



Victoria Academies Trust

STAFF LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY v1.1

Date of last review:	March 2020	Review period:	1 year
Date of next review:	March 2021	Owner:	COO
Type of policy:	Trust	LGB or Board approval:	Trust Board

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all employees of Victoria Academies Trust.

The Victoria Academies Trust (VAT) aims to encourage all of its employees to maximise their attendance at work. It is recognised, however, that a certain level of sickness absence is inevitable. It is our policy to support employees who are genuinely sick and unable to come to work.

This policy is designed to ensure that the VAT operates consistently in dealing with cases of general sickness absence and disability related sickness absence, and that employees are treated equitably and with care.

2. PROCEDURE

Requests for time off, under the terms of this policy, will be delegated to and dealt with by the Head Teacher. Head Teacher requests will be dealt with by the CEO.

The Governing Body / Academy Council will only consider requests for time off outside of these provisions in extenuating circumstances, such requests having been made through the Head Teacher initially. If a Head Teach is not in post at the academy the delegation reverts to the Executive Head.

All requests for time off must be made at the earliest opportunity and on a Leave of Absence Request form (Appendix 1) available from the school office.

Part 2 of the Leave of Absence request form will be returned to the employee to confirm agreement to requests. If a request is to be refused, the Head Teacher will meet with the employee to discuss the reasons for refusal. Part 2 of the request form will then be given to the employee as written confirmation.

Part-time employees will be entitled to time off, under the terms of this policy, pro rata to their contractual hours. The Head Teacher will, however, take into account the working patterns of part-time employees. (For example, an employee who works on one day a week only would be granted time off with pay for the funeral of a close relative on that working day without pro rata calculations being applied).

Where practicable, the Head Teacher may agree that an employee can make up lost time as an alternative to loss of pay. The Head Teacher will notify Employee Services (on form ES354, or other payroll provider, of all leave that is granted without pay to enable pay adjustments to be made.

The Head Teacher will ensure that absence records are maintained for all employees. Leave of Absence Policy— School Based Employees 3.

The Executive Head Teacher will consider requests made by the Head Teacher for leave of absence under the terms of this policy.

For a member of ELT, the CEO or chair of Trustees will make the decision as appropriate.

3. COMPASSIONATE LEAVE / FUNERALS

The Head Teacher will grant leave of absence in respect of the following circumstances:

- a. In the event of serious family illness or the death of a close relative, up to three days leave of absence with pay will be granted for any one occasion.
- b. In addition, one day's leave with pay will be granted for the funeral of a close relative. This may be extended up to three days with pay if the funeral takes place at more than half a day's journey from the Academy.
- c. A close relative is defined as parent/stepparent/guardian, son/stepson/daughter/stepdaughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, partner's parents, partners, grandparents and grandparents in law and grandchild. This includes adoptive relatives.
- d. Uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, sisters in law, brothers in law are normally excluded. However, where the Head Teacher is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist, one day may be granted for attending the funeral of one of these relatives.
- e. Where employees have been raised by an uncle, aunt, brother/sister in law, the maximum compassionate leave of absence may be granted by the Head Teacher.

4. TIME OFF FOR THE EMERGENCY CARE OF DEPENDENTS

At the discretion of the Head Teacher employees will be granted reasonable time off (with or without pay) to enable them to take emergency action for the care of a dependant in circumstances such as:

- a. when the arrangements for caring for a dependant unexpectedly break down or are terminated;
- b. when a dependent child is involved in an unexpected incident at school or on a school trip;

- c. when an elderly relative or neighbour living alone is injured and emergency arrangements/contacts need to be made.

A dependant is either a family member or other person who relies on the employee for assistance in the particular circumstances.

5. INTERVIEWS

If a member of staff applies for vacancies time off with pay will be granted for the actual interview, plus reasonable travelling time.

If an employee approaches the Head Teacher with the letter inviting them for interview, time off with pay should be granted as a matter of course.

Employees who are officially “at risk” of redundancy will be afforded reasonable time off with pay for interviews with any prospective employer.

6. HOUSEHOLD REMOVAL

The Head Teacher will grant one day with pay to employees who are moving house.

Employees who have an annual leave entitlement will be expected to book annual leave in respect of this day.

7. SHORT COURSES / EXAMINATIONS

The Head Teacher will grant time off with pay to enable employees to attend short courses or undertake examinations where they are relevant to the post held.

8. PARENTAL LEAVE

The Head Teacher will grant leave without pay, in accordance with the Parental Leave provisions of the Employment Relations Act 1999, to allow a parent to look after or make arrangements for the good of the child, where an employee meets the following criteria: An employee must have at least one year’s continuous Local Authority Service and:

- a. An employee must have at least one year’s continuous service, and
- b. be the parent (named on the birth certificate), or have acquired formal parental responsibility, of a child who is under 5 years of age, or

- c. have adopted a child under the age of 18. (The right to parental leave will end on the child's eighteenth birthday or five years from the adoption date, whichever is sooner).

Eligible employees can request leave, which must be in blocks of one or more full weeks (except where a child is disabled) up to a maximum of four weeks for each child in any year.

The request must include at least 21 days notice and include the dates on which the leave would start and end. The Head Teacher has the right to postpone leave, on justifiable business grounds, for up to six months, within seven days of receiving the request.

