Grove
Learning Trust

Leave and Absence Policy

Autumn 2025

Vision

Together, we will create remarkable schools in which all children can thrive.
As one organisation, Grove Learning Trust, with schools that are unique and united, shares aspiration for our children, which is underpinned by a strong commitment to our values.

Trust >> Connect >> Collaborate

Our policies underpin our vision and set out clearly our expectations of each other.

Introduction

1. Grove Learning Trust (The Trust) recognises and values the contribution of each member of staff to the education of the children in the Trust schools.

2. High levels of absence between teaching and support staff pose a serious problem for a school in terms of disruption to teaching programmes, pupils' learning and other areas of the school's work. We are committed to managing attendance so that any disruption to the pupils' education or the effective running of the school is minimised. Equally it recognises that during the course of employment, colleagues will occasionally be absent from work through ill health, maternity and other authorised circumstances.

3. Absence of any staff employed in schools (and those within the central team on term time only contracts,)during term time means some impact on the children's education. Therefore, requests from any member of staff for absence to be taken during term time must be regarded by all as the exception. Requests for leave of absence for the purpose of taking holidays and/or contributing to holidays will not be granted.

4. This policy gives details of entitlements of members of staff in relation to absence. The number of days' entitlement given in the table below are days per occasion of absence.

5. Part-time staff will have the entitlement for leave from work reduced in proportion to the percentage of time they work.

6. The Sickness Absence Policy assists managers in taking action to arrange any appropriate support that may prevent maximum attendance of staff. This Leave and Absence Policy will therefore be used in conjunction with the Sickness Absence Policy if the amount of absence taken under this policy is not considered reasonable.

7. All requests will be considered sensitively and in accordance with the Trusts obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Seeking approval for leave from Work

8. All staff will be required to follow the trusts procedures for requesting leave of absence and for reporting absence.

9. Authorised paid and unpaid absence from work for the reasons given in this policy requires prior approval unless in exceptional circumstances where this has not been possible.

10. Requests for paid or unpaid leave must be made in writing to the Headteacher (Teachers & school-based support staff) or Line Manager (Heads & central team) with full reasons for the request. Requests by the Members of the Executive Team should go to the CEO. Requests by the CEO should go to the Chair of Trustees. The request should be made as soon as it is known that it will be required, and in any case not less than one full week in advance of the proposed absence, except in exceptional circumstances such as the death or sudden illness of a family member.

11. The Trustees have given delegated authority to the Headteacher to approve leave of absence requests for up to 5 days (10 days for parental bereavement leave, see chart below). For anything greater the Headteacher must discuss each case with the Executive Team and act on the recommendation made.

12. Parental bereavement leave was introduced on 6 April 2020 and allows up to 10 days' absence in the event of the death of a child under the age of 18. Headteachers are asked to discuss requests for this period to be increased with the Executive Team as appropriate.

13. Requests for leave of absence will be considered taking into account:
    - the principles of this policy
    - the best interests of the pupils and the school
    - treating staff in a fair, reasonable and consistent way
    - national and local terms and conditions of employment

14. Where the agreements refer to close relatives, this is taken to mean – husband, wife, civil partner, permanent partner, brother/sister, parent, child and grandparent or the corresponding relatives-in-law. Additionally, this includes grandparents or other relatives/carers who have taken on the main caring role or people who are not related but occupying a similar position in the family.

Dental and medical appointments

15. It is expected that dental and medical appointments will be made outside of working hours wherever possible. It is recognised that in some circumstance, such as an appointment from a hospital, that this may not always be possible. However, appointments in work time should be kept to a minimum and cause as little disruption as possible. In any event, prior approval to attend an appointment will need to be sought and agreed.

Special Leave

16. All employees have the right to take a reasonable period of time off during working hours for special leave circumstances. Special paid leave is not an entitlement, and some leave can be authorised as unpaid or Time Off in Lieu. This is at the discretion of the head within a school or line manager for central employees.

17. Special leave can be granted for both domestic (e.g. family emergencies, bereavement, travel) and non-domestic (e.g. study leave, reserve forces training, voluntary public service.

18. Before making any sort of commitment which may lead to a request for special leave, staff should first discuss their requirements with their line manager. Formal applications for special leave should be made, in writing, in advance to the head within a school or line manager for central employees.

19. It is recognised that staff may have no choice when court attendance or jury service is concerned. Special paid leave should normally be pre-authorised, but where circumstances make this impossible it may be authorised retrospectively. In cases where there may be a conflict of interest with official duties and responsibilities, the head or line manager can seek further advice on the proposed arrangement from HR.

Suspected abuse of special leave provisions

20. Staff members are expected to only request and take leave specifically for the purpose stated. If the Trust suspects that an employee has not used the leave for the requested purpose, the Trust may, after appropriate investigation address the matter under our Disciplinary policy.

