Leave of Absence Policy

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About St Francis Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

St Francis Catholic Multi-Academy Trust's work is rooted in Catholic faith, Gospel Teachings and the belief that education, together with strong community, is one of the most powerful tools available to shape the future for children. The Trust is committed to high standards of education, personal growth, professional collaboration and the sharing of excellence across its schools.

Each academy has its own character, context and community. This policy therefore balances Trust wide fairness and consistency with appropriate local decision making by Headteachers, in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity and the common good.

Introduction

This Leave of Absence Policy and Procedure has been approved and adopted by St Francis Catholic Multi-Academy Trust for use in all its academies. It forms part of the Trust's wider suite of employment policies and should be read in the context of the Trust's Catholic character, its commitment to staff wellbeing and its responsibility to provide the highest standard of education for pupils.

St Francis is a family of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Hallam, established to serve children, families and communities through education rooted in Gospel Teachings. The Trust recognises that its schools are unique, serving wide ranging communities, and that good policy should protect that individuality while providing clear and consistent expectations across the Trust.

In the spirit of the St Francis community prayer, this policy seeks to reflect wisdom, wonder and awe, kindness, humility and compassion, alongside a love of learning, a thirst for knowledge and a commitment to making the world better. These values do not remove the need for clear rules; they shape how those rules are applied.

The Trust recognises that employees may, on occasion, need to request leave from work for personal, domestic, civic, religious, compassionate, professional or other exceptional reasons. The Trust also recognises that, in school-based roles, absence during working time may affect pupils, colleagues, service delivery and school budgets because absence may need to be covered.

This policy provides a fair, clear and consistent framework for considering leave of absence requests. It is intended to support employees where absence during working time is unavoidable, while also ensuring that the Trust can continue to provide effective education and services to pupils.

Leave of absence under this policy is not annual leave. Unless expressly stated otherwise, leave granted under this policy is discretionary, is not contractual and may be amended following consultation or where required by law, operational need or collective agreement. Statutory rights are not affected by this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to employees who have a contract of employment with the Trust or one of its academies. This includes full-time employees, part-time employees, sponsored apprentices and employees engaged on fixed-term or temporary contracts.

This policy does not apply to self-employed contractors, agency workers, volunteers, casual workers or workers engaged by third-party providers, except where a statutory right expressly applies to a wider category of worker.

Where a fixed-term or temporary employee has been engaged for less than 12 weeks, the Trust will consider any request reasonably and in accordance with any applicable statutory, contractual or national terms and conditions entitlement. Discretionary enhanced leave under this policy will normally apply only after 12 weeks of continuous service, unless the employee's applicable terms and conditions require earlier access, or unless applying the 12-week requirement would amount to unjustified less favourable treatment.

This policy does not cover sickness absence, maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, shared parental leave, neonatal care leave, parental leave, parental bereavement leave or statutory carer's leave. Those matters are covered by separate Trust policies or statutory arrangements.

Annual leave is determined by the employee's contract and relevant terms and conditions of employment. This policy does not create an additional annual leave entitlement.

Where an employee is seeking a permanent or ongoing change to their contracted working days, hours, working pattern or work location, the Flexible Working Policy and Procedure should be used instead of this policy.

Where an employee may be eligible for a statutory entitlement, another Trust policy entitlement and/or a discretionary allowance under this policy for the same circumstances, the employee will not receive duplicate leave or duplicate pay for the same period. The Trust will apply the entitlement or allowance that is most appropriate to the circumstances and will cross-refer to the relevant Trust policy where necessary.

Governance and Delegated Authority

The Trust Board remains the accountable body for the Trust and has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate HR policies and systems are in place. All staff employed in connection with the Trust or its academies are employees of the Trust.

The Scheme of Delegation recognises that decision making should take place as close as possible to those affected by the decision, provided that this is compatible with proper accountability, transparency, support for the common good and the limits of delegated authority.

For this policy, day-to-day responsibility for considering leave of absence requests in academies will normally sit with the Headteacher, or another senior leader where authority has been expressly delegated. Requests from

Headteachers, central team employees, Executive Team members or employees requiring Trust-level discretion must be considered in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and any current internal approval arrangements.

The Executive Team and Shared Services will support Headteachers by providing advice on interpretation, consistency, equality, payroll implications and exceptional cases. Local Academy Committees may provide local oversight where appropriate but should not normally be involved in individual leave decisions unless required by the Scheme of Delegation or another Trust procedure.

Where a matter may create legal, financial, operational, reputational or equality risk for the Academy, the Trust or the Diocese, the Headteacher must seek Trust advice before confirming the decision, unless a genuine emergency requires immediate action.

Annual Leave and Teachers' Working Time

Annual leave for employees covered by local government terms and conditions

For support staff employed on a 52-week contract, annual leave entitlement is determined by the employee's contract of employment and applicable local government terms and conditions. Annual leave should normally be requested, approved and taken in accordance with the Trust's local arrangements and any relevant school closure requirements.

Where operationally possible, annual leave for school-based 52-week support staff should normally be taken during school closure periods. Leave during term time, or during periods of known operational pressure, may be refused where it would adversely affect education, safeguarding, operational delivery, statutory deadlines or service continuity.

