



LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

- We will consider any request for this policy to be made available in an alternative format or language. Please note that the College may charge for this service. Please contact: Executive Director of HR
- We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. We welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility or fairness of this policy.
- All our policies are subject to equality impact assessments. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wishes to contribute to these impact assessments. Please contact: Executive Director of HR

Approved by:	Version:	Issue Date:	Review Date:	Contact Person:
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CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Types of Leave of Absence	2
3. General guidance on leave of Absence	3
4. Types of Leave	4
5. Application Process	4 - 5
6. Bereavement of a Dependent	5
7. Medical appointments	5 - 6
8. Public Duties	6 - 7
9. Urgent Domestic Circumstances	8
10. Inspectors, External Examiners, moderator's role in Further/ Higher Education context	8
11. Absence for Job interviews	8
12. Time off for Trade Union duties	9
13. Examinations and External Ceremonies	9
14. Policy Review	9
Appendices	
Leave of Absence Form and Guidance notes	10-12

1. INTRODUCTION

The College recognises the need for effective policies, which play a key part in supporting an appropriate work life balance. Such policies are intended to:

- allow a more effective combination of home and work responsibilities;
- enhance equality of opportunity at work;
- maintain the competitive advantage of the organisation by retaining employees;
- provide support to individuals to undertake public duties outside the College.

2. TYPES OF LEAVE OF ASBENCE

The College recognises that an employee may be absent from work for a range of circumstances:

- bereavement of a dependant;
- parental activities;
- medical appointment;
- public duties (eg JP/Local Councillor/Reserve Forces Training/Jury Duty);
- urgent domestic circumstances;
- inspector's/external examiner's/moderator's role in further/higher education context;
- adverse weather;
- job interviews;
- time off for Trade Union duties.

This policy provides guidance for addressing such absence by developing a flexible system of managing and taking the leave, whilst maintaining fairness and equity across the College in the application of the leave.

There is no entitlement to a retrospective application for planned leave outlined in this policy.

3. GENERAL GUIDANCE ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- 3.1 There is no automatic right to Leave of Absence except where there are specific requirements as part of Government Legislation.
- 3.2 A member of staff requesting special leave should complete a Leave of Absence request form at least 3 days in advance of the leave required giving full details of the type of leave and duration of absence, (Leave of Absence request forms submitted within 3 days of the intended leave will only be considered in exceptional cases).
- 3.3 The Line Manager will consider requests for Leave of Absence submitted on the Leave of Absence form (Appendix A) and either accept or reject the application. If applicable the form should then be forwarded to the appropriate Assistant Principal for consideration. The completed form should then be returned to the Human Resources Department.

All requests for time off from work will be considered having proper regard for the operational needs of the service in which the individual works. If time off would mean that an adequate level of service could not be maintained or there would be a demonstrably unreasonable disruption of work, the request for time off may be refused.

- 3.4 If the individual wishes to appeal against the decision of the Manager they must do so in writing to the College Management Team for further consideration. The decision of the College Management Team is final and there is no further right of appeal.

4. TYPES OF LEAVE

Leave can be paid or unpaid. It may be the case that an application will attract a combination of both paid and unpaid leave:

- **Paid Leave** is full pay. Absences on paid leave do not affect an employee's basic pay, incremental date, annual leave entitlement or pension.
- **Unpaid Leave** will count towards service with the College, however:

when five weeks or more of unpaid leave are taken in one annual leave year there will be a reduction in annual leave entitlement for that year (pro-rata'd for the months of unpaid leave);

the employee may consider paying pension contributions for the period for which unpaid leave was authorised.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS

5.1 Unplanned Absence

It is acknowledged that some Leave of Absence by their very nature (e.g. bereavement, urgent domestic circumstances) cannot be planned or even anticipated and it is therefore not always possible to secure written approval prior to leave being taken.

An employee who is seeking time off under these circumstances must contact his/her Line Manager as soon as possible, ideally prior to the scheduled commencement of work. The employee must outline the reason for the leave and indicate a likely return.

The manager will evaluate the request and provide verbal approval or otherwise.

In the case of bereavement of a dependant, the employee should contact their Line Manager as soon as possible.

On return from unplanned Leave of Absence the employee must complete the Leave of Absence form (Appendix A) and submit it to their Line Manager for consideration, completion and forwarding to the Human Resources Department.

A copy of the completed form will be scanned and emailed back to the line manager and employee.

5.2 Planned Absence

Some of the absence covered under this policy is planned in advance (eg public duties, jury service, medical appointment, reserve forces training).