Unauthorised absence

30. Where a staff member does not follow the notification requirements or takes leave when it has previously been refused, the absence may be noted as unauthorised and the Trust may, after appropriate investigation address the matter under our Disciplinary policy.

Appeals

31. The decision of the headteacher/line manager for leave requests is final and there is no right to appeal.

32. Staff members should discuss any refused request informally with their headteacher/line manager.

33. If the decision related to a special leave provision, this should be raised under the Trust's grievance policy.

Monitoring

34. The Trust will record, monitor and review requests and leave granted on an individual and whole Trust basis to ensure effective management.

Appendix 1 : Reasons for leave with pay

Reasons for leave with pay	Teachers	Support Staff
Sickness	see Section 4 of the "Burgundy Book"	See Part 2, Section 10 of the "Green Book"
Annual Leave	Not Applicable	See Part 2, Section 7 of the "Green Book" for all year round staff, not applicable for term time only staff
Serious/critical illness of a close relative i.e. spouse, civil partner, partner, sibling, parent (or other relative/carer who brought up the employee), child or corresponding relatives in-law who lives within the members of staff or lives alone	In cases of critical/serious illness of close relatives, up to one week's paid leave. In other relationships, applications for unpaid leave should be addressed in writing to the Headteacher to consider	For critical/serious illness up to five working days for all year round staff, half of which will be taken from annual leave or will be unpaid. Up to two and half days for term time only staff. Can include taking children to hospital
Death or critical illness of a close relative i.e. spouse, civil partner, partner, sibling, parent (or other relative/carer who brought up the employee), child or corresponding relatives in-law	Up to five working days	Up to five working days
Children under 18: In the event of the death of child under 18 years of age, parental bereavement leave is an entitlement for bereaved parents to be absent from work, for up to two weeks	**Children under 18:** Up to ten working days Parents can take the leave as either a single block of 2 weeks, or as 2 separate blocks of one week each taken at different times across the	**Children under 18:** Up to ten working days Parents can take the leave as either a single block of 2 weeks, or as 2 separate blocks of one week each taken at different times across the

	first year after their child's death. This means they can match their leave to the times they need it most, which could be in the early days or over the first anniversary	first year after their child's death. This means they can match their leave to the times they need it most, which could be in the early days or over the first anniversary
Ante-natal care for expectant mothers	The right to paid off time to attend ante-natal care on production of evidence of appointments if requested. "Burgundy Book" Section 5 para 3 – Maternity Scheme	The right to paid off time to attend ante-natal care on production of evidence of appointments if requested.
Cancer screening	For reasonable periods where attendance in school time cannot be avoided	For reasonable periods where attendance in school time cannot be avoided
Time off for elective procedures	At the discretion of the Headteacher/flexible working consideration. Paid leave for IVF	At the discretion of the Headteacher/flexible working consideration. Paid leave for IVF
Religious devotion days	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager

Weddings of close relatives i.e. sibling, parent (or another family member/carer who brought up the employee) or children or corresponding relatives in law	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Attendance at funerals of close relatives i.e. sibling, parent (or another family member/carer who brought up the employee) or children or corresponding relatives in law	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Graduation ceremony – employee's own partner, son, daughter or close relative	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Potential redundancy	Reasonable time to seek alternative employment	Reasonable time to seek alternative employment
House removal	One working day with as much advance notice as possible.	One day (term time only employees). Grey Pages 4.6(j)

Times of severe weather	Permission to leave early should not be unreasonably refused. Headteacher to ascertain whether possible for teachers to undertake work activities at home in order to fulfil their statutory obligation to work for 195 days in the school year	Permission to leave early should not be unreasonably refused. Lost hours should be made up where annual leave cannot be taken
Jury Service or attendance as a witness in Court proceedings	For the required period subject to the employee claiming for loss of earnings	For the required period subject to the employee claiming for loss of earnings
Magisterial duties	Minimum attendance requirement including training and membership of a statutory tribunal not exceeding 20 working days a year	Minimum attendance requirement including training
Attendance as elected members at local authority meetings and properly established committees	Up to 20 days per year or equivalent	Up to 144 working hours
For members of another school's Trustees	Up to a maximum of 4 half-days per annum depending upon the reasonableness of the request	Up to a maximum of 4 half-days per annum depending upon the reasonableness of the request
For officials of Trade Unions to perform I.R.	i)Regular release, and/or	Authorities shall provide the necessary facilities to Trades Unions

duties/undertake approved training	ii) Occasional release and/or iii) Consultative meetings convened by the Trust	including paid leave of absence to carry out their duties. Clarify the local agreement
Candidates for Parliamentary Elections	Normally not more than 5 working days	Up to 3 weeks' paid leave of absence during period up to and including polling day
Reservists	Up to 2 weeks per annum	Up to 2 weeks per annum
Call up for Military operation	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Special Constables/Retained Firefighters	Up to 10 days paid leave	Up to 10 days paid leave
Members of non-regular forces – annual training	Up to two weeks – the second of which is to be unpaid	Up to two weeks (Grey Pages paragraph 4.6(g))
Lecturing in professional capacity on condition that all fees to be paid to school	At the discretion of the Executive Team	At the discretion of the Headteacher up to a maximum of 5 working days. At the Discretion of the Executive team up to a maximum of 12 working days
Sitting examinations relating to professional development	Employees are entitled to be paid leave of absence for the purpose of sitting for examinations concerned with the teacher's professional development to the benefit of the school	Employees are entitled to be paid leave of absence for sitting for approved examinations. Additional leave may be granted for final revision for approved examinations
Duties in connection with external examinations	Refer to the Burgundy Book - Appendix 2.	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager

Interviews / selection processes for other posts	For all posts	For all posts
Attendance at approved conferences	At the discretion of the Headteacher subject to conference being of benefit to school and the teacher's professional development	Up to 12 working days in any one year Grey Pages 4.6(b
For Safety Representatives to perform duties and undertake associated training	i)Regular release, and/or ii) Occasional release and/or iii) Consultative meetings convened by the Trust	Clarify the local agreement
Sports representation as competitor at national/ international level	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Work Life Balance day. Given with HT discretion for reasons not covered by any of the above. This is to be formally requested with as much notice as possible. Consideration will be given with regard to staffing levels, other requests and the timeliness of the date. Days may not be carried over nor taken as an entitlement	One day per Annum	One day per Annum
Other circumstances not mentioned in the policy / Special paid leave	At the discretion of the executive team	At the discretion of the executive team

Appendix 1 : Reasons for leave without pay

Reasons for leave without pay	Teachers	Support Staff
Non-serious illness of an employee's child/dependent (falls under the provision of Emergency Time Off for Dependants)	In the case of a sick child/dependent with a non-critical illness, after the first day it will be assumed that alternative arrangements for childcare will be made. The first day would fall under the Emergency Time Off for Dependants provisions and will be paid (subject to a maximum of one day/part day per term). Subsequent days will be unpaid.	In the case of a sick child/dependent with a non-critical illness, after the first day it will be assumed that alternative arrangements for childcare will be made. The first day (or part day) would fall under the Emergency Time Off for Dependants provisions and will be paid (subject to a maximum of one day/part day per term). Subsequent days will be unpaid
An unexpected or sudden problem involving someone who depends on your help or care (falls under the provision of Emergency Time Off for Dependants).	Up to two days to deal with the emergency and make any arrangements that are needed	Up to two days to deal with the emergency and make any arrangements that are needed
Hospital appointments for children where both parents wish to attend	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Funerals / Weddings – other than close relatives as in "With Pay" section	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Weddings – Employees own wedding and for those other than relatives first degree	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager

Accompanying a pregnant woman, with whom they are having a child, at ante-natal appointments	Up to two ante-natal appointments. See Maternity Policy	Up to two ante-natal appointments. See Maternity Policy
House removals – in excess of one day	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher
Court hearings – other than those covered under "With Pay" sections – including divorce proceedings, custody of children, maintenance payments and other Court appearance where the member of staff is defendant or involved in non-criminal proceedings	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Special family flights where spouse or civil partner is in the armed forces	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Delays on return to school caused by industrial disputes	At the discretion of the Headteacher	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Sporting representations below national level	At the discretion of Headteacher Normally, not more than ten school days in a year.	At the discretion of the Headteacher/line manager
Time off in Lieu (TOIL)	At discretion of Headteacher. Taken within 3 months of being accrued and not taken in periods of more than one day in term time.	At discretion of Headteacher/line manager. Taken within 3 months of being accrued and not taken in periods of more than one day in term time.

Other circumstances not mentioned in the policy / Special leave	At the discretion of the executive team.	At the discretion of the executive team.

In special circumstances additional time off can be requested but this needs to be sent to the HR Business Partner to discuss with the executive team and trustees where appropriate.

Version Control

Version	**Date**	**Status**	**Author (AU) / Approver (AP)**
Draft 01	Sept 23	Completion of first draft	PHP (AU)
Draft 02	Feb 24	Additions to reflect central team (line manager) Amendments made to request for leave structure Authorisation changes – Headteacher / Line Manager / Exec. Team	SR (AU)
Final – A	Spring 24	Ratified by the Board of Trustees	BoT(AP)
	Summer 25	Addition of special leave section and removal of "Emergencies involving dependents" removed as covered in Time of for Dependents policy. Parental leave section removed to form part of it's own policy.	CS (AU)