Term-time only employees and employees employed for identified weeks per year receive paid holiday entitlement as part of their pay and working arrangements. They are expected to arrange holidays, routine appointments and planned personal events during non-working periods wherever reasonably practicable.

Teachers' working time

A full-time teacher employed under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document must be available for work for 195 days in any school year, of which 190 days may require the teacher to teach pupils and perform other duties, and 5 days may require the teacher to perform other duties only.

For teachers to whom the STPCD directed-time provisions apply, a full-time teacher must be available for work for 1265 hours, allocated reasonably across the days on which the teacher is required to be available for work. A part-time teacher's availability for work and directed time must be calculated on a pro-rata basis in accordance with the STPCD and their working time arrangements.

In addition to directed time, teachers are required to work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable them to discharge their professional duties effectively. The employer must not determine the number or timing of those additional hours.

The STPCD working time provisions apply subject to the exceptions set out in the STPCD, including for headteachers, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers, leading practitioners, teachers in receipt of an acting allowance for leadership duties, and certain unattached teachers. Nothing in this policy reduces or varies any STPCD entitlement or obligation.

Leave during term time for teaching staff will therefore be considered carefully, having regard to pupil continuity, curriculum delivery, safeguarding, cover, workload impact and whether the matter could reasonably be arranged during school closure periods.

Definitions

TERM	MEANING
Academy	Any academy operated by St Francis Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and all sites upon which the Academy undertaking is carried out.
Board	The board of Directors of the Trust.
Chair	The Chair of the Board as appointed from time to time.
CEO	The Chief Executive Officer of the Trust, or a person with delegated authority to act on their behalf.
Companion	A willing work colleague, trade union official or accredited representative of a trade union or professional association of which the employee is a member.
Directors	Directors appointed to the Board from time to time.
Headteacher	The most senior teacher in the Academy responsible for its management and administration. This may also be referred to as Head of School or Principal.
Line Manager	The person with day-to-day management responsibility for the employee.
Local Academy Committee	The body carrying out employment functions of the Trust in relation to the Academy, where such functions have been delegated.
Trust	St Francis Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, which is the employer of staff at the Academy.
Working Day	A day on which the employee would ordinarily be required to work. This may apply differently to teaching and non-teaching staff, and to full-time and part-time staff.
Working Week	A week during which the employee would ordinarily be required to work.
Leave of Absence	Authorised time away from work, other than annual leave, sickness absence or family leave, granted under this policy.
Immediate Family	Spouse, civil partner, partner, child of any age, stepchild, parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, sibling, sibling-in-law, step-sibling, grandparent or grandchild.
Parent	A birth parent, adoptive parent, person fostering to adopt, legal guardian or foster parent with parental responsibility obtained through a court order, excluding short-term or emergency foster care.
Dependant	A spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, child, person living in the same household as the employee, or any person who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance, care, arrangements or action in an emergency.
Rolling 12 month period	The 12 months immediately preceding the first day of the requested absence, unless the policy states that a different statutory period applies.
Members	The guardians of the Trust's constitution, including those appointed in accordance with the Trust's Articles and Diocese of Hallam arrangements.

TERM	MEANING
Executive Team	The Trust leadership team responsible for executive and management functions across the Trust, led by the CEO and supported by senior officers and Trust directors/officers.
Governor	A governor appointed or elected to serve on a Local Academy Committee.
Diocesan Schools Commission	The education service provided by the Diocese of Hallam, which may also be known or referred to as the Diocesan Education Service.
Scheme of Delegation	The Trust document setting out lines of responsibility, accountability and delegated authority between Members, the Board, Local Academy Committees, the Executive Team and Headteachers.

General Principles

1.1 The Trust will consider all leave of absence requests fairly, reasonably, consistently and without unlawful discrimination.

1.2 The Trust will apply this policy in a way that reflects its Catholic mission, the dignity of work, the dignity of the individual, the needs of pupils and the common good of the school community.

1.3 Consistency does not mean identical outcomes in every case. The Trust's schools serve different communities and have different operational pressures. Decisions must therefore be principled, evidenced and proportionate, while allowing Headteachers to take account of local circumstances within the boundaries of this policy.

1.4 Where the circumstances of a request indicate that another Trust policy may be more appropriate, for example Sickness Absence, Family Leave, Flexible Working, Disciplinary, Grievance or Restructure and Redundancy, the Headteacher should seek advice and signpost the employee to the appropriate policy.

1.5 Employees are expected to arrange personal appointments, domestic arrangements and planned events outside working time wherever reasonably practicable. This is particularly important for term-time only employees and employees who have school closure periods as non-working periods.

1.6 The Trust accepts that not every life event can be arranged outside working time. Requests will therefore be considered on their individual facts, having regard to the circumstances, any evidence provided, equality considerations, statutory entitlements, previous requests, pupil needs, cover requirements, service delivery and budgetary impact.

1.7 The fact that a category appears in Appendix 1 does not create an automatic right to leave. The employee must meet the criteria for the category and follow the notification requirements, unless there is a genuine emergency which prevents this.

1.8 Where paid leave is granted, this will normally be limited to the standard provision in Appendix 1 unless local or Trust discretion is expressly available and approved.

1.9 Leave will normally be granted in half-day or full-day blocks unless the Headteacher confirms that a shorter period is more appropriate and administratively workable, or a statutory entitlement provides otherwise.

1.10 Part-time employees will not be treated less favourably because they work part-time. Where an allowance is expressed in days, it refers to the employee's normal working days unless the context requires otherwise.

1.11 Employees must not assume that leave has been granted until written approval has been given, except where a genuine emergency prevents prior approval and the employee has notified the Academy as soon as reasonably practicable.

1.12 The Trust may request reasonable evidence to support a request. Evidence should be proportionate to the circumstances and may include, for example, an appointment letter, court notification, funeral order of service, travel disruption confirmation, foster care panel notification, examination timetable, competition selection letter or other relevant document.

1.13 The granting of leave in one case does not create a precedent for other cases. Each request will be considered on its own facts and in the context applying at the time of the request.

1.14 The Trust will handle personal and sensitive information confidentially and in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy, privacy notices and data protection legislation.

Access Arrangements

The Trust will take reasonable steps to ensure that employees can access and use this policy. Where an employee does not have ready access to computer facilities during working time, has difficulty using IT, has low literacy or has a disability which affects their ability to submit a request, they may ask their line manager, Headteacher or another nominated member of staff for support.

Any assistance provided must maintain the employee's confidentiality and must not influence the decision on whether leave is granted.

Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring that appropriate HR policies are in place across the Trust.

The Trust Board delegates day-to-day operation of this policy in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation and may amend discretionary provisions following appropriate consultation.

Executive Team and Shared Services

The Executive Team and Shared Services are responsible for supporting consistent implementation of this policy across the Trust, providing advice to Headteachers and ensuring that Trust-level discretion is considered only where this policy permits it or where circumstances are genuinely exceptional.

Shared Services will advise on payroll, HR recording, equality considerations and the interaction between this policy and other Trust policies.

Local Academy Committee

The Local Academy Committee supports local oversight of the Academy within the Scheme of Delegation. It is not expected to decide routine individual leave requests, but may be informed of themes, trends or risks through appropriate monitoring arrangements.

Headteacher

- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied fairly and consistently within the Academy.
- The Headteacher may approve leave within the standard provision and any local discretion set out in Appendix 1.
- The Headteacher must consider equality, disability, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief and other relevant protected characteristics when considering requests.
- The Headteacher must ensure that appropriate records are kept and that payroll is notified promptly where pay is affected.
- The Headteacher may delegate the administrative handling of requests but remains accountable for decisions unless authority has been expressly delegated.

Line Managers

- Line managers have day-to-day responsibility for supporting employees, maintaining confidentiality and ensuring that requests are referred to the Headteacher or authorised approver promptly.
- Line managers should discuss planned absences with employees at the earliest opportunity so that cover or work arrangements can be considered.

- Line managers should not give informal assurances that leave will be paid or authorised where they do not have authority to approve the request.

Employees

- Employees are responsible for making requests in advance, providing accurate information and giving reasonable evidence where requested.
- Except in emergencies, employees should submit requests at least two weeks before the proposed absence. Where Trust-level discretion is required, employees should allow at least three working days for Trust review after the Headteacher has considered the request.
- Employees must contact the Headteacher or line manager by telephone as soon as reasonably practicable where an emergency prevents prior approval. If telephone contact is not possible, a text or email may be sent, but the employee must follow this with a telephone call as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Where family circumstances include another parent, partner or other responsible adult, employees are expected to consider whether care or emergency responsibilities can reasonably be shared.
- Employees must not provide false or misleading information in support of a request.

Trust-level advice and discretion

Trust-level discretion may be considered only where Appendix 1 provides for it or where circumstances are genuinely exceptional and fall outside the listed categories.

Trust advice must be sought where a request may create legal, financial, operational, reputational or equality risk, or where a proposed decision would sit outside the standard provision or local discretion in Appendix 1.

The Trust will monitor the operation of the policy to support fairness, consistency and effective workforce planning across academies.

Requesting Leave of Absence

2.0 Planned leave

2.0.1 Employees should submit a Leave of Absence request using the Academy or Trust's designated system or form.

2.0.2 The request must state the reason for the absence, the date(s) and time(s) requested, whether the request is for paid or unpaid leave, and the category relied upon in Appendix 1.

2.0.3 Where evidence is available at the time of the request, it should be provided with the request. Where evidence is not yet available, the employee should explain when it will be provided.

2.0.4 Employees should not book travel, commit to arrangements or assume cover can be secured until leave has been authorised.

2.1 Emergency leave

2.1.1 Emergency leave is intended to enable an employee to deal with an immediate and unforeseen situation, such as an incident involving a dependant, serious domestic emergency, urgent medical emergency or other matter requiring immediate action.

2.1.2 Emergency leave is not intended to provide ongoing care, planned childcare, routine appointments or repeated arrangements which could reasonably be made outside working time.