Where it is reasonable to expect such planning the College will require the employee to submit a Leave of Absence form (Appendix A) to their Line Manager for consideration.

The Line Manager may wish to discuss the absence and how the individual's work is to be undertaken in his/her absence prior to completing the form. The form will then be forwarded to the Human Resources Department.

6. BEREAVEMENT OF A DEPENDENT

The following are classified as a dependent for the purpose of this policy:-

- a partner/spouse;
- a son or daughter;
- a parent;
- a brother or sister;

The College will consider applications for Leave of Absence for Bereavement in the case of individuals treated as close relatives (e.g. someone who lives with the employee as part of their family).

Managers will be able to consider granting normally up to five days paid Leave for bereavement of a dependent or close relative.

Consideration of unpaid leave to attend funerals of others than those identified above will be sympathetically considered.

7. MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Paid Leave will be granted for medical appointments, only where an individual is unable to arrange a medical appointment outside normal working hours. For the purpose of this policy medical appointments shall be deemed to include appointments at:-

- Hospital (e.g. outpatients);
- General Practitioners;
- Dental/Optician/Podiatrist, or
- Treatments referred by the above, e.g. GP referral for counselling.

Where possible a copy of the appointment card should be attached to the Leave of Absence form.

8. PUBLIC DUTIES

8.1 Leave of Absence provision exists to allow employees to undertake public duties. These duties are normally planned in advance, therefore employees should inform their line managers of these at the earliest opportunity.

8.2 For the duties outlined below there will be no carryover of paid absence from one year to the next.

- Reasonable time off will be considered based on;
- How long the duties might take
- The amount of time the employee has already had off for public duties
- How the time off will affect the business

The College can refuse a request for time off if they think it is unreasonable. Jury Service requests cannot be refused.

8.3 **Jury Service/Witness at the Court**

Leave will be granted to undertake either jury service or to be a witness at a court. The College will ensure that normal pay will be maintained throughout however, if the employee is dismissed from court early they will be required to attend for work.

When submitting the application for Leave the employee should attach the appropriate correspondence requiring their attendance.

8.4 **Magistrate Duties**

Prior to applying to undertake magistrate duties an employee must secure the agreement (in respect of time off) from the Chief Executive .

Subject to the agreement of the Line Manager the Principal will consider up to 13 full days or 26 half days paid absence in each 12 months period.

Any court fees received by the employee must be transferred to the College if obtained during paid leave (excluding expenses, e.g. travel). The commitment to the role of Magistrate is a sustained one and a Leave of Absence form (Appendix A) will need to be completed on an annual basis (rather than for every meeting).

8.5 **Local Government Councillor**

Prior to applying to undertake local government council duties an employee must secure the agreement (in respect of time off) from the Chief Executive, completing a Leave of absence Form.

Subject to the agreement of the Line Manager, the Chief Executive will consider up to 24 days paid absence in each 12 months period. Any fees received by the employee must be transferred to the College if obtained during paid leave (excluding expenses, e.g. travel).

The commitment to the role of Local Government Councillor is a sustained one and a Leave of Absence form (Appendix A) will need to be completed on an annual basis (rather than for every meeting).

N.B where local government duties are combined with magistrate duties the total paid Leave for the two purposes will not exceed 24 days in any 12 months.

8.6 Reserve and Cadet Forces

Employees who are members of the reserve forces will be considered for up to ten days unpaid Leave for attendance at annual camp. Employees will be eligible to receive payment from the reserve forces for such attendance.

Reservists will be issued with a 'call-out notice' if they are needed for full time service (known as 'mobilisation'). In most cases reservists will be given 28 days' notice. Reservists are required to inform their line manager and the HR Department as soon as they are informed of the mobilisation.

8.7 Parliamentary Candidature

Employees who are adopted as a candidate at a parliamentary election will be considered for up to six weeks unpaid Leave up to the date of the election.

8.8 Statutory Tribunals and Government Bodies

Prior to applying to undertake public duties for either statutory tribunals or a government body, for example:-

- Statutory tribunals;
- Police Authority;
- Board of Prison Visitors;
- Education Authority;
- School Governor;
- Environment Agency;
- Health Authority.

An employee must secure the agreement (in respect of time off) from the Chief Executive, by completing a Leave of Absence form. Subject to the agreement of the Line Manager consideration will be given of up to 10 days paid absence in each 12-

month period. Any fees received by the employee must be transferred to the College if obtained during paid leave (excluding expenses, e.g. travel).

