



SPECIAL LEAVE FOR STAFF POLICY

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Middlesex Learning Partnership: Special Leave for Staff Policy
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Middlesex Learning Partnership aims to deliver an efficient, cost effective and quality service to its students. The Trust believes that the participation and commitment of every employee in the activities of the Trust is vital in order to achieve an optimum level of service and that good attendance and punctuality is an essential factor in the achievement of the Trust's objectives.

This Policy has been developed consistent with the principles that the Trust recognises that every employee is needed; however circumstances can arise when a member of staff needs to request Special Leave for circumstances other than sickness.

This Policy applies to all staff employed within the Middlesex Learning Partnership.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Middlesex Learning Partnership and Directors/Governors are committed to securing good employee relations through providing for the care and welfare of employees.

The Middlesex Learning Partnership and Directors/Governors will ensure that the Special Leave for Staff Policy is applied fairly and consistently.

Staff who are absent due to ill-health will be approached in a sensitive and caring manner with due regard to confidentiality in line with the procedures contained within the Absence Management/ Attendance Policy.

Special Leave provisions operate with a high level of trust. Abuse of this trust will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

Entitlements to statutory leave such as maternity, adoption, paternity and parental leave are covered under separate procedures.

3. PURPOSE

The Special Leave for Staff Policy recognises that a work life balance benefits both the Trust and employees, and supports the principle that employees work best when they are able to achieve an appropriate balance between work and other aspects of their lives.

The Policy also recognises that employees may experience difficult circumstances and unforeseen events, for which they will need to take time off work. The Trust will facilitate time off whenever possible.

This Policy outlines the circumstances for which an employee may request time off from work under the Special Leave Policy in **any one Academic Year** and the period of time off which can be allowed with pay. Any request for time off beyond the specified period will be at the discretion of the Head of School a) whether to grant the leave and b) whether it will be with or without pay.

Where an employee has an entitlement to take Annual Leave, there will be an expectation that the employee will use their Annual Leave entitlement in some circumstances instead of requesting special leave.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 *Employee's Responsibility*

The responsibility of the employee is to:

- Attend work when fit to do so

- Comply with the Trust's Special Leave for Staff Policy and procedures

4.2 *Head of School Role*

The role of the Head of School is to manage the attendance of employees of the Academy by:

- Acting fairly and consistently in applying the appropriate procedures as set out in this policy
- Ensuring that accurate absence records are maintained for monitoring and pay purposes
- Seeking advice from Trust HR / Schools HR as appropriate
- The Head of School has the discretion to grant Special Leave which may be paid or unpaid. This is not an entitlement and there is no automatic right to Special Leave.

5. **SPECIAL LEAVE FOR STAFF**

- 5.1 Except in cases of serious urgency, no member of staff may, without previous permission, be absent from the Academy for any reason other than their own personal illness.
- 5.2 If a member of staff requires Special Leave of Absence, a Request for Special Leave should be completed outlining in detail the reason for the request; following the guidance given in Appendix 2. The forms should be forwarded to the Academy's designated person.
- 5.3 The designated person will discuss the request for Special Leave with the Head of School.
- 5.4 The request for Special Leave will be considered in line with the circumstances and payment of salary during absence.
- 5.5 Following the meeting with the Head of School, the employee would be informed of the outcome and whether the request would be granted with pay or unpaid leave as appropriate.

6. **DEFINITION OF CLOSE RELATIVE/DEPENDENT**

For the purposes of this Policy, a close relative is defined as **Spouse/Partner, Children (including stepchildren, adopted and current foster children), parents, siblings, grandparents or grandchildren, parent-in-law, elderly relatives** or a person to whom the employee is next of kin or is nominated as such, or someone where there has been a guardian relationship.

The employee is the person who can demonstrate that they are a principal carer and is clearly the most appropriate person to provide support.

7. **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Where an employee is absent from work without permission without an acceptable explanation, pay will be deducted and action will be taken under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

8. PAYMENT OF SALARY DURING ABSENCE (PER ACADEMIC YEAR)

Salary during absence for reasons other than personal illness may be paid in accordance with those outlined below:

Statutory Absence

Reason for Absence	Salary Payable
Paternity/nominated carer's leave	10 working days
Jury Service	Leave of absence will be granted. Claims for loss of earnings to be made to the Court (the Court provides a claim form to be completed by Payroll). Payroll will deduct from salary an amount equivalent to the allowance

Non-Statutory Absence per Academic Year

Reason for Absence	Salary Payable
To attend job interview	3 days
Examination, if required to improve educational qualifications	Period necessary to sit the examination
Study leave	Consideration given for individual study not necessarily linked to professional duties
Religious Festivals	3 days
Attendance at meetings of Examiners/ Moderators	Period necessary to attend, provided any fee receivable is refunded to the Academy
Bereavement	5 days
Emergency Domestic Leave	3 days
Attendance at funeral of near relative	1 day
House move	1 day
Wedding of close relative	1 day
Dependent Leave	5 days

Appendix 1: Types of Special Leave

The following are circumstances for which Special Leave may be requested and granted with pay:

Bereavement Leave

Requests to attend funerals will be considered sympathetically. It is recognised that individual circumstances are many and varied and there may need to be discussions with the employee in order to obtain the full circumstances when responding to requests.

The purpose of Bereavement Leave is to facilitate an employee making funeral arrangements and/or attending the funeral, the event of the death of a close relative.

The maximum paid Bereavement Leave is **5 days** per academic year.

If additional time away from work is needed, over and above the 5 day allocation, the Academy may wish to seek to allow time off using other means such as unpaid leave, or annual leave where the employee has an entitlement to take annual leave.

Emergency/Domestic Leave

Emergency/Domestic Leave is clearly intended to assist employees in dealing with unexpected problems which cannot be planned for in the normal way.

Circumstances for which Emergency/Domestic Leave is authorised are varied and whilst it can be a difficult time for the employee, the Head of School has a right to satisfy themselves that the application is appropriate.

Unexpected emergencies can be dealt with in a relatively short period of time but decisions as to how much time is reasonable may need to be made very quickly and depends on the circumstances of the emergency.

Employees are expected to plan for and use their annual leave, where appropriate, for known events such as school/childminder holidays or routine domestic appliance servicing. Where these arrangements break down unexpectedly, Emergency/Domestic Leave enables the employee to make immediate alternative arrangements. For example a childminder being suddenly taken ill, a day care centre or school closing at short notice, an incident occurring at a child's school, or in the event of the employee suffering flood, fire or burglary.

If, in the circumstances, the employee is unable to explain the nature and extent of the problem when telephoning the cover line to identify that they will not be attending that day, further discussion must take place as soon as possible or immediately on return to work with the employee's Line Manager and the Designated Person.

The maximum level of paid Emergency/Domestic Leave is **3 days per academic year**.

If additional time away from work is needed, over and above the 3 day allocation, the Academy may seek to allow time off using other means such as unpaid leave, or annual leave where the employee has an entitlement to take annual leave.

Dependent's Leave

The purpose of Dependent's leave is to facilitate an employee taking time off where they have caring responsibilities and need time to deal with an emergency involving a dependent who has been suddenly taken ill.

There can be a number of reasons for an employee requesting Dependent's Leave which could include accompanying a young or vulnerable dependent to a significant emergency appointment or in-patient stay, or to look after a sick dependent where other arrangements cannot be made.

When considering requests for Dependent's Leave and the time given, the Head of School would recognise the needs of service delivery, whilst at the same time recognising the employee's need to undertake their caring responsibilities. In making these decisions, the Head of School would consider:

- Is the person requiring care a 'dependent' as defined by the Special Leave for Staff Policy?
- The Head of School/Designated Person/Trust HR Manager may have some awareness of the personal circumstances of their employees and may be able to make informed judgments without making further enquiries.
- Where it is not apparent what the nature of the dependent relationship is, it will be necessary to explore the situation sensitively with the employee to ascertain whether the request falls within the provisions for Dependent's Leave.

The maximum level of paid Dependent's Leave is **5 days per academic year** regardless of the number of dependents.

If additional time away from work is needed, over and above the 5 day allocation, the Academy may seek to allow time off using other means such as unpaid leave, or annual leave where the employee has an entitlement to take annual leave.

Religious Festivals

An employee can take up to 3 days with pay each academic year for observance of Religious Festivals. Time off with pay would only be allowed where the Religious Festival is celebrated by the whole of the affected community on a national/international level.

Where an employee has an entitlement to take annual leave, they would be expected to use their annual leave for this purpose and would not be granted time off under this policy.

Wedding of a Close Relative

The maximum level of paid leave is **1 day per academic year**.

Where an employee has an entitlement to take annual leave, they would be expected to use their annual leave for this purpose and would not be granted time off under this policy.

Moving House

The maximum level of paid leave is **1 day per academic year** to allow an employee to move household effects to their new home.

Where an employee has an entitlement to take annual leave, they would be expected to use their annual leave for this purpose and would not be granted time off under this policy.

Attend Job Interviews

Paid leave up to **3 days per academic year** may be given dependent on interview arrangements and the distance involved in attending. This period may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

Where an employee has an entitlement to take annual leave, they would be expected to use their annual leave for this purpose and would not be granted time off under this policy.

Appendix 2: Completing the Special Leave Request Form Guidance

In order that your request for Special Leave may be looked at sympathetically, it is important to provide details of the reason for the request. The following guidelines clarify the type of information that is required:

Bereavement Leave

Please indicate:

- Your relationship to the deceased i.e. wife, husband, partner, parent, child, brother, sister etc (please refer to Section 6 Definition of Close Relative/Dependent)
- The place where the funeral is to take place and if you need time off to travel there
- Any other relevant details, such as responsibility for making funeral arrangements

Dependency Leave for Illness of a Child

Please indicate:

- The age of the child
- The nature of the illness
- Any other relevant details

Dependency Leave for Illness of other Close Relative

Please indicate:

- Your relationship to the person who is ill
- The nature of the illness
- Any other relevant details e.g. demonstrating that you are the principal carer and are clearly the most appropriate person to provide support

Emergency/Domestic Leave

Please indicate:

- Type of emergency
- If emergency is relating to the breakdown of care arrangements at the last minute, please give details of type of care arrangements and your relationship to the dependent
- Any other relevant details

Request for Special Leave to attend Job Interview

Please indicate:

- The format of the interview and the duration as given by the organization
- The location and the extent of travelling involved
- Any other relevant details