



# Special Leave Policy

<b>Committee</b>	Trust Board
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**Review Procedures**

This Policy will be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary. Any amendments required to be made to the Policy as a result of a review will be presented to the Board of Trustees for acceptance.

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## Part A - Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

The trust recognises that at some stages during their working lives employees may need to take time off to fulfill their personal commitments, including domestic and family responsibilities. The trust also acknowledges that employees have certain statutory rights in respect of time off work.

The headteachers of the schools within our trust will give due consideration to requests made under these provisions and will endeavour to grant reasonable time off in so far as is practicable taking into account the needs of their schools.

The headteachers of the schools within our trust reserve the right to decline requests where this would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the school or cause undue disruption to other employees.

This procedure explains:

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

It does not address absences for reasons of personal sickness or family related leave which are set out in other procedures. Please refer to Appendix 2 for details of other associated leave policies and guidance.

### 2. Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all employees of Inspira Academy Trust.

### 3. Adoption Arrangements and Date

This procedure was adopted by the Trust Board on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and supersedes any previous Special Leave Policy and Procedure.

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board every 3 years or earlier if there is a need. This will involve consultation with the recognised unions where there are material changes.

### 4. Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- > To consider requests for leave fairly and equitably in accordance with the provisions of this policy and procedure and discretions available.

- > To comply with any statutory provisions that may apply in relation to special leave.
- > To balance any requests for leave with the operational needs of the trust and the schools within this; to ensure that granting an employee leave does not have a detrimental impact on the school or cause undue disruption to other employees.
- > To monitor leave requested / taken under the special leave provisions and discuss any concerns with the employee regarding the frequency and duration of time taken.

## 5. Responsibilities of the Employee

- > To make any request for leave in accordance with the provisions and timescales set out in this policy and procedure.
- > To take leave only for the specific purpose for which it is requested.
- > To make the school aware should they undertake public duties or other commitments outside of the workplace for which they may be entitled to request leave.

## 6. Delegated Responsibility

The management of special leave may be delegated to staff other than the headteacher in their absence. References to the role of the headteacher in the policy and procedure include his / her nominee.

## 7. Monitoring of special leave

In order to manage special leave effectively the trust will record, monitor, and review requests and leave granted, on an individual school and whole trust basis.

## Part B - Procedure

### 8. Emergency Dependant Care Leave (formerly Emergency Time Off for Dependants)

#### Entitlement

The trust is willing to grant employees a reasonable period of paid time off work to deal with unforeseen or emergency situations involving a dependant who relies upon the employee for assistance.

A dependant is defined as the employee's spouse, civil partner, child or parent, and any person who lives at the same house as the employee (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or Employee) or who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance or arrangements for care in the event of illness or injury. This may also include step children.

Circumstances, in which time off may be permitted include but are not limited to:

- > Providing assistance if a dependent falls ill, is injured or assaulted or is unexpectedly taken into hospital.
- > Making arrangements for the care of a dependent who is ill or injured.
- > If a child is involved in a serious incident at their school or during school hours.
- > Dealing with an unexpected breakdown / disruption in the usual arrangements for the care of a dependent.
- > Taking action that is necessary following the death of a dependent.

Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. As a guide the time off should be sufficient to enable the employee to deal with the immediate situation and make any necessary longer-term arrangements. In most cases a day or two will be sufficient to deal with the immediate circumstances.

The trust will grant our employees a maximum of 3 working days paid dependent leave per academic year (1<sup>st</sup> September – 31<sup>st</sup> August). Any further leave will be unpaid.

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

### 8.1 Eligibility

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

### 8.2 Requesting Leave

All requests should be submitted via a time off request form and given to the headteacher for consideration. Approval must only be given by the headteacher, or in their absence the CEO.

The trust recognises that it may not always be possible for the employee to notify the headteacher of the need to take emergency time off in advance,

however the employee should inform the headteacher of the need to take time off as soon as reasonably practicable.

The employee should advise the headteacher of the reason for the absence and how long they expect to be absent. Where an absence lasts more than one day the employee should make contact with the headteacher each day if other arrangements were not agreed on the first day of absence.

There is no limit to the number of occasions such time off will be granted – however the trust will monitor absences and may address this with employees where the number or duration of such absences are causing concern.

The headteacher reserves the right to refuse time off where employees could reasonably be expected make alternative arrangements or contingency plans for the situation in advance – e.g. to care for their child during the pre-planned closure of their school.

The trust may also direct the employee to other more appropriate types of leave which may be requested given the circumstances.

The decision of the headteacher is final and there is no right of appeal.

Emergency Dependant Care Leave should be recorded separately to any other leave which may be taken.

## **9. Personal Leave (formerly Compassionate Leave)**

Personal or compassionate leave may be granted at the discretion of the headteacher to allow an employee to attend to urgent or unforeseen personal circumstances.

The trust may need to undertake reasonable and sensitive enquiries into the situation when considering requests.

### **Entitlement**

Up to 10 working days paid leave may be granted in any one academic year.

Entitlement is calculated on a pro rata basis for part time staff.

Additional unpaid personal / compassionate leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Circumstances in which leave may be granted include:

- > Death of a member of the employee's immediate family and attendance at the funeral.
- > Injury or critical illness of an immediate family member.

Immediate family is defined as the employee's spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, child, stepchild, sibling, grandparent or in-law. Careful consideration will also be given to requests for time off relating to other people outside an employee's immediate family.

### **Eligibility**

All employees, regardless of their length of service are entitled to request compassionate leave.

### **Requesting Leave**

All requests should be submitted to the headteacher for consideration.

The trust recognises that it may not always be possible for the employee to notify the headteacher of the need to take compassionate leave in advance. The employee should inform the headteacher of the need to take compassionate leave as soon as reasonably practicable. The employee should advise the headteacher of the reason for the absence and how long they will need to take leave and whether they are requesting paid or unpaid leave.

Requests will be viewed sympathetically and each considered on a case by case basis.

The decision of the headteacher 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 trust.

This provision is in addition to any statutory entitlement for emergency time off for dependents.

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to grant a combination of Personal Leave and Emergency Dependent Care Leave.

Personal Leave should be recorded separately to any other leave which may be taken.

## **10. Carers Leave**

It's expected that, for the most part, flexible working arrangements will allow employee's to balance their caring commitments and work. However, there



may be occasions, where, on a short-term basis, employees may require time off to meet their caring commitments. In this situation an employee may request to take Carers Leave.

### **Entitlement**

Up to 5 days of Personal Leave can be requested to be taken as Carers Leave in any one academic year.

Entitlement is calculated on a pro rata basis for part time staff.

Circumstances in which Carers Leave may be granted includes:

- > Providing care to a relative after a planned operation or accident
- > Taking a relative to a hospital appointment.

### **Eligibility**

This provision applies to employees on Kent Scheme terms and conditions.

To be eligible the Employee should:

- > Provide unpaid care or support to an ill, frail, elderly or disabled partner, child, relative or friend on an ongoing basis.

### **Requesting Leave**

All requests should be submitted to the headteacher for consideration.

To ensure the school are fully aware of individual circumstances, an Employee should, wherever possible, discuss their anticipated caring needs in advance with their headteacher.

In order to consider the request, the employee will be required to provide the headteacher with information regarding the nature of their caring commitments. This discussion will allow the headteacher to explore the most appropriate way to support the employee in fulfilling their responsibilities whilst ensuring service delivery is maintained. A written record will be made of the agreed Carers Support Plan.

Generally, Carers Leave is taken in whole days, however smaller periods of leave may be agreed at the discretion of the headteacher.

The employee should inform the headteacher of the specific days / times they wish to request Carers Leave as soon as reasonably practicable. The employee

should advise the headteacher of the reason for the absence and how long they will need to take.

Requests will be viewed sympathetically and considered on a case by case basis.

The decision of the headteacher 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 trust.

This provision is in addition to any Emergency Dependant Carer Leave which may be requested or flexible working arrangements which may be agreed.

Carers Leave should be recorded separately to any other leave which may be taken.

## **11. 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 in respect of each child.

This entitlement is calculated on a pro rata basis for part time Employees.

All parental leave will be 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.

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**

To qualify for parental leave:

- > Employees must have completed at least one year's continuous service

and

- > Be the parent or adoptive parent of a child who is under 18 years of age.

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

### **Requesting Leave**

All requests should be submitted to the headteacher for consideration.

Requests for parental leave should be made in writing to the headteacher 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 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 within 7 working days of the request being made.

The decision of the headteacher is final and there is no right of appeal.

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**

Each request for parental leave will be considered on a case by case basis.