The commitment to such Committees is often a sustained one and a Leave of Absence form (Appendix A) will need to be completed on an annual basis (rather than for every meeting).

9. URGENT DOMESTIC CIRCUMSTANCES

Employees may be faced with periods of urgent domestic distress. This time is intended to allow employees to deal with unforeseen matters only.

If it is possible to plan or defer the time off required to deal with the domestic issue then the employee should do so and take annual leave at a later date.

It is acknowledged that by its nature, time off for urgent domestic circumstances cannot be planned or even anticipated. An employee who is seeking time off under these circumstances must contact their Line Manager as soon as possible, ideally prior to the employee's normal starting time (eg. 8.30 am).

10. INSPECTOR'S/EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S/MODERATOR'S ROLE IN FURTHER / HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

Prior to applying to undertake an Inspector's role (and/or examination or moderation) in a Further or Higher Educational context an employee must secure the agreement (in respect of time off) from the Chief Executive, by completion of a Leave of Absence Form.

Subject to the agreement of the Line Manager consideration of up to 5 days paid absence in each 12 month period will be given.

Requests for additional days will be considered on a case by case basis.

11. ABSENCE FOR JOB INTERVIEWS

Whilst staff are subject to organisational change such as redundancy, the College will allow reasonable paid time off to attend job interviews. In all other circumstances staff may either use unpaid leave or holiday entitlement.

12. TIME OFF FOR TRADE UNION DUTIES

Reasonable time off for recognised Trade Union duties will be considered and authorised by the College Management Team.

13. EXAMINATIONS AND EXTERNAL CEREMONIES

Sufficient paid leave will be granted to take nationally recognised examinations as part of an agreed staff development programme (clearly linked to role and/or career progression).

14. POLICY REVIEW

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years in light of experience and best practice. This mechanism recognises that changes as a result of experience and/or to employment legislation may prompt a review of the policy before the end of the three year period.

On considering the effectiveness of this policy, consultation will be undertaken with the Trade Unions, Employees and Managers to assist in the policy review and monitoring of this policy.

Application for Leave of Absence from duty

This form is not for personal illness within the normal sickness reporting arrangements, College duties, TOIL.

Full name	
Department/School/Service	
Job Title	
Request made (please delete as appropriate)	In advance / In retrospect
Date and time of intended absence	
Date and time of intended return	
Reason for Leave of Absence	
Cover required (please delete as appropriate)	Yes / No
Details of cover required	

PLEASE ATTACH COPY OF APPOINTMENT LETTER/CARD BEFORE FORWARDING TO YOUR LINE MANAGER

I confirm that the above information is correct.

Signed (Employee) _____

Date: _____

Authorisation

Post	Signature	Date	Recommended Yes / No	Comments <i>Please state with or without pay</i>
Line Manager			Yes / No	
Assistant Principal			Yes / No	
HR Department			Yes / No	
Chief Executive (Approval for Public Duties, etc.)			Yes / No	

HR Use Only

HRIS:	Cc Payroll provider:	Cc Employee:	Cintra:
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NOTES ON USE

1. This form should be completed by the applicant and returned to the Head of School/Curriculum and Performance/Service at least 3 days in advance of the leave required (Leave of Absence request forms submitted within 3 days of the intended leave will only be considered in exceptional cases). If leave is required in an emergency, application should be made as soon as possible after the leave of absence commences, as payment of salary may otherwise be affected.
2. This form is to be used for all reasons other than personal illness and holiday.
3. The time and dates of the period of intended absence should be stated and if more than one day, the dates of the first and last days of absence should be shown.
4. Full details must be given to allow for consideration for the payment of salary. The words "Domestic", "Private", "Family Illness", will not suffice.

In the case of absence due to "Family Bereavement" the relationship to the deceased should be stated. Where leave is required to attend a funeral, as well as giving the relationship to the deceased, the application should state the place and time of the funeral service.

5. Wherever possible leave of absence requests for appointments should be accompanied by the appropriate appointment card (or a photocopy).
6. The Head of School/Curriculum and Performance/Service must forward the signed form to the Assistant Principal if appropriate This is then forwarded to the Human Resources Department.
7. Leave of Absence forms will be scanned and a copy emailed to the employee and line manager.
8. The Chief Executive must sign **ALL** leave of absence forms in respect of below

PUBLIC DUTIES &INSPECTOR'S/EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S/MODERATOR'S
ROLE IN FURTHER / HIGHER EDUCATION