

Special Discretionary leave and Emergency Leave Policy

Document title	People Directorate: Special Discretionary Leave and Emergency leave Policy
Version number	2
Policy status	Draft for Consultation or Final for Approval
TSAT Board Approved	Date
Union Approved	Date or n/a
Date of issue	
Date to be revised	

Revision Log (last 5 changes)

Date	Version No	Brief detail of change
September 2025	2	Clarity around Period of leave granted. Records compliant with GPDR and the Data Protection Act. Additions to the policy – Carers Leave, Unpaid Leave and sabbaticals. Right of Appeal for Parental Leave and Unpaid Leave. Format modifications.



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Part A – Policy

1 Policy Statement

The Trust recognises that employees may occasionally need to take time off due to personal or professional circumstances and acknowledges that Employees have certain statutory rights in respect of time off work. The Trust is committed to promoting a healthy work-life balance and strives to foster a supportive and inclusive workplace environment. This policy provides a fair and consistent framework to balance the needs of employees to take reasonable time off for emergency or non-emergency situations, with the operational requirements of the Trust.

This procedure explains:

- Employees' entitlement to leave and how this should be requested.
- How the Trust will manage and respond to requests for leave in a fair and consistent manner.

2 Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all Employees of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust, including teaching and support staff, whether full or part-time, or on fixed term contracts. For those employees who have transferred under TUPE Regulations 2006 the principle of no detriment will apply in respect of transferred policy entitlements in respect of special and discretionary leave.

All Employees, regardless of their length of service, are entitled to request reasonable time off under this provision.

This policy does not address absences for reasons of personal sickness or maternity / paternity leave which are set out in other procedures.

3 Adoption Arrangements and Date

This procedure was adopted by the Board of Directors of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust on 1st September 2025 and supersedes any previous procedures except to employees with preserved entitlement as referred to in paragraph 2 of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Directors every 4 years or earlier if there is a need. This will involve consultation with the recognised unions.

4 Responsibilities of the Trust Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service

- To consider requests for leave in accordance with the provisions of this procedure.
- To comply with any statutory provisions related to emergency leave or special leave.
- To balance leave requests with the Trust's operational needs to ensure minimal disruption.
- To liaise with the Trust HR team for advice on policy implementation and whether to

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grant leave with or without pay.

- To handle requests sympathetically, confidentially and compassionately to promote a culture of a positive work life balance.

5 Responsibilities of the Employee

- To make any request for leave in accordance with the provisions and timescales set out in this procedure.
- To take leave only for the specific purpose for which it is requested.
- To show consideration to the operational needs of the Trust and respect to colleagues when making leave requests.

6 Delegated Responsibility

The responsibility for managing Special Discretionary leave and Emergency leave may be delegated to staff members other than the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service. Any references to the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service's role within the policy also apply to their designated representative.

7 Definition of a Dependant

For the purposes of this policy, a "dependant" is defined as:

- The Employee's spouse, civil partner, partner, child or parent, or someone who depends on the employee for care.
- any person who lives at the same house as the Employee (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or Employee)
- any other person who would reasonably rely on the Employee for assistance in the event of illness, injury or breakdown of care arrangements.

8 Definition of an Immediate Family Member

For the purposes of this policy, an "immediate family member" is defined as a:

- spouse or civil partner;
- partner (including same-sex partner);
- parent (including step-parent);
- child under the age of 18 / adult child
- sibling (including step-sibling);
- grandparent; or
- grandchild.

9 Requesting Leave

- All requests should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service for consideration.
- The Employee should advise the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service of the reason for the absence, how long they will need to take leave and whether they are requesting paid

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or unpaid leave as outlined by policy entitlements.

- Requests for leave should be planned, giving sufficient notice for the Trust to assess the impact of granting leave.
- Immediate release may be agreed where an emergency arises during the course of the working day.
- The Trust recognises that it may not always be possible for the Employee to notify the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service of the need to take bereavement, compassionate, Emergency or parental bereavement leave in advance. The Employee should inform the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Requests will be considered sensitively and in accordance with the Trust's obligations under the Equality Act. The Trust will endeavour to grant reasonable time off in so far as is practicable and considering the needs of the Trust.
- The Trust reserves the right to decline requests where this would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the Trust or cause undue disruption to other staff.
- The decision of the Headteacher/Principal is final and there is no right of appeal.
- The outcome of the request and any arrangements for payment will be confirmed in writing by the Academy.
- See specific Notification requirements as details in the relevant policy section, including notification requirements for [carers leave](#) and [Parental leave](#).

Part B – Types of Leave

10 Emergency Time Off for Dependants

The Trust has a statutory obligation to grant Employees a reasonable period of unpaid time off work to deal with unforeseen or emergency situations involving a [dependant](#) who relies upon the Employee for assistance.

Employees are entitled to take reasonable time off for dependants, during emergency situations, to:

- Provide assistance if a dependant falls ill, is injured or assaulted or is unexpectedly taken into hospital.
- Make longer term care arrangements for an ill or injured dependant.
- Address an unexpected breakdown / disruption in the usual care arrangements (e.g., absence of a childminder or unexpected closure of a nursing home).
- Respond to emergencies involving their child during Trust working hours (e.g., suspension or injury).
- Take action that is necessary in consequence of the death of a dependent

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- To attend appointments with dependants, where the employee's attendance is essential. Whenever feasible, these appointments should be scheduled outside of working hours.

Period of leave granted

The first day of each period of Emergency time off is paid, up to a maximum of three occasions per Academic year. Unless an employee has a preserved entitlement through a TUPE transfer. Further details of entitlement can be sought from HR.

Additional emergency leave may be requested in line with the statutory provisions but, this will not normally be paid. The decision of any additional paid emergency leave is at the Headteacher/ Principal/ Head of Service discretion.

Reasonable time off will be granted. However, the Headteacher/Principal/Head of Services reserves the right to refuse paid time off for non-emergency, pre-planned events if the employee could reasonably have arranged alternatives (for example, scheduling a dependant's routine appointment outside of work hours or arranging someone else to help).

The Trust recognises that unforeseen circumstances arise which may result in a breakdown / disruption of the usual arrangements for the care of a dependant. However, it is the responsibility of each Employee to ensure that they have appropriate care arrangements in place.

The Trust will monitor absences and may address this with Employees where the number or duration of such absences are causing concern

Time off for non-dependants is not covered by this provision.

11 Carers leave

All employees, regardless of length of service, can request carers leave to provide or arrange care for a dependent or close relative with a long-term care need.

Entitlement

- One week of unpaid leave per year for employees who are providing or arranging care for a dependant or close relative with a long-term care need.
- Leave can be taken flexibly in half or full days, up to a maximum of one week within a 12-month period.
- The leave can be used for various caring situations such as taking someone to medical appointments, supporting with personal care or arranging future care
- Employees are not required to provide evidence of their caring responsibilities

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Requesting Carers Leave

To request carers leave, employees must give notice to the Headteacher /Principal/ Head of Service, with as much notice as possible but no less than the following:

- For half a day or a day of leave, at least 3 days' notice
- For more than a day the notice period must be at least twice as long as the requested leave.

12 Bereavement and Compassionate Leave

The Trust is committed to supporting staff through their grief by providing compassionate and bereavement leave, keeping in touch with staff while they are off work, and supporting staff on their return to work.

Bereavement Leave

In the event of the death of an immediate family member, you may take up to 10 days' paid bereavement leave.

- Up to a maximum of 10 days will normally be allowed in any one year, in the days following the death of an immediate family member (other than a child under 18 where the employee is eligible for Parental Bereavement Leave).

Additional leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances and at the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service's discretion, this leave would usually be unpaid.

Compassionate Leave

Compassionate leave may be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal/Head of Service on behalf of the governing body to allow an Employee to attend a serious urgent / unforeseen personal circumstance.

Up to a maximum of 5 days will normally be allowed in any one year in the following circumstances:

- Death of a close relative, including where the employee is the nearest relative responsible for dealing with the estate.
- Serious illness and/or hospitalisation of a spouse, partner (including same sex partner), parent or child or other close relative.
- Other domestic crisis, e.g. relationship break down, fire, flood etc.

Additional leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances and at the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service's discretion, this leave would usually be unpaid.

The Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service may need to undertake reasonable and sensitive enquiries into the situation when considering requests.

13 Parental Bereavement Leave

The Trust recognises that, while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child is among the most devastating events that an employee can ever face. We are committed to supporting staff coping with the loss of a child by ensuring that bereaved parents can take

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parental bereavement leave.

Whatever your length of service, you can take two weeks paid parental bereavement leave if you have lost a child (i.e., under the age of 18) and are the:

- parent of a child who has passed away; or
- partner of the child's parent, where you live in an enduring family relationship with the child and their parent; or
- "parent in fact" of a child who has passed away, which means that, for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child passed away, they have been living with the child and had "day-to-day responsibility" for the child (but who is not being paid to look after the child).

In practice, this means that most employees with parental responsibility for a child who passes away can take parental bereavement leave.

Parental bereavement leave is available in a number of other scenarios, including for adoptive parents whose child has passed away and where a parent suffers a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

If you have suffered a bereavement but are unsure if you are entitled to parental bereavement leave, you should contact a member of the HR team for clarification.

If you are a bereaved parent, you are able to take the leave as:

- a single block of two weeks; or
- two separate blocks of one week at different times.

A bereaved parent can take parental bereavement leave at any time from the date of the death of the child until 56 weeks after of the date of the death of the child.

14 Parental Leave

Employees with parental responsibilities have a statutory entitlement to request parental leave specifically to take care of the welfare of their child.

Entitlement

- Qualifying Employees may take up to a total of 18 weeks leave for each child born or adopted before the child's 18th Birthday.
- An Employee who is the parent or adoptive parent of a child who is disabled is entitled to up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave, which can be taken up to the child's 18th birthday.
- This entitlement is calculated on a pro rata basis for part time Employees.
- All parental leave is unpaid.
- Leave may be taken in periods of no less than 1 week up to a maximum of 4 weeks in any 12-month period. Where a child is disabled periods of less than 1 week may be agreed.

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- Each 12-month period commences on the anniversary of the date an Employee first became entitled to parental leave in respect of the child in question.
- Both parents each have an entitlement to parental leave – however this cannot be transferred between parents.

Eligibility for Parental Leave

Employees are entitled to a period of leave in respect of each child. To qualify for parental leave, Employees must have completed at least one year's continuous service with a Trust school, LA; or other maintained school and

- Be the parent of a child who is under eighteen years of age
- Have adopted a child under the age of 18 (the right to parental leave lasts for a period of five years from the date of adoption or until the child's 18th birthday, whichever is the sooner); or
- Acquired formal parental responsibility for a child who is under five years of age.

The Employee may be asked to complete an application / declaration form to formally confirm their eligibility for parental leave.

Requesting Parental Leave

- Requests for parental leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher/Principal no later than 21 days before the intended start date. When requesting leave the Employee should specify the duration and intended return date.
- To request parental leave immediately after the birth or adoption of a child Employees should submit their application no later than 21 days before the beginning of the expected week of confinement or placement, or as soon as is practicable if the child is born prematurely.
- The Trust may ask the Employee to evidence their relationship with the child for whom leave is requested by providing birth or adoption certificates, as appropriate.
- The outcome of the request will be confirmed in writing by the Headteacher/Principal within 7 working days of the request being made.
- The Trust will keep a record of the amount of leave taken, in order to maintain an accurate account of the Employee's entitlement.

Postponement of leave

- The Trust may ask an Employee to postpone a period of parental leave if their absence would be detrimental to the operation of the Trust. Such a postponement may be extended by up to 6 months.
- In instances where a request for leave is made immediately following the birth or adoption no postponement is permissible.

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- Where a request cannot be accepted – the Trust will discuss the reasons for this and suitable alternative dates with the Employee. The Trust will notify the Employee of the outcome in writing within 7 working days of the original request setting out the reasons why a postponement is necessary and suitable alternative dates.

Changing Employers

- Employees who change Employers during the period in which they are eligible to take parental leave may transfer any unused leave to their new Employer. Such leave may not be taken until the Employee has been employed by the new Employer for 12 months.
- The Trust reserves the right to contact previous Employers to verify the amount of unused entitlement an Employee has.

Conditions of employment during periods of parental leave

During a period of parental leave – the Employee will remain employed although pay will be suspended. Where leave is for less than 4 weeks an Employee will have the right to return to the same role as before.

Right of Appeal for Parental Leave Refusal

In the event that the Headteacher/Principal or Head of Services refuses a request for parental leave, the employee may lodge a written appeal within 10 school days of receiving that decision.

Appeals should be addressed to the [Designated Appeal Officer/Panel], who will review the case and respond in writing within 15 school days of the appeal submission.

The decision of the Designated Appeal Officer/Panel is final.

15 Time Off for Religious / Cultural Observance

The Trust recognises that there may be occasions where Employees may wish to request time off during their usual working hours or alter their usual working patterns for religious / cultural observance.

All Employees, whatever their religion or belief, will be treated equally in respect of requests for time off for religious /cultural observance or requests for alterations to their working patterns for religious reasons.

All Employees, regardless of their length of service, are entitled to request time off under this provision.

Period of leave granted

- Up to two days paid leave per year may be granted for religious observance, provided:
 - The observance is on a day set aside exclusively by the religious body.
 - The event does not fall on weekends, bank holidays, or Trust / school closure days.

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- Religious / cultural observance leave does not cover preparation for festivities or family celebrations unrelated to specific religious / cultural obligations.
- Employees must travel to and from religious events in their own time.

Requesting leave

All requests should be submitted to the Headteacher/Principal for consideration in line with the Academies procedure for requesting time off.

Requests for leave should be planned in advance other than in emergencies, giving sufficient notice for the Trust to assess the impact of granting leave.

Requests will be considered sensitively and in accordance with the Trust's obligations under the Equality Act.

The Trust will endeavour to grant reasonable time off in so far as is practicable and taking into account the needs of the Trust.

The Trust reserves the right to decline requests where this would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the Trust or cause undue disruption to other staff.

16 Time off in Lieu (TOIL)

- The Trust recognises that the nature of some work means that on occasion staff will be needed to work outside of their contracted hours. In these instances, TOIL should be agreed with line manager in advance and can only be accrued in full hours or more.
- TOIL should be taken as soon as reasonably practicable after it has been accrued and within 3 months. TOIL may not be taken in periods of more than one day during term time.
- TOIL accrued and not redeemed by the end of the academic year will be considered lost and no monetary compensation will be offered

17 Jury Service and Subpoenaed Witnesses

The Trust will grant Employees paid leave to undertake jury service

Notifying the Trust

The Employee should advise the Headteacher/Principal as soon as practicable that s/he has been called for jury service and provide a copy of the confirmation of jury service letter received from the court.

Period of leave granted

In the first instance up to 10 days paid leave will be granted. The Trust will extend this in instances where the case continues beyond this period.

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Should an Employee not be required to attend court for any whole or part day they should notify the Headteacher/Principal. The Trust may require an Employee to return to work for this period. This may vary depending on the circumstances.

If the Employee's jury service ends before the expected 10-day period the Employee will be expected to return to work.

Payment

The time off for jury service will be paid at normal contractual pay. An Employee will continue to receive their usual salary throughout their period of jury service. However, a loss of earnings allowance payable by the court is offset against the Employee's normal salary.

Following the completion of jury service the Employee will receive a payment direct from the court together with a remittance advice. The remittance advice should be passed to the Headteacher/Principal / Head of Service to enable the amount paid by the court to be deducted from the Employee's salary.

Employees who are subpoenaed to attend court as a witness during their contracted working hours - such time off will be paid.

Should an Employee be required to attend court in a professional capacity on behalf of the Trust – such time will be paid.

Where an Employee is attending court for some other private purpose, paid leave will be at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service.

18 Time Off for Public Duties

The Trust will grant reasonable paid leave to Employees for the specific purpose of undertaking certain public duties. Such duties include:

- Magistrates / Justices of the Peace / Employment Tribunal panel member
- Member of a Local Authority / Local Councilor or Members of any Committee or Subcommittee thereof.
- Member of certain public authorities – e.g. police, health or education authority, statutory tribunal or member of a prison board of visitors
- School Governor.

Time off under these provisions should not exceed a total of 18 days in any 12-month period of the Academic year.

Employees should advise the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service at the time of their appointment if they hold a public position where leave may be granted under this provision. Before agreeing to a public duty, the Employee should discuss the possible implications of the duty with the Headteacher/Principal / Head of Service. Enquiries will not be made prior to an offer of employment being made.

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Period of leave granted

Reasonable paid time off, from up to 18 days in any 12-month period will be given for public duties.

19 Time off for Professional Association Duties

- The Trust recognises that accredited Trade Union officials are entitled to reasonable time off with pay for the specific purpose of undertaking union duties.
- Arrangements under this provision are set out in the Trust Professional Association Recognition Agreement.

20 Reservists.

Eligibility

Employees who are a reservist with the following organisations are entitled to request time off under this provision:

- Territorial Army
- Royal Navy Reserve
- Royal Auxiliary Air Force
- Royal Marines Reserve

Notifying the Trust

- The Trust requires that all new recruits who are already reservists or existing staff who intend to become reservists inform the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service as soon as possible that they are, or intend to become, reservists.

Time off for reservist training

- Employees should seek to undertake training activities at weekends or outside of the Trust term, where possible.
- Should an Employee wish to request time off for training they should do so in writing to the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service as soon as practically possible. Proof of attendance may be required.
- Where training takes place during the school term the Trust will grant Employees up to 2 weeks paid leave in any year.

Call up for Military Operations

- Should an Employee be called up they should advise the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service as soon as practicable and present his/her mobilisation papers / letter from the MOD, outlining the date, and possible duration, of his/her mobilisation.
- All requests should be submitted to the Headteacher/Principal / Head of Service for consideration. The Trust will only seek to apply for an exemption or deferral of the

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Employee's mobilisation in exceptional circumstances.

- It is not the Trust's policy to continue to pay a reservist while they are absent on military operations therefore the Employee's salary will cease on their first day of absence. During this period the Employee will receive payment directly from the MOD.

Rights on return

- An Employee has the right to return to their former job within 6 months of demobilisation on terms and conditions which are no less favourable than had they not been absent.

Continuity of Service

- Continuity of employment is not affected by a period of mobilization. However, the period that the Employee was absent from work will not count towards continuous service entitlement.
- The outcome of any request and any terms relating to the leave will be confirmed in writing.

21 Special Constables and Retained Fire-fighters

- The Trust will grant 10 days paid leave to Employees for the specific purpose of undertaking duties associated with the above activities.

Notifying the Trust

- The Trust requires that all new recruits who already have responsibilities under these provisions or existing staff who intend to take on such responsibilities, inform the Headteacher/Principal as soon as possible.

22 Time off for Medical Appointments & Screening.

- Prior approval must be sought for time off for medical appointments / screening during working hours.
- Wherever possible, routine medical appointments / medical screening should be made outside of working hours. Should this not be possible the Academy will allow reasonable paid time off to attend such appointments, where the request is supported by an appointment card or letter. Whenever possible, appointments should be made at the beginning or end of the Academy Day to minimise absence during working hours.
- The Academy reserves the right to require an Employee to reschedule non urgent appointments where their absence would have an adverse impact on the operation of the Academy.
- Time off for medical appointments will not be recorded as sickness absence.

