outside normal working hours. You should liaise with the Headteacher to agree a mutually convenient time so that the operational requirements of the school are met and then request leave from the Headteacher using the form at Appendix 1.

3.2.2 Attendance in court as a witness

If you are subpoenaed or summonsed to attend a Court (including an Employment Tribunal), as a witness and you are not representing the Academy then, on production of proof of required attendance, you must request leave from the Headteacher using the form at Appendix 1 and you will be granted unpaid leave to attend. If you wish to attend Court as a witness on a voluntary basis then you should request leave of absence from the Headteacher as soon as the need for the leave is known using the form at Appendix 1 and a decision will be made on a case by case basis.

3.2.3 Leave of absence for religious observance - up to 2 days per year paid

You may request unpaid time off work to attend religious festivals, pilgrimages, time off for prayer or may request an adjustment to your working time to accommodate periods of fasting or requirements to cease work by a particular time using the form at Appendix 1. Requests for time off will be considered sympathetically and on a case by case basis, taking into account the needs of the Academy pupils and surrounding circumstances. You should request time off at the beginning of the Academy year if possible, otherwise as soon as possible, so that plans for covering your absence can be made in good time.

4 Statutory Leave of Absence for Public Duties

- 4.1 Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of **unpaid** time off work by law to carry out certain public duties. Public duties include service as a:
- Tribunal member
 - Magistrate
 - Local councillor
 - Member of an NHS Trust
 - Prison visitor
 - Lay visitor to police stations
 - School governor
 - Lay observers, appointed under section 81(1)(1)(b) of the Criminal Justice Act 1991. These are volunteers who monitor conditions for prisoners under escort and in court custody;
 - Members of Visiting Committees, for the immigration and detention estate, appointed under section 152(1) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. These committees monitor the immigration detention estate;
 - Members of Visiting Committees appointed to monitor short-term immigration holding facilities, for example at airports; and

- 4.2 As soon as you are aware that you will require time off for performance of a public service you should request leave of absence from the Headteacher using the form at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 The Academy will agree to requests for **paid** time off to undertake public duties wherever reasonably possible having regard to the criteria set out in this policy.
- 4.4 Each request for time off will be considered on its merits, in the circumstances in which it is made including:
- Whether the activity is reasonable in relation to your employment
 - How much time off is reasonably required for the duty in question
 - How much time off you have already taken for the public duty in question
 - How your absence will affect the School.

5. Jury Service

- 5.1 You must inform the Headteacher as soon as you are summonsed for jury service and provide a copy of your Jury Service Summons and the accompanying Loss of Earnings form. Where, in our view, the release of an employee for jury service raises significant teaching or operational problems, assistance will be provided to the employee in order to appeal to the court to re-arrange or cancel the dates of service.
- 5.2 Employees attending Jury Service are usually able to claim compensation from the court for loss of earnings. We will make up the Loss of Earnings allowances to your normal level of earnings. We must complete the Loss of Earnings form and you must give the completed form to the Clerk of the Court on your first day of Jury Service.
- 5.3 Upon completion of Jury Service, the Court will pay an employee for travel, subsistence and Loss of Earnings and provide a remittance advice. This advice **MUST** be forwarded to the Business Manager or the PA to the Senior Leadership Team within 3 days of your return to work.
- 5.4 Your salary will be reduced by the "Juror's Loss" paid by the Court. Pension contributions are not affected. An Employee cannot be paid twice by the Court and the Academy for the same days.

- 5.5 Where jury service lasts for less than half a day you must return to work for the remainder of the day wherever practicable. You must keep the Headteacher regularly informed about how long you are likely to be away from work.
- 5.6 Employees are protected from being subjected to a detriment or being dismissed, as a result of being summoned to attend for service as a juror or being absent from work on jury service.

6. Statutory Dependent Care Leave

- 6.1 Employees have a right to take a reasonable amount of **unpaid** time off work when it is necessary to:
- (a) provide assistance when a dependent falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
 - (b) make longer-term care arrangements for a dependent who is ill or injured;
 - (c) take action required in consequence of the death of a dependent;
 - (d) deal with the unexpected disruption, termination or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependent; and/or
 - (e) deal with an unexpected incident involving their child during school hours (or those of another educational establishment).
- 6.2 A **dependent** for the purposes of this paragraph 6.1 is:
- (a) an employee's spouse, civil partner, parent or child;
 - (b) a person who lives in the same household as an employee, but who is not their tenant, lodger, boarder or employee; or
 - (c) anyone else who reasonably relies on the employee to provide assistance, make arrangements or take action of the kind referred to in 6.1 above.



APPENDIX 1

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

Part 1

Name:	
Job title:	

Date/ time from:	Date/time to:
I have read and understood the discretionary leave policy. Please attach a copy of any relevant appointment card. Reason for request: ☐	
If authorised, have you arranged cover for playground duty ☐ <i>I understand and accept that if leave of absence is granted without pay it will affect my pension entitlement.</i>	
Signed	Date
Have you tried to book this request outside of school hours? Yes ☐ No ☐	

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DECISION Part 2

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Approved without pay:	☐
Not approved for the following reasons:	
☐	Operational difficulties in covering absence
☐	Loss of entitlement/continuity of educational provision for pupils/students
☐	Leave of absence limits already reached
☐	The request is outside the policy framework
☐	Other. Explanation of reason(s) for non-approval:
Signed:	Date:
Job title:	

APPEAL AGAINST LEAVE OF ABSENCE DECISION

If you wish to appeal against a refusal to grant discretionary leave of absence then you must explain your reasons below and return this form to the Deputy Head Teacher within 5 days of the date of the decision as recorded above. Your appeal will be heard by the Head Teacher.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 2 Bereavement

Rookery School acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways.

1 Leave entitlements

Paid leave

Bereavement leave is paid leave that allows an employee time off to deal with their personal distress and related practical arrangements, primarily, but not limited to, when a member of their family dies.

Rookery School acknowledges that bereavement impacts all individuals differently and the guidelines below are intended to show the minimum paid leave an employee is entitled to in different circumstances.

Rookery School acknowledges that not all employees will need to take the full allowance, and some employees will need additional time, depending on their relationship with the person who has died and the circumstances of the death.

In the event of the death of an immediate relative, 5 working days paid leave will be granted. An immediate relative includes a spouse, civil partner or partner (including same sex partners),* child,** parent, step-parent, sibling or a person with whom the employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency.

*Partner includes someone with whom the employee is co-habiting but is not the employee's spouse or civil partner.

- 1 Child includes children in respect of whom the employee is the adoptive parent and legal guardians and carers

An employee should notify their line manager of their need to take leave as soon as possible or, at latest, on the first day of absence. In exceptional circumstances, applications for leave will be considered after the first day of absence. Line managers have the right to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances as outlined above. Leave days do not have to be taken consecutively.

Annual leave

In the event of a bereavement, an employee will be able to take unpaid leave or annual leave at short notice to supplement their bereavement leave. Requests should be directed to the employee's line manager.

Unpaid leave

Unpaid leave on compassionate grounds up to a maximum of 5 days may be granted after bereavement. An employee must consult with their line manager before starting unpaid leave.

2 Return to work

In certain circumstances a full return to work may not be possible for an employee following the death of an immediate relative – for example, when the employee's grief is likely to impact on their ability to perform their role, or where new child care arrangements have to be sourced or responsibility for the care of an elderly parent has transferred to the employee.

In such instances Rookery School will allow a phased return to work on a part-time or reduced hours basis where practicable. Alternative duties may also be considered. Any such arrangement would need to be agreed in advance by the line manager, would be subject to an agreed maximum number of days and would be managed in line with Rookery School's flexible working policy.

3 Employee support

Rookery School acknowledges that bereavement leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period around the death of a relative. However, the process of grief, the natural reaction and adjustment to loss and change may take a significant time and will be personal to each individual.

An employee with any concerns about the grieving process impacting on their work performance should discuss this in confidence with their line manager, to ensure that any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary are discussed and put in place and that the employee is supported in their return to the full range of duties and responsibilities that they had prior to the bereavement or their duties and responsibilities are adjusted (as necessary) with the prior agreement of line manager.

Rookery School recognises that the majority of people do not require counselling to cope effectively with their grief. However, for employees wishing to avail themselves of professional help in coming to terms with a significant loss, the organisation will support the use of Cruse Bereavement care www.cruse.org.uk/bereavement-at-work and or cover

the cost of up to 3 counselling sessions with an independent counselling practice. This is a confidential service and can be accessed directly through the Partner Headteacher

4 Health and safety

Bereavement can have an impact on concentration, sleep, and decision-making. The health and safety assessment of the workplace will include consideration of the impact of bereavement on employees, their duties and responsibilities, and the context in which they are working, eg do they operate heavy machinery?

Any employee who is concerned about their ability to conduct their duties safely in the weeks following a bereavement must discuss this with their line manager.

Rookery School reserves the right to request an employee to be referred to an occupational health doctor before returning to work.

5 Culture and Diversity

Rookery School recognises that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways.

Line managers will check whether the employee's religion or culture requires them to observe any particular practices or make special arrangements which would necessitate them being off work at a particular time. Employees should not assume that their line manager is aware of any such requirements and should draw this to their line manager's attention as soon as possible.

Line managers who are unsure of how to respond to a bereaved employee from a different culture should ask the bereaved employee or someone else from their cultural group about what is appropriate.

Appendix 3 Quarantine after travel abroad

Travelling Abroad

If an employee is required to quarantine after travel abroad. They may:

- *take unpaid leave*
- *make up the 14 days' leave over a period of time, so they do not incur a drop in pay*

Employees should complete a foreign travel quarantine form as soon as they have confirmed their travel arrangements.

Consideration will be given to

- *an employee who has extenuating circumstances such as a family funeral abroad*



ROOKERY SCHOOL FOREIGN TRAVEL QUARANTINE

ARRANGEMENTS

Date:
Name: first name and surname
Job title Click or tap here to enter text.

Date of travel from	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date of travel to	Click or tap here to enter text.
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If I am required to quarantine on my return I will : (please delete as appropriate)			
Take leave without pay:			
Make up time			
Time to be made up			
Date from	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date to	Click or tap here to enter text.

I understand and accept that if leave of absence is granted without pay it will affect my pension entitlement.

Signed:

Date:

