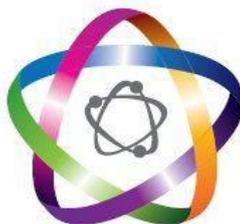


POLICY DOCUMENT No SO 5



DEBENHAM HIGH SCHOOL

A Church of England High Performing Academy



Discretionary Leave of Absence Policy

This policy is reviewed every two years in the late autumn or early spring

History of Document

Issue No	Author/Owner	Date Written/ Reviewed	Approved by Governors on	Comments
Issue 1	TD/SMcB	24/07/2014	07/10/2014	Adapted from EPM model policy
Issue 2	TD/SMcB	25/11/2016	06/12/2016	Reviewed no changes
Issue 3	TW/SMcB	25/01/2019	02/07/2019	Reviewed no changes
Issue 4	T Willmott	29/06/2021	06/07/2021	Addition of Parental Bereavement Leave

1. Introduction.

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

2. Procedure and Decision Making

- 2.1 Except in emergencies, authorisation to take leave of absence must be requested from the:
- **Deputy Headteacher** (for teaching staff & Teaching Assistants) or
 - Direct Line manager (all other support staff)
- as soon as the need for the leave is known using the Pink form (example Appendix 1). Where the leave of absence request is made by the Head Teacher, the request should be made to the Chair of Governors.
- Once authorised, the leave of absence request **must** be passed to the Business Manager for processing.

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

3. Discretionary Leave of Absence

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

Summary non exhaustive examples of leave normally granted with pay	Days Per [Annum] [Rolling 12 month period]
<u>compassionate leave</u> illness or injury of a significant other person giving rise to serious domestic difficulties	period reasonably necessary but not normally more than 3 days
<u>bereavement leave</u> death (including funeral) of a significant other person	period reasonably necessary but not normally more than 5 days
moving house where it cannot be arranged for a non-working time	1 day
<u>personal events or emergencies</u> i.e. an event which, if response were to be delayed, would result in significant personal loss to the employee such as fire or flood	1 day
<u>accepted impossible</u> travel because of weather or other public crisis.	period reasonably necessary but not normally more than 2 days
interviews for jobs in the education service	period reasonably necessary but not normally more than 3 days
<u>dependent care leave</u> . employees may only take paid time off to provide personal care for a dependent where there is an immediate crisis. (NB: There is a statutory right to take unpaid leave see 6.1below)	In normal circumstances not more than 1 day on each occasion. Up to 3 days in any rolling 12 month period.

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

Summary non exhaustive examples of absence that may be granted without pay	Days Per Annum - All Staff
Any personal reason other than those above which it was not possible to schedule for a non-working day or time or within annual leave e.g. dentist, optician, medical appointment, driving test, important one-off family occasions.	maximum of 3 days
Attendance as witness either on subpoena or other direction from a court or at the direction of the police, or voluntary attendance at an inquest as witness not representing the school	period of attendance necessary.
Leave of absence for religious observance	reasonable time off

3.2.1 Medical appointments:

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

3.2.2 Attendance in court as a witness

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

3.2.3 Leave of absence for religious observance

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

4 Statutory Leave of Absence for Public Duties

- 4.1 Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of **unpaid** time off work by law to carry out certain public duties. Public duties include service as a:
- Tribunal member
 - Magistrate
 - Local councillor
 - Member of an NHS Trust
 - Prison visitor
 - Lay visitor to police stations
 - School governor
- 4.2 As soon as you are aware that you will require time off for performance of a public service you should request leave of absence from **Deputy Headteacher** (for teaching staff & Teaching Assistants) or direct Line manager (all other support staff) using the form at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 The school will agree to requests for **paid** time off to undertake public duties wherever reasonably possible having regard to the criteria set out in this policy.
- 4.4 Each request for time off will be considered on its merits, in the circumstances in which it is made including:
- Whether the activity is reasonable in relation to your employment
 - How much time off is reasonably required for the duty in question
 - How much time off you have already taken for the public duty in question
 - How your absence will affect the school.

5. Jury Service

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

5.6 Employees are protected from being subjected to a detriment or being dismissed, as a result of being summoned to attend for service as a juror or being absent from work on jury service.

6. Statutory Dependent Care Leave

6.1 Employees have a right to take a reasonable amount of **unpaid** time off work when it is necessary to:

- (a) provide assistance when a dependent falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
- (b) make longer-term care arrangements for a dependent who is ill or injured;
- (c) take action required in consequence of the death of a dependent;
- (d) deal with the unexpected disruption, termination or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependent; and/or
- (e) deal with an unexpected incident involving their child during school hours (or those of another educational establishment).