The headteacher may ask an employee to postpone a period of parental leave if their absence would be detrimental to the operation of their school. 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.

Where a request cannot be accepted – the school will discuss the reasons for this and suitable alternative dates with the Employee. The School 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 School 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.

The employee will have the right to return to the same role as before their period of parental leave.

## **12. Parental Bereavement Leave**

Employees may request a period of parental bereavement leave in the event of the loss of a child under the age of 18 or in the event of stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

### **Entitlement**

Regardless of an Employee's length of service up to 2 calendar weeks leave will be granted. This leave may be taken as a single block or 2 separate weeks.

Bereavement leave may be taken within 56 weeks from the date of the bereavement.

Statutory Parental Bereavement pay will be paid to qualifying Employees with more than 26 weeks continuous service with the School. Employees who do not qualify for statutory parental Bereavement pay will be entitled to unpaid leave.

Employees on Kent Scheme Conditions of Service will receive their normal contractual pay during any period of Parental Bereavement Leave, regardless of their length of service. They may also take leave in periods of single day or a few days providing the total number of days leave does not exceed 10 working days (pro rata for part time staff).

### **Eligibility**

Employees are eligible for parental bereavement leave where they are the legal parent or in circumstances where they are the primary carer and have a parental relationship with the child. This includes acting as legal guardian, foster parent, kinship carer or where a court order is in place giving the employee legal responsibility for the care of a child.

### **Requesting Leave**

In view of the nature of this type of leave it is recognised that requests are likely to be made with little or no notice where leave is to be taken very soon after the date of bereavement. However, employees are required to notify the headteacher that they are exercising their entitlement to take parental bereavement leave as soon as is practicable.

Where leave is taken more than 56 days after the date of bereavement, employees are required to give 1 weeks' notice of their intention to take leave.

The right to request Parental Bereavement Leave is in addition to any period of Personal (Compassionate) Leave which may be granted or period of maternity or family leave they may be entitled to.

### **13. Time Off for Religious Observance**

The trust recognises that there may be occasions where employees may wish to request time off during their usual working hours for religious / cultural observance.

#### **Entitlement**

The trust will endeavour to grant reasonable time off in so far as practicable taking into account the needs of its schools. The headteacher reserves the right to decline requests where this would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the school or cause undue disruption to other employees.

#### **Eligibility**

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

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

Employees who are contracted on a term time only basis and who therefore have no entitlement to take annual leave should request unpaid leave where they wish to take time off for this purpose.

Support staff employees who are contracted on an all year round basis should request annual leave should they wish to take time off for this purpose. Where annual leave has been exhausted, unpaid leave may be requested. Priority consideration will be given to employees requesting annual leave for the purpose of religious observance.

### **Requesting leave**

All requests should be submitted to the headteacher for consideration.

Requests for leave should be planned in advance giving sufficient notice for the school to assess the impact of granting leave. All requests should be made in writing to the headteacher clearly stating the dates and reasons for requesting time off.

Requests will be considered sensitively and in accordance with the trust's obligations under the Equality Act. The headteacher will endeavour to grant reasonable time off in so far as is practicable and taking into account the needs of the school. The headteacher reserves the right to decline requests where this would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the school or cause undue disruption to other employees.

The decision of the headteacher is final and there is no right of appeal.

The outcome of the request will be confirmed in writing.

Time off granted for religious observance should be recorded separately to any other leave which may be taken.

## **14. Jury Service**

The trust will grant employees paid leave in order to undertake jury service.

### **Eligibility**

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

### **Notifying the Headteacher**

The employee should advise the headteacher as soon as practicable that she/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 leave will be granted. The employee must advise the headteacher as soon as they are notified that the case on which they are serving is likely to continue beyond the initial 10-day period. The trust will extend jury service leave in these circumstances.

Should the employee not be required to attend court for any whole or part day they should notify the headteacher. The school may require the Employee to return to work for this period. This may vary depending on the circumstances.

If the 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. The 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.

The employee must claim the entitlement payable by the Court and provide the headteacher with a Loss of Earnings Certificate obtained from the Court. The headteacher will calculate the employee's daily net rate of pay. The employee should present the Loss of Earning Certificate to the clerk of the court on their first day of jury service.

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 HR Officer to enable the amount paid by the court to be deducted from the employee's salary.

### **15. 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 Councillor or Members of any Committee or Sub-committee thereof
- > Member of certain public authorities – e.g. police, health or education authority, statutory tribunal or member of a prison board of visitors.