Employees can request up to 13 weeks leave for each child across the five year qualifying period, or up to 18 weeks leave where the child has a disability, over a longer period of up to the child's 18th birthday.

9. PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE AND PAY

Two weeks leave on full pay will be given for employees who suffer the death of a child under 18 or a still birth from 24 weeks of pregnancy. This can be taken in either a single block of 2 weeks or 2 blocks of one week taken at different times in the 56 weeks from the child's death. This applies to birth parents and those with parental responsibility for example adoptive parents, fostering to adopt and legal guardians.

This leave is an entitlement from day one of employment, there is no qualifying period.

10. PUBLIC DUTIES

Employees should be aware that the interests of the Academy or Trust should always be put first when embarking upon any of the following duties.

However, if the Head Teacher concerned is satisfied that any time granted will not be detrimental to the School's services, leave with pay may be granted:

Purpose	Amount of Leave
Service as a Justice of the Peace	Equivalent of 20 full days' leave per year, with pay
Service as a member of a local authority	Equivalent of 20 full days' leave per year, with pay
Service as a member of a public body	Equivalent of 12 days' leave per year, with pay

Service as a member of the National Executive of a trade union	Equivalent of 12 days' leave per year, with pay
Service as a member or in connection with meetings concerned with National or Provincial Council Affairs	Equivalent of 12 days' leave per year, with pay
Member of reserved armed forces	Equivalent of 20 full days' leave per year with pay

In exceptional circumstances, leave in excess of the above amounts may be granted. However, this will be conditional upon the time lost being made good i.e., forfeiture of annual leave or leave without pay.

11. JURY SERVICE

When an employee receives a summons to serve on a jury, they should immediately report the fact to the Head Teacher.

Leave of absence will be granted unless an exemption is secured.

Whilst serving as a Juror, an employee must claim allowances for loss of earnings. Normally, they receive a form with the summons asking for details of their daily rate of pay. Because this form requires the net daily rate of pay, this form should be sent to the Trust payroll provider for completion. After the employee has concluded their period of jury service and has received their payment from the courts, the employee should present the form which explains how the payment has been calculated, to the Payroll Provider so that the appropriate "loss of earnings" can be deducted from their salary/wage. Any travelling and subsistence expenses that the employee claims from the courts can be retained by the employee.

The above procedure also applies if an employee is called as a witness, or attends as a defendant or plaintiff on behalf of the Trust.

12. SCHOOL GOVERNING DUTIES

Employees who are School Governors with any School will be allowed up to the equivalent of 12 days leave with pay each year to attend day time interviews, meetings etc.; this would include reasonable travelling time.

13. INVESTITURE WITH AN HOUR OF DECORATION

If an employee has the distinction of being included in an Honours List, the Governing Body / Academy Council will grant paid leave to enable the employee to attend the investiture.

The employee should let the Head Teacher see any correspondence received from the Crown in connection with this, so that leave can be arranged.

14. TIME OFF FOR RELIGIOUS FESTERVALS

Consideration will be given to requests for time off without pay, or annual leave, for the observance of religious festivals.

15. DOCTORS AND DENTIST APPOINTMENTS

Employees should arrange doctors and dentists appointments outside of normal working hours. Where the Head Teacher is satisfied that the appointment is urgent or cannot be arranged wholly outside of working hours, time off with pay will be given.

16. HOSPITAL / MEDICAL SCREENING APPOINTMENTS

Time off with pay will be given for employees to attend hospital appointments or medical screening appointments. However, if possible these should be made out of working times.

17. MATERNITY / PATERNITY/ ADOPTION LEAVE

These are out of scope of this policy and are included separate VAT policies.

18. HOLIDAY DURING TERM TIME

Requests for time off during term time for the purposes of an annual holiday will not be considered. School employees are contractually required to attend for work during term time and should arrange for their holiday to coincide with the school holiday period.

19. CAMPAIGNING FOR ELECTION TO PUBLIC OFFICE

No paid time off is allowed for employees to campaign for election, either for themselves or when acting as an agent for someone else.

20. ABSENCE DUE TO SERVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

Employees are expected to attend for work in the normal way during severe weather conditions.

Employees who arrive late as a result of adverse weather conditions will not lose pay or be required to make up lost time.

Disabled employees with mobility problems should not attempt to come to work and will not lose pay or be required to make up lost time.

Where school is closed to both pupils and staff, time off will be with pay.

In normal circumstances, employees who do not come to work at all on the particular day will be required to either make up lost time or book a day's holiday where this is contractually possible. Where these arrangements cannot apply, time off will be without pay.

APPENDIX 1

Part 1

Leave of Absence Request Form

Name:

First day of absence:

Last day of absence:

Date of return to work:

Reason for which leave is requested:

Are you requesting leave of absence with pay?

Signed: Date:

For completion by Head Teacher

Request	Approved with pay	<input type="text"/>
	Approved without pay	<input type="text"/>
	Not approved	<input type="text"/>
Employee Services/Payroll provider informed		<input type="text"/>
Absence recorded		<input type="text"/>

THIS FORM IS TO BE RETAINED IN SCHOOL

Leave of Absence

To:

Your request for leave of absence from to is:

Approved with pay

Approved without pay

Not approved

Signed: Date:

Teacher

Head