



Special Leave Policy

Statement of Intent

The Governors of The Marsh Academy recognise the importance of consistency, openness and quality in responding to requests from staff for special leave of absence for family and personal reasons.

This Policy recognises:

- the statutory entitlement to **unpaid** time off to attend urgent matters related to dependants
- national and local agreements
- best practice which seeks to maintain good working relationships between staff and management
- the operational needs of the school

It is intended that this policy will provide a clear and workable framework to enable requests for leave of absence for staff working in schools to be reasonably and fairly handled. This policy recognises that the operational needs of the school are a priority and there may be times when the Executive Principal/Head of School has to refuse a request for leave.

It should be noted that there might be occasion when circumstances arise not identified in this policy. In such circumstances the decision regarding leave of absence remains within the discretion of the Executive Principal/Head of School or the Chair of Governors.

Personal Leave

Paid compassionate leave is granted at the discretion of the Executive Principal/Head of School in the following circumstances:

- sudden, serious illness of near relative, spouse, partner or child - up to 5 days paid leave
- death of a near relative, spouse, partner or child - up to 5 days paid leave
- funeral of a near relative, spouse, partner or child - 1 day of paid leave
- accompanying wife or partner during labour - 1 day of paid leave

Employees wishing to attend the funeral of other relatives, friends or colleagues may take unpaid leave, provided it does not affect the operational needs of the school. In exceptional circumstances, the period of leave may be extended at the discretion of the Executive Principal/Head of School.

Time off for Dependants

All employees have a statutory right to take reasonable unpaid time off to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies relating to dependants.

A dependant is a spouse, partner, child or parent who lives with the employee (but not a lodger). It could also be someone else who reasonably relies on the employee for care.

Staff taking time off under this right are requested to notify the Executive Principal/Head of School of their absence on the day they take time off and if possible to give notification in advance.

Circumstances when an employee may take time off are:

- if a dependant falls ill, or has been injured or assaulted
- when a dependant is having a baby
- to make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
- to deal with the death of a dependant
- to deal with unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant
- to deal with an incident involving the employee's child during school hours

Sick Children

It is recognised that it can be difficult for working parents to respond to the need to care for sick children. Staff have a statutory right to unpaid time off to make arrangements for the care of a dependant child. If it is impossible to make appropriate arrangements for the care of sick children, the staff in this school may, after discussion with the Executive Principal/Head of School, take reasonable (up to three days) unpaid leave to care for sick children. This arrangement applies to all staff with dependant children. For seriously ill children see personal leave.

Medical Appointments

Routine medical appointments should be arranged outside of the working day. However, if this cannot be avoided, the leave may be unpaid.

Hospital and necessary emergency medical appointments may be taken as allocated by the outside organisation and will be paid leave.

Requests to attend hospital or emergency appointments with dependant children under the age of 16 will normally be granted and paid. Requests to attend hospital or emergency appointments with adult relatives must be made in advance and leave granted may be unpaid.

The operational needs of the school will be considered before granting leave and there may be times when the Executive Principal/Head of School will need to refuse a request for leave.

Leave to attend significant events

The Governors recognise that from time to time staff may have the opportunity to attend a significant social event during the term time. For example, the graduation ceremony for a son or daughter or the wedding of a close family member.

Teachers and term time only staff do not have a leave allowance which can be taken during term time. This policy enables staff to take one day of leave in order to attend a significant social event. Staff must seek the express permission of the Executive Principal or Head of School for leave in advance of the event. The leave may be unpaid. If the school incurs additional cost in granting such absence, the leave will be unpaid.

The operational needs of the school will be considered before granting leave and there may be times when the Executive Principal/Head of School will need to refuse a request for leave.

Moving House

Staff who are moving house are entitled to one day paid leave. If they require more than one day, then they may take unpaid leave up to a maximum of 3 days. Requests for such leave must be made to the Executive Principal/Head of School in advance of the move.

Religious Festivals

Staff who wish to attend significant religious festivals which fall during the school term time may take unpaid leave to attend the festival. Requests for such unpaid leave must be made to the Executive Principal/Head of School in advance of the event.

Interviews

All Staff may take reasonable paid leave to attend selection interviews for jobs. Requests to take leave to attend an interview must be made to the Executive Principal/Head of School in advance.

Reserved Forces

In the interests of the effective operation of the school, staff are encouraged, as far as it is possible, to attend training camps during school closures. The maximum entitlement to leave for such purposes is 10 days paid leave.

Emergency Situations

In addition, the governors may choose to give time off to allow the employee to deal with certain personal emergency situations, ie: a burst boiler at home, but this leave will not be paid.

It may not be considered appropriate to award paid or unpaid leave in circumstances where the employee can reasonably be expected to make alternative plans or arrangements which may therefore not require their assistance, or where the arrangements can be undertaken outside of term-time.

If an individual takes excessive time off for situations that are not "unexpected or sudden" this will be discussed with the individual and it may be that such absences will then fall within the Absence Monitoring Policy and Procedures for Staff.