2.1.3 Where emergency leave is granted before the facts can be fully established, it will be recorded initially as authorised unpaid leave unless the Headteacher later confirms that paid leave applies under Appendix 1.

2.1.4 On return to work, the employee must discuss the absence with the Headteacher or line manager and provide any reasonable evidence requested.

2.2 Requests outside the listed categories

2.2.1 If a request does not fall within Appendix 1, the Headteacher must consider whether it is appropriate to treat the matter as exceptional discretionary leave.

2.2.2 Such requests will normally be unpaid unless the Trust approves otherwise in writing.

2.2.3 The employee must explain why the absence is unavoidable during working time and why alternative arrangements are not reasonably available.

Considering and Deciding Requests

3.0.1 Except in emergencies, the Headteacher or authorised approver will normally respond within five working days of receiving the request and any required evidence. Decisions should be fair, compassionate and clear, while also protecting pupils' learning, staff wellbeing, school budgets and the wider common good of the Academy community.

3.0.2 If further information is required, the Headteacher may meet or speak with the employee before reaching a decision. The purpose of any discussion is to clarify the circumstances, consider alternatives and ensure that the decision is fair and properly informed.

3.0.3 The decision will be confirmed in writing and will state whether the leave is authorised, refused, authorised in part, paid, unpaid, or subject to Trust-level approval.

3.0.4 In reaching a decision, the Headteacher will consider: the nature and urgency of the request; the employee's explanation; any evidence provided; statutory entitlement; equality considerations; previous leave of absence requests in the previous 12 months; impact on pupils; cover arrangements; service needs; budgetary impact;

current working arrangements; whether the request can reasonably be accommodated in another way; and whether previous requests exceed the allowance for the relevant category.

3.0.5 Where a request is refused, the reason will be explained. A refusal does not prevent the employee from submitting a further request if the circumstances materially change. There is no separate appeal against a discretionary leave of absence decision. Where an employee believes this policy has not been applied fairly, consistently or in accordance with equality obligations, they may raise the matter under the Grievance & Resolution Policy, subject to the scope and requirements of that policy.

3.0.6 The Headteacher may authorise fewer days than requested where the reason for the leave is accepted but the full period requested is not considered reasonable or necessary.

3.0.7 Where the request requires Trust-level discretion, the Headteacher should provide the Trust with the employee's request, relevant evidence, operational context and their recommendation. The Trust decision should be recorded in writing.

Pay, Records and Payroll

4.0.1 Appendix 1 identifies whether leave is paid, unpaid, paid/unpaid depending on the circumstances, or subject to local or Trust discretion.

4.0.2 Where leave is unpaid, payroll will make the appropriate deduction from salary. Where leave is paid, the employee will receive normal contractual pay for the authorised period.

4.0.3 Where a public or external body pays an allowance or loss of earnings payment, the employee must claim that payment where required and provide evidence to payroll. The Trust may top up pay to normal pay only where Appendix 1 allows this.

4.0.4 All approved and refused requests, including emergency retrospective requests, will be recorded on the employee's staff file and/or the Trust's management information system.

4.0.5 Records will be retained in accordance with data protection requirements and the Trust's retention schedule.

Extended Leave and Career Breaks

5.0.1 Requests for extended leave or a career break will only be considered where the circumstances are exceptional or where the request supports retention of an employee whose skills and experience are valued by the Trust.

5.0.2 Extended leave may be considered where an employee needs a longer period away from work for reasons such as a lengthy period of care for a chronically sick, disabled or terminally ill dependant. Extended leave will normally be unpaid unless the Trust confirms otherwise in writing.

5.0.3 A career break or sabbatical may be considered for purposes such as study, volunteering, travel or caring responsibilities. Requests to take a career break in order to work for another employer will not normally be approved.

5.0.4 Employees requesting a career break should normally have at least five years' continuous service and should submit their request in writing at least three months before the proposed start date. The Trust may waive or vary these requirements only in exceptional circumstances.

5.0.5 Career breaks will normally be unpaid and will not normally exceed one year. A career break will not normally count towards the accrual of contractual benefits such as annual leave or occupational sick pay, unless required by law or expressly agreed in writing. The employee's continuity of employment position and any effect on contractual benefits will be confirmed in the written career break agreement before the break begins.

5.0.6 Any outstanding annual leave should normally be taken before the career break begins. The employee and Trust will agree reasonable communication arrangements before the break starts.

5.0.7 The Trust cannot guarantee that the employee will return to the same post. Where possible, the Trust will seek to identify a role of broadly similar status and nature. If a redundancy situation arises during the break, the Trust's Restructure and Redundancy Policy will apply.

5.0.8 Employees must give at least three months' written notice of their intended return date unless an alternative period is agreed in writing.

Unauthorised Leave or Misuse of the Policy

6.0.1 If an employee takes leave without prior authorisation and there is no genuine emergency preventing prior approval, the absence will normally be recorded as unauthorised absence and unpaid.

6.0.2 Absence without authorisation may be treated as absent without leave and may be investigated under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

6.0.3 If the Trust has reasonable grounds to believe that a request was made using false or misleading information, this may be investigated as a conduct matter under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

6.0.4 Repeated requests or patterns of absence may be reviewed with the employee to understand whether further support, alternative arrangements or another Trust policy may be more appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

7.0.1 The Trust will monitor the use of leave of absence to promote fairness, consistency and effective workforce planning.

7.0.2 This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where there is a legal requirement, business need, Trust requirement or collective agreement which necessitates change.

7.0.3 Any changes to discretionary enhanced provisions will be subject to appropriate consultation.

Appendix 1 - Leave of Absence Categories and Allowances

Unless expressly stated otherwise, allowances apply in a rolling 12 month period and are not contractual. The Headteacher must record the reason for any use of local discretion. Trust discretion must be approved in writing before the leave is confirmed, unless there is a genuine emergency. Statutory entitlements must be applied in accordance with the law in force at the time of the request.

REF	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION / CRITERIA	STANDARD PROVISION	LOCAL DISCRETION	TRUST DISCRETION
01	Hospital appointments - medical screening	Medical screening linked to health surveillance, disability, pregnancy-related risk, occupational health, cancer screening, or statutory/Trust health requirements. Routine screening should be arranged outside working time where reasonably practicable.	Paid leave for the time reasonably required to attend, including reasonable travel time.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
02	Hospital appointments - scheduled clinics / outpatients	Hospital, consultant or specialist clinic appointments which cannot reasonably be arranged outside working time. Routine GP, dental or optician appointments are not covered unless urgent or exceptional.	Paid leave for the time reasonably required to attend, including reasonable travel time.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
03	Emergency dental / doctor appointment	Immediate or emergency medical or dental care required during working time and not reasonably capable of being delayed.	Up to 2 working days unpaid in any rolling 12 month period.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
04	Elective medical treatment	Treatment, including surgery or cosmetic procedures, which is not medically necessary at the time it is undertaken. This does not include gender reassignment treatment, which will be handled sensitively and in accordance with equality legislation and the Sickness Absence Policy.	Normally unpaid and should be arranged during non-working periods. Medically necessary treatment and unforeseen complications may be managed under the Sickness Absence Policy where supported by medical evidence.	No additional local discretion.	Trust advice should be sought where equality considerations may arise.
05	Fertility treatment	IVF or other fertility treatment appointments which cannot reasonably be arranged outside working time. The Trust will deal with requests sensitively and confidentially.	There is no automatic right to paid time off for IVF or other fertility treatment appointments. Requests should normally be managed in the same way as other medical appointments, including through annual leave for 52-week staff, unpaid leave for term-time only staff, adjusted	Unpaid leave may be authorised where appointments are clinically necessary, cannot reasonably be arranged outside working time and evidence is provided.	Paid or unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust in exceptional circumstances, taking account of equality considerations, operational impact and the individual circumstances.

REF	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION / CRITERIA	STANDARD PROVISION	LOCAL DISCRETION	TRUST DISCRETION
			working arrangements, time made up by agreement, or another agreed arrangement where appropriate.		
06	Antenatal appointments - pregnant employee	Antenatal care advised by a registered medical practitioner, midwife or nurse.	Paid time off as required by statutory entitlement and the Family Leave Policy.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
07	Antenatal appointments - accompanying expectant mother	Employee with a qualifying relationship accompanying a pregnant woman to antenatal appointments.	Unpaid time off for up to 2 appointments, capped at 6.5 hours per appointment, in accordance with statutory entitlement.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
08	Bereavement - immediate family	Death of a member of the employee's immediate family.	Up to 3 working days paid.	Up to 2 further working days paid where the Headteacher is satisfied that additional time is necessary because of the employee's relationship to the deceased, travel requirements, caring responsibilities or funeral arrangements.	Further paid or unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust in exceptional circumstances.
09	Bereavement - child	Death of the employee's child, including a child under 18, an adult child, stepchild, adopted child or child for whom the employee has parental responsibility. Where statutory parental bereavement leave applies, this will be managed under the Family Leave Policy.	Where statutory parental bereavement leave applies, the employee's entitlement will be managed under the Family Leave Policy. The Trust may provide paid leave under this category as an enhancement to, not in addition to, any statutory parental bereavement leave entitlement. The employee will not receive duplicate leave or duplicate pay for the same period. Where statutory parental bereavement leave does not apply, up to 2 weeks' paid leave may be granted under this policy.	No additional local discretion.	Further support or leave may be considered by the Trust in exceptional circumstances.

REF	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION / CRITERIA	STANDARD PROVISION	LOCAL DISCRETION	TRUST DISCRETION
10	Funeral - immediate family or child	Attendance at the funeral of a member of the employee's immediate family or child, where separate bereavement leave is not being taken for that day.	1 working day paid.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
11	Bereavement - other person	Death of a person outside the immediate family where the employee has a close personal relationship or specific responsibility.	1 working day unpaid.	Up to 2 further working days unpaid where the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances justify additional leave.	No Trust discretion normally required.
12	Funeral - other person	Attendance at the funeral of a person outside the immediate family.	1 working day unpaid.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
13	Dependants leave	Emergency leave to deal with an immediate and unforeseen incident involving a dependant, including illness, injury, breakdown of care arrangements or urgent arrangements following an incident. This is intended for short-term emergency response only. It does not replace statutory carer's leave, parental leave or any other entitlement under the Family Leave Policy.	Up to 1 working day paid for the immediate emergency response and up to 2 further working days unpaid in any rolling 12 month period.	Up to 2 further working days unpaid where the Headteacher is satisfied that the matter remains urgent and unavoidable.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust in exceptional circumstances.
14	Compassionate leave	Serious illness, personal crisis, serious hardship or serious emergency not otherwise covered by another category.	Up to 3 working days. The first working day may be paid where the circumstances are sudden, serious and unavoidable. Any further days will normally be unpaid.	Up to 2 further working days unpaid where the Headteacher is satisfied that additional time is necessary.	Further unpaid leave, or paid leave in exceptional cases, may be considered by the Trust.
15	Domestic emergency	Fire, flood, burglary, serious property damage or other sudden domestic incident requiring immediate attendance.	1 working day paid for the immediate emergency response.	Up to 2 further working days unpaid where the Headteacher is satisfied that the matter remains urgent and unavoidable.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust in exceptional circumstances.
16	Court attendance - jury service	Attendance for jury service following formal summons.	Paid leave will be granted for jury service following formal summons. The employee must claim any court loss of earnings allowance. The Trust may top up to normal pay where evidence of	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.

REF	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION / CRITERIA	STANDARD PROVISION	LOCAL DISCRETION	TRUST DISCRETION
			the allowance and attendance is provided.		
17	Court attendance - witness	Attendance as a witness where the employee is required by summons, subpoena or formal court/tribunal notification.	1 working day paid.	Up to 3 further working days unpaid where required by the court or tribunal.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust.
18	Court attendance - character witness	Attendance as a character witness where formal attendance is required.	1 working day paid.	Up to 3 further working days unpaid where required by the court or tribunal.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust.
19	Court attendance - appearance by employee	Attendance required by a court or tribunal in a personal capacity, excluding matters connected to the employee's conduct at work.	1 working day paid.	Up to 3 further working days unpaid where required by the court or tribunal.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust.
20	Reserved forces - training	Royal Naval, Royal Marine, Army or Air Force Reserve training or annual camp.	Up to 3 working days unpaid.	Up to 2 further working days unpaid where training dates cannot reasonably be arranged outside working time.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust. Where a reserve unit cannot arrange annual camp during school closure periods, the Trust may consider paid leave of up to 2 weeks.
21	Reserved forces - mobilisation	Mobilisation or call-out into full-time service.	Statutory right to be released from work. Pay will normally be provided by the Ministry of Defence rather than the Trust.	No additional local discretion.	Trust advice must be sought.
22	Trade union duties and activities	Reasonable paid time off for accredited trade union representatives to undertake recognised duties and training, in accordance with facilities time arrangements.	Variable paid time as reasonably required and agreed in advance.	No additional local discretion.	Trust advice should be sought where the request is unusual or extended.
23	Public duties - governor or public office	Duties as a school/college governor, magistrate, local authority member, police or health authority member, director or comparable public office.	School/college governor: up to 3 working days paid. Other public duties: reasonable unpaid time off unless a separate statutory or agreed arrangement applies.	Further unpaid leave may be granted where operationally reasonable.	Further paid or unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust for significant public duties, such as magistrate or local authority leadership roles.
24	Election candidate / political conference	Standing as a candidate in a parliamentary or local election, or attendance as an official delegate at a national political party conference.	Parliamentary candidate: up to 15 working days unpaid. Local election candidate: unpaid leave on polling day only. Official delegate: unpaid leave for the duration of the conference.	No additional local discretion.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust.

REF	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION / CRITERIA	STANDARD PROVISION	LOCAL DISCRETION	TRUST DISCRETION
25	Interview - academy, school or college	Attendance at an interview for a role within an academy, school or college.	1 working day paid.	1 further working day paid where the interview process requires attendance over more than one day.	No Trust discretion normally required.
26	Induction day - academy, school or college	Attendance at an induction day for a teaching or pupil/student-facing role in an academy, school or college.	1 working day unpaid, or time may be made up where this is agreed in advance and operationally possible.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
27	Interview - other employment	Attendance at an interview for employment outside academies, schools or colleges.	1 working day unpaid.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
28	Study / examinations	Study or examinations for programmes funded, required or formally supported by the Academy or Trust.	Up to 2 working days paid.	Further paid or unpaid leave may be granted where operationally reasonable and where the training, study or examination is required or formally supported by the Academy or Trust.	Trust advice should be sought where the request is extended, repeated, unclear, or where the training or examination is required by the Academy or Trust and exceeds the standard local allowance.
29	External examining work	Teachers engaged by examination groups or awarding bodies.	Paid release may be granted where the Burgundy Book or other applicable terms support release and the work benefits the Academy or Trust.	No additional local discretion.	Trust advice should be sought where supply reimbursement, payment or release arrangements are unclear.
30	Ofsted duties and activities	Employees engaged in Ofsted inspection, training or related activity.	Leave may be granted for the pre-agreed number of days where approved in advance. Any Ofsted or contractor payment, reimbursement or supply-cover payment must be declared and agreed.	No additional local discretion.	Trust approval required before paid release is confirmed.
31	Religious observance	Religious observance not already accommodated by the academic calendar or the employee's working pattern.	1 working day unpaid.	1 further working day unpaid where the Headteacher is satisfied that the observance cannot reasonably take place outside working time.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust, including extended religious observance such as pilgrimage.
32	Wedding or civil partnership ceremony	The employee's own wedding/civil partnership ceremony, or attendance at the wedding/civil	Own wedding/civil partnership: 1 working day paid. Immediate family: 1 working day unpaid.	1 further working day unpaid where significant travel is unavoidable.	No Trust discretion normally required.

REF	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION / CRITERIA	STANDARD PROVISION	LOCAL DISCRETION	TRUST DISCRETION
		partnership ceremony of an immediate family member or other person.	Other person: 1 working day unpaid.		
33	Graduation attendance	The employee's own graduation or attendance at the graduation of an immediate family member or other person.	Own graduation: 1 working day paid. Immediate family: 1 working day paid. Other person: 1 working day unpaid.	1 further working day unpaid where significant travel is unavoidable.	No Trust discretion normally required.
34	Moving house	Moving to a new home where the move cannot reasonably be arranged on a non-working day.	1 working day paid.	No additional local discretion.	No Trust discretion normally required.
35	Foster carers	Fostering assessment, training, panels, meetings, hearings, support groups or other key events connected to becoming a foster carer or supporting a foster child in the employee's care.	Up to 3 working days paid in any rolling 12 month period.	Further unpaid leave may be granted where the request is reasonable and operationally manageable.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust.
36	Disability leave	Time off for a reason related to the employee's disability, including assessment, treatment, rehabilitation, equipment fitting or other disability-related matter.	Paid or unpaid depending on the circumstances, medical evidence, equality considerations and whether the leave is a reasonable adjustment.	Headteacher may grant reasonable paid or unpaid leave after considering the individual circumstances.	Trust advice should be sought where the request is complex, repeated, may require wider reasonable adjustments, or where the Headteacher is considering refusing a disability-related request which may place the employee at a disadvantage.
37	High-level amateur sport / performing arts representation	Participation in organised sporting or performing arts activity requiring significant commitment at elite, national or recognised representative level, where the employee is not engaged as a professional.	Up to 3 working days paid.	No additional local discretion.	Further paid or unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust where the representation is exceptional and evidence is provided.
38	Semi-professional or professional sport / performing arts	Participation in semi-professional or professional sporting or performing arts activity.	1 working day unpaid.	No additional local discretion.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust.
39	Travel disruption - overseas	Unavoidable overseas travel disruption outside the employee's control, supported by evidence such as airline confirmation, cancellation notice, travel provider confirmation or official advice.	1 working day paid.	Up to 4 further working days unpaid where the Headteacher is satisfied that the employee could not reasonably return earlier.	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust.
40	Travel disruption - domestic	Unavoidable domestic travel disruption outside the employee's control, supported by evidence where reasonably available.	1 working day paid.	1 further working day unpaid where the Headteacher is satisfied that the employee	Further unpaid leave may be considered by the Trust.

REF	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION / CRITERIA	STANDARD PROVISION	LOCAL DISCRETION	TRUST DISCRETION
				could not reasonably attend work.	
41	Emergency closure / adverse weather	Circumstances where the Academy or Trust workplace is closed, or where the workplace remains open but the employee cannot safely attend due to severe weather or disruption.	If the workplace is closed and the employee cannot work from home or another location, paid leave will normally apply. If the workplace remains open and the employee cannot attend, the absence will normally be unpaid unless home working or another arrangement is agreed.	Headteacher may agree home working, attendance at another Trust site, adjusted hours or unpaid leave depending on the role and circumstances.	Trust advice should be sought where closure affects multiple employees or sites.
42	Extended leave of absence	Longer period away from work for exceptional reasons, such as prolonged caring responsibilities for a chronically sick, disabled or terminally ill dependant.	Refer to section 5. Normally unpaid.	No additional local discretion beyond section 5.	Trust approval required.
43	Career break / sabbatical	Unpaid break for study, volunteering, travel or caring responsibilities, normally available only to employees with at least five years' continuous service.	Refer to section 5. Normally unpaid and normally up to one year.	No additional local discretion beyond section 5.	Trust approval required.
44	Annual leave - 52-week support staff	Annual leave for support staff employed on a 52-week contract.	Not leave of absence. Annual leave must be requested and approved under contractual annual leave arrangements.	Term-time annual leave may be refused where it would affect service delivery.	Trust advice should be sought where there is a dispute or exceptional request.
45	Teachers' working time	Requests by teachers for absence during directed time, where no other category applies.	Not a separate leave entitlement. Requests should be considered under the relevant category in this appendix, with regard to STPCD working time obligations, including the 195-day availability requirement, the 1265-hour directed time limit where applicable, pro-rata arrangements for part-time teachers, and the STPCD exceptions for leadership and certain unattached teacher roles.	No additional local discretion.	Trust advice should be sought where the request is unusual or extended.

Appendix 2 - Leave of Absence Request Form

For staff use. Please complete Sections A-C and give this form to your Headteacher, line manager or authorised approver. Attach evidence where available. Leave is not approved until confirmed in writing.

Section A - Staff details

Employee name	
Academy / team	
Role / job title	
Date submitted	

Section B - Leave requested

Leave category from Appendix 1	
Type of request	[ ] Planned [ ] Emergency
Date(s) requested	From: _____ To: _____
Time requested	From: _____ To: _____ [ ] Full day [ ] Half day
Total working days / hours requested	
Expected return to work date / time	

Section C - Reason and evidence

Please explain why the leave is needed during working time. For emergency leave, explain what happened and why prior approval was not possible.

Evidence attached?	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] To follow

Type of evidence	
Contact during absence, if relevant	

Section D - Employee declaration

I confirm that the information I have provided is accurate and complete. I understand that leave is not approved until confirmed by the Headteacher or authorised approver, and that false or misleading information may be treated as a conduct matter.			
Employee signature		**Date**	

Decision Record - for Headteacher / authorised approver use

Complete after considering the request.

Section E - Decision

Decision	[ ] Approved [ ] Refused [ ] Approved in part [ ] Referred for Trust approval
Paid / unpaid outcome	[ ] Paid [ ] Unpaid [ ] Mixed [ ] Payroll deduction required
Approved date(s) / time	From: _____ To: _____ Total days/hours: _____
Category applied	
Evidence reviewed?	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Not required
Reason for decision	
Conditions / follow-up action	

Section F - Trust approval, if required

Trust decision	[ ] Approved [ ] Refused [ ] Approved in part
Paid / unpaid	[ ] Paid [ ] Unpaid [ ] Mixed
Trust notes	
Trust approver name / signature / date	

Section G - Records and payroll

Payroll action required?	[ ] No [ ] Yes - details below

Payroll details	
HR/MIS updated?	[ ] Yes [ ] No
Approver name / signature / date	

Retain this form on the employee's staff file and/or the Trust's HR/MIS system in accordance with data protection requirements and the Trust's retention arrangements.

Appendix 3 - Leave of Absence Request Workflow

1. Employee identifies a need for leave of absence

▼

2. Is the request an emergency?

▼

YES - emergency request	NO - planned request
Employee contacts the Headteacher or line manager as soon as reasonably practicable, normally by telephone. If telephone contact is not possible, text/email may be used, followed by a telephone call as soon as reasonably practicable. Emergency absence is recorded initially as authorised unpaid leave until the facts are reviewed.	Employee completes the Leave of Absence Request Form and submits it in advance. Planned requests should normally be submitted at least 2 weeks before the proposed absence. Supporting evidence should be attached where available, or the employee should explain when it will be provided.

▼

3. Headteacher / authorised approver reviews the request

▼

4. Is further information or evidence needed?

▼

YES - clarify first	NO - proceed to decision
The Headteacher or authorised approver may speak with the employee, request proportionate evidence, and consider whether alternatives are available.	The request is considered against the policy, including category, criteria, evidence, statutory entitlement, equality considerations, previous requests, pupil impact, cover, service needs and budget impact.

▼

5. Can the request be decided within the standard provision or local discretion?

▼

YES - local decision	NO - Trust-level advice or discretion required
Headteacher / authorised approver decides whether to approve, refuse, or approve in part. The decision must state whether the leave is paid, unpaid, or partly paid / partly unpaid.	The Headteacher refers the request for Trust-level advice or discretion, including the request, evidence, operational context and recommendation. The Trust decision must be recorded in writing.

▼

6. Decision confirmed in writing to the employee	7. Payroll, HR/MIS and staff file records updated where required	8. Leave is taken as approved, or alternative arrangements made if refused

▼

9. If leave is taken without authorisation and no genuine emergency applies, the absence may be treated as unauthorised / AWOL and may be managed under the Disciplinary Policy.

Workflow Notes

For employees

- Planned requests should normally be submitted at least 2 weeks in advance.
- Employees must not assume leave is approved until written confirmation has been received.
- Employees should attach supporting evidence where it is available and relevant.
- Emergency leave is for immediate and unforeseen situations only. It is not intended for ongoing care, planned childcare, routine appointments or repeated arrangements that could reasonably be made outside working time.
- Where family responsibilities can reasonably be shared with another parent, partner or responsible adult, employees should consider this before requesting leave.

For Headteachers / authorised approvers

- Requests should normally be considered within 5 working days, except in emergencies.
- The decision should confirm whether leave is approved, refused, approved in part, paid, unpaid, partly paid / partly unpaid, or subject to Trust-level approval.
- Where evidence is requested, it should be reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances.
- Trust advice should be sought where the request creates legal, financial, operational, reputational or equality risk, or where it falls outside the standard provision or local discretion in Appendix 1.
- Reasons should be recorded clearly, particularly where local discretion or Trust discretion is used.

Document control note: This appendix is designed to support, not replace, the Leave of Absence Policy and Appendix 2 form. In the event of any conflict, the policy wording takes precedence.