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23 Time off to attend ante-natal appointments

A pregnant employee is entitled to a reasonable amount of paid time off for the purpose of ante natal care. The husband, partner or civil partner of a pregnant person has the statutory right to take unpaid time off work to accompany them to up to 2 ante-natal appointments although employees of the Trust will be entitled to two days paid leave for attendance at ante natal classes.

The Academy may require employees to provide evidence of these appointments and of their pregnancy.

24 Election duties

Employees will be granted reasonable unpaid leave of absence of up to 10 days if engaged in duties pertaining to their candidacy in a Parliamentary, County or District or Borough election at the Principal's discretion.

25 Time off for Elective Procedures

To enable an Employee to attend appointments associated with elective procedures such as cosmetic surgery, flexible working arrangements may be considered at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service.

Employees may take paid leave for one cycle of IVF. Should further cycles of IVF be required, additional periods of paid leave may be granted at the Headteachers discretion.

Alternatively unpaid leave or annual leave (in the case of employees contracted all year round) may be requested for such absence. An Employee should make the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service aware of the need for any time off under this provision as soon as practicable.

Should the consequences of the treatment make the Employee unfit for work this would be regarded as sickness absence and the usual absence reporting / certification procedures would apply.

26 Adverse Weather Conditions / Disruption to Travel Arrangements

Employees have a contractual duty to report to work and should make every reasonable effort to attend work in adverse weather conditions or where there are unforeseen and unavoidable travel disruptions - even if their arrival is delayed.

However, the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service will have due regard to the health and safety of employees and may use their discretion in making appropriate alternative arrangements according to local conditions.

In instances where the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service determine that a Trust site should close, all Employees will continue to receive full pay. However, Employees may be expected to undertake reasonable alternative duties including working from home or attending another site.

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Paid absence in other circumstances is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service and will only be granted with the prior approval of the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service.

Paid leave should only be considered once all other reasonable options, including working from home or / at another site / making up lost time / taking annual leave / have been considered.

The Trust recognises that it may not always be possible for the Employee to notify the Headteacher/Principal/Head of Service in advance that they will be unable to get to the workplace or will be late to work. However, the Employee should endeavour to inform the Headteacher/Principal/Head of Service as soon as is reasonably practicable in accordance with the agreed reporting arrangements for the Academy/ Service.

27 Paid leave for other circumstances.

The Trust may grant paid leave for other circumstances as follows. Proposed absences should always be discussed with the Headteacher/Principal/Head of Service in advance and agreement sought.

Circumstances in which paid leave may be considered include:

- Moving House (where it is not possible for this to take place outside of the employee's normal working hours) –1 day.
- Attending a job interview for a post within local government or a maintained school. – At the Principals discretion (nb, where an employee is at risk of redundancy reference should be made to the Redundancy and Restructure Policy)
- Attendance at the graduation ceremony of [child](#) – 1 day.
- Attendance at the wedding / christening of an [immediate family member](#) – 1 day.
- Sitting an examination relevant to the employee's professional development -1day (in exceptional circumstances this may be increased).

Requests for such leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service as soon as the need to take leave is known. Each request will be considered on its own merits, balanced against the operational needs of the Trust and granted at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service.

28 Unpaid leave

The Trust may exceptionally grant unpaid leave for no more than 4 weeks for reasons other than those specified in this procedure.

Requests for such leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher/Principal / Head of Service. Each request will be considered on its own merits, balanced against the operational needs of the Trust and granted at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service.

The outcome of any request and any terms relating to the leave will be confirmed in writing.

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Right of Appeal for Parental Leave Refusal

In the event that the Headteacher/Principal or Head of Services refuses a request for parental leave, the employee may lodge a written appeal within 10 school days of receiving that decision.

Appeals should be addressed to the [Designated Appeal Officer/Panel], who will review the case and respond in writing within 15 school days of the appeal submission.

The decision of the Designated Appeal Officer/Panel is final.

29 Sabbaticals

Eligibility

1. Permanent Employees with a minimum of five years of continuous service, including at least 2 years with the Trust.
2. Both teaching and support staff may apply subject to meeting the service requirements.

Duration and Frequency

1. Sabbatical leave may be granted for a minimum of one month and maximum of one year.
2. Generally, sabbatical leave is granted only once during an Employee's employment with the Trust.

Application Process

1. Submit a written application to the Headteacher/ Principal/ Head of Service at least 6 months before the proposed start date.
2. Include in the application:
 - Purpose and objectives of the sabbatical
 - Proposed dates and duration
 - Detailed plan of activities
 - Alignment with Trust goals and values
 - Suggestions for managing responsibilities during absence

Approval Considerations

The Headteacher/ Principal/ Head of Service will consider:

1. Operational needs of the School / Trust / Service
2. Merits of the application
3. Potential impact on students and staff
4. availability of suitable cover arrangements

Terms And Conditions of Approved Sabbatical Leave

- Sabbatical leave is unpaid
- Continuity of service is maintained but benefits may be affected
- Employees are expected to return to their previous role or a comparable position
- The Trust will not contribute to pension schemes during the sabbatical
- Employees must maintain in reasonable contact with the School/ Trust / Service, as agreed at approval, while on sabbatical leave.

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30 General Provisions

Equality

We are committed to being an inclusive employer enabling all staff to feel a sense of belonging. We commit to ensuring our policies are inclusive by nature, are of benefit, accessible and understood by all staff. As a minimum we ensure our policies and practices comply with the Equality Act 2010 but we are committed to go beyond our minimum requirement of equality legislation. Our policies aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers and create opportunities to maximise positive impacts on our staff, fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in public life. Through our actions we recognise, appreciate and value difference treating everyone fairly and seeking to embed a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion across our Trust which delivers the best outcomes for the diverse society in which and for whom we work. We are committed to undertake an equality impact assessment on all appropriate policies.

Suspected Abuse of Special Leave Provisions / Concerns Regarding Absence

It is expected that Employees will only request and take leave specifically for the purpose stated.

Where it is suspected that a fraudulent request had been made or leave not used for the stated purpose, the Trust may, after appropriate investigation address the matter through its disciplinary procedure.

The Trust will monitor absences and may address any concerns with the Employee e.g., where the number or duration of absences are causing concern,

Unauthorised Absence

Where an Employee fails to adhere to the notification requirements set out in this procedure or takes leave where it has previously been refused by the Headteacher/Principal/Head of Service, any absence may be regarded as unauthorised and, after appropriate investigation, be addressed via the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

Should a request for special leave be declined and the Employee subsequently takes unauthorised leave – this may be addressed via the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

Pension Contributions

Employees should refer to the conditions of the Local Government Pension Scheme and Teachers' Pension Scheme for provisions relating to pension contributions during periods of unpaid special leave. Pension payments will continue to be made during periods of paid leave.

Disputes

Employees should discuss the reasons for any refused leave requests informally with the Headteacher/Principal/ Head of Service.

Disputes regarding the application of special discretionary leave and emergency leave provisions should be addressed via the Appeals Procedure or via the Trust's Grievance Procedure.

Special Discretionary leave and Emergency Leave Policy

Record Keeping

Notes may be taken of all discussions and formal / informal meetings held with Employees to relating to a request to take special leave. Where notes are taken a copy will be made available to the Employee.

The Employee may be asked to complete a leave request form when applying for leave under the provisions of this document. Records will be kept of leave taken for monitoring purposes.

All records will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Monitoring Of Special Leave and Emergency Leave

To manage special discretionary leave and emergency leave effectively, the Trust will record, monitor and review requests and leave granted on an individual and whole Trust basis.