- > School / Academy Governor – either in the school where the individual is employed or another School / Academy.

Total time off for all public duties undertaken should not exceed a total of 18 days in any academic year.

### **Eligibility**

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

### **Requesting Leave**

Employees should advise the headteacher where they are a member or intend to become a member of a public organisation where they may be entitled to leave under this provision. The employee should discuss with the headteacher at the start of each academic year how much time they anticipate requiring to request under these provisions.

All requests should be submitted to the Headteacher for consideration.

Employees should give reasonable written notice should they wish to request leave for public duties in order to enable the school to assess the impact of granting leave. As a guide it is expected that not less than 5 working days' notice will be given of the request to take leave under this provision, although this requirement may be waived in exceptional circumstances.

The headteacher will endeavour to grant reasonable time off in so far as is practicable taking into account the needs of the school. The headteacher reserves the right to decline / postpone requests where the amount of time requested becomes excessive or in instances where granting time off would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the school or cause undue disruption to other employees.

Each request will be considered on a case by case basis.

The outcome of the request will be confirmed in writing.

The decision of the headteacher is final and there is no right of appeal.

Time off which is granted for the purpose of undertaking public duties should be recorded separately to any other leave which may be taken.

### **Payment**

Reasonable paid time off of up to 18 days in any academic year will be given for public duties.



## 16. Time off for Trade Union 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.

Employees should make the headteacher aware as soon as possible on their appointment or during the course of their employment should they be appointed as a Trade Union official and become eligible to request time off under these provisions.

Trade Union representatives should provide the headteacher with as much notice as is possible of any request to take time off. All time off is subject to the prior agreement of the headteacher and time off may be declined where this may have detrimental impact on the operation of the school.

Arrangements under this provision are set out in the Trust's Recognition and Facilities Agreement.

## 17. Reservists

### Eligibility

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

- > Army Reserves
- > Royal Navy Reserves
- > Royal Auxiliary Air Force
- > Royal Marines Reserves.
- > Regular Reservists (ex-regular service personnel who may be liable to be mobilised)

### Notifying the Trust

The trust requires that all new recruits or existing employees inform their headteacher as soon as possible where they are or intend to become, reservists.

The trust may require the employee to provide a copy of the written notification provided by the MOD to confirm that they are a member of the reserve forces and the terms of their engagement. The Employee may also be required to confirm on an annual basis that they are still a reservist.

### **Time off for reservist training**

Employees should seek to undertake training activities at weekends or outside of the School term, where possible.

Should an employee wish to request time off for training they should do so in writing to the headteacher as soon as practically possible.

The headteacher will consider any request carefully but may decline to grant time off where this would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the school or cause undue disruption to other employees.

Where time off for training is agreed during the school term up to 2 weeks unpaid leave may be granted in any academic year. Any payment for time off for reservist training is at the discretion of the headteacher.

### **Call up for Military Operations**

Should an employee be called up they should advise the headteacher as soon as practicable and present his/her mobilisation papers / letter from the MOD, outlining the date, and possible duration, of his/her mobilisation.

The maximum period of mobilisation will depend on the scale and the nature of the operation and is typically no longer than twelve months.

All requests to be released from duty following 'call up' should be submitted to the headteacher for consideration.

The trust will only seek to apply for an exemption or deferral of the employee's mobilisation in exceptional circumstances.

The headteacher may meet with the employee to discuss the terms of release and arrangements for maintaining contact during the period of mobilization and confirm these in writing.

### **Payment**

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 according to their military rank.

### **Terms Relating to the Period of Mobilisation**

Continuity of employment and service related benefits are not affected by a period of mobilisation however the period that the employee was absent from work will not count towards continuous service entitlement.

For Support Staff the terms under which mobilisation leave is granted are specified in the Kent Scheme Conditions of Service and associated guidance.

### **End of the Mobilisation Period**

As far as is practical the employee should notify the trust as soon as they are aware their period of mobilisation is due to end. In all cases the employee must write to the headteacher no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday after their final day of military service to advise them of their wish to return to work.

The headteacher may meet with the employee to discuss the arrangements for their return. Consideration will be given to support or training which may be appropriate to support the employee in their reintegration to the workplace.

### **Rights on return**

An employee has the right to return where possible to their former role, and if not, to a mutually acceptable role on the same terms and conditions prior to mobilisation.

## **18. Special Constables and Retained Firefighters**

The trust will grant reasonable leave to employees for the specific purpose of undertaking the duties of a Special Constable or Retained Fire-fighter.

### **Notifying the Trust**

The trust requires that all new recruits or existing employees inform their headteacher as soon as possible where they are, or intend to become, a Special Constable or Retained Firefighter.

The trust may require the employee to evidence that they are engaged as a Special Constable or Retained Firefighter. The employee may also be required to confirm on an annual basis that they are still undertaking such duties.

### **Eligibility**

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

### **Time off for training**

Employees should seek to undertake training activities at weekends or outside of the school term, where possible.

Should an employee wish to request time off for training they should do so in writing to the headteacher as soon as practically possible.

The headteacher will consider any request carefully but may decline to grant time off where this would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the school or cause undue disruption to other employees.

Where time off for training is agreed during the school term up to 2 weeks unpaid leave may be granted in any academic year. Any payment for time off for training is at the discretion of the headteacher.

### **Requesting Leave**

Employees should advise the headteacher where they are entitled to request leave under to undertake the duties of a Special Constable or Retained Firefighter.

All requests should be submitted to the Headteacher for consideration.

Requests for leave should be planned in advance giving sufficient notice for the headteacher to assess the impact of granting leave. The headteacher will endeavour to grant reasonable paid time off in so far as practicable taking into account the needs of the school.

The outcome of the request will usually be confirmed in writing by the headteacher.

### **19. 'Timeout' / Career Break**

The trust may, at its discretion, allow employees to take a planned career break and return to the workplace afterwards. Breaks may be requested for a number of reasons including to:

- > Pursue a personal interest or project
- > Undertake voluntary work
- > Undertake extensive overseas travel
- > Spend more time with family.
- > To undertake domestic / caring responsibilities.

## **Entitlement**

Employees may request between 2 months and 1-year unpaid leave from work.

No more than one career break will be granted during an individual's employment with the trust.

## **Eligibility**

Employees employed on Kent Scheme Terms and Conditions, with at least 2 years continuous service with the trust are eligible to request time off under this provision.

To qualify an employee needs to demonstrate:

- > That they have a firm intention of returning to work by an agreed date.
- > Have a satisfactory performance and conduct record.
- > Possess skills which the trust wishes to retain.
- > How they intend to use the time away from work.

## **Requesting Leave**

All requests should be submitted to the headteacher for consideration.

Any request for time off must be made in writing to the headteacher no later than 3 months before they wish the break to start. Employees should state the reason for the request, length of the break requested and the anticipated start and return date.

The headteacher will meet with the employee to discuss the request. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis taking into consideration the benefits of granting leave to both the employee and the school. The headteacher reserves the right to decline requests where this would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the school, cause undue disruption to other employees or where it is not possible to cover the employee's role.

The outcome of the request and any terms relating to the career break will be confirmed in writing. Where a request is declined the reasons for this will be stated.

The decision of the headteacher is final and there is no right of appeal.

## Payment

All career breaks are unpaid. The employee will not receive pay progression during the period of the break.

Where an employee is granted a career break immediately following Maternity or Adoption leave and they have received the additional 12 weeks at half pay, they will need to complete three months service (or equivalent if they are a teacher) after their agreed return date following the career break. If they do not return to work on the agreed date, they will have to repay the half pay received.

## Returning to Work Early

If an employee's circumstances change and they wish to return to work early, they should contact the headteacher in the first instance. An employee should give at least 3 months written notice of a wish to return early or where the leave period is less than 3 months as much notice as is reasonably practical. The headteacher will consider whether an early return date can be accommodated but reserves the right to require the employee to remain on the career break until the date originally agreed

## Terms Relating to Career Breaks

Employees will be required to provide the trust with details of how they may be contacted during the period of the career break.

Employees who are granted a career break will be entitled to return to their substantive post, unless a redundancy or restructure process is undertaken during the period of absence. In this case the trust will consult with the Employee to regarding the potential impact of the change on their role.

Annual leave does not accrue during a career break.

The period of the career break will count towards the calculation of continuous service for statutory purposes (e.g. redundancy rights, unfair dismissal rights, statutory maternity and adoption leave).

However, the period of the career break will not count towards continuous service for contractual purposes (e.g. annual leave, contractual maternity, adoption and paternity schemes and contractual sick pay). When the employee returns to work following the career break, their pre-break and post-break service will be added together to make total service for contractual purposes.

## **20. Time off in relation to legal proceedings**

The trust will allow reasonable time off in relation to legal proceedings not related to work matters.

All employees regardless of their length of service are entitled to request time off for this purpose.

Such time off will be unpaid.

The employee should advise the headteacher in writing as soon as practicable of the dates and duration if they wish to take leave for this purpose. The employee may be required to provide evidence of the dates / duration they will be required to attend court.

## **21. Adverse Weather Conditions & Unforeseen Disruption**

There may be occasions where employees experience difficulties attending work during periods of adverse weather or where there are disruptions to road and / or public transport. Employees are advised to consider reasonable contingency arrangements in these circumstances.

Employees have a contractual duty to report to work and should make every reasonable effort to attend work even if their arrival is delayed.

However, the headteacher 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 determines that the school 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 another of the trust's sites.

Employees should endeavour as far as is possible to make contingency arrangements in the event that their child's school is closed or usual child care arrangements disrupted.

Paid absence during periods of adverse weather or unforeseen disruption is entirely at the discretion of the headteacher and will only be granted with the prior approval of the headteacher. 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.

## **22. Unpaid leave**

The trust will exceptionally grant unpaid leave for reasons others than those specified in this procedure. The maximum period of unpaid leave that may be requested in any academic year is 6 months.



Requests for such leave should be made in writing to the headteacher. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis, balanced against the operational needs of the school and granted at the discretion of the headteacher.

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

The decision of the headteacher is final and there is no right of appeal.

### **23. Pension Considerations**

Certain periods paid or unpaid leave may impact on an employee's pension.

Employees should seek guidance from the LGPS or Teachers Pension Scheme regarding the pension implications of any period of special leave taken and any mandatory or optional pension contributions which may be made during a period of leave.

### **24. Suspected Abuse of Special Leave Provisions**

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

Where it is suspected that a fraudulent request has been made, the trust may, after appropriate investigation address the matter through its disciplinary procedure.

Where an employee is believed to be making excessive use of discretionary leave provisions, beyond that which is judged reasonable for the purpose for which it is requested, this may be addressed by the headteacher using the appropriate policy.

### **25. Unauthorised Absence**

Where an employee:

- > Fails to adhere to the notification requirements set out in this procedure or takes leave without seeking prior authorisation,
- > Is identified as not utilising the leave for the purpose it was requested

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.



## 26. Disputes

Each request will for special leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent for another employee to be granted leave in similar circumstances.

The decision of the headteacher is final and there is no right of appeal.

Employees should discuss the reasons for any refused leave requests informally with the headteacher.

Disputes regarding the application of special leave provisions should be addressed via the trust's Grievance Procedure.

## 27. 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 time off request form when applying for leave under the provisions of this document. Records will be kept of leave taken for monitoring purposes.

Separate records should be kept of the number of days leave requested and granted under each of the special leave provisions.

## Appendix A: Employee Time Off Request Form

### Employee Time Off Request

#### Employee Details:

Name:	
Job Title:	
School:	

#### Time Off Request:

Beginning on:		Ending on:	
Number of days:		Hours:	
Return to work:		Regular Working Hours (per week):	

#### Reason for Request:

Bereavement/Compassionate Leave	
Dependant Leave	
Interview	
Medical/Hospital Appointment (proof must be provided)	
Public Duties i.e. Jury Service	
Religious Observance	
Training	
Other – please state	

#### Employee Certification

I certify that the above information is accurate, and I understand that this request is subject to management approval and Trust policies.

**Employee Signature**..... **Date**.....

#### Headteacher Decision

Approved  Rejected  Paid  Unpaid

**Headteacher Signature**..... **Date**.....

## Appendix B: Associated Policies and Guidance

### For all Employees:

- Maternity Information Pack
- Adoption Information Pack
- Maternity Support Leave Information Pack
- Shared Parental Leave Information Pack
- Jury Service Guidance\*
- Reserve Forces Leave Guidance\*

### For Support Staff employed under Kent Scheme Conditions of Service:

- Kent Scheme Conditions of Service
- Carers Leave Guidance\*
- Time Out Guidance\*

### For Teachers:

- Conditions of Service for Teachers in England & Wales 'The Burgundy Book'

\* Available [www.kelsi.org.uk](http://www.kelsi.org.uk);