6.2 A **dependent** for the purposes of this paragraph 6.1 is:

- (a) an employee's spouse, civil partner, parent or child;
- (b) a person who lives in the same household as an employee, but who is not their tenant, lodger, boarder or employee; or
- (c) anyone else who reasonably relies on the employee to provide assistance, make arrangements or take action of the kind referred to in 6.1 above.

7. Parental Bereavement Leave

7.1 We recognise that, while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child is among the most devastating events that an employee can ever face. *In such circumstances, Debenham High School will endeavour to support the individual in any way, including but not limited to the statutory rights set out below, introduced under The Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (General) Regulations 2020.*

7.2 This entitlement applies to employees who have suffered the loss of a child or who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

7.3 Irrespective of the length of service, an employee can take parental bereavement leave if they are the:

- Parent of a child who has passed away
- Partner of the child's parent, where you live in an enduring family relationship with the child who has passed away and their parent
- "Parent in fact" of a child who has passed away, which means that, for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child died, you have been living with the child and had "day-to-day responsibility" for the child (but you have not been paid to look after the child)
- "Intended parent" of a child who has passed away, i.e. a parent using a surrogate
- "Natural parent" of a child who has passed away who is named in a court order, i.e. where a court orders some contact for an adopted child's birth parent
- Adopter of a child who has passed away

- In practice, this means that most employees with parental responsibility for a child who passes away can take parental bereavement leave
- If you have suffered a bereavement but are unsure if you are entitled to parental bereavement leave, you should contact your line manager for clarification.

7.4 What leave a bereaved parent can take

- For each child who has passed away, a bereaved parent can take *a minimum of one or two weeks' statutory* parental bereavement leave, *however, additional leave may also be agreed*
- Parental bereavement leave is not available as individual days

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

- A single block of two weeks
- Two separate blocks of one week at different times
- The leave must be taken within 56 weeks of the date of the death of your child
- This lengthy period recognises that, as a bereaved parent, you may need some flexibility as to when you take the leave. For example, you may:
 - Wish to take leave around the first anniversary of your child's death or at another particular time that is special, such as your child's birthday
 - Already be on another type of leave, such as maternity leave or sickness absence

In practice, we will allow as much flexibility around how and when leave is taken as is practicable.

7.6 Notice to take parental bereavement leave

Informal notification, such as a phone call or email, is sufficient to take parental bereavement leave.

If you intend to take parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days after your child's death, you can take the leave straightaway. You do not have to provide a period of notice. This means that you can begin parental bereavement leave by letting your line manager know no later than when you are due to start work or, if that is not feasible, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

If you intend to take parental bereavement leave more than 56 days after your child's death, you have to give your line manager at least one week's notice of your intention to take parental bereavement leave.

7.7 Cancellation of parental bereavement leave

If you have asked to begin parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days of the date of your child's death, you can cancel your parental bereavement leave, as long as you let your line manager know before you would have been due to start work.

If you have asked to begin parental bereavement leave more than 56 days after your child's death, you can cancel your parental bereavement leave, as long as you let your line manager know at least one week in advance.

7.8 Pay during parental bereavement leave

Recognising the need to support bereaved parents, we will enhance the statutory pay by continuing to pay normal pay during parental bereavement leave.

7.9 Rights during parental bereavement leave

During parental bereavement leave, all terms and conditions of your contract will continue. This means that all other/all] benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement will continue to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid.

7.10 Returning to work following parental bereavement leave

You have the right to resume working in the same job when returning to work from parental bereavement leave if the period of leave, when added to any other period of statutory leave (typically maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or shared parental leave) in relation to the same child, is 26 weeks or less.

You are entitled to return to another job that is suitable and appropriate for you, rather than the same job, if:

- The period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks when added to most other periods of statutory leave taken in relation to the same child; and
- It is not reasonably practicable to return you to the same job.

DAY 2								
Date/ time from:			Date/time to:					
For teaching staff Cover required (See over if over 1 day)	AM Reg	P1	P2	P3	P4	PM Reg	P5	P6
DAY 3								
Date/ time from:			Date/time to:					
For teaching staff Cover required (See over if over 1 day)	AM Reg	P1	P2	P3	P4	PM Reg	P5	P6

Absence for training	
Title	
Organiser	
Venue	
NB: Deputy Head should be consulted and a training request completed before any training is booked	

Part 3

APPEAL AGAINST LEAVE OF ABSENCE DECISION

If you wish to appeal against a refusal to grant discretionary leave of absence then you must explain your reasons below and return this form to Headteacher within 5 days of the date of the decision as recorded above.

Signed